

ONE DAY GENERAL STRIKE NOW



HEALTH WORKERS striking to defend our health service are giving inspiration to workers throughout the country. Twice in two days, the Manchester nurses and then the blood transfusion workers forced Thatcher into humiliating concessions.

The dam has burst. A torrent of workers' grievances is threatening to break through. The Tories and the bosses can be beaten. Now workers are looking to wrest back what has been taken from them under Thatcher.

Pit deputies voted 90 per cent for action. 88 per cent of Ford workers voted to strike, although they have been cruelly let down by their national union leaders.

Ferry workers are defying legal injunctions, striking to protect staffing levels and thereby passenger safety. Vauxhall workers may vote to strike. DHSS workers are preparing for battle. West Midlands gas workers are out. Even Butlins workers are threatening to strike.

Solidarity

Nurses have shown the courage and determination the whole union movement needs to defeat the Tories. But trade unionists understand they cannot leave it to health workers by themselves, with their dedication to the sick, to save the NHS. They want to stand side by side with health trade unionists.

Not since the miners' strike has such a feeling of solidarity swept through the working class. There could not be a better opportunity for nationally organised industrial action to force the Tories to back off.

Militant supporter and TUC General Council member, John Macreadie, has pushed for a one day general strike in support of health workers. Under pressure the TUC has called a demonstration for 5 March. This must be turned into a massive display of

By **Jeremy Birch**

working class power. Show Thatcher what she is taking on when she touches our health service!

John Macreadie has now written to the TUC demanding an answer—after 5 March, what next?

Neil Kinnock has called for budget day, 15 March, to be made into national health day. How better to turn words into action, than organising a national 24 hour stoppage for 15 March? As the Chancellor rises to announce tax cuts for the rich, nine million workers will be on strike demanding more spending on health.

But Kinnock condemns action in support of health workers as a "gesture." Even the health union leaders seem embarrassed by their members' picket lines.

'A gesture' is to do nothing but make speeches about the health workers' plight. They have petitioned, they have negotiated, and they got nothing. Now they have decided to fight back.

Thatcher only understands one thing—militant action. 38 Manchester nurses proved that. Think what action by the entire working class could achieve.

The TUC must be pressed to call workers out on 15 March. This cannot be left to the leaders. NHS broad lefts, health shop stewards' committees and local action committees involving other workers must organise now from below.

They must mobilise the maximum turnout for 5 March. And if the TUC fails to give a fighting lead, the local action committees must be ready to call for action on 15 March.



Pickets out at Maudsley hospital, 2 February.

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Militant

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The socialist alternative

THE ACTION by thousands of health workers ought to be the launching pad for a campaign to defeat the Tory government. But the Labour leadership has totally failed to seize this chance to take on Thatcher. They have refused to organise action in support of the nurses, yet are pressing on with the expulsion of some of the party's best campaigners.

The nurses and ancillaries have an unanswerable case for striking against their poverty pay and the strangling of the health service. But they also express the anger of millions of others, reflected in the wave of disputes sweeping the country.

For Labour there could not be a better opportunity. Not only on health, but on every one of the policies now being pursued by the Tories, there is growing opposition.

A MORI poll in The Times asked: "Do you support or oppose the government adopting each of the following policies?" On 11 out of 12 policies—allowing schools to opt out, selling off more state industries, the poll tax and charges for dental and sight checks, there were on average 65 per cent opposed, 24 per cent neutral and only 11 per cent in support. Only seven out of 1,000 supported the government on all twelve items!

Yet in polls on voting intentions, the Tories have lost little support since the election and Labour still lags well behind, even despite the disarray within the Alliance. That can only mean that the Labour leadership have failed to make themselves credible as an alternative government.

The reason is obvious from the reports on this page. Not only are the Labour and TUC leaders not organising action in support of workers in struggle, but they boast that they are not leading these struggles.

At the same time Labour council leaders are now implementing cuts imposed by the Tory government. Thousands of jobs and essential services are at risk. Yet the best advice Roy Hattersley can give Labour councillors is to "prove that Labour local government works even in adversity".

The verdict of voters living 'in adversity' in Greenwich has already been expressed. In a council by-election, Labour lost a seat to the SDP, with a swing of 15 per cent to a party split down the middle. In no way can that have been a positive vote for the SDP but a cry of protest against Labour.

The notion that because Thatcher won three elections her policies must be popular was always false. Now it is shown by the MORI poll to be absurd. On both policy and tactics the Labour leaders are out of touch with the seething mood of anger in the workplaces and estates.

They are in the ludicrous position of having policies which are both wrong and unpopular, quite incapable of inspiring doubtful workers to swing back to Labour.

There is no better proof of the real mood of working people than the reselection of Glasgow councillor Larry Flanagan, in a ward in Castlemilk. A concerted right-wing attempt to use the membership of a Labour social club to oust this supporter of the ideas of *Militant* backfired dramatically when he was reselected by 139 votes to 28.

Even those members not usually active who were brought along to back the right responded overwhelmingly to a militant approach to fighting back against the Tories.

Yet the leadership are expelling from the party Marxists in Bradford and Bermondsey, who take a similar stand and have a record of fighting and winning for Labour.

In Bermondsey, their decision to launch an inquiry has even coincided with a crucial by-election campaign, for which the SDP made an appeal at their conference for a national mobilisation. It is vital that Labour activists rally behind the candidate who stands four-square behind the Bermondsey party's policies.

It is not the popularity of Tory policies which led to three election defeats, but the Labour leaders' lack of a convincing alternative. They will never recover support if they carry on down their present road.

On the contrary it is the fighting socialist policies of those they wish to expel around which workers in struggle will flock. They will provide the troops for a new Labour army which will win mass support and march on to victory.

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Leading from behind

WHILE HEALTH workers were voting to strike, their leaders on Labour's national executive meeting on 27 January were petrified about the 'bad publicity' they believed would follow.

By a Militant reporter

The left moved an emergency resolution to give "full support for any strike action." But an alternative one moved by health union leaders, Tom Sawyer of Nupe and Colm O'Kane of Cohse, meekly 'recognised' health workers' frustration. "Picket lines give the wrong image of this dispute," said Sawyer, who condemned those linking the health dispute with the campaign to get rid of Thatcher for wanting "to play politics with this dispute".

O'Kane blurted out just how out of touch the leaders are: "We were taken by surprise. We did not realise the strength of feeling of our members". He even admitted: "The Tory government has done its best to prove the union leaders are leading this strike, but we are not. The rank and file are organising this strike!"

Michael Meacher thought the left resolution "extremely unwise and provocative" and Neil Kinnock at-

tacked it as a "glib gesture". Sawyer's resolution was carried and the other defeated, with Jo Richardson abstaining.

But these same leaders, who were so desperate to proceed delicately with the nurses' strike in case it lost Labour support, were happy to continue their fight against *Militant*, with no holds barred.

Sawyer lost his terror of bad publicity when it came to witch-hunting socialists. If it was electorally unpopular "so be it; this is something we have to do".

UCATT right winger, Jack Rodgers, summed up this 'kamikaze

tendency' in the debate on the suspension of Bermondsey Labour Party: "We have not wielded the knife deep enough. We have not hit them hard enough."

David Blunkett stooped to pure abuse, describing *Militant* supporters as "a double crossing bunch of organised liars".

The suspension of Bermondsey was carried by 20 votes to 4. Then by 17 to 5, eight Bradford North party members were referred to the National Constitutional Committee.

No doubt these decisions will help convince nurses that Labour has its priorities right!

Bradford North campaign

BRADFORD NORTH Labour Party members threatened with expulsion have launched a defence campaign. They will go out with petitions and public meetings to reach the Labour voters who gave their verdict on the 1987 general election campaign by defeating a Tory and electing Pat Wall as their Labour MP.

All those under threat were prominent in the election campaign: Bill Reed was constituency party secretary, Keith Narey the trade union

liaison officer and Hamid Khayam persuaded many Asians to vote Labour.

Mick Richardson was the canvassing officer in a campaign which gained 23,000 Labour pledges and Avril Hunter, Linda Mackenzie and Kirstie McLean all played a leading role in the women's campaign, which included an historic Asian women's meeting.

The NEC are attempting to behold a 'winning team' who stand firm on socialist principles.

Councils of despair

NEIL KINNOCK opened Labour's local government conference with a claim that the only thing which could make the Tory poll tax popular is the people who are appealing for illegality to defeat it. That set the tone for the rest of the conference.

Introducing a workshop on the poll tax, Jeff Rooker said that with a few more Tory rebels we could win some amendments in the committee stage. He was echoed by Eric Milligan, Lothian Regional Council Finance Chair: "We have won the battle on poll tax outside Parliament—now we have to win it inside".

Roy Hattersley conceded that these were "desperate days for all Labour councillors" and that many were questioning whether it was worth carrying on. His only solution was not to resign but "stay and decide the priorities". David Blunkett expressed the hope that "there is a difference between going illegal and giving up altogether".

30 copies of *Liverpool—a City that Dared to Fight* were sold to delegates and 50 heard Tony Mulhearn, Ron Brown MP and Tony Byrne at a meeting in support of the Liverpool 47 surcharged councillors. Their record of struggle was unfortunately a closed book for most of the Labour councillors in the conference.



The only enthusiasm for a fight at Labour's local government conference was shown by the lobby outside the hall by 250 supporters of Labour Movement Against the Poll Tax. Photo: Steve McTaggart.

Labour women back one-day strike

"WE NEED to know that the labour movement supports us" said a student nurse, supporting a call for a 24-hour general strike, at the Greater London Labour women's conference.

By Maggie McGinley

She described life in the crumbling health service, all for £70 a week to support herself and her child. Most of the nurses contemplating strike action were young and nervous about the consequences. A 24-hour general strike would give them a tremendous feeling of solidarity.

Despite a few protests that the resolution was 'simplistic' it was passed 2-1, reflecting the changed mood of conference as a result of the nurses' action.

An appeal from Bermondsey delegates for support against the witch-hunt against their party, was carried almost unanimously. Significantly the same NUPE officials who voted against also voted against supporting the nurses' strike.

Major role

The overwhelming mood was that the time had come to organise a united campaign of all health and local authority unions to fight government cuts. The four Marxists elected to the regional women's committee can play a major role in leading this campaign.

THE NORTH West Labour women's conference called on the labour movement to organise a massive campaign of resistance to the Local Government Bill, Housing Bill and poll tax, including preparation for rent strikes and

industrial action.

Unfortunately a resolution calling for support for the North West day of action to defend the NHS on 10 February, including industrial action and a one-day general strike, was narrowly defeated.

Premises attacked

THE SAME day that the *Sunday Times* published an article supposedly exposing *Militant's* 'regional nerve centres', premises used by *Militant* in Liverpool were

attacked by thugs with crowbars, who smashed their way in, stole money and ransacked offices, causing hundreds of pounds worth of damage.

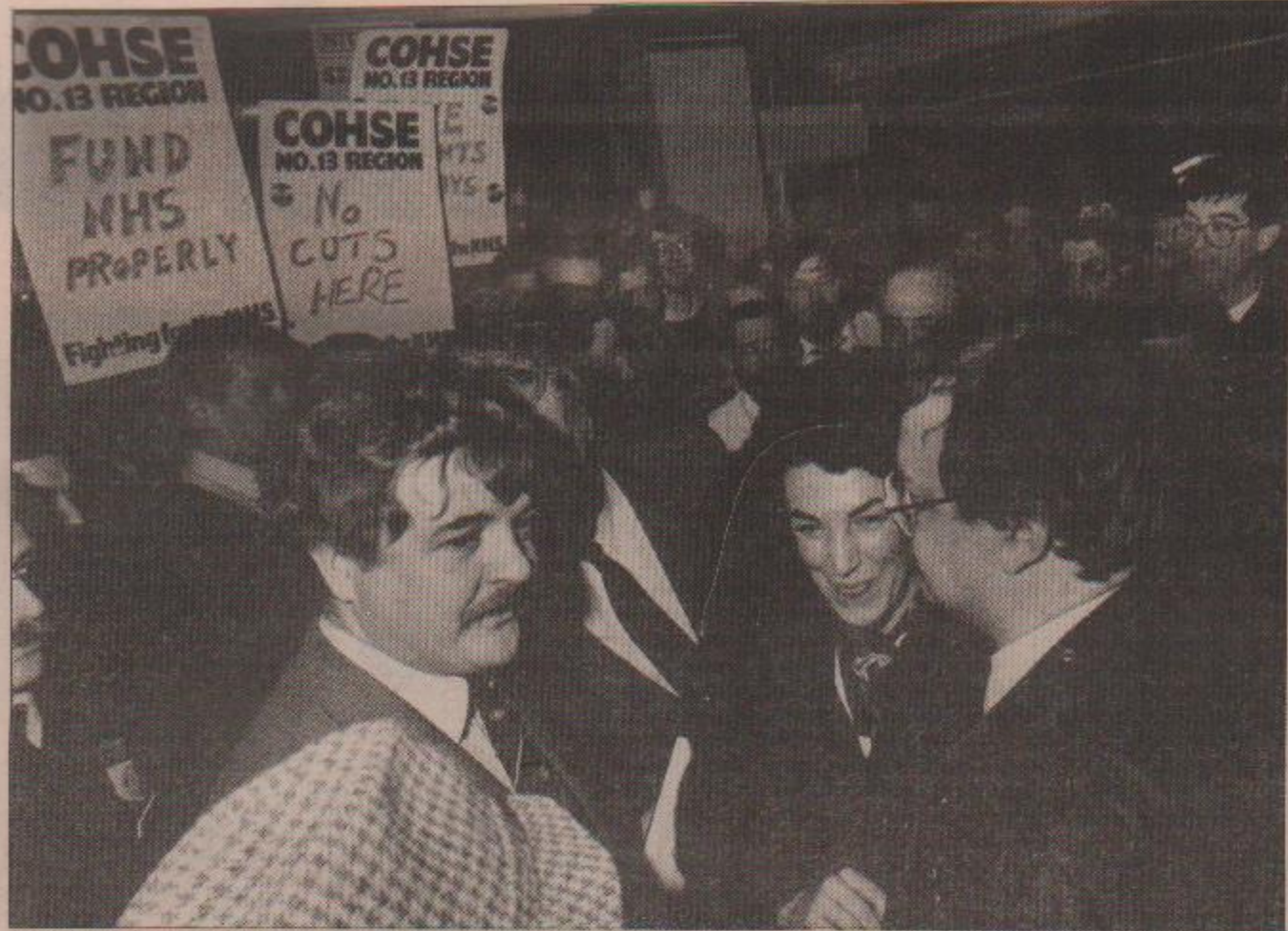


Photo: Neville Thunhauser

Junior Health minister Edwina Currie got a hot reception outside Southampton District General Hospital on 29 January, having to run the gauntlet of outraged NHS workers, all of whom wanted to 'discuss' the problems of the health service.

'We wish we hadn't voted Tory'

I'M A nurse in a Leicester psychiatric unit dealing with short stay mentally ill people.

By Gwyneth Lloyd

Most have to wait 8 to 12 weeks before they see a psychiatrist. Most of them have had a psychiatric breakdown, many are suicidal or potentially harmful to other people.

We are down to minimum cover in the ward, which is probably under emergency cover. Five nurses on morning shift, four on late shift and only two night staff look after 30 patients who are violent, suicidal and depressed. It's stressful and demanding work.

You wait six weeks to order supplies like bandages and plasters. If you want something urgently you go borrowing in other wards or make do with something sub-standard.

When the government tried to take away our enhanced pay for working lates and nights, I faced

about £30 a month cut off my wages. The Manchester nurses' strike forced that item back to the pay review body this year. But the Tories might still cut it next year.

When they said there would be no new money for the NHS, nurses told me they had voted Tory in June and wished now they could go back and change their vote to Labour. One girl walked round hospital with a badge on her uniform saying "I didn't vote Tory, don't blame me."

At one local hospital Cohse sent round letters to every ward before balloting, saying they didn't agree with strike action and that everyone who did could face disciplinary action from management.

Its disgusting—they are saying let's just talk about how bad things are; don't try to change anything. The truth is that according to the contract of employment, a nurse cannot be sacked for taking strike action. If we strike together we will be safe.

'We support nurses strike'

SEVENTEEN MONTH old Rachel from Nuneaton had her heart operation at Birmingham Children's Hospital on 25 January after it had been cancelled eight times in 12 months.

While Rachel was still in intensive care, her father, Paul Pearson, told me: "Every time we went to Birmingham we could see they had all the high tech equipment they needed, they just didn't have the staff. My baby's life was at

risk because there was no money.

"The nurses know what they have to do to get what they need. You can't condemn them for doing it.

"We couldn't go to London with the other parents. (See *Militant* 22 January-eds). But we could have told Mrs. Thatcher a few things.

"When the delays started getting publicity we were really worried that Rachel might never get her operation. She was so tiny compared to her twin sister—we had to make sure she stayed small so there was no strain on her heart. Her fingers were blue and she was pale, not pink.

"We support the nurses' strike. What we think of Mrs. Thatcher is unprintable."

By Sian Rhys

Ealing's realism

WHEN THE general secretary of the RCN went on TV and attacked strike action, even the RCN's local full-time officials were incensed.

Then we held our ballot—95.78 per cent in favour of a strike. Over the last two weeks at Ealing Hospital, 125 new members have been recruited to Cohse, mostly from the RCN. Nine new recruits have already become stewards.

Management tried to sabotage the strike, telling nurses that Cohse are refusing to provide emergency cover. Well, we have given them seven days notice to get agency cover. If an emergency arises, of course we will cover. But I am not prepared to discourage the vast majority of my members from striking.

I support the call for a one day general strike on budget day. Already the local TGWU at Hanwell bus garage have donated the use of their bus to publicise our strike. The Bakers' union are supplying buns and soup for our picket. The Saturday before the strike we went to the main high streets to publicise our mass picket, with the help of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Labour's role nationally has been scandalous. Look at the last NEC meeting. Not only did they expel some of the hardest workers in the party, they came out against solidarity action with the nurses.

The health workers' representatives had better watch their step, because our members will be told which way they voted.

We keep being told about 'new realism'. Well, this strike is real, the cuts are real and the rock bottom pay of health workers is real. New realism is here, why doesn't Labour listen to us? After all the health service is the only socialist thing left.

Mick Hagan, Cohse branch secretary Ealing Hospital spoke to Paul Couchman.

Production-line health

WORKING IN a general surgical clinic with 300 or so patients a day is like working on a factory production line. You can give no personal attention.

There are 100 patients for the morning surgical clinic, dealing mainly with breast problems. The patients wait anxiously for up to three hours to see a doctor.

After the tests they still have a week or two of worry before they return here for another long wait. They then get only five or ten

minutes of the doctor's time in which they may be told they have cancer.

With tears in their eyes and after a small amount of comfort from a nurse they are shipped out and another patient enters.

At around 1 o'clock patients start arriving early for the afternoon clinic. By 2.15 the nurses have to explain that the consultant hasn't arrived yet.

The patients believe that he is at an emergency call. In fact he is attending to his

private patients who pay for his large house and fancy car.

At 5 o'clock the clinic is due to finish but there are still several patients because of the consultant's late arrival. So nurses work up to an hour past their time and don't get paid for it.

And Thatcher tells us the NHS is safe in her hands.

By a Cohse member

Liverpool organises

THE NORTH West TUC call for hour long vigils outside a few hospitals on 10 February met derision from health workers who wanted a 24 hour strike with cover. Nupe and Cohse officials claim there is no mood for a strike, and use stalling tactics to stop ballots.

Nurses want an effective campaign and they can see the support of other workers. At a meeting called by Terry Fields, MP for Broadgreen, representatives from a wide cross section of unions pledged support for 10 February.

The Health Service Broad Left has endorsed Liverpool trades council's demonstration to support

the vigils, with a march and a rally at St George's Plateau where Terry Fields and other Labour MPs will speak.

Non-health service unions should show solidarity by staging stoppages and joining health workers' demos.



Health workers protest in Portsmouth at a visit by John Moore, Tory health secretary. Photo: Militant

In brief

Profits from sickness

THE TORIES encourage people to take out private health insurance. The two largest insurance schemes, British United Provident Association (Bupa) and Private Patients Plan (PPP) account for 90 per cent of private policy

holders.

Their main interest is profit so they are not interested in the expensive, chronically ill. Their schemes do not provide full cover. Bupa restricts chronic cover to 180 days in hospital a year. Chronic sickness such as kidney failure is not covered. PPC does not cover psychiatric care, pregnancy complications or drug and alcohol dependency.

Policy holders with these complaints would have to return to the NHS if they couldn't afford private clinics.

NURSES IN Alberta, Canada, came out on all-out strike last week in a struggle against proposed wage cuts after a few

years with no wage rise. The strike is solid, even though the state authorities threaten striking nurses with jail. Construction workers, meat packers and public sector workers joined the picket lines and the Alberta Federation of Labour will declare a general strike if any nurse is jailed.

A MASS meeting of Hackney Housing department Nalگو and Nupe members voted to back the call for a 24 hour general strike. Nalگو members will be out on 3 February.

THE NUR London District Eight has backed a call for the TUC to call a 24 hour general strike.

HEALTHY SALES!

OUR SALES at hospitals are breaking all records. 83 copies of *Militant* were sold at Royal Liverpool Teaching Hospital, beating last week's record of 52 at Liverpool's Alder Hey.

18 were sold at the small St Andrews in east London. A porter at a big London hospital personally paid for 22 copies to be distributed free to nursing staff. 13 copies were sold at Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.

Some supporters are selling from 8pm to 9.15pm when you can reach both visitors leaving and the staff shift change. The 7am or 1pm shift changes are also good. One hospital worker, seeing sellers in the evening and early morning asked if they had been there all night!

In Woolton, Liverpool, three supporters with a petition supporting the nurses sold 23 papers door to door as well as collecting 200 signatures.

By Gerry Lerner

How to defend o

THE STRIKE by 38 night nurses at North Manchester General, and the threatened action of blood transfusion workers have bought into the open all the accumulated anger and resentment in the NHS.

By Mick Barwood

(COHSE Edgware Hospital, and BLOC national officer, in personal capacities)

Health workers are fed up with having to manage on low pay and struggle to care properly for the sick in the face of Tory cuts.

Thatcher hoped that by conceding to their demands, the mounting criticism of Tory control of the NHS would be quelled. Instead it has given new confidence to all health workers, who now realise that by standing up for themselves, they can overturn Tory plans.

Their fight has also highlighted, in the minds of all working class people, the perilous state of the NHS.

The NHS, which is forty years old this year, is the most treasured possession of the people of Britain. The Tories understand this only too well. Over the years they have carefully chosen the areas of the NHS which they thought they could cut or prune without too much danger of mass opposition.

Unfortunately in this strategy they faced little or no resistance from the leaders of the NHS unions. The brave battle by the workers at Addenbrookes hospital and at Barking to block privatisation, was let down by the union leaders.

The real wishes of the Tories and their class can be seen in a recently disclosed confidential report. The *NHS and the Private Sector* was drawn up by the Carlton Club Political Committee with the Conservative Medical Society.

If implemented, this would be a declaration of war against the principle of a free health service and against the rights and conditions of health workers.

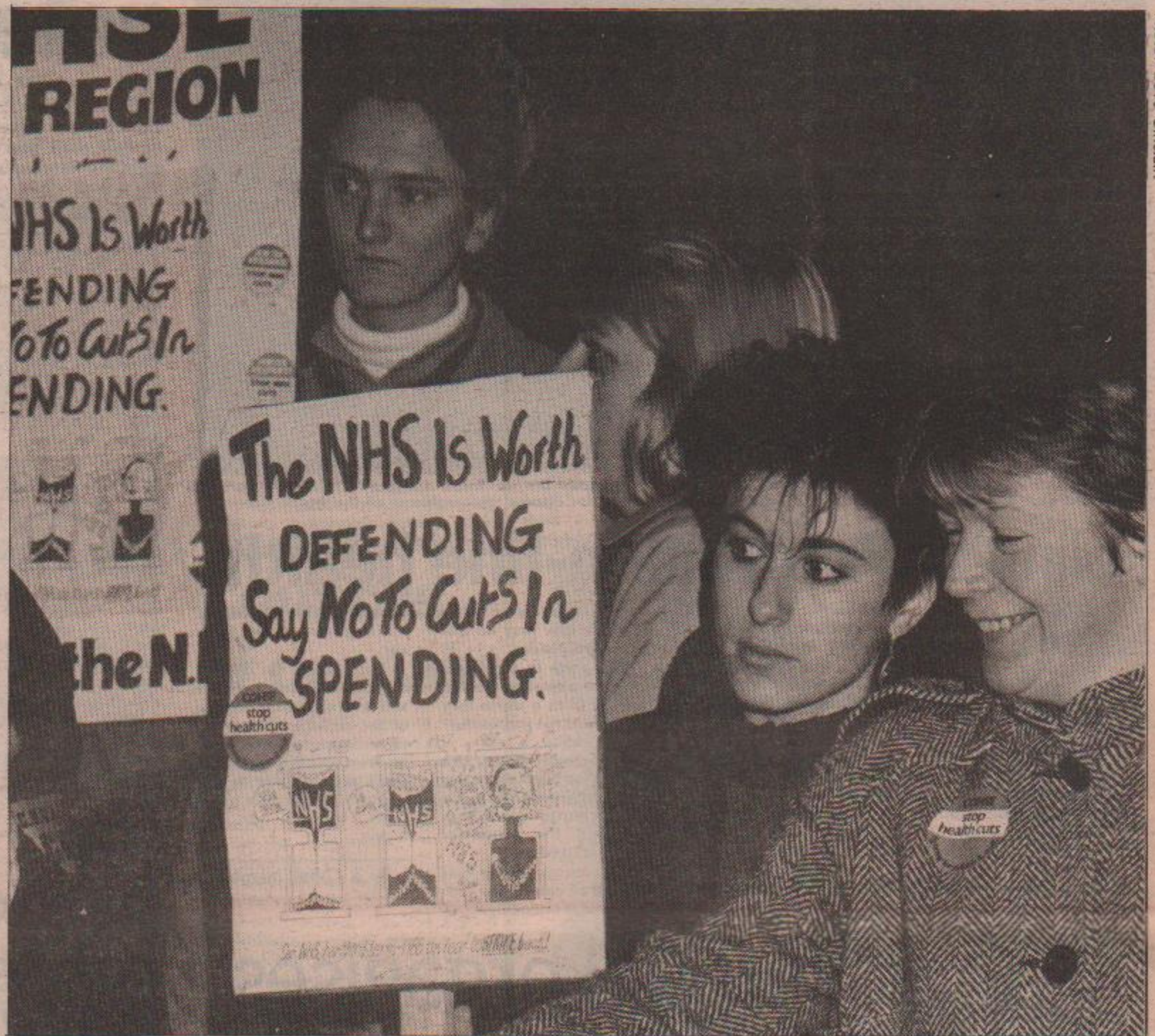
The Tories see health care as just another commodity to be bought and sold. The NHS is a target for their friends in big business.

The Tories did not support the introduction of the NHS in 1948. They see health care as just another commodity to be bought and sold. Right from its very inception the NHS has been a target for their friends in big business.

Health workers need their own friends. The defence of the NHS is not just health workers' fight, it must be waged by the whole labour movement. And Thatcher's back-tracking over special duty payments to nurses has shown all workers that they can fight back and win.

The Ford workers' ballot result, the 24 hour strike of Nacods, the industrial action by ferry workers and the developing strike of CPSA members in the DHSS, together with the reelection of Arthur Scargill are clear signs that the tide is turning against Thatcher.

Health workers are leading the movement by the trade union rank and file to bury the ideas of 'New Realism' that have so taken in their national leaders. The



The anger in the hospitals has been building up for years. Maudsley hospital workers on the picket line on 2 February.

union leaders were obsessed by false notions about the unpopularity and weakness of the unions. They attempted a policy of conciliation, which Thatcher turns down every time. As a result union members have had to suffer the onslaught of the Tories' policies.

At meetings up and down the country of health workers, and particularly nurses, the question most frequently on their lips has been: 'what are our leaders doing?' The action taken so far has been organised and inspired by the rank and file. In many areas full time officials have openly discouraged any action.

At the London Co-ordinating committee of Cohse, the general secretary, Hector McKenzie, told assembled stewards from striking hospitals they did not have the open backing of the national union.

His plan was for them to take action over the question of London weighting. The national executives of Cohse and Nupe up until the end of last week, had not met to discuss the present action.

At the TUC General Council on 27 January *Militant* supporter John Macreadie, the CPSA deputy general secretary, called for a one day day general strike in defence of the NHS. This was referred to the TUC health service committee, because the health unions themselves had still not met to formulate any form of action.

The explosion of protests in the NHS took the union leaders by surprise. The demand for a one day general strike was getting an echo throughout the country. It was this developing mood for

The Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) is calling a national lobby of the 24 February TUC General Council meeting to back John Macreadie's call for a one day general strike. All health workers and left trade unionists should see this lobby as a major part of their campaign to ensure the escalation of the action.

stronger action amongst all sections of workers which forced the TUC health committee to call the national demonstration on 5 March.

Now the TUC have decided to give their support, this will further boost workers' confidence.

The response to this call in the first few days has been swift. The Manufacturing, Science and Finance union has put out a circular to all members encouraging "all branches to organise maximum support." TGWU leader, Ron Todd, has said: "The NHS is in crisis and action is needed now to save it."

Demonstration

His words must be echoed in every union branch and Labour Party body throughout the country. If it is properly organised the mood is now there for a massive demonstration.

On 21 February 1971, following a call by the TUC, a quarter to a half a million workers took to the streets of London against the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act. That demonstration gave enormous confidence to ordinary workers, and marked the real beginning of three years of struggle, which ended in the toppling of that Tory government.

5 March 1988 can similarly give a major boost to the self-confidence of organised workers. But the question will obviously be asked—how way forward from here?

The TUC health committee called a similar march on 22 September 1982, during the health workers' pay dispute. The mood then was electric. The tail of the demonstration was still leaving Jubilee Gardens, as the head was arriving at Hyde Park. People cheered from office windows. Cars and buses sounded their horns in support.

But instead of building on this sympathy and on the strength of feeling of health workers, the health union leaders scaled down the action.

When the eyes of the movement were set on determined national action, they called a rolling programme of regional days of action. Although these were well supported in some regions, the momentum had been lost. The dispute dragged on for another three months, before coming to a rather inglorious end.

The lessons of 1982 must be understood by ordinary health workers. After 5 March they must demand the dispute is taken forward, involving the widest layers of the working class movement.

A one day general strike should be the call, to defeat the Tory plans for the NHS, to stop the cuts and the privatisation and to demand adequate funding for the service and decent pay for every health worker.

The Tories say they are not planning any real increase in health spending in the coming budget. John Macreadie has already written to the TUC suggesting a one day general strike for budget day, 15 March.

The Broad Left Organising Committee (Bloc) is calling a national lobby of the 24 February TUC General Council meeting to back John Macreadie's call. All health workers and left trade unionists should see this lobby as a major part of their campaign to ensure the escalation of the action.

A one day general strike would stop the Tories in their tracks. The warning would be there—either scrap your plans for the NHS or face even more determined generalised action by the working class. The health dispute coincides with unrest among many other workers. That gives the possibility of delivering a body-blow to the Thatcher government.

But national activity on this scale has to be actively campaigned for, at every level of the trade union movement. In the health unions, district and regional meetings of all shop stewards, branch secretaries and NHS activists must be organised now to prepare such action.

Activists must organise meetings throughout the labour and trade union movement and at every organised workplace with health workers speaking and call-

Our health service

The Tories' wrecking plans



Barking Hospital workers were left to fight their battle with no backing from the union leaders.

THE REPORT *The NHS and the Private Sector* had amongst its contributors 'leading figures from British and American private health companies, special advisers to Number Ten and the Department of Health'. It recommends disbanding the health service unions and their replacement with an organisation with specialist sections. So much for the Tories' interests in the rights of people to belong to unions.

They further suggest that the NHS should be "Retitled ... to show that its first 40 years was the 'end of the beginning' and that, from 1988 onwards, a whole new concept of funding and services will take us into 2000 AD."

This report, far from being the radical document claimed by its authors, would take health provision back to the days before the NHS. This almost certainly was what Edwina Currie had on her mind when she said last week in Southampton that the elderly should give up their savings to pay for their non urgent operations.

After a lifetime contributing to the NHS, millions of pensioners will now fear the return of the grim days before the NHS.



Protest at Whitley Hospital, Coventry.

ing for solidarity action.

Every TUC union must publish leaflets, posters and special health editions of their union journals to explain the case for the one day general strike.

The rest of the working class should be drawn in, the NHS is their service. Meetings should be organised by tenants' associations and leaflets delivered to every door like in a general election, mobilising the Labour parties and Labour Party Young Socialists.

In the hospitals themselves strike action should be taken by all health workers—nurses, ancillaries, ambulance workers and medical students. Emergency cover should be maintained by a skeleton staffing level determined by joint union teams. Although in many cases, so deep have the cuts been, staffing levels will not be much different from normal, especially in psychiatric hospitals.

A national 24-hour strike would give NHS and other workers a taste of their power, and put the Tories on the run.

But will the trade union tops be prepared to take up the call, and would they have the determination to organise to ensure its success? The health dispute so far has been notable for the marked reluctance of the union leaders to give any lead.

A key will be the impact made by the various union broad lefts, organising to push the official union structures to give a fighting lead. They should be moving into action right now, in particular ensuring the largest possible attendance for the 13 February Bloc conference and then for the Bloc lobby of the TUC.

The Bloc conference will provide a forum to co-ordinate the pressure that needs to be exerted within individual unions and the trade movement general-

ly for action. The pressure from below by left activists in union branches and at district and regional level could be very important in determining whether the 24 hour strike is taken up.

Bloc conference will also see the launching of the NHS Broad Left, to bring together activists throughout the health service to prepare for further action. The reluctance of the official union leadership gives new opportunities for the left to build their forces.

Local broad lefts could also help co-ordinate the various local health action committees, or draw together health activists and other trade unionists to step up the campaign. The strategy will be to pressurise the national union leaders to act. But if they hesitate then these local committees could even step into the breach and organise the action for 15 March.

Local ad hoc bodies were able to organise action in Coventry and in Crewe against health cuts towards the end of last year. Similarly a local committee of active workers initiated the call for a one day shut down on Merseyside on 10 February, the date of the north west TUC's more limited day of action.

A national 24 hour stoppage really would give workers a taste of their own power. It would disprove once and for all the myth that under Thatcherism the trade union movement has been 'marginalised'. We can put the Tories on the run.

Already Thatcher's own back-bench MPs are insisting she adopts a softer tone when speaking of the NHS. This was not achieved by petitions or letters to MPs, but by industrial action by health workers.

Now with the rest of the working class movement mobilised behind them, the Tories could be driven back from their attacks on health and the political situation in Britain turned decisively in favour of the labour movement.

...suffer a set-back

THE TORIES' behind-the-scenes plans for widespread privatisation in the health service were knocked back last week.

By Ben Eastop

A private member's bill which called for the abolition of regional health authorities was defeated. Tory MP for Maidstone, Ann Widdecombe, claimed that her bill would provide £109 million, now spent on administering regional health authorities, for patient care.

While the government remains publicly uncommitted to large scale privatisation, the right wing Adam Smith Institute has produced a pamphlet which suggests reducing staffing levels and making operations of the regional authorities more "flexible" with "greater use of contracting".

But Labour MP Dave Nellist, who spoke in opposition to the bill, said Widdecombe was naive if she thought the money would be put into patient care.

"The money saved would go back to the Treasury and end up as tax cuts for the top five per cent of the population", he said.

Accountable

He said that many health workers might be initially in favour of abolishing regional health authorities which have pushed through government cuts. Trade union representatives, and any delegates to authorities who oppose cuts have often been weeded out.

Instead he called for real accountability and democratic control of the regional health authorities. "The majority of district and regional health

authorities ought to be elected and accountable, with, in turn, a majority of their seats reserved for health workers and other trade unionists".

He pointed out that the root cause of the crisis was "not administration but the financial cuts imposed by the government".

Britain is now seventeenth out of the 21 OECD countries in terms of health spending. Infant mortality is now rising for the first time since 1971, he said.

After 5 March

JOHN MACREADIE, deputy general secretary of CPSA, welcomed the decision by the TUC Health Services Committee to call a rally on 5 March in support of the nurses and NHS workers and in defence of the National Health Service.

"In my opinion, if properly organised, there is a potential of hundreds and thousands of workers taking part in the rally... It is a fact, however that at the rally the question will be posed generally 'What next?'. In my view the demonstration should be used to launch the call for a one day general strike on 15 March, Budget Day."

He said that it was important not to underestimate the tremendous feeling of respect and support for the nurses and health workers. "The time has come for the trade union movement to fight back against the government's attacks on the health service and the Welfare State generally."

Militant meetings

Militant meetings on the NHS
BETHNAL GREEN Approach Tavern, Approach Rd (near London Chest Hospital) 7.30pm 7 February
HACKNEY Crown and Castle, Dalston, 7.30pm 11 February. Speaker Myrna Shaw, Nupe.
BATTERSEA York Library, Wye St, SW11 7.30pm 10 February. Speakers include Ken Spearpoint, Nupe.
BRIXTON St Matthews Meeting Place, Brixton SW2 7.30pm Thursday 18 February
BIRMINGHAM Carr's Lane, Birmingham, 7.30pm 3 February.

Speaker: Lynn Martin, Nupe.
NEWCASTLE: Blackie Boy, Groat Market, 7.30pm 3 February
Speakers: John Malcolm (Cohse), Vanessa Lorraine.
FALKIRK Unemployed Workers' Centre, Falkirk, 7.30pm 4 February. Speaker from Cohse.
MAESTEG Victoria Hotel, Commercial Street, Maesteg, 10 February 7.30pm
PONTYPRIDD Rose and Crown Pub, Graig, Pontypridd, 7.30pm 11 February. Speaker from Cohse.
BRIDGEND Dunraven Arms Hotel, Bridgend, 9 February 7.30pm

Photo: Militant



Private business

TORY EURO-MP Richard Cottrell paid £349 for a meal at a Strasbourg restaurant. Six 19th century brandies cost £40 a glass. Cottrell has a reputation for attacking "public waste", but thought his own gluttony was not a "public issue."

Reward for enterprise

SOME OF Cottrell's class think the public sector should spend more, paying people like them, that is. A letter in the *Financial Times* moaned that the new department of enterprise are paying only £70 a day to consultants when the usual rates for senior consultants are £60 to £75 an hour.

These experts work for the Manpower Services Commission, creators of the YTS and other slave pay schemes designed to stop the rest of us 'pricing ourselves out of the market'.

It's a tough job selling 'enterprise' to British capitalists, like selling dancing lessons to a rheumatic hippopotamus. But that's no reason why the MSC should pay them twice as much an hour as they pay 'trainees' a week.

Putting out the contract

LAST YEAR, workers in a London subsidiary of John Laing, the top British construction company, were horrified to find they were building gallows for reactionary Middle Eastern governments like Abu Dhabi.

A joiner said: "We knew it was going to be an expensive job because we were using such good teak... It finally dawned on us when the plans became more detailed and we had to build a trapdoor to be tested in the workshop before export."

John Laing gave £5000 to the Tories recently. Their slogan is: "we build for people." One worker commented that it was: "horrible to think I am using my skills to kill somebody." Building unions are campaigning to end the trade.

Cultural desert

DESERT ISLAND Discs recently gave an insight into the mind of Tory politician Michael Heseltine. Old Goldilocks chose: "The Teddy Bear's Picnic." "Keep right on to the end of the road" (presumably not dedicated to Thatcher), and a speech by Winston Churchill. Don't get stranded on the island next door, the excitement might kill you.

Police state

IN CALIFORNIA, 14 state departments have their own police forces. They include the Board of Dental Examiners, insurance regulation, labour standards, horse racing and many other departments. The Board of Medical Quality Assurance has its own force, not surprising given the desperation ill health causes in the USA.

On top of the state police, there are a whole pack of armed federal non police forces. When the labour movement really starts moving, these armed bodies will put the police mobilisation during Britain's miners' strike in the shade.

A new Marxist best seller

A 'BEST SELLER' even before it's published. Over a thousand copies of "*Liverpool—a city that dared to fight*" had been ordered and paid for even before it was delivered by the printers.

Now copies of the 'real thing' are selling even faster. A *Militant* supporter in Basildon sold four copies in one evening, with promises of three more sales next week. In Camberwell, readers sold their own copies to friends in a pub.

The rising tide of activity in the labour movement will mean millions of workers searching for a way to beat the Tories, and looking at the lessons of past struggles. Every labour and trade union meeting should be approached with copies of the book, with order forms or with the advert here in *Militant*.

Some libraries have already asked about the hardback edition (£14.95 normal price) after the recent press publicity. No doubt many others will follow suit when people ask for the book.

Local authority workers have, in addition to buying their own copy, requested copies for their departmental reference shelves in the town

hall. The interest is not limited to Britain. Orders have already been dispatched to Germany, Belgium, France, Sweden and Australia—where a group of bookshops are interested in stocking it.

Don't be the last to read it. Order your copy now—while the special offer lasts (until 13 February).

Support the Liverpool 47

TONY BYRNE, a former leader of Liverpool city council and now surcharged and disqualified, made this appeal for the 47 surcharged councillors.

"I have read this book and recommend it to you as a fair and true account of what really happened in Liverpool between 1983 and 1987. Labour councillors were victimised and surcharged by the Tory courts for defending the jobs and services of ordinary working people in Liverpool. We have a combined debt from the surcharge and court costs of £350,000.

"If we cannot repay this sum we face bankruptcy and the possible seizure of our homes and belongings. We are confident, however, that when workers hear the truth about what we did they will respond

generously.

"I am appealing to you to make a donation to our fund, or better still, take out a standing order. If you are active in the labour movement, why not ask for a donation from your union or Labour Party branch. We can provide a speaker if required.

"Despite everything that has happened to us, we would follow the same road again to defend jobs and services and carry through the reforms we did. Any other course would have been a betrayal of the people who elected us."

Donations to Liverpool 47 Defence Fund c/o Merseyside Trades Council, Unemployed Resource Centre, Liverpool 1. Cheques to Liverpool 47 Defence Fund.

Launch tour by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn. Provisional dates, all February: London press launch, 9th; Liverpool, 10th; Newcastle, 11th; Sheffield (BLOC conference), 13th; Leeds, 14th; Edinburgh, 15th; Bristol, 15th; Glasgow, 16th; Swansea, 16th; Manchester, 17th; Birmingham, 17th—7.30 New Imperial Hotel, Temple Street, off New St; Eastern Region, 22nd; Southampton, 23rd and Brighton, 24th. Get your copy of the poster for the book, 18" X 14", on gloss paper. 75p plus 25p postage, from Fortress Books, Po Box 141, London E2 ORL

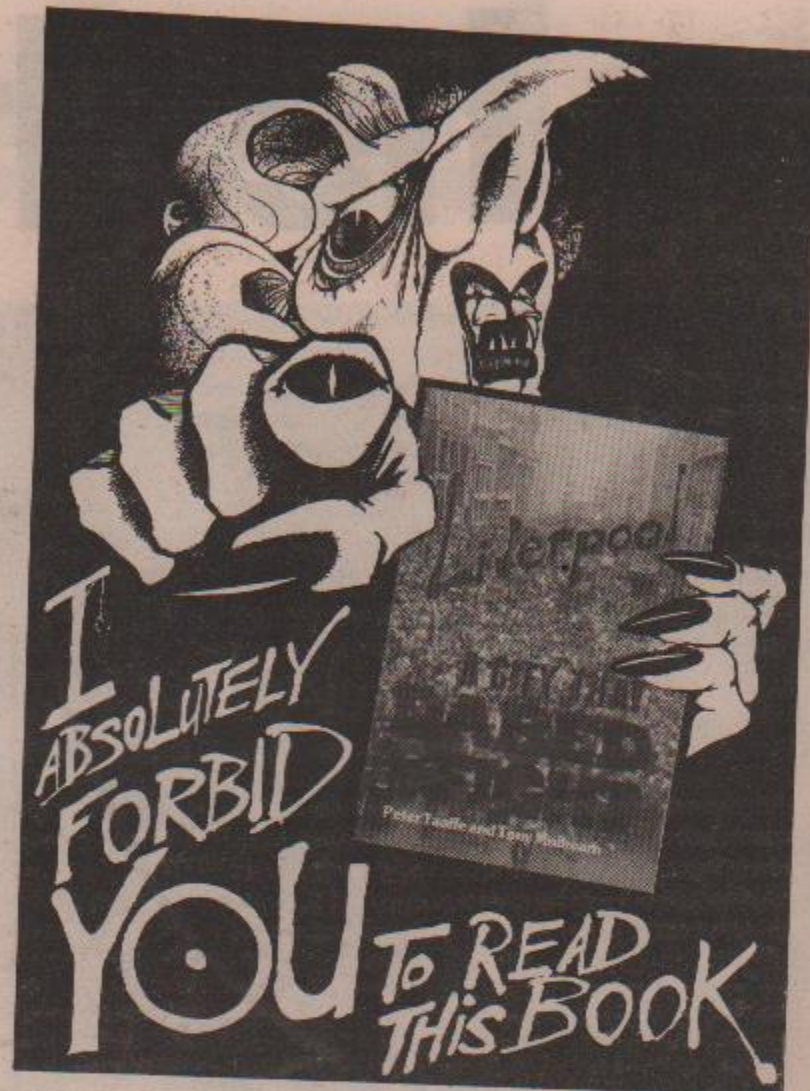
Liverpool—A City That Dared to Fight

"I HAVE read this book and recommend it to you as a fair and true account of what really happened in Liverpool between 1983 and 1987"—Tony Byrne, leader of Liverpool City Council 1986-87 and one of the 47 surcharged councillors.

Special Offer. The book is now in stock. Get your order in now! Softback £5 + 90p post, hardback £8 + £1.20 post. Special offer closes 13 February. From Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL.

Name

Address



SPUC fight with fiction

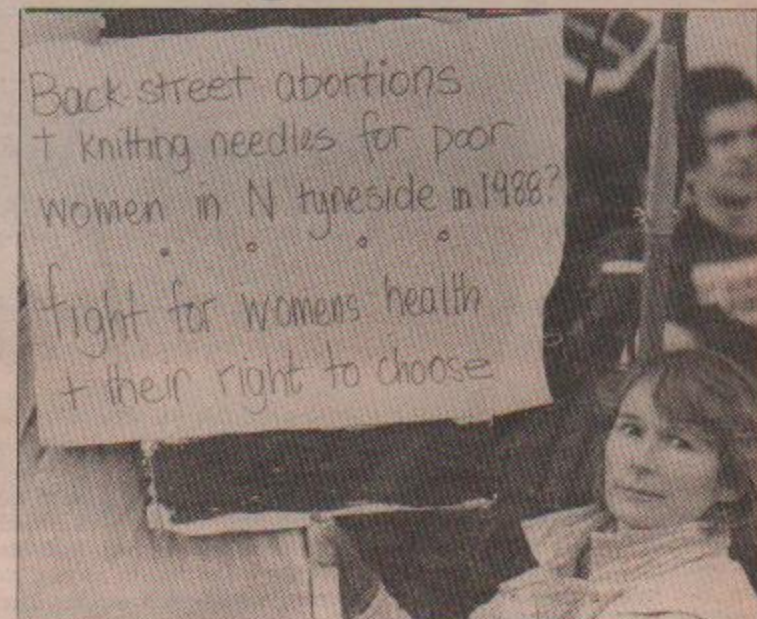


Photo: Militant

Alton's bill means a return to the back streets.

THE SOCIETY for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) have a new leaflet, misnamed 'Fighting with facts' asking trade unionists for support in attacking women's rights.

But they only show how out of touch they are. The photograph on the front shows a highly exploited homemaker. This is presumably their solution to the lack of childcare facilities. Only a few months ago, a pile of catalogues being packed by a homemaker collapsed, killing the homemaker's baby.

They print a picture of a pregnant woman sitting in front of a VDU screen. Evidence has piled up of the birth and pregnancy abnormalities attributable to these machines.

The Tories have removed the maternity grant and cut the right of women at work to return, (50 per cent have lost that right since 1979). Cuts in local government money have hit childcare and housing while cuts in the NHS hit maternity and perinatal care. SPUC ask the unions for help but where were they when the unions protested at these cuts? Nowhere.

All major unions support the right of women, who bear the brunt of bringing up a child, to choose. SPUC and Alton are entitled to their own views but not to impose them on others.

Alton claims that delays in the health service only account for 5 per cent of late abortions and that the bill will make the NHS "get its act together."

But the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists report on late abortions in 1984 says that 20.5 per cent of women who had abortions between 20 and 23 weeks had been medically referred before the end of the 12th week.

Two doctors already have to agree to an abortion. Abortion is almost unavailable in some areas, only 2 per cent on the NHS in Dudley and 16 per cent in Leeds compared with 92 per cent in Newcastle. In some areas, abortion rights depend on ability to pay, or at best on charity, in a private clinic.

These clinics should be taken over by the NHS and staffed by those who agree with abortion. No doctor or consultant should be able to stop the right to abortion on the NHS.

SPUC's leaflet alleges that the Chorion Biopsy can detect at 9 to 10 weeks all the abnormalities the amniocentesis test shows at 18 to 20 weeks. But only 20 per cent of abnormalities can be detected as yet; the facility is available in very few centres and even this is threatened by cuts in the NHS, as at Guys Hospital who may be refused £32,000 funds.

A huge injection of money into the NHS would allow many abortions to take place far earlier. Late abortions will not be stopped by criminalising women but by fighting for a decent health service.

By Jane Hartley

RUC getting away with murder

Gilbert McNamee Not guilty

THE DECISION not to prosecute Royal Ulster Constabulary officers involved in a 'shoot-to-kill' policy and the dismissal of the Birmingham Six appeal have exposed the real role of the British state. It exists not to dispense justice but as an instrument of repression to protect itself and the ruling class it serves.

ON 11 November 1982 in Co Armagh, a heavily armed RUC death squad in an armour-plated Cortina, with sub-machine guns and automatic rifles, laid an ambush. When a car containing three men—Eugene Toman, Sean Burns and Gervaise Kerr—entered a catholic housing estate in Lurgan, two undercover policemen opened fire.

By Manus Maguire

The car sped off, pursued by the police Cortina. Its front passenger leaned out of the window, spraying the car with his sub-machine gun. The passenger in the rear also fired with his automatic rifle.

The police driver had the driving wheel in one hand, firing his pistol from the other. The car ended up in the ditch. At least 109 bullets had been fired in a few minutes. The three occupants were dead. All were unarmed.

Weapons and uniforms were then transferred and those involved were told, in the 'interests of national security', to concoct false stories about what happened.

Four policemen were prosecuted but acquitted. Later it was revealed that vital evidence was omitted and the policemen had told their concocted stories in court.

In 1984, John Stalker, deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, was appointed to investigate these shootings. But no sooner had he begun than he found obstacles placed in his path.

He failed for months to get key documentary evidence he demanded from RUC chief constable John Hermon. At one stage he even threatened to resign, saying: "Policemen are committing murder and I am unable to get to them".

Eventually Stalker was suspended from the inquiry



The way the Tories are riding roughshod over justice in N Ireland exposes the sham of the Anglo-Irish agreement. Rather than reforms it has only brought more repression.

Photos: Derek Speirs (Report)

and removed from all police duty. He was now subject to a police inquiry into his own activity. But it became clear that this was an attempt to blacken his name and remove him from the inquiry. He was getting too close to the truth.

Marked man

Stalker later stated: "Probably the luckiest day of my life was the one on which I was removed from the investigation. If I had returned I would have been a marked man. It doesn't take a fortune to hire a hit-man in Belfast".

He was cleared of any misconduct and his suspen-

sion was lifted. But he was not taken back to conduct the RUC investigation. He had become the victim of the very 'dirty tricks' department which he had intended to uncover.

Now N Ireland's Director of Public Prosecutions has decided not to prosecute the policemen involved, despite admitting there is evidence of perverting the course of justice. "In judging the public interest" said the Attorney General: "I and any prosecuting authority, must balance one harm to the public interest with another".

In other words there is one law for RUC officers,

who can act with impunity, and another for the rest.

Conspiracy

Since the first killings in N Ireland in 1969 by members of the RUC and British troops or the Ulster Defence Regiment, which now run into hundreds, only one soldier has been sent to jail.

It is now being said that if the RUC men were prosecuted, it would "bring the house down" because they were acting on orders from superiors. They would expose the entire conspiracy of the state's undercover services in N Ireland, up to the top of the RUC, the

Special Branch, MI5, MI6 and the Tory cabinet itself.

The labour and trade union movement in Britain and Ireland must demand the publication of Stalker's inquiry, the prosecution of those involved and a labour movement inquiry into the functioning of the RUC, MI5, MI6 and the Special Branch.

These forces play a political role on behalf of the Tories and the British ruling class. They are hostile to the working class and the labour movement must demand their disbandment.

THE 25-YEAR sentence on Gilbert 'Danny' McNamee is a miscarriage of justice as monstrous as the Birmingham Six case.

In October 1987 this 27 year-old from Crossmaglen, N Ireland, was convicted of conspiring to cause explosions, including the Hyde Park bombing in 1982.

The evidence rests solely on three of his fingerprints—two on tapes on bombs found in arms dumps in Oxfordshire and Northants and a third on a battery attached to an unexploded bomb in London.

There is a simple explanation for these prints. For four years McNamee repaired and made parts for electrical goods at Kimble Engineering in Dundalk, southern Ireland. Thousands of his prints would have got on to items of electrical equipment, some of which were used in bombs.

But that is no proof of guilt. Another man's prints were also found on an item in one of the dumps, but his explanation that he was a garage owner and would therefore have left his prints on many items, was readily accepted by the police.

There is even less evidence to connect McNamee to the Hyde Park bomb charge. Two postage-stamp size fragments of the circuit board were found. According to the prosecution forensic scientists, this was made by the same person as made one found in Northants. That did not prove that McNamee was involved.

McNamee's 'conspiracy' was never defined. Instead the prosecution showed the jury photographs of dead and mutilated soldiers, which helped sway the jury and fuelled hysteria in the press.

They denounced McNamee as a 'top IRA bomb-maker in South Armagh'. Yet he was never even charged, let alone convicted of any such offences when for three years he lived in a flat in the Square at Crossmaglen, a town where locals face daily harassment and repression.

His house was beside a big army and police base, from where an army lookout post looked straight on to his front door from 40 yards. Had he been involved with the IRA he could not have gone undetected for three days, let alone three years.

In court McNamee denied any involvement with the IRA and condemned them, something IRA men have never done.

This case must be taken up by the labour movement in Britain and Ireland, to demand McNamee's immediate release and organise an inquiry into the case, to ensure that Danny McNamee will not, like the Birmingham Six, still be in jail 14 years on.

By Anton McCabe,
NI Labour and
Trade Union Group

No justice for the six

THE MYTH of 'independent and impartial' judges has been shattered by the three judges who threw out the appeal of the Birmingham Six.

They ignored the gaping holes in the case against the six men in jail for 14 years for the murder of 21 people in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

They refused to admit that the forensic evidence of Frank Scuse has been totally discredited by other scientists.

Forced into early retirement because of 'limited effectiveness', he was shown to have used a different test for nitroglycerine from that used by other experts, which could have produced a positive reaction from numerous innocent products.

The judges accused former WPC Lynas, who returned to the witness

box to withdraw earlier evidence and testify that she had seen the prisoners being brutally mistreated, of being "not worthy of belief".

Yet she had no motive, save her own conscience, for admitting that she had committed perjury. On the contrary she will have incurred the enmity of former colleagues.

The appeal judges set aside the mysterious schedule produced by Det Supt Reade, who headed the interrogation of the six, which amended the times of interviews in Morecambe police station.

They paid no heed to the inconsistencies and omissions in the four 'confessions' and the failure of the police to investigate these.

They did not question the implausibility of five of the Irish men who were supposed to have just committed the biggest mass murder

in Britain this century setting off together by train from Birmingham to catch a ferry to Belfast, where they were bound to be stopped by police.

Nor even did the appeal judges address the evidence of Chris Mullin MP that he has identified the real bombers and that their identity is known to the police.

Lord Denning

These three judges knew that to allow the appeal would have put the whole apparatus of the British state into the dock. It was spelled out by Lord Denning in 1980 when he upheld an appeal by the West Midlands police against a move by the six to take civil action against them:

"If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of per-

jury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous...

"This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say: it cannot be right these actions can go any further."

For him and others of his class it is far less appalling that six innocent men should spend 21 years in jail for a crime they did not commit.

The labour and trade union movement must now hold its own investigation into the Birmingham case and not stop campaigning until the six are freed and compensated.

By Pat Craven

BRADFORD'S ASIAN community suffer all the problems of unemployment, poverty and deprivation in this city, one of the poorest in Britain, but two or three times more acutely.

Asian youth face up to 70 per cent unemployment. Asians face some of the worst overcrowding and those in work are some of the lowest paid.

Most of Bradford's Asians came here in the 1950s and 1960s from Pakistan, and later from Bangladesh to work in the textile mills and engineering industry. As these jobs have been squeezed by economic recession the community has been forced back on itself. Racism and hostility from outside means there are few opportunities for work elsewhere.

Old traditions of family support, arranged marriages and the dowry system are increasingly relied on. But this has led to tension as the youth, especially young Asian women, question the restrictions on their lives.

For most Asians in Bradford life is a struggle for existence. On top of the 'normal' problems is the added strain of dealing with the Tories' petty and vindictive immigration laws which have divided families.

But many have instinctively looked towards the labour movement for support. Important links were made between the Asian community and Bradford North Labour Party in the campaign to elect Pat Wall as a workers' MP.

This victory is a major step in turning the struggle for existence into a struggle to change society—a struggle for socialism.

LIAGAT ALI, 29, a taxi driver, had an arranged marriage when he was sixteen and now has five children. Two of his daughters have the sometimes fatal hereditary disease, cystic fibrosis, passed on through his family because he was married to a cousin. All his children will now be carriers of the disease and if they marry into the family their children may suffer from it as well.

"To get married when you are sixteen. A great age to get married!

"I work six nights, 10 to 12 hours each night. You can earn £150 to £200 a week if you work a lot of hours. But if you don't own the car, like me, then it's split two ways—half goes to the firm.

"They are mostly Asian drivers. But there is no respect for taxi drivers. None of the white community and none from our own.

"It's impossible to sleep in the day with the kids in the home. They come downstairs in the morning and make a noise. Then I can't get back to sleep.

"I just live from day to day—it's a horrible life. It's for the kids' future that I'm going through with this at the moment. But generally I keep out

of the way of the family.

"I think there will be an explosion, a rebellion against the old traditions. You have to establish your independence—if I were a woman I would do the same. You have to sacrifice something to achieve something. I am doing it so that my children can be independent.

"I'm so indecisive about my home problems. I'm caught between two separate cultures—trying to find out which one I belong to. Confused! That is the word.

"I want to be active. I couldn't bear to be stashed away in a cupboard. I would rather fight for my beliefs and act accordingly. Whatever you believe in you think that's right and you are bound to fight for it. You want to get people to see your point.

"I'm devoted to Labour. I've always thought of them as working for the workers. The Conservatives would rather spend money on the rich than on the poor.

"I believe in something, but I'm doing something else. That's what really hurts inside. I feel guilty with myself. I despise people who live in the way I don't like, but then I'm living just like them.

"I can't break free."

Bradford Asian Struggle a future



Night shift in a Bradford textile mill. Most night workers are Asian.

Photo: Ben Eastop

Women are at the bottom of the pile



"YOUR FATHER owns you", explained Laila (right), who had an arranged marriage in Bangladesh. She left her husband, taking her daughter with her, after seven years.

"I'd put up with it for so long. I was allowed to go out but not in the evenings. Even then I could only go to places that my husband approved of, like the shops. He used to say he trusted me but not other men.

"I wore saris in the house at all times. To wear anything else would hurt his pride.

"You are living in absolute fear of the men, whether it's your father or brother. It's done very subtly. You are trained from the earliest age that women are below men. You just wouldn't question it.

"Your father gives you away to another family as if you are being sold. Then that family gets a new house keeper. The woman is expected to clean the house and do the housework straight away. She is at the

bottom of the pile.

"When I left him my mother accepted it. She felt she wouldn't make the same mistake with my sister, who is 16, as she did with me.

"I don't feel bitter about it at all. But I would never bring my daughter up the same way.

"I think more and more girls will start to do things for themselves.

"But if they leave they are totally cut off from their family. It affects everything. Even their sisters wouldn't be able to get married, because they would be shunned by the community.

"Those at the top, the Mullahs, are opposed to anything for the women, they would stop any changes. It's not really a religious thing, just a way of maintaining the status quo.

"I want to get active or involved, as long as it is in something close at home and not too abstract."

Living with racism

KHALID NAZIR (right) works in a restaurant as head waiter. Although the hours are long—6.00pm to 2.00am in the week and 6.00pm to 4.00am at the weekends—he enjoys the job. Unlike many restaurant workers he gets good concessions. But he was fortunate to get a reasonable job after the humiliating instances of racism he experienced trying to do day-time work.

"I got a job working for the Inland Revenue in Bradford. When I went to the interview, as I came out of the lift on the third floor there was a notice on the wall right opposite which read:

'Danger Black Alert' in big felt tip pen.

"At first I was the only black in the department. I knew most people were racist by the way they talked to me. In the end I felt I would rather be dead than work there.

"Then I was off sick and when I came back the manager said I was playing tricks and faking the sick notices.

"I told him that they weren't faked and that he could ask the doctor.

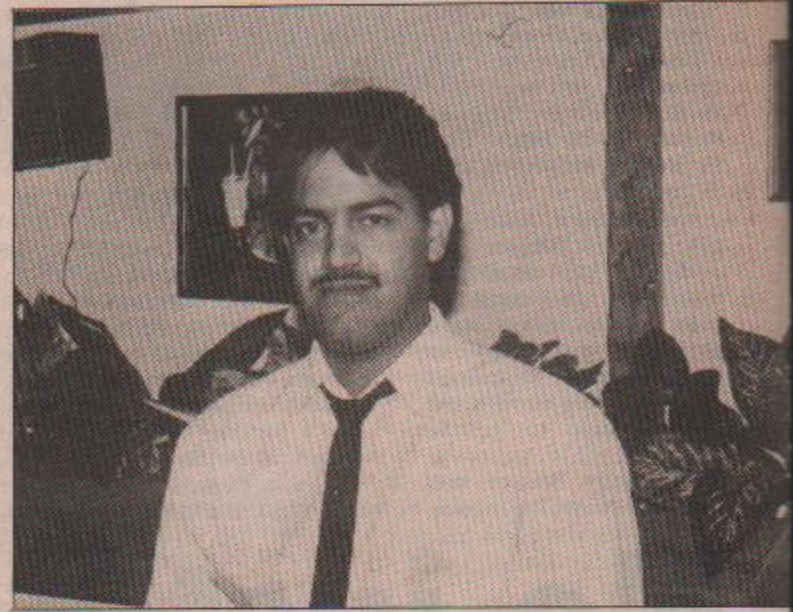
"Then he said: 'You black bastards are all the same'.

"So I told him he could stick his job up his arse.

"Another time I went for an interview for a job as a clerical assistant.

"There was a white lad sitting next to me. He had less qualifications and no experience. It said on the application form 'experience preferred'.

"I didn't get the job, but I met the white lad in town later. He got the job."



Desperate for money

"I'VE WORKED six days for £25 in 1985" said Ifzal Ahmid who came to Britain shortly before then. He was optimistic about getting work and having a future. Now he is 21 and when he spoke to *Militant* he was desperately short of money.

He was forced to take a low-paid job in a restaurant to see him through the next couple of weeks.

"I think he will pay me £60 for 50 to 60 hours, six evenings a week.

"You start early evening and work until everyone has gone home. Then you still have to stay and clear up.

"Many of the youth are forced to do it because they have no money. They can't go for a job with no experience, so many do it to say they have worked.

"In 1984 Ifzal went onto YTS and was sent to a placement in a shop. It only lasted a couple of months.

"There was an argument about holidays. I said that I would go by the college holidays—a Monday bank holiday and Tuesday.

"But the boss said: 'You work for me, not your teacher. Go back and tell him that you are no longer wanted'. After that I left YTS because it wasn't worth it. In the end I was doing six evenings in a restaurant as well as going to college in the day.

"Many of my friends have to work to support their families.

Asians' Support for a workers' MP

for

Interviews by
Nasima Patel and
Ben Eastop

Working the night shift

KHALID MEHMOOD works on night shift in a textile mill, from 7.30pm to 7.30am five nights a week. He gets £2.90 an hour, which is better pay than most places.

"The £40 or so more that night workers get is vital when you have a family. Nobody likes working nights but because of the difference in pay, older Asian workers with large families to support and commitments back in Pakistan have no alternative.

"I've tried to swap with a worker on the day shift but nobody wants to. You don't have much of a family life, with little time to spend with the kids and not much influence in bringing them up. You are just working and sleeping.

"Officially you get one half-an-hour break. Two years ago I had a few problems with the manager when I insisted on having regular tea breaks.

"Most of the supervisors are English. All the labouring jobs and the semi-skilled work is done by Asian workers. Most of the night shift is Asian.

"Once there was a vacancy for an assistant overlooker. Nobody was told about it, there was no advertisement, we just heard rumours that management filled the vacancy with an English lad.

"Only one other worker apart from myself is in the union. There's no encouragement to join. I joined the TGWU in 1985, but up until now I haven't heard a thing from them. I had to make the initiative to join and to find out about the meetings.

"If there was a union rep, helping the workers and explaining what a union is then it would make a lot of difference. The biggest problem is the divide between the day and night workers. We won't be able to change the conditions of work unless we get support from the day workers."

"If they are married they might have to support two families.

"They get pressure from their families to go and do any job.

"My friends don't have confidence in anything, even themselves sometimes.

And what about the future? "We don't have enough time to think about it! There's no future in Pakistan, no future here. Sometimes I see people my age who have talked about committing suicide. It's just the way they talk and behave, they are so depressed.

"I want to be active and go to meetings, to do something about it. But at the moment I can't think of anything except getting some money.

"I think a campaign to organise the youth could be successful".

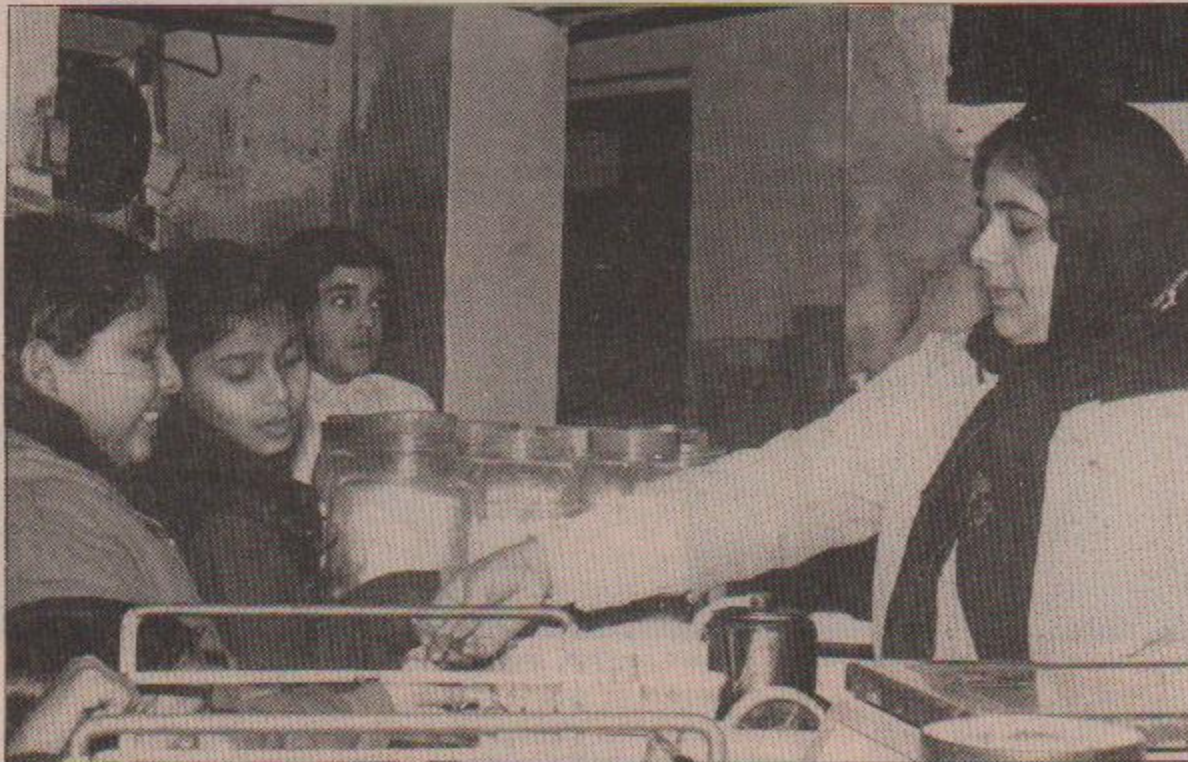
IN LAST year's general election left wing Labour MPs were elected to all three Bradford seats with some of the best results in the country.

The election of Pat Wall, as a Marxist in Bradford North, was particularly significant coming about despite years of personal attacks against him and the denigration of his ideas by the press and media.

This was only overcome by Bradford North Labour Party's far-reaching socialist campaign.

Most of all the election campaign made important links with the Asian community, which included, for the first time ever, election meetings of Asian women.

Since then, these achievements, and the work of Pat Wall has done in the Asian community, have been brought into question by the right wing's accusations of 'Militant infiltration' and by the Labour leadership which has endorsed the suspension of Bradford North Labour Party.



Mrs Bashir (right) and her husband worked tirelessly for the election of Pat Wall as MP for Bradford North.

MR AND Mrs Bashir, who own a shop in Bradford 3, energetically campaigned for Pat Wall in last year's general election, helping to organise meetings and get support from the Asian community.

"We've been Labour Party supporters for 14 years, ever since we've been in this country, because it supports the

struggles of the Asians and the poor.

"When my husband was unemployed he used to be very active and had regular house meetings. The Labour members are very helpful in helping to solve our problems.

"Pat Wall is a good man, a good MP. He works very hard to represent us, particularly on the question of immigration. In this street a man was having

difficulties in obtaining a visa for his little daughter. As soon as Pat got elected this man got a visa very quickly and has been grateful to Pat ever since.

"In the election campaign we were very active. We went to every house to convince everyone that Pat would be a good MP, a workers' MP on a worker's wage, and that he would have the strength, with our support, to work hard for us.

"We must have won support from 99 per cent living in Bradford 3. The Asian women's meeting (which Mrs Bashir helped to organise) was very good in getting Asian women involved in the campaign, and out to vote. On election day we closed our shop! We will always support Pat and other socialists in the Labour Party.

Tories do nothing

"The Tories have done nothing for us. Already they've cut family allowances, restricted the rights of entry of fiancés and are going to make it more difficult to obtain British citizenship.

"We've worked very hard in this country, so why are the Tories making it so difficult for us all? They're not allowing our friends and relatives to visit us.

"Even worse is the new tax which everyone over 18 will have to pay. We've got six children in our family, so what are we going to do? We really need a Labour government to solve our problems. We are upset at Labour's loss nationally.

"We know about the attacks on Pat and the other socialists in the Labour Party and we oppose them.

"Some in the Labour Party are only socialists at the top. They've been made rich by being in the Labour Party, they really belong to the Tory or Liberal Party.

"Pat is socialist from the bottom. We agree with what he stands for, he supports ordinary workers—the poor and not the rich. That's why we will fight hard for him again."

SINCE BEING elected Pat Wall has taken up around 400 immigration cases. Typically they involve Asians having to wait for months or even years in Pakistan and Bangladesh for permits either to visit or stay permanently with their family in this country.

By a Militant reporter

Often in these cases, husbands, fiancés, wives, and children who have been refused time and time again the right to join their relatives in Britain have had to undergo humiliating interviews, investigations and even medical tests.

Pat has been closely involved with the family of Rajwinder Singh, a young mentally handicapped Asian man who has been forced to take sanctuary for the past year in a Sikh temple because of the threat of deportation hanging over him.

Pat has helped get national publicity for Rajwinder's plight and has embarrassed the Home Office into making some concessions—but not yet to give in.

Immigration Bill

In his speech against the Tories' vindictive and racist Immigration Bill last year Pat gave the example of two brothers, "both quite comfortable, with nice houses and good jobs" who want to bring their parents, aged over 70, to Britain. They have been told that they cannot do so because they get pensions in Pakistan "amounting to the magnificent sum of £700. Those elderly people cannot have children; they will not break up and remarry; they will not be a burden on the economy. Why has entry been refused?"

It is this racist immigration policy which Asian families have to face daily and which Pat Wall has tried to assist with. He has been able to obtain priority interviews for some people and to force the Home Office to reconsider certain cases.

Far from trying to alleviate these problems, of course, the Tories have introduced the Immigration Bill in order to make it even harder for Asian families to be united in this country.

Pat is also a member of the committee which is going through the detailed clauses of this reactionary piece of legislation. Yet in spite of dozens of amendments moved by Labour members in the committee, the Tories have accepted not a single one.

Of course, Asians in Bradford rightly expect their MPs to voice their opposition to immigration law in the House of Commons. Yet clearly, the Tories' majority in Parliament means that organising outside the House of Commons is vital.

For Asians in Bradford, having a fighting Marxist MP, who lives on a workers' wage and so can relate to the problems of working class people, is a vital asset.

Pat has involved himself as much as possible in the Asian community in Bradford. He takes up the pressing issues facing Asian workers, like at a recent meeting at a Hindu Temple where he outlined the process for registering as a British Citizen before the government deadline at the end of December.

But Pat also believes that it is vital for Asians that they themselves become involved in the labour and trade union movement, to push it into taking up the issues facing Asians in Britain and to turn it into the fighting organisation which can achieve socialism.

ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں۔

1 ٹوری حکومت کی طرف سے، تعلیم اور صحت کے پیٹ میں غیر منظمی کسی کے خوف، پولیس کے خوف اور سوشلسٹ پروگرام پر ترقی لینے حکومت کے تیار کیے۔

2 ہم تعلق اور ناشر کے خلاف جدوجہد کرتے ہوئے کامے اور گورنر کے امتیاز کے بغیر صحت کٹھنوں کے درمیان ایک اتحاد کے خواہاں ہیں ہم لیبر پارٹی ایسٹن سٹیوں اور معاشرہ کے حصہ میں پیٹے ہوئے ان صحت کٹھنوں کے اتحاد کیلئے اپنی جدوجہد جاری رکھے ہوئے ہیں۔

3 ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں نسلی تعصب پر مبنی تمام ایگریشن اور نسلی قوانین کے خلاف

4 ہم موجودہ پولیس سسٹم کے خلاف جدوجہد کرتے ہوئے اس سسٹم کو گھبرایا بنادوں براستور کرنا چاہتے ہیں

5 ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں ایسے معاشرہ کا جو ہر نوجوان کو ملازمت کی ضمانت دے سکے، جو ایک بہتر ٹریڈ یونیک مشورہ کرتے ہوئے صحت کٹھنوں کو کم از کم ۲۵ پونڈ ہفتہ تنخواہ دے سکے، ہم فوری طور پر کاکا کے اذات، چالیس گھنٹے ہفتہ سے کم کر کے ۳۵ گھنٹے ہفتہ کرنا چاہتے ہیں۔

6 ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں سوشلسٹ پروگرام کے تحت صحت کٹھنوں کی نگرانی میں انڈسٹری چلانے کیلئے

7 ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں اسلہ پر خرچ کی جانے والی رقم میں فوری کمی کیلئے

8 ہم جدوجہد کرتے ہیں دو سو سے زائد اجارہ داروں کو ختم کرنے کیلئے اور تمام صنعتیں قومی ملکیت میں لینے کیلئے۔

- * Opposition to all immigration controls, abolition of the Nationality Act, and opposition to the new Tory Immigration Act.
- * Guaranteed job for all. Immediate introduction of £120 minimum wage and 35 hour week as a step towards eliminating unemployment. Proper training schemes for youth with trade union rates of pay and guaranteed job at the end.
- * For black and white workers' unity in fighting racism and fascism. For defence of black and Asian community against racist attacks to be organised by the labour movement and black and Asian organisations.
- * Opposition to Tory attacks on education and health services, and opposition to poll tax. For the election of a Labour government on a socialist programme.
- * For democratic control of police through elected local authority police committees.
- * Nationalisation of the top 200 industries under workers' control and management, and the introduction of a socialist plan of production.

Spanish Socialist Party congress

"THIS PARTY will have to consider whether the policies carried out so far by the socialist government have benefited the rich or the poor." (Greeting of Nicolas Redondo, general secretary of the UGT, Socialist union, to the 31st Congress of the Spanish Socialist Party, PSOE.)

These words were like a slap in the face for the majority of the delegates—lawyers and public officials, whose jobs have been created by the government.

Nicolas was replying to the opening speech by party leader Felipe Gonzalez, in which he repeated several times that the policy of his government "is real Social-Democracy".

Gonzalez was convinced that this policy "has given positive results", attributing "blindness and the incapacity to make a thorough analysis" to those who don't share his opinion and say that "things are worse in Spain".

The fact is that in 1987 there were 120,000 more unemployed, pushing the figure to over 3 million; the fact is that in 1987 (which has been described as "the best year of the decade") there were an average of 330 new unemployed every day.

The policy of the PSOE government is neither socialist nor does it offer a way out of the crisis. The cuts in public spending and the loss of 1,100,000 jobs since 1982 have only favoured the bosses.

All this is what made Nicolas Redondo say that "the policy of restructuring [rationalising major industries, with mass redundancies] has not brought an improvement in basic social figures...on the contrary, there is more unemployment, inequality

"Winning the future?"



Felipe Gonzalez (left) and 'visitor' Nicolas Redondo at PSOE congress.

in the distribution of wealth has increased, there is less social security in some fundamental areas (such as in unemployment and sickness benefit)..."

Nicolas Redondo demanded of the PSOE "a real change and a clear, socialist plan". Redondo, although he came to the Congress as a visitor, was the only speaker who reflected some of the questions of workers and youth, who make up the majority of society.

For this reason the Marxists supporting the paper *Nuevo Claridad* do not share the decision of Redondo and the UGT leaders to refuse to participate in the Congress as delegates and defend their ideas and differences openly.

This attitude allowed the most right-wing leaders to continue to control the party and the government.

In this Congress the lack of internal party democracy also stood out. As there is no individual delegate vote, the new executive committee was elected by almost 100 per cent.

Distortion

This system distorts the reality within the party, as was shown by the election of the federal committee, the only one in which each delegate has a vote. The official list only got 72 per cent whilst the *Izquierda Socialista*, (left wing) with only 6 per cent of the delegates, got 22.5 per cent of

the vote and nine representatives—even though they have no programme, and offer no serious alternative to the right-wing.

If the PSOE leaders really want to "win the future"—as the theme of the Congress stated—it has to give room to the real voice of the youth, of the workers, of the poor. Whether right-wing leaders like it or not, this is the real social basis of the PSOE who put them in the government and the town halls with their votes.

For working people the only hope for the future is in achieving a socialist society through the struggle of a strong, conscious and organised labour movement. On the basis of the capitalist economy, and the limits of

capitalist democracy, there is no future for the working class and other sections who suffer exploitation by the banks, the monopolies and landlords.

If the PSOE leadership continues with its present policies, the 'future' they will deservedly win is one of division and crisis. A radical change in policies, adopting a real socialist programme, would not only have the support of the majority of socialists in the UGT. It would rally the majority of workers, organised and unorganised, to fight effectively against the economic and social degeneration of capitalist society.

From a correspondent in Spain

Eye-witness report from Chile

I AM a young socialist student from a technical school. I am interested that students from other schools learn of what took place in my school during the last few months.

Mr C—, the owner of the school, threatened to sack a number of teachers. Students and teachers began to organise, beginning with a march on 10 October. We also organised protests in front of the school with placards.

The owner of the school called the police against us, resulting in four teachers being arrested.

As students we began by trying to organise a CODE (rank and file committee). This had to be dissolved when the headmistress threatened the members with expulsion and denouncing them to the police.

Two weeks went by and we heard that someone from the Ministry of Education was going to visit us. So we got together and decided to tell him about the problems the school faced.

Some girls from the fourth year tried to talk to him. He refused, saying he hadn't come to hear problems. All that he'd come for was to take the names of those who'd organised the protests.

We got angry. That's when some students spray-painted his car with slogans such as "Justice for all the teachers". Third and fourth year students began to throw water and bags full of rice at him. Cookery students threw tomatoes.

We shouted: "We can defend

Students fight for teachers' jobs



Chilean school student protest.

ourselves alone!" After this came the repression. The headmistress, by threats, made six students sign a paper admitting their part in the organisation of the protests.

During November the mood went down a little. However, in December we heard they were going to sack four teachers. We decided to form an organisation with the most active students.

We called the students outside and began to protest. Sitting down, we

shouted: "We don't want any more lies!" "How nice it would be to see the headmistress in the river and the students in power!" "Justice, justice, we'll impose justice!"

Confronted with this strong mood, the headmistress called the police to try to throw us out. The peaceful protest then turned violent.

The occupation of the school lasted from 9.30 to 1.30. The headmistress ordered the police to use tear gas.

When some of the students tried to leave, the police began grabbing them. A teacher from the social sciences intervened, and the police attacked him. We kicked and scratched them. Many of the police ended up with caps and buttons missing.

We made the teachers take refuge in a classroom, and organised a human chain to stop the police taking them away.

The police tried to convince us to leave. We told them: "Not until all the sacked teachers are taken on again". In the end we won. The police left.

However, we think that when we're at school we can stop any attack with a fightback, but during the holidays the teachers will be sacked.

We understand that the education problem will not be solved just with protests against the owners of the school. We have to fight against Pinochet who bears all the responsibility for what goes on.

From a student in Chile

International notes

Israel

OVER 200 Palestinians have had their hands and arms smashed by Israeli troops since Labour Defence Minister Rabin proclaimed his shocking "force, power and beatings" policy to try and break the two-month-old mass movement in Gaza and the West Bank. Their 'logic': people with broken arms can't throw stones!

"I have never seen

anything like it", says an old woman who has known occupation by Turkey, Britain and Jordan.

But the power of the working class to hit back was brought home when Palestinian labourers refused work at a Tel Aviv carpentry shop. The job in hand was to make 10,000 batons for the Israeli Defence Force.

"We're not idiots", said one worker. "Why should we produce weapons that will be used against our brothers?"

Bangladesh

BANGLADESH HAS been rocked by renewed waves of mass protest against the regime of General Ershad. Seventeen people were shot dead by police in Chittagong, sparking off last week's general strike.

The leaders of the opposition parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party, demand Ershad's resignation. The general has reacted by calling elections for 3 March, which the opposition

threaten to boycott.

But neither a military clampdown, nor an elected capitalist government could put a lid on the struggle for long. "The main difference between Ershad and the opposition parties", says a former Awami League official, "is that one is in power and the rest aren't."

Of the country's 115 million people, 100 million live below the poverty line, while 3,000 families control all wealth and power. The opposition leaders, like the present rulers, are rooted in this elite.

"Help us to defend ourselves"

THE LETTERS from South Africa reprinted on this page show the magnificent fighting spirit among activists who daily face death at the hands of Inkatha vigilantes, and the need for socialists internationally to support them.

The Pietermaritzburg area of Natal has become a crucial battleground in the freedom struggle. The tide has been turning in favour of the mass movement under the banner of the African National Congress, the Congress-orientated United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of SA Trade Unions (COSATU).

Buthelezi, leader of the Bantustan Kwazulu, is fighting desperately to regain his grip. His Inkatha organisation and its strike-breaking workplace wing, UWUSA, have been waging a vicious 'dirty war' against worker and youth militants.

Inkatha's reign of terror is shown by the woman who tells:

"My three-year-old son, Siyanda, wakes up in the middle of the night screaming and asks me: 'Mama, where is Inkatha?'"

Officially, three hundred have been killed in fighting in the last four months.

Buthelezi claims that Inkatha is a 'liberation movement'. In fact

By George Collins

he is a close ally of big business in Natal, maintaining himself by violence and intimidation. Inkatha is actively supported by the regime's police.

The real lines of division are made clear by the instinctive support among the capitalist class, nationally and internationally, for Buthelezi's style of 'liberation'.

On 28 January the BBC World Service gave a platform to Buthelezi to 'inform' the world that Congress and COSATU are to blame for the bloodshed. For good measure this was repeated on Radio Four the next day.

Needless to say, no supporter of the mass struggle was asked for comment.

Another highly significant outburst by Buthelezi, however, has been studiously avoided by the British media, even though it got front-page coverage in South Africa. Last December Buthelezi launched a tirade against the

South African Marxist journal, *Inqaba yaBasebenzi* for arguing a strategy of armed self-defence and mass action against Inkatha and UWUSA.

Buthelezi used this as a pretext to break off 'peace talks' with the UDF and COSATU leaders in Natal, then demanded that they repudiate the article. They complied, staking everything on the hope of reaching a negotiated end to the fighting.

But, as Marxists warned, no lives have been saved by the talks. Inkatha merely saw it as a sign of weakness, and stepped up the attacks.

The media in South Africa and abroad, when not defending Buthelezi, have widely misrepresented the struggle in Natal as senseless 'black-on-black violence'. Buthelezi, however, has been forced to admit the class basis of the struggle. As he recently told an interviewer, "his eyes closed as he concentrated on selecting the right words":

"The ANC is involved. And

those who work in tandem with them are ... brewing a revolution". *Weekly Mail*, 15 January.

Trade union activists in Pietermaritzburg are solidly with the youth. The youth have organised all-night vigils to guard the workers' homes against attack by vigilantes. This marvellous spirit of revolutionary solidarity is the real threat to Buthelezi and his capitalist backers.

Workers and youth want to live in peace. But, on the streets of the townships, it is clear that no peace is possible while Inkatha exists to terrorise those in struggle against the regime. Its whole survival now depends on terror.

Inqaba, in a statement on 16 December, called on COSATU, the UDF and the SA Youth Congress to organise self-defence committees throughout Natal; to organise country-wide action on the social demands of working people, and show an alternative also to Inkatha's rank and file; to set a figure in the national minimum wage campaign; to extend the rent boycotts; to campaign in every area, school and workplace to raise support for the comrades in Natal; and for the ANC leadership to do everything possible to provide the arms that are necessary for self-defence.

The letters from South Africa confirm that the youth themselves have started along this road. With bold leadership, the movement in Natal could be the beginning of a country-wide resurgence in the revolutionary movement, with brilliant opportunities of building the trade unions, the SA Youth Congress and the workers' ANC. Inkatha can be crushed. The youth and the workers are showing the way.

We are the comrades in Pmb. We got a problem of Inkatha and State in Pietermaritzburg many comrades died because of Inkatha and the State. So we need a support of your, by the sponsors like money, material, something to defend our self. We have read the pamphlets, *Inqaba yaBasebenzi*. We feel glad to get some views from other comrades like you. All the views in the pamphlet is exactly what we need.

We got only the problem of Zulu Police (Zulu Popay) B.A.P. Inkatha, S.A.D.F. We will be very glad if this can be accepted. And it will be easy to organize the community and the workers, youth as well. If we have the resources.

We are looking for support from the working class in the world.

Aluta Continua Viva ANC. Forward with workers struggle

Sipho Dladla

"WE ARE the comrades in Pmb. (Pietermaritzburg). We got a problem of Inkatha and the State.

"In Pietermaritzburg many comrades died because of Inkatha and the State. So we need support from you ... like money, material, something to defend ourselves.

"We have read the pamphlets, *Inqaba yaBasebenzi*. We feel glad to get some views from other comrades like you. All the views in the pamphlet are exactly what we need.

"We got only the problem of the Zulu Police (Zulu Popay*), SAP (South African Police), Inkatha, SADF (SA Defence Force). We will be very glad if this can be accepted.

"And it will be easy to organise the community and the workers, youth as well. If we have the resources.

"We are looking for support from the working class of the world.

"Aluta continua! Viva ANC! Forward with workers' struggle!"

"Sipho Dladla."

(* Township name for police, meaning 'backward rural people').

"WE ARE the comrades around Pmb. Right now we have got a problem.

"Problem no. 1: We haven't got political material.

"Problem no. 2: We haven't got money.

"Problem no. 3: We haven't got no support and weapons in order to defeat Inkatha and the State.

"Inkatha killed our comrades. Inkatha and Zulu Popai and SAP and the SADF attack us in our township and shoot our comrades.

"Now we are still trying to organise people in order to win our freedom.

"Please help us comrades.

"Phansi SAP phansi! (Down with the SA Police)

"Phambili nomzabalazo phambili! (Forward with the cause)

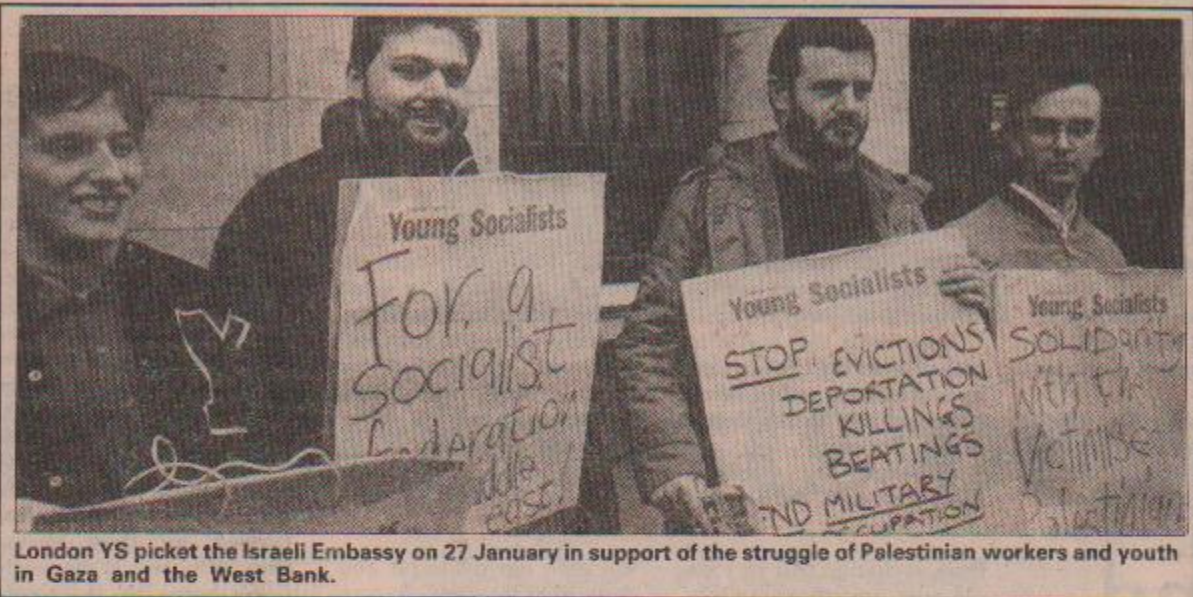
"Viva UDF viva!"

"Mandla Ngcobo."

IVIN MALAZA, a supporter of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, is one of those workers' leaders who have been killed by UWUSA death squads. In his memory, the Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund has been launched to raise funds to help support his family and continue his work.

Some of the proceeds of the Fund are now being used to assist the organisation of self-defence among the militant youth in Natal. We urge Militant supporters in the trade unions, Labour Parties and LPYS to continue to raise funds.

Donations c/o: Clir L Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.



London YS picket the Israeli Embassy on 27 January in support of the struggle of Palestinian workers and youth in Gaza and the West Bank.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	616	[Progress bar]	7080
2 Scotland East	189	[Progress bar]	2150
3 Scotland West	214	[Progress bar]	2520
4 Northern	183	[Progress bar]	2810
5 Southern	125	[Progress bar]	2020
6 West Midlands	241	[Progress bar]	4080
7 Manchester/Lancs	143	[Progress bar]	2890
8 Yorkshire	248	[Progress bar]	5950
9 Eastern	80	[Progress bar]	2260
10 East Midlands	95	[Progress bar]	2530
11 Merseyside	131	[Progress bar]	5000
12 South West	41	[Progress bar]	1270
13 Wales	97	[Progress bar]	3510
14 South East	35	[Progress bar]	1570
15 National	2236	[Progress bar]	4000
Total	4676	[Progress bar]	50,000

More struggles, more cash!

A £100 DONATION from Andy and Terry Paterson has boosted the Fighting Fund to over £5,000 this week. Now we have just 5 weeks to raise another £45,000.

It is even more necessary that we reach our full £50,000 target because the growing militancy amongst all sections of workers is putting even more demands on our resources. *Militant* was printed a day early this week to cover the strikes of the health workers effectively and the other industrial disputes taking place this week. This shows the urgent need for cash to provide more staff and equipment for *Militant*, the only workers' paper with a clear socialist

programme.

We appeal to all readers to send a donation without delay and then to organise collections in your workplace, school or college.

The growing confidence of workers to struggle will make it even easier to raise money. Sellers at Coventry and Warwick Hospital raised £7 and sold 30 of the last issue. There is enormous potential for sales and Fighting Fund at every hospital, special sales should be organised. Always ask for the solidarity price and use collecting tins or buckets. A collection amongst trade union activists in Hackney raised £55, while over £250 was raised at Fels conference.

Hundreds of pounds

have so far been raised selling the STOP ALTON stickers on the streets. Rattling tins were overflowing with £15 raised this way in Peckham on Saturday, while on the streets of Hackney £17 was collected and 31 papers sold.

All readers should step up fundraising activity to meet the new opportunities.

Thanks to Helen Taylor from Berkshire who donated £35, Jory Sudaby, a reader from Stuttgart, sent £20 and K Waddington from North London sent £10. Special thanks go to Rempy Sogat Chapel in Leicester who sent £7.50. Can your union branch send a donation too?

Horror of desperate conditions

Dear Comrades,

I refer to the letter from D Connaughton in issue 877 about my letter blaming Thatcher and her system for driving a young mother to kill her daughter by pushing her out of a window.

He says this is "utter rubbish". I don't know all the circumstances about that case, but I do know of a similar case on my estate.

Again this was a young mother stuck in a tower block with a baby who

wouldn't stop crying. She was forever getting complaints from neighbours and, coming from the Philippines, had no family or friends to turn to. Barking Labour council hasn't built any houses with gardens since the 50s, so the chance of getting out of a tower block are remote in the least.

There are no facilities on our estate for mothers and toddlers, so no opportunity to meet people.

As far as I know, only one health visitor covers an es-

tate of several thousand people. Statutory areas for all children under five have been dropped. Her final safety net removed, this mother cracked one day and smashed her baby against the wardrobe and it died.

I don't call that murder—nor am I suggesting every parent in those circumstances (like myself) is going to kill their child. However, deteriorating conditions, particularly in the inner cities, caused directly by the policies of Thatcher and

capitalism, create the conditions where some individuals crack with the horrific consequences outlined in these cases.

Surely our job is not to argue whether or not these mothers are guilty of murder. As socialists we should fight for the kind of society, with decent housing, wages, community and health services, where parents can enjoy their children.

Maggie McGinley,
Barking.

'Conscience' or class?

Dear Comrades,

Probably like many other readers I was disappointed to see the comments of left wing Labour MP, Ronnie Campbell, in the Sunday papers, confirmed in his vote to support Alton's attack on abortion rights.

From what I know of his record Ronnie did not let his Catholicism stand in the way of his support for the Liverpool councillors who defied the Tory government in order to improve the standard of life of Liverpool people—even though they were denounced by the Catholic bishop of Liverpool. He followed

his class instincts.

Now, tragically, by viewing abortion as a 'moral' question and not a class issue, he is lending credence to the claim of Liberal MP David Alton (a Liverpool MP who viciously opposed the council) that he is 'protecting the rights of children'.

Only socialists fight to change the degrading quality of life that under this system compels many women to make the terrible 'choice' to have an abortion.

Clive Heemskirk,
Tower Hamlets

Saturday slaves

Dear Comrades,

My friend has a Saturday job working for a local butcher's. She has to work from 6am to 6pm and sometimes doesn't even get a dinner break. There are three people working in the shop and they are constantly rushed off their feet. For 12 hours' slave labour she receives just £10.

When I asked her about it she said "Of course it's disgusting but I don't have much of a choice. My parents can't afford to buy my clothes so I have to find

some way of making money."

Loads of students in my school either have Saturday jobs or evening jobs. For most of them it's the only way they can get any pocket money. Of course working like this gives them no leisure time or time to do their homework and study for their exams, so their education suffers.

Soft South? Not until we get socialism.

Leisa Woods,
Hackney South and
Shoreditch LPYS

Classified ads

20p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-display £3 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. Militant meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by first post on Friday, the week before publication.

12 February SALEP benefit. Bands: The Neurotics, The Hillstormers, disco and stalls. 8 'til late. Thames Polytechnic, Cellar Bar, Woolwich. £2.50 waged, £2 unwaged.

Islington Militant supporters public meeting on the council's budget crisis: Defend jobs and services! No rent increases! Tuesday 9 February 7.30, Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road. Speakers: Cllr Dave Barnes, Lawrence Hemming (Hackney Nalgo, personal capacity) and Pat Booton (Channel Islands Tenants Association, personal capacity).

Read Militant Irish Monthly the Marxist paper for workers' unity and socialism. January 1988 issue now out, with articles on: Enniskillen bombing; Joe Higgins to stand for Labour; Strike against Youth Training Programme; World recession; Women and the cuts. To subscribe to 6 (12) issues, send £3 (£5) to Militant, 75 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1 or 4 Waring Street, Belfast.

Back file of Militant nos 1-877 plus 50 old Militant Irish Monthly 75 old Left/Socialist Youth Any offers? to box no 69, World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

Inqaba T-shirts for sale £5.25 each inc postage. Logo black clenched fist "smash apartheid and capitalism". Available in white or lemon large or XL. All surplus to Campaign for a Socialist South Africa. Cheques/cash with orders to W. Blackstock, Flat 23, 425 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.

Urgent: Word processing: would any comrade familiar with Word Perfect software please contact SALEP urgently as we need advice. 01-241 0434

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Lessons of Martin Luther King

Dear Comrades,

Blacks in America today are very much alive in the battle for a new world and have taken advantage of the Martin Luther King commemoration to advance their cause.

The black people are receiving a terrific education around the country on the rottenness of the system by way of full length film showings in meeting halls, churches etc.

I sat through a three and a half hour showing of Martin Luther King's life from his first marches in the South up to his death and it is a stirring film. But all through it he is calling for a non-violent fight by blacks while they are attacked by dogs, severely beaten and murdered.

In the discussion following, a black minister of the church stunned the audience by telling them



America today 20 years after King's assassination.

that King had been all wrong in his policy of non-violence, that it gets you nowhere all through the

world, in South Africa and the third world countries.
Betty Traun,
Brooklyn USA

At sea with the rich...

Dear Comrades,

The south and south west of Britain are supposed to be booming, but could the first rumblings of recession be heard?

I work in a factory which produces high quality yachts, with high prices to match. Recently however,

all overtime has been cut (not that you should have to do overtime anyway).

Apparently this is due to orders from the USA drying up and existing orders being cancelled due to the slump in the States.

Although the work is quite well paid, the amount

that's paid in wages is nothing compared to what the company makes. What is really galling is that our livelihood is decided by whether some millionaire decides to buy a new plaything or not.

J Hayes, Poole CLP

...and poor

Dear Comrades,

A week ago a fishing boat sank off the Sussex coast with the loss of three

lives, including two 16 year old boys, one of whom was on a YTS scheme. The boat was on a fishing trip from Lymington to Brighton and back.

It was stated by a Fisheries officer that anyone can buy a boat and take it to sea. You don't need a Navigation and Seaman certificate. More fishermen are now killed at

sea than down the pit and that's bad enough.

The controls that exist for large professional boats and others are inadequate and while market forces dictate livelihoods many more YTS and fishermen will perish.

Shoreham-by-Sea
fisherman

Militant **New** **Out now**
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ABORTION RIGHTS
A Socialist Approach

RALLY '88

Alexandra Palace
Sunday 19 June

Tickets £6
Order your ticket now! From Militant Rally, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9.

Antics of NEC's 'antiques'

Dear Comrades,

As a recently ousted member of the LPYS—whom the NEC have decided to label an 'old man' at 24—then I must protest at the antics of some of the 'antiques' that sit as members of Labour's NEC.

In a recent letter from Labour's HQ, Joyce Gould, director of or-

ganisation, attempts to explain the cancellation of the LPYS conference:

'The delegation to the LPYS conference has averaged just over 300 with approximately 1000 visitors. It would seem wholly inappropriate for there to be a conference of possibly less than 200 younger delegates controlled by this large number of

older visitors.'

'...controlled...! What contempt for YS delegates. As a past delegate I can assure the NEC that nobody held a revolver to my head when voting on issues; nobody told me what to say or how to think. Young people are quite capable of formulating their own ideas and policies.

However with no conference or no forum for discussing national policy or campaigns, will it be the NEC that decides which campaigns and activities the YS should undertake? Surely this would be 'control' by a 'small number of very old' people!

Ray Duffin,
Hull North CLP

Tories bleed Health Service

Dear Comrades,

How dare Thatcher and the Tories condemn nurses who decide to come out on strike for better pay? No nurse takes that decision lightly and I support them.

Who do I blame? Well I blame the capitalists. In the area called the posh South East the local health authority built a new hospital costing approximately £20-£25 million and now they are having to close the women's surgical ward down because of lack of funds.

It's pathetic, capitalism does not work unless it makes a profit. What every comrade should demand is socialism.

Mike Jackson,
Mid Kent CLP

Dear Comrades,

The Tories are consistently prattling on about how safe the NHS is in their hands and how many extra patients they are treating and how efficient it is etc. One brief news item on television recently gave the lie to this claim. Chichester Area health authority have a grave shortage of beds for operations. Their solution—farm off 150 operations to a nearby private hospital. The cost—£84,000—it would have undoubtedly been cheaper if the NHS had carried out those operations. The cost is obviously being borne by the hard-pressed taxpayer.

Another example of the Tories providing better value for public money? I don't think so, more like another public subsidy to the Tories' private sector friends.

Clive Walder, Brighton
Kemptown Labour Party

Unions must fight Tory schemes



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

100 YOUNG people lobbied the TUC general council's last meeting. They were there to stop the TUC supporting the Tories' new adult training scheme.

It will mean unemployed youth being forced to work a 40 hour week for their dole money plus £10. The TUC's education and training committee had approved the scheme and was recommending it to the whole TUC. General secretary

Norman Willis said the scheme was a "considerable improvement" on the initial proposals and saw the unions' role as one of "damage limitation".

But none of the TUC's proposals had been accepted, pointed out *Militant* supporter, John Macreadie, from the civil service union CPSA. He led opposition to the scheme and said CPSA members who would administer it saw it as nothing but slave labour.

The TUC agreed to await publication of the government's white paper and decide their policy at the next general council. Meantime resolutions and letters should be sent to union leaders, especially Ron Todd (TGWU) and John Edmonds (GMBATU). Let them know that young union members think they should be fighting these schemes rather than meekly going along with them.

Plans are being laid to stage a larger lobby of the next general council meeting on 24 February.

By Davie Archibald Secretary Youth trade Union Rights Campaign

Thousands will strike in Scotland

PAULINE DONALD from Cardonald college spoke to *Militant* about YTURC'S strike in Scotland on 11 February.

"A lot of our work in building for it will be in the colleges.

"In the future thousands more will be forced into the colleges by the new training schemes. MSC control of further education is now the only profitable way the bosses can run education.

"On 11 February I'm sure there will be thousands on the streets of Glasgow protesting against the Tories. Unfortunately NUS Scotland are not. During the last YTURC strike they barred speakers from colleges and tried to undermine the action. This time round they have not even planned any action for the official 'NUS days of activity'."



Labour Party Young Socialists

Youth campaign supports health workers

"DEFEND THE NHS, no to privatisation" was the theme of the East of Scotland Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) public meeting on 26 January. It attracted 80 people.

Before leaving the meeting to organise her members for further strike action, nurses' shop steward, Deirdre Johnson, vowed: "I am confident that if we mobilise properly, we can enforce a major defeat on this government." John Fairgreave, TGWU convenor of Edinburgh's cleaning department, attacked the district council's freeze on vacancies. He told the meeting there were 50 unfilling vacancies in his department and that the council leader wanted a further £1,085,000 worth of cuts in employees' costs.

By Veronica Ferguson Edinburgh YTURC

The black book of YTS abuse

NEAR MONSOON conditions, which tore away the local trades council's banner, failed to stop Labour Party Young Socialists from demonstrating in Chesterfield on 30 January.

Shouting and singing their defiance of the Tories, they managed to carry their banners around the town centre to a rally at the local tech. Speakers there included local MP Tony Benn, Clay Cross councillor John Dunn and a representative from the strikers at Sheffield MSC.

The demonstration was a fitting climax to a campaign which included an occupation of the local Job Centre and an angry picket of a local agency after a YTS trainee was sacked for "having a bad attitude" (being off sick).

Now local supporters will be taking the campaign further.

A 'black book' of particularly appalling YTS exploitation is being compiled with trainees and a convention on YTS will make sure school leavers get the whole story. The success of the campaign so far points to wide support for the YTURC youth strike in March.

By Bill Esmond Chesterfield Labour party youth officer

Young Socialists fight for conference

LABOUR'S NATIONAL organiser, Joyce Gould, has been forced to try to justify the unconstitutional closure of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) conference.

Opposition to the move has prompted her to send out a circular claiming that the closure was a direct result of the cut in the LPYS age limit from 25 to 22.

LPYS national chair, John Ellen, has written to all constituency parties asking for support for a resolution at the party's youth committee on 8 March, calling for the 1988 conference to be convened. Resolutions should be sent to Joyce Gould, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1 JT.

See letter, page 11.

FE activists organise

The Further Education Labour Students (Fels) held their conference in Chesterfield on 30 and 31 January. Delegates and visitors were enthusiastic about the debates.

"The facts and figures provided will be especially useful in the campaigning work we do in our college," said Ryan Cronin. "It showed us the best way to support the NHS workers."

"Next year I will be forced to leave school early and go to college because my mother will lose £40 through the benefit system changes," Lyndy Donald told us.

"The only way I can continue my education is by signing on and going to college at night time. Fels conference provided a way of organising the best FE activists to defeat government attacks like these."

A visitor from Orpington



Photo: Alison Dixon.

Cheryl Varley shows Fels conference glossy government propaganda for Tory attacks on education.

college told how his family's experience had changed his views:

"If I could have voted at the '83 election I would have voted Tory. But my dad was one of the 5,000 sacked at Wapping. What happened to him taught me the Tories must go.

Scottish NUS elections

SCOTTISH LABOUR students (SLS) will select their candidate for their candidate for the leadership of NUS Scotland on Saturday 13 February. Militant supporter Douglas Blackstock is the left's nominee

for president. Despite threats of expulsion and right wing disaffiliation from NUS, the left will not be deterred from standing in this election at which every SLS member can vote.

Plymouth Citybus strike

AS PLYMOUTH Citybus drivers face their third week on strike, support continues to grow. Last week, with wives and families, they led a protest march on the council, the owners of the company. Taxi drivers protested in solidarity.

Postal workers, tanker drivers and many others are respecting the pickets. A driver training instructor who stopped work said, "I don't mind training drivers but I can't go on training these people to be used against the other lads".

Scabs are being recruited from as far away as South Yorkshire but only a dozen or so buses are running. The strike was deliberately provoked by management to smash a strong union branch and decimate the wages and conditions of Citybus workers.

The attacks included wage cuts of up to £30 per

By Chris Parry.

week, less holidays, longer hours, split shifts and even lower pay for new drivers. The drivers had no alternative but to make a stand and voted 233 to 6 for an all-out strike. The strike has far wider implications for the whole bus industry. Support is already flooding in with support groups being set up as far away as Scotland. Solidarity action must be mobilised through the TGWU and the NUR.

Behind the scenes, Western National have already reportedly bid to

buy out Citybus in the midst of the strike. As one driver put it, "We're just pawns in the hands of big business".

Anger is building up on the picket lines. Labour city councillors must come out and give unequivocal support for the drivers. A victory for them would enormously boost the morale of the whole working class in the Plymouth area.

Support and enquiries c/o Citybus strike office, TGWU building, Bretonside, Plymouth. Phone 0752 665459.

Plymouth LPYS public meeting in support of the drivers, 7.30pm, Monday 8 February, Coburg St school refectory.



Plymouth bus drivers marching for their jobs and conditions.

NUT: more democracy wanted

ARTHUR SCARGILL'S re-election as president of the National Union of Mineworkers has been hypocritically attacked in the media as somehow not really a victory—more of a "moral defeat". The fact is, however, that Scargill did win after offering himself for democratic election. Not so in some other unions which the press keep quiet about.

Last November, the executive of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) announced that 'moderate' Doug McAvooy had been elected general secretary designate, to take up his post in January

1989.

The only real shock in this was that no election had taken place! No returning officer had made any announcements, no nominations had been called for, no hustings, no bandwagons had rolled.

The executive had simply taken upon itself the decision to 'select' him as general secretary designate. Hey presto! Doug McAvooy is now elected. The only concession to the rank and file is that the decision will be ratified by conference; but given the way NUT conference is organised, the right

wing quite confidently foresee no problems.

Thus, the executive of a so-called democratic trade union, which insists on secret ballots on everything and insists on two-thirds majorities in many cases—just to ensure that a majority is really and truly a majority—have just disenfranchised 185,000 NUT members of their right to elect the leader who will speak for them and who is entrusted to fight to safeguard their jobs and conditions against the Tory onslaught on state education.

The general secretary is rumoured to be on a salary of "considerably upwards of £40,000".

If this had taken place in a union controlled by the left, just imagine the reaction of the Tories and their friends in the press. Of course, they have maintained a deafening silence.

When criticised by the more militant areas of the union, like London, for this action, unprecedented in the history of the union, the executive argued in favour of a "swift election"—the present general secretary doesn't

retire until September 1989!

The need to have real control over our union has never been more urgent. We demand:

- ★ Regular democratic elections for all officials.
- ★ Immediate right of recall over all officials.
- ★ All officials to be paid the average pay of a classroom teacher.
- ★ Escalating action to defeat the Baker Bill.

By a London NUT member

BLOC BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Conference '88

Sheffield
City Hall
Sat 13
February

ALL TRADE union bodies (branches, workplaces, district committees, divisional councils etc) can send up to five delegates. The fee per delegate is £3. For application form and details of local transport to the conference, write to Broad Left Organising Committee, PO box 464, London E5 8PT.

Speakers include **Tony Benn**

ONLY WEEKS ago we were being told that trade unions were out-dated and that workers were no longer prepared to strike in defence of jobs and conditions. Now, all of a sudden, the press is talking of a new "winter of discontent" as health workers, car workers, seafarers on ferries and pit deputies—to mention just a few—take action.

This means that the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) conference takes on an even greater importance. So, if your branch or steward's committee hasn't elected delegates yet, there's only one week left!

Delegations which have been received this week include Hull city council JSSC; UCW Hull c+s; Nupe, Hull hospitals, Edinburgh South hospitals;

NUM Bentinck colliery; NCU, Girobank, Overseas Telegraph, Merseyside Broad Left; FBU Macclesfield; Gmbatu, Glasgow 40, Hull no 1, Wirral hospitals; Ucat Brixton no 1; Nalga, Harngney, Hackney housing department stewards, Leicester poly; IRSF Leicester, Rutland and Northants; Sogat Markem Systems chapel; Horset Engineers JSSC.

Urgent: Transport. Bookings for London train to 143B Amhurst Road, Hackney E8 2AW. Cost is £20 return. Departs St Pancras 7.39am. Cheques payable to BLOC.

Merseyside coach leaves St John's Lane, Liverpool, at 8.30am. Cost £3.50 return. Cheques payable to Merseyside BLOC. Send to 24 Pilch Lane, Liverpool L14 7QB.

How do I organise?

MILLIONS OF low-paid full and part-time workers have no trade union protection in the workplace and employers are increasingly taking Thatcher's encouragement of 'Victorian values' seriously. Trade union Broad Lefts and Militant supporters have a vital role to play in getting these workplaces unionised. We have received a letter from a worker who wants to do just that where he works. For obvious reasons, he has to remain anonymous. We invite readers to send in their experiences and ideas for tackling this problem.

"Dear Militant, I am writing to you to ask you for advice on how to organise a union at my workplace. Since I started work in a hotels chain as a French polisher I've made contact with quite a few members of the staff who have expressed a keen desire for union representation, mainly because they have to contend with ridiculously low pay and intimidation from a scabby foreman and the management.

"We have an unbearable

amount of work to do daily, mainly polishing up furniture and doors. There are only three of us to do 1,650 rooms in one hotel alone, and we have to cover three hotels. This is back-breaking work for a basic pay of £140 per week. Other staff, such as cleaners, get a basic of nearer £65 per week. One told me that they were only expected to clean 12 rooms per day, but that figure is now 40—for the same pay!

"The management's reluctance to recruit more staff is obvious for they know full well they can get labour more cheaply by having a reduced workforce and giving the excuse that they can't fill the vacancies.

"The majority of people employed here are workers from Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain and Ireland and there are problems of language.

"I'd like to know how to go about organising the workforce and discussing the problems we face without management finding out. Also, what union should we approach?"

Islington council cuts

ISLINGTON POLICY committee meets on 4 February to consider cuts of eight to ten per cent in all services, including the issue of up to 200 redundancy notices. The Nalga branch has voted for a one-day strike and all the council unions will take part in a lobby.

We aim to leaflet every single council tenant, inviting them to join our lobby.

The proposed rent increases of £6 per week only just got through the housing committee and the cuts in caretakers' overtime which have already been imposed have led to the formation of a joint union action committee and a work-to-rule.

It still remains an urgent task to unite manual and white collar stewards, and to formulate an alternative programme, based on a deficit budget, with help from tenants' associations and councillors willing to fight.

The words of Margaret Hodge, written to Kenneth Baker in January 1986, still apply, even if she may have forgotten them: "We have detailed local knowledge of the borough's needs and finances, and we are totally satisfied that this council's



Margaret Hodge

spending level can be justified. Any reductions in expenditure would directly affect the lives of the residents of the borough, many of whom are largely dependent upon the services that we provide..."

Militant public meeting: Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, Tuesday 9 February. Speakers will be Cllr Dave Barnes, Quadrant ward; Laurence Hemming, Hackney Nalga, personal capacity; Pat Booton, secretary Channel Islands Tenants Association.

By an Islington council worker

Reject 'derisory' Ford offer

Ford offer

A MOOD of bewilderment changed during the course of Monday to anger as workers at Halewood became more aware of the nature of the deal. The MSB section walked out in protest. So did workers at Thurrock and Dagenham. The deal adds virtually nothing to Thursday's offer.

By a Halewood worker and John McKay.

For this reason it should be overwhelmingly rejected. There has been talk of 9-10,000 jobs going over the course of the three year deal—30 per cent of the workforce. Six out of ten foremen will go.

In the face of a massive 88 per cent vote to reject Ford's previous offer, the company conceded two small pay increases over the period of the three year deal. But there has been no shift on the strings—which amount to a fundamental attack on conditions.

For this reason the deal should be overwhelmingly rejected. The latest offer will mean a seven per cent increase this year, followed by increases of 2.5 per cent above the retail price index next year and the year after. All Sunday's talks achieved is a miserly half a per cent for years two and three of the deal.

'Group leaders'

As we go to press, stewards at Dagenham, Halewood, Bridgend and Basildon look set to recommend rejection.

About Thursday's offer, Alan Phillips, deputy convenor of Basildon Tractors, said: "It is derisory. Far from a situation where we can go back to the plants and give a recommendation of acceptance we must base our claim on the company's ability to pay in terms of the profits. The British taxpayer is subsidising a profit-making company because some workers are paid so badly they have to claim things like free milk."

It has now been said that some of the strings can be negotiated at a local level. Ford union leaders have apparently accepted this. Local negotiations would give management the opportunity to pick off the weaker plants and make it more difficult to organise effective resistance to changes in working practices. Again, Alan Phillips: "We can't sell off our rights at a price".



Dagenham foremen on strike last December.

If demarcation was ended it would be detrimental to both line workers and craftsmen. The company wouldn't overman lines and therefore workers would be pushed from one area of work to another. It is designed to cause friction amongst the workforce with workers doing the same jobs but on different pay. It would damage and undermine the apprenticeship schemes. Management want to create an environment where workers will be driven out of the industry, therefore cutting the workforce.

As Alan explained, "The 'group leader' system is in operation in Japan. The company would pay a 'group leader' a differential of ten per cent and we believe would be used as a company policeman. At present, workers' problems are dealt with by the shop stewards. Many problems would be handled by a 'group leader', but as a tool of management. It is another way of smashing the unions by breaking down union structures. Foremen presently get £250-300 per week. 'Group leaders' would mean cost savings for Ford through cheap labour."

As Alan explained, "The 'group leader' system is in

operation in Japan. The company would pay a 'group leader' a differential of ten per cent and we believe would be used as a company policeman. At present, workers' problems are dealt with by the shop stewards. Many problems would be handled by a 'group leader', but as a tool of management. It is another way of smashing the unions by breaking down union structures. Foremen presently get £250-300 per week. 'Group leaders' would mean cost savings for Ford through cheap labour."

Battle not over

Management want to do away with the sick payment scheme. At present, both Ford and employees pay into a fund, and a committee with union representation negotiates the

payments for workers off sick. Now Ford want total control over the allocation of sick pay, therefore having the power to dictate the terms. Also, the reserves available for sick pay will be used for other profit-making initiatives rather than for the direct benefit of Ford workers.

This battle is one of the most important that Ford workers will have to fight. Despite Sunday, the battle is not yet over. Ford workers have already shown in the ballot that they want the full claim with no strings. The latest deal should be decisively defeated and all-out strike action immediately organised.

- ★ For the full claim!
- ★ No strings!
- ★ Organise immediate all-out strike action!

from the mass of abuse expected from certain individuals? But if you are seen to read it yourself, soon genuine interest in the *Militant* will be shown by your workmates.

"Make it clear from the outset that the paper is for sale! Raise the question of the solidarity price as a donation towards a daily *Militant* that supports workers as an alternative to the capitalist press that supports management.

"Once you have a sale or two, it will give you confidence to build up more sales around the office or factory. But don't stop there. If one or two people are interested, set up a workplace Marxist discussion group in the local pub. It's a good idea to get a speaker or someone new who can put a fresh approach to the ideas.

"Very soon you will be faced with another problem. Your paper sales will have dropped because someone else at work is now selling the *Militant!*"



"THE FIRST thing any supporter of *Militant* should do if you want to build sales at work is to read it yourself—during the tea break and lunch break," says Roy Wenborne, a Post Office engineer. "That way you will find the *Militant* sells itself as workmates ask you what it's about.

"Depending on where you work, selling the paper for the first time may appear a daunting task. What reaction will I get? Will I be able to recover

What's happening in your workplace? Phone in your reports to the Industrial Editor on 01-533 3311 before 5pm on Monday.

News in Brief

London UBO strike

EVENTS HAVE taken a decisive turn in the London Department of Employment (DE) dispute over compulsory transfers and staff cuts. CPSA's campaign appeared to have suffered a serious setback when King's Cross UBO members returned a tied vote on joining the strike.

Management read this to mean no support for the strike. In north and west London they announced the sacking of all casual staff and the redeployment of 'excess' staff, expecting the strike to collapse.

They had totally underestimated the position. In north London the strength of feeling was so great that nine offices immediately walked out. In west London, members in 17 offices took protest action last Friday in a magnificent show of strength. Tottenham, Wood Green and Kensington job centres and Hendon UBO have voted to join the all-out action. Plans are in hand to ballot other north London offices.

The work done by branch officials, including

Militant supporters, explaining the issues at stake and preparing members for action, was decisive. This was helped by the decision of the DHSS section committee to urge members in the DHSS-linked offices to black all work connected with the DE dispute. The speed and scale of developments gave management a severe shock. From a position of 'strength' they have now backed down and opened negotiations on staffing levels and compulsory transfers.

Victory

A victory is now possible if the pressure is kept on. The DE section committee should generalise the London and Bristol disputes into a national staffing campaign, explaining to DE members what's at stake and encouraging them to join the dispute. Cheques should be made payable to CPSA fighting fund, DE North west London dispute. Send to 7 Fowler House, South Grove, London N15 5QJ.

By Julie Wyeth, London regional organiser DE, and Nicola McNulty, London regional secretary DE, in personal capacity.

Notts NUM

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers area poli-

DHSS staff prepare for action

PLANS TO cut jobs in social security offices throughout the country have been met by anger in local offices. Cuts of 20 to 30 staff per office have been announced recently. Management attempted to keep secret these figures and play down the enormity of the cuts, fearing public knowledge could undermine their drive to carry out the conversion of supplementary benefit claims to the new income support system.

This drive is causing immense pressures to local offices and a growing mood of discontent is evident.

Militant supporter Simon Dennison, on the CPSA DHSS sectional executive committee, successfully proposed a motion on behalf of the Broad Left supporters on the committee for an immediate departmental-wide campaign to stop these cuts and provide permanent jobs for all staff engaged on limited

contracts of employment. The motion, overwhelmingly carried, called for an urgent meeting with the employer to negotiate a stop to the cuts and at the same time a campaign, involving workplace meetings, to explain the issues to members and prepare for a ballot for all-out strike action to commence 14 March if the department fail to concede.

Only the extreme pessimists of BL '84 opposed the campaign but they proposed no alternative.

Tory plans to bring in YTS, casualisation and closure of offices are all part of the general offensive against civil servants. Militant supporters and the Broad Left have given a lead. A successful campaign can force the government to back down.

By Harriet Stevens, CPSA DHSS sectional executive member, personal capacity.

By Harriet Stevens, CPSA DHSS sectional executive member, personal capacity.

NHS Broad Left Greenwich Public meeting
7.30 Wed 17 February
Woolwich Town Hall
Speaker: Tony Benn

Ferry workers defy Tory law

TORY LAWS are being used against the ferry workers' strike. The High Court has handed ferry bosses an injunction with which they hope to bludgeon leaders of the National Union of Seamen (NUS) into submission.

By Richard Knights

The legal attack is a major threat to all workers' rights and to all organisations of the labour movement. The whole trade union movement must act to defend the NUS.

The ferry workers are striking just to defend their present working conditions. Bosses on the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (IMSPC) want to rip up existing agreements and impose longer hours at work and shorter leave and employ seasonal, non-union labour.

When 160 workers occupied a ferry in protest, the company sacked them.

Tommy Keefe, NUS executive member and one of the sacked men told *Militant*: "This is the thin end of the wedge. This is a threat to all jobs and terms and conditions. Now is the time to fight."

He described Scalink boss, James Sherwood, as "another MacGregor, trying to smash our union."

The union's national ferry committee voted unanimously for all-out action to support the



Strikebound: workers on the Isle of Man ferries have launched a national strike to save the NUS.

IMSPC workers. Hull workers occupied the Norland ferry eight hours before the strike was due to start because P and O bosses had put a larger ferry in dry dock in Holland to avoid the strike.

Dirty tricks were used to serve a writ on their full time official, Ken Turner, when a court official gained access to his home by telling his son he was "an old friend".

This is a battle for the future of the whole industry and the future of the National Union of Seamen. The number of ships on the UK register has declined by nearly 1,000 to 635 in ten years. The union has lost 30 per

cent of its membership in five years.

A clear strategy must be drawn up to ensure victory:

- ★ All deep sea NUS members must be called out on strike.
- ★ Dockworkers must be approached to black cargo.
- ★ The International Transport Workers Federation must black all cargoes bound for Britain.

TUC must act

If the NUS's funds are sequestrated and action is taken against its leadership, it should call for a national transport strike. Seafarers should go to

transport workers to explain their case and win support.

There must be no repeat of the TUC's passivity when the NGA and the NUM were robbed by capitalist courts.

The TUC must link this fight to the health workers' fight and call a one-day general strike to support both groups of workers. If they refuse to act then seafarers must respond from below and appeal to the rest of the labour movement for solidarity action.

The seafarers must not stand alone. The unions must act now to defend union rights!

On the road to Damascus

NUS GENERAL secretary, Sam McCluskie, has rightly defied the High Court's injunction. Sequestration will not matter, he says, "because the union is skint".

But, as Pater Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn's book *Liverpool—the City that Dared to Fight* says, when Liverpool councillors faced Tory legal attacks, he declared: "You do not achieve democratic socialism in Britain by defying the laws of the land."

Sam seems to have undergone a conversion as dramatic as Saul's on the road to Damascus. He will find Liverpool workers and *Militant* supporters ready to fight alongside him and his members in defence of union rights.

The real criminals

ONE OF the companies that has won an injunction against the NUS is P and O, owners of Townsend Thoresen.

Despite the capsizing of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, they have been trying to cut up to 900 jobs on their ferries.

"Crews at present work long shifts and many retire early due to stress-related ill health," says Sue Haney of the *Herald Families Association*. "Further attempts to extend working hours is bound to have an adverse effect on even the youngest and fittest crew member. Both passenger and crew safety will suffer."

P and O made record profits of £174 million last year and chairman, Sir Geoffrey Stirling gets £2,400 per week. But they are still prepared to sacrifice safety to cut costs.

How dare they take the unions to court! It's them who should be on trial for this criminal negligence!

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What we stand for

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