



MAY DAY

20 page special

— see pages 7-14

P&O – National NUS strike now

THE FERRY strike has reached the point of no return. It is now a fight to the finish.

The strike-breaking plans of P&O bosses have backfired. They thought that by sending out despatch riders at 3.00 am, issuing redundancy notices and by derecognising the National Union of Seamen, they could break the spirit of the strike.

On the contrary, after this cynical provocation the strike immediately began to develop from strength to strength.

The next mass picket on 26 April brought Dover to a standstill. "It's about time" said one Sealink worker as he walked to join the Dover picket: "We have been waiting for this since February."

Solidarity

Some of those on the picket had actually signed the company's agreement. Now they have been sacked for not crossing the picket line. Many of them may have felt the strike was losing momentum. Now morale has rocketed. The feeling amongst all the seafarers is: "we can win".

Spontaneously from below the battle is being driven forward. Representatives of seafarers from all over Britain have joined the mass pickets, to express solidarity and the willingness of their members to join the strike.

All seafarers understand that if P&O succeed at

By Brian Ingham

Dover in tearing up the maritime agreement (under which the employers and the NUS jointly organise the allocation of labour) and derecognising the union, no seafarer is safe. The very existence of the NUS is at stake.

Folkestone NUS members have refused to cross picket lines. In Hull, workers on the P&O subsidiary North Sea Ferries have occupied the *Norsea*, after being sacked for calling a 48-hour strike in solidarity with Dover. The NUS Felixstowe port committee have agreed to come out.

The entire strength of the NUS must now be united in action to defend union rights, jobs, conditions and safety. A clear unequivocal lead must be given by Sam McCluskie and the NUS executive.

Any attempt to develop the strike by coded language could cause confusion. And it will not stop these rabid employers or Tory judges taking legal action.

The NUS leaders must immediately call an all-out strike. Every port must be closed. Other workers in Britain and internationally must be urged to block all traffic in and out of Britain. French seafarers have already pledged solidarity. The mood amongst Dutch



Dover pickets attempt to stop a P&O lorry.

Photo: Steve Gardiner.

and Belgian seafarers is—once all P&O ships are stopped, they will stop.

This fight has serious implications for every worker in Britain. A defeat for the NUS would give the green light to all bosses to take the same brutal anti-union measures as P&O. The

closed shop and union rights everywhere would be under threat.

At the 27 April TUC general council, John Macreadie called for a special general council meeting to be convened to organise support should the NUS call for assistance. Ar-

thur Scargill backed this call, urging all trade unionists to support the NUS dispute.

TUC action

The whole trade union movement must be prepared to act if the

bosses' courts move against the NUS. Any attempt to sequester the union's assets, impose a fine or imprison any of its local or national officials must be met immediately by the call from the TUC for a one-day general strike.

Trotsky's grandson to speak at Militant rally

THE ORGANISERS of the *Militant* rally on 19 June are proud to announce that Trotsky's grandson, Esteban Volkov, will be speaking. He is campaigning for the rehabilitation of all those murdered by the Stalin regime. It will be an historic occasion which no socialist should miss.

See article and booking form on centre pages.

£30,000 by Wednesday

WE NEED another £30,000 by Wednesday 4 May. Follow the example of D. Brown from Bristol who gave £235. Send your donation now!

Militant

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Parliamentary ritual

RON BROWN has been hounded in the pages of the Tory press like a criminal. He has been thrown out of the Commons and even had the Labour whip withdrawn. Yet the Tories are daily bullying the weakest, most defenceless sections of society.

Millions of ordinary people face a savage onslaught on their standard of life from the Tories' social security cuts and iniquitous poll tax. Young people are being conscripted on to slave labour schemes. Many pensioners, after a life-time's work, are being deprived of housing benefit and heating allowances. In sheer despair, some old people have threatened to commit suicide, others just broke into tears in their local housing office.

But it is Ron Brown, not Thatcher, whom the press have turned on—for damaging the Mace, a feudal relic, symbol of all the absurd, archaic ritual of Parliament.

Workers need no lectures from Thatcher or from Murdoch's *Sun* about respect for democracy. Every democratic right, to free speech, free press, to strike and to vote, had to be fought for by working people.

It is the Tories who undemocratically trampled on union rights at GCHQ, abolished the metropolitan councils because they could not win a majority on them. They have friendly relations with every rotten capitalist dictatorship around the world, like apartheid South Africa.

The defence of democracy resides not in the Mace, but in the vigilance of working people and the strength of their organisations.

Yet the leader of the Labour Party has been at one with the baying hounds of the Tory back benches and the press about the need to discipline Ron Brown. In fact the Shadow Cabinet already found him 'guilty' and recommended withdrawing the whip, before the Commons debated suspending him for a month.

It is 20 years since the whip was removed from a Labour MP. And Ron Brown is in good company. Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot, in his left wing days, had the whip withdrawn for crossing the right wing Labour leadership of the day.

Kinnock pretends to stand in the shadow of Bevan. But he is demonstrating he is firmly in the tradition of Labour's authoritarian, witch-hunting right.

Why is the Parliamentary Labour Party not disciplining right wingers Denis Healey and Dennis Howell? They failed to turn up for the crucial poll tax debate, when Thatcher's Commons majority was cut to its lowest ever.

Howell is a front bench environment spokesman. Yet it was reported that shadow environment secretary, Jack Cunningham, who led for Labour in the debate, did not know where Howell was. In fact he was 4000 miles away in America. Was he speaking up for his inner-city constituents there?

Now the National Committee of the AEU, without even allowing Ron Brown a hearing, has withdrawn his parliamentary sponsorship. When Arthur Scargill threatened similar action against right wing NUM sponsored Labour MPs, who were completely at odds with the views of mining activists, he was accused of interfering with parliamentary privilege. Will the PLP now put up this defence for Ron Brown?

He has broken no rule of the AEU. He has merely stuck up for ordinary working people in Scotland. Unlike the AEU leaders themselves, who over Dundee were prepared to sell Scottish workers on the cheap to the Ford multi-national.

Gestures like seizing the Mace do not in themselves achieve anything, but Ron Brown was expressing something of the burning anger of workers at the brutality of Thatcherism.

There is undoubtedly growing frustration among left MPs. With their heavy majority the Tories are riding roughshod over questions and objections in the House, but the Labour leaders are restricting their opposition to purely parliamentary channels.

Kinnock not only abhors any damage to the Mace, he opposes any defiance of such blatantly class laws as poll tax.

Socialist MPs should combine parliamentary opposition with backing mass action outside. Use the platform of the Commons, inadequate as it is, to proclaim the socialist message. But devote equal time to agitating around the country, for a movement to defeat the poll tax, to giving support to workers in struggle, like the seafarers.

Only Kinnock's public relations advisors, cocooned in their offices, could possibly believe that this could be unpopular with the millions of Labour voters.

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"OUR MESSAGE is that black and white students are uniting against deportation threats," Beverley Ekpo, vice-president of Liverpool's City college student union told a rally of 300 students and trade unionists.

In only four days the union organised a half day strike against the deportation of City student, Oliyinka Olatunji and her daughter Nicole.

"I understand how Yinka must feel," said exiled South African socialist Tyrone Simpson. "I am a stateless person. I carry a United Nations document that supposedly enjoys universal recognition. It enjoys universal contempt. In

every country I have to go through special procedures, visas etc. My young daughter is refused citizenship, declared a refugee.

"It is bitterly ironic that while the Tories rush through Zola Budd's citizenship, they are preparing to deport Yinka and Nicole on a technicality."

Pat Younge, NUS vice-president, gave the union's full support and a promise to mobilise national support.

Students' unions, trade unions, Labour Parties, Young Socialists should protest to Timothy Renton MP with copies to City college students union, Myrtle Street, Liverpool.

Ron Brown speaks to Militant

"I don't apologise"

THERE HAS been a hue and cry in the press over Ron Brown MP violating parliamentary procedure. He dropped the "Mace" on the floor after a debate on social security.

He talked to *Militant* about the incident and the fuss it has caused:

"The powers that be are certainly annoyed at me, not for touching a bit of metal, the bauble that Cromwell spoke about, but because I support a challenge to the Tories.

I challenged their right to use Parliament as a rubber stamp.

In the debate Michael Portillo, the Tory minister, arrogantly dismissed any challenge to the Government.

I'd come down from Scotland, knowing that many people had suffered badly because of the cuts in social security. If I felt angry I don't apologise because

if Labour MPs can't be angry against the Tory government there's something wrong.

Whether in hindsight I should have touched the Mace is another matter. I don't think it's particularly important, but some people value the Mace more than they value the rights of working class people. Sadly that includes many within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

People have written in supporting me. Even though the incident has been misrepresented in the capitalist press, people do still feel that something has to be done to make life difficult for the Tories and I agree with them.

The AEU executive has withdrawn my parliamentary sponsorship. That is very sad. I have been an activist of the union going back many years and was the convenor of the main

factory in East Scotland.

If I'm said to have done something wrong then I should have the right to speak to the National Committee. I know that Gavin Laird goes to these wine and dining sessions with Mrs Thatcher. He listens to her, I would hope he will also listen to me.

Agitate

An MP must be involved in the Commons to challenge as best he can. But let's make this clear, the Tories have got the votes there and whatever we do we're not going to change that. It has to be emphasised over and over again that the movement is outside Parliament.

It's the working class that count. It's the struggle of working people collectively that can change things. Perhaps more so today, when we face an authoritarian

government, which is destroying rights that have been built up over a number of years.

Politics is not just for the MPs, it's for the working class. It's this understanding of socialism that we've got to get across. The more we become activists and agitators against the Tories, the more we fight back against oppression, the better.

An incident, such as it was, with a Mace is not important. It may be important to Neil Kinnock or the PLP. I'm not sure, Neil Kinnock hasn't even had the decency even to speak to me, so I don't know his views.

In any case if this has become an issue, the real issue is how we fight back against the Thatcher regime."

Ron Brown spoke to
Jeremy Birch

The Ministry of Danger

IN JUNE 1983 one of the giant warehouses at COD Donnington went up in flames. The fire raged for hours causing more than £150 million damage to the site.

On 25 April this year another warehouse on the same site burst into flames. It has taken two days to put out the flames.

Both times, the fallout of asbestos dust covered miles of Telford's roads, open spaces, homes and gardens.

The inquiry following the first fire cited asbestos walls

as one of the major hazards and recommended that fire break partitions should be constructed in the warehouses, which each cover several thousand square feet.

Pollution

According to local radio this recommendation has still not been carried out. Now there are fears of wind-borne pollution as far as the Welsh hills.

Hours after the fire started local residents were told

to stay indoors with doors and windows shut. The next morning that advice was repeated on morning TV by an environmental health officer, who also told us under no circumstances to touch the fallout.

Only hours later that advice had been withdrawn and residents have been told they are responsible for clearing up the toxic waste from their homes and gardens.

There have long been fears about what is stored in COD Donnington and the

apparent lack of safety procedures there.

The threat of privatisation has increased those fears with the thought that the push for maximum profit would outweigh proper manning and safety standards.

There must be a full workers' inquiry into why there have been two major fires in five years. The asbestos must be removed. Any attempt to privatise the depot must be resisted.

By Jane Smith, Telford.

Stop 'Clause 28'

Labour must defend gay rights

TENS OF thousands will be demonstrating their anger at the infamous Clause 28 of the Local Government Bill on 30 April. John Johnson and Colin Coffey examine the threat it represents to democratic rights and to the labour movement.

THE TORIES' Local Government Bill is a further massive attack on the conditions of council workers, tenants and working people in general. Privatisation, swingeing cuts in jobs and services will mean the virtual destruction of local government, and an end to any pretence of local democracy.

But not satisfied with this, the Tories' rabid right have slipped in Clause 28, attempting to whip up

a reactionary climate of opinion against lesbians and gay men. Clearly they see this as another means of attacking particularly left Labour councils.

Hot on the heels of the Tory press' sickening use of the AIDS virus to intensify discrimination, prejudice and violent attacks on lesbians and gay men, Clause 28 will be seen as virtually legitimising harassment and persecution.

Formally Clause 28 is about preventing 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities. But its real effects will be; to starve voluntary counselling services and lesbian and gay switchboards of grants, forcing them into closure; to face teachers and social workers with the sack if they fail to repeat, or challenge the doctrine of pre-

judice and intolerance preached by the gutter press; to close down lesbian and gay pubs and clubs; to give a green light for employers to escalate victimisation and sacking of gay and lesbian workers.

Employment bans

This reactionary legislation is a step in the direction of employment bans based on morals, security or political affiliation, like the *berufsverbot* in West Germany which vetted public sector workers for their political views.

To their shame the Labour leadership opened the parliamentary door for the Clause, by not even opposing it at the committee stage. The labour movement must commit itself to outright opposition to Clause 28 and to

campaign in line with Labour Party conference policy:

- 1) to repeal all criminal laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men, clarifying and codifying those sections of the Common Law which deal with public morality, guided by the maxim that there should be no crimes without victims.
- 2) prevent police harassment of lesbians and gay men.
- 3) prohibit discrimination and unfair dismissals on grounds in any way connected with lesbian and gay sexuality or life-style.

There must be a massive campaign to defeat Clause 28. All Labour councils and local authority unions must be pressed to adopt a policy of non-compliance with compulsory privatisation and for non-implementation of the measures in Clause 28.

In the 'liberal' period of capitalism, when the economy was still going forward, it was possible, in 1967, for the legal restraints on gay people to be abolished. Now when capitalism has entered an era of crisis, the Tories are forced to use all their most brutal policies, and are raking up all the old prejudices as a political weapon to protect their system and undermine workers' unity.

It is the labour movement that provides the ultimate defence of all democratic rights. But these will only be finally guaranteed on the basis of socialism. A publicly owned and democratically planned economy could dramatically improve living conditions and education, allow for better personal relations, and prejudice and intolerance will finally disappear.

Anti-abortionists fake pity on working women

THE REACTIONARY anti-abortion group Life has circulated a letter to MPs calling on them to oppose the new social security provisions. Completely contrary to their previous propaganda they say "the legislation could force women to seek abortions and will discriminate against the most vulnerable of young women and their children".

During recent debates with Life and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (Spuc) women have described their struggle to bring up children in conditions of bad housing and cuts in benefits and services.

It is these conditions which lead many women to decide not to continue with pregnancy and seek an abortion.

Spuc and Life have arrogantly dismissed the idea that social conditions are important and have branded women who want abortions as murderers.

Now Life has 'discovered' the poverty which working class women and their children have

faced for decades. The social security cuts are just the latest in a long line of Tory attacks on the poor of which women have borne the brunt.

Spuc and Life have now become the mouthpiece for the Tories' reactionary ideas towards women—forcing them back into the home to make up for the cuts in the welfare state.

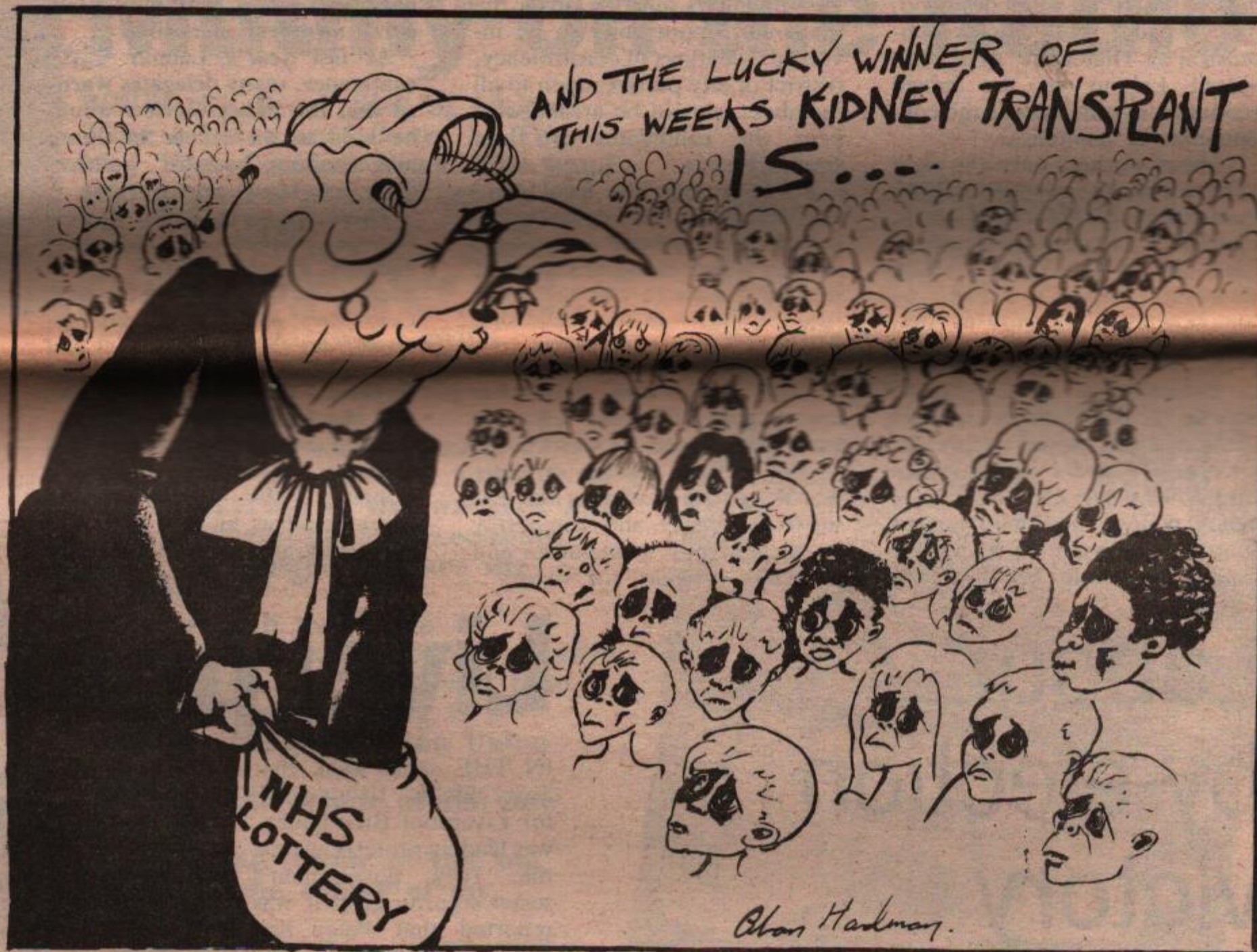
Women don't need the fake pity of Life and Spuc. Many of their supporters in Parliament in any case voted for the Social Security Act. Spuc and Life's continued support for the Alton Bill will mean that the poorest women that they pretend to be concerned about will be dragged through the courts, or even imprisoned, for having illegal abortions.

It is precisely because of the appalling social conditions and the individual responsibility which women carry for bringing up children in capitalist society that socialists argue for the right to safe abortion.

By Maureen Hearn

STOP ALTON'S BILL

Demonstrate 5 May
Assemble 6.30pm Malet St
Eve of third reading of the Bill



DHSS staff step up action against fascist

HUNDREDS of workers at 20 benefit offices in South London walked out on strike on Friday 22 April in protest at the employment of a known fascist and racist, Malcolm Skeggs, at Hither Green DHSS office in Lewisham.

Staff at Hither Green have been on strike since 5 April after threats to suspend any member refusing to work with Skeggs, a former National Front parliamentary candidate, and now a senior officer in the British National Party.

DHSS management's attitude towards Skeggs is in stark contrast to the sacking of a trade union activist, Ian Williams, from his computer operator's job at RAF Stafford for being a *Militant* supporter.

This Tory government sees fit to sack a Marxist and trade unionist who stands up for the interests of his members and still employ a known fascist.

After Skeggs completed his train-

ing, staff were informed that anyone boycotting him would be disciplined. So CPSA sub-branch secretary, Onay Kasab, called a ballot for strike action and 90 per cent voted in favour. He told *Militant*:

"We are totally amazed that someone with his background can be employed in a job which includes dealing with the public. The members have done everything to avoid hurting the public and it is in the public interest that we are taking this action."

"Cars of skinheads have been driving past the picket, and fascist graffiti have been daubed on a wall nearby. The shop stewards have received mail from fascist organisations. One female striker has had her fence burned down and people knocking late at night."

"Up until now the regional reserve staff have been crossing the picket line at Hither Green, but they voted to support the day of action on Friday."

Nurses' strike action forces concessions

THE TORIES have been forced to give the nurses a far bigger pay award than they had intended as a result of the mass industrial action by nurses and the overwhelming support from millions of other workers.

By a Manchester student nurse

It was the government's attempt to abolish the special duty payments, giving many nurses a pay cut, which sparked off the strike action by 38 Manchester nurses in February.

The resulting strike wave throughout the NHS, and the massive support it aroused, gave a glimpse of what could be achieved by united, militant action.

However many nurses remain cautious towards the

award and believe that it still won't solve the problems of pressure and stress in the nursing profession.

The Tories hope that in making a more generous award to the nurses they will take the steam out of the debate over NHS funding, which was beginning to undermine their support.

But behind its caring facade the government aims to use the pay award to sow divisions amongst the nurses and between nurses and other health workers by increasing pay differentials.

Divide and rule

The 15 per cent rise which has been highlighted in the media does not exist for many nurses. They will only get four per cent now and then another rise in October when new staff

grading scales are to be introduced. Student nurses will then only get a top rise of 7.8 per cent. For many it will be as little as 6.3 per cent and some only four per cent. Some high grade ward sisters will get up to 54 per cent more.

For the majority of nurses this pay rise is completely inadequate. Nor does it redress the problems of funding and resources in the health service generally. The hypocrisy of the Tories is demonstrated by the introduction of YTS in Guy's Hospital. Trainees will earn as little as £27 per week for doing the same work as other staff.

The crisis in the health service remains—but the nurses have shown that determined industrial action gets results. This lesson won't be lost on other health workers when it comes to their turn.

Leadership election must be democratic

EVEN BEFORE the campaign for Labour's leadership has really begun, the big union leaders, whom Neil Kinnock has been contacting to try to secure their backing, appear to have already decided how their block vote will be cast.

GMBATU leader, John Edmonds and even Ron Todd of the left TGWU have reportedly been urging John Prescott to stand down and give Hattersley and the right a clear run. Apparently they have offered in return to ensure that the nature of the deputy leader's job will be discussed at October's party conference.

But this election cannot be left to a few union leaders to decide. It is about the future direction of the labour movement. Labour and trade union activists must demand the fullest democratic debate before votes are committed.

On TV recently Kinnock challenged his interviewer: "The question of the destruction of capitalism—now find out where in the history of the labour movement that has been proposed."

He asserted that an economic policy based on "public good, private bad," was "equally nonsensical as Thatcher's". He committed Labour to the mixed economy, in other words the continuation of capitalism.

Labour workers have the right to have a say about whether this is their vision of a socialist party, whether it is what they understand Clause Four (the socialist clause) of Labour's constitution to mean. That, not personalities, is what this election is about.

But there must be informed democracy, with the chance to debate the policies and question the candidates or their representatives, not postal ballots which would turn the election into a beauty contest, in which the main source of information about the candidates would be the Tory

By Jeremy Birch

press.

In every union and Labour Party there must be open discussion about the candidates and the future of the party. Delegates to party conference should then be mandated to support the candidates the members have voted for within the normal democratic structures of the movement.

Each union affiliated to the Labour Party must be pressed now to invite all the candidates to address the union conference. After an opportunity for discussion, the delegates should determine which candidate the union will back. That decision should then be binding on the union's executive and its delegation to Labour Party conference.

Within the local Labour parties, members must be given the maximum opportunity to be involved. Meetings of constituency, district or city parties, open to all members, should be arranged to hear the candidates or their spokespersons.

Then through the local ward branches and the constituency general management committee, the conference delegate should be instructed how to cast the constituency's vote in the leadership ballot at party conference.

Only the right can have an interest in limiting debate at every level. For the left, the leadership contest provides the opportunity to make ordinary workers aware of what is happening to their party, and then to rely on their loyalty to socialism and the class struggle, for victory.



Hattersley and Kinnock—rank and file must decide their future.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Policy review shambles

THE LABOUR Party has been touring the country 'listening'. This is supposed to be the means by which workers and members get their views taken into account in the Policy Review, which has been talking place simultaneously. But many of the 'listening' events have been a flop, with only a few party members attending.

At last year's Labour Party conference, many delegates warned that the Policy Review would be used as an excuse to dump long-standing socialist policies. They are being proved right.

There are seven Policy Review Groups (PRGs), on *Economic Equality, People at Work, A Productive and Competitive Economy, Consumers and the Community, Democracy for the Individual and the Community, The Social and Physical Environment and Britain and the World.*

They are made up of national executive committee members, Labour MPs, trade union representatives and advisors.

No rank-and-file members were allowed on the groups, though

members with "a special knowledge or interest" in the subjects could attend to give evidence or send in written evidence. But hardly anybody knew about this, so nobody has bothered.

So far, apart from the first meetings, the PRGs have been very badly attended. In fact one secretary has admitted that the whole thing has been a mess, with hardly anyone turning up or bothering to contribute because they did not know what the PRGs were meant to be doing.

The PRG on the economy has been particularly bad, with only a couple of people turning up. Once when the members were asked to produce statements on how a Labour government should tackle the economy, only Ken Livingstone bothered to write one. So the meeting was cancelled until the right wing could get their act together.

The bad attendance at the PRGs has meant that the statements now being produced are being based mainly on the work of the advisors, who are even more

removed from reality than the right-wingers in the party.

Thus the first draft of the *People at Work* group contained such gems as:

"Strikes are bad for business, costly for workers and unpopular with consumers"; and on the closed shop: "Those employees who do not wish to join the trade union would have to pay the equivalent of union dues to an agreed charity." These ideas were removed in the second draft.

Now constituency parties have been asked to try to keep their conference resolutions within the Review Groups' subjects.

The present right-wing leadership have contempt for the views of the rank and file of the party. Workers already know what they want from the next Labour government, but they want to know how the leadership is going to deliver it. The right wing are trying to avoid that discussion, because they have nothing to offer.

By a Militant reporter

Labour by-election victory

THE LIBERALS have suffered a serious defeat in Bermondsey, losing a council by-election in the Riverside ward, one of their key bases of support.

Labour won with 1,348 votes to the Liberals' 1,345, overturning a Liberal majority of over 400 with a swing of ten per cent to Labour.

The main reason for this victory is the campaigning work done by Bermondsey Labour Party, especially in the general election.

In this by-election, the Labour candidate, Coral Newell, was undemocratically imposed on the local party. She previously stood against Labour as an independent in 1982 and was election agent for John O'Grady, the ex-Labour independent in the Bermondsey by-election in 1983. She was suspended from the Labour Party for 18 months, rejoining only a few weeks ago.

She won the seat not on the basis of her political

programme, but because, despite her past record of anti-Labour activity, she is seen locally as a campaigner, with a record of fighting against the LDDC and the local council on behalf of local tenants.

Regional Labour Party officials are claiming the result as a victory over *Militant*. But Shareen Blackall, chair of Riverside party branch, said that nothing could be further from the truth. Despite the fact that Coral Newell was undemocratically imposed, local party members, especially *Militant* supporters, campaigned for Labour in the by-election.

Party members in Bermondsey are now demanding that the suspension of the party is lifted immediately, to allow it to campaign, particularly against the poll tax and the abolition of Ilea.

By a Militant reporter

Liverpool MP attacked in secret report

IN THE same week that Terry Fields, Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, was leading protests against the Tory government's social security cuts, it was reported that Peter Kilfoyle, the appointed 'policeman' of the Labour party on Merseyside, has written a report to the party's national executive committee attacking the MP and the influence of *Militant* in his constituency Labour Party.

Sensational stories in the press, taken from the report, claim that Terry Fields' parliamentary office is "a no-go area for non-militants" and that *Militant* plans to hijack official party meetings.

Proof of these absurd allegations, which may be used in expulsion hearings, is supposedly contained in a mysterious lost filofax, in Kilfoyle's hands!

Since the Broadgreen party was reconstituted after its suspension, support for the left has been growing, despite bureaucratic manoeuvring.

The local right wing, having lost the political argument, are now preparing for a wholesale purge. In a *Sunday Times* article, a leading 'moderate' in

Broadgreen was quoted as saying that the constituency should be closed and cleansed of *Militant* once and for all.

A right-wing delegate to the constituency party said on the local radio station that there would be a big purge in Broadgreen and he thought that *Militant* supporters deserve to be burnt at the stake!

It is not *Militant* supporters who are attempting to hijack the Labour Party, but the right wing. If they can't win the vote, they will wreck the party.

As for Terry Fields' office being a front, this is a scandalous allegation. His office is invaluable for the constituency. During last year's local and general elections, it was the main campaign headquarters.

It is used by ward party branches, the young socialists and women's sections for their regular meetings and by hundreds of constituents as an advice centre.

Sensational claims in the press against the MP and the party are not new. Some weeks ago Kilfoyle

and party officers claimed in the press that police were investigating the accounts. The treasurer even reported that to the constituency party.

Fabrication

But when this was checked out, and a delegation sent to see the party's bank manager, it was proved to be a complete fabrication. It was yet another attempt to smear the name of the Broadgreen party and create an atmosphere of suspicion.

But the majority of party members, trade union activists and Labour supporters in the constituency will not take any notice of these attacks against Terry Fields.

They will judge him by his actions in supporting workers in struggle against Tory attacks and by his stand as a worker's MP on a worker's wage. Any attempt by the right wing to close down Broadgreen Labour Party, conduct another purge or deselect Terry Fields will be met with massive resistance.



Terry Fields MP.

Nigerian general strike

ALL NIGERIA'S 42 industrial unions have called for industrial action, to demand withdrawal of increases in the prices of oil products.

Report next week.

Here comes the poll-axe

Youth

and the poll-tax



Labour Party Young Socialists

Youth lead the struggle

Now go for a massive LPYS—Socialism in our time
Greetings from Marxists on the LPYS National Committee

SEVEN HUNDRED thousand young people will face paying tax for the first time when the poll tax is introduced.

The tax will average out at £400 to £450. How many young workers will be able to pay that?

The Tories' plans are stoking up a hatred for them and their system the likes of which has never been seen before. Michael Forsyth, the Tory MP for Stirling, will save £1299 per year, while working class families face a cut in their living standards of up to £30 a week.

Students will have to pay at least £50. Student identity cards are to be introduced to prevent them avoiding the tax. In fact some of the press have discussed introducing them for everyone.

"The community charge registration officer will be Big Brother breathing down your neck," is how electoral

registration officer Jim Thomson summed up the terrible threat to civil liberties.

The tax will cause friction in thousands of working class households.

Snoopers

One person in each household is deemed responsible for collecting. Working class parents, with already overstretched budgets, will face a choice. Either further cuts in the family income by paying their children's tax or turn their children out on the street.

Many young people will leave home. Some will drift from town to town in order to avoid paying the tax. They will be hunted by the snoopers who the Tories admit will have to be employed.

As well as being an attack on the poor, the tax is an attack on local councils. It will mean less money for local services.

The price of sport and leisure facilities will rise. Young people who use these facilities will be tempted to turn to drink and drugs, crime and vandalism.

The Labour leaders say they can't encourage people to break the law. But many people are already saying they will be forced to break the law because they will be unable to pay the tax.

If a collective campaign is not organised they face the prospect of being hounded by the bailiffs and picked off by the courts one by one.

There has never been a better chance for the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) to sink roots into working class communities. They must channel the anger on the streets into the ranks of the labour movement and fight to defeat this vicious tax.

By Gavin Brown
Leith LPYS

Mutiny on the Radio

BORED BY Bros? Sick of Sinitta? Take a listen to Colours by The Men They Couldn't Hang. The band once played a national benefit for the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC). Now they've produced a political song which has managed to find its way onto Radio One's daytime playlist.

It is about a sailors' mutiny at the time of the American and French revolutions.

One of the leaders stands defiantly at the gallows, waiting to die. He appeals to the workers and peasants awaiting his execution:

"To the masters we are the rabble
The swinish multitude
But we can rearrange the colours
Of the red, the white and blue."

The point of the song is a symbolic changing of the Union Jack:

"Red is the colour of the new republic
Blue is the colour of the sea
White is the colour of my innocence
No surrender to your mercy."
It's good to hear a song with a message, instead of the usual *I Should Be So Lucky/Cross My Heart/Pump Up The Volume* dress!

John Hird
East London



Pupils march to

Save ILEA

THREE HUNDRED school students from all over London marched through the centre of the city on Saturday 23 April.

They were protesting against the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (Ilea). The action was organised by members of the newly set up London Pupils' Union and the Student Action for Education along with the School Students Union (SSU).

The march was well organised and the mood was very anti-Tory. Fifty school students signed up to join the Labour Party Young

Socialists (LPYS) and a number of Militants were sold.

Dan Lewenstein from the SSU called for further action and a strike on a schoolday which received a tremendous response. Many students felt they would have got more people out if it hadn't been a Saturday.

A meeting was called for the next Tuesday night to set up an Ilea students' joint action committee to co-ordinate future united action. This may well include a strike in the near future.

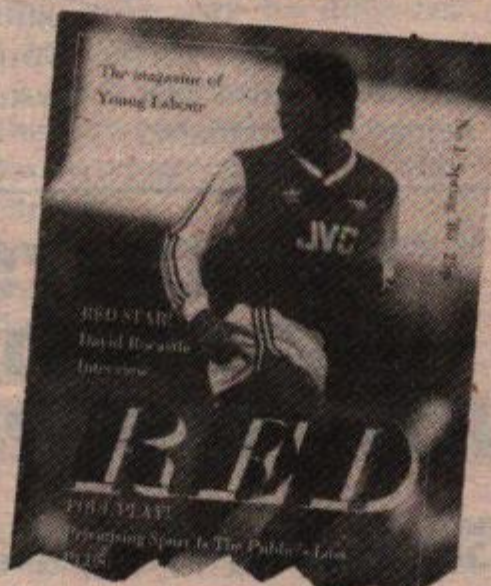
By Jess Beishon

Who will read Red?

LAST WEEK we asked you what this publication is. The answer is not a football programme, but *Red*, "the magazine of Young Labour". It is the long awaited replacement for *Socialist Youth*, the paper run by the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), which the Labour leadership closed.

Inside are an interview with David Rocastle, quotes from party leaders and articles ranging from the Alton Bill to Labour's 'Get Busy' campaign.

Red is a 10-15 minute



read and doesn't have much impact.

Socialist Youth consisted mainly of articles sent in by young people. This is a magazine written on behalf of young people. Worst of all,

none of the articles suggest how to fight the Tories.

When establishing this magazine was discussed I argued its editorial board or editor should be LPYS age and elected. This was ignored.

Despite promises neither the Labour Students or the LPYS were consulted properly about *Red*. The day before it was printed Linda Douglas, the LPYS rep on Labour's national executive, had a phone call asking for a quote and photo to go in the back of the

and photo to go in the back of the magazine to endorse it. There was no time for her to see if she approved of the magazine so she declined the offer.

This quarterly magazine can't replace our monthly *Socialist Youth*. Labour desperately needs a paper that will attract working class youth. So the battle to regain *Socialist Youth* must continue, it is needed now more than ever.

By Paul Ursell
Ex-editor of *Socialist Youth*

Wilmorton FE College Labour Club
Demonstration

Smash racism— Unity to defeat the Tories!

Saturday 21 May
Assemble 11.30am
Derby Council House



Please send us your contributions for *Left and Right* to the *Militant* office, by Thursday of the week before publishing.

Psychic cat healer

THE NEWLY elected right-wing Tory councillor for Lewisham's Sydenham West ward is, not surprisingly, against councils helping minority groups. He says gays have got the Samaritans and don't need any other organisations. No 'loony left' stuff for him.

But councillor Coombs is a bit of a minority himself—he claims he is a psychic healer and can heal cats over the phone. He also claims to have held a human 'heal-in', for which he was dubbed The Devil by Christian fundamentalists.

This non-loony once drew up a plan for converting council garages into temporary accommodation for the homeless. Perhaps he needs some help after all.

American Express?—that will do nicely!

AMERICAN ARMED forces using British bases have built up a debt to the government of £31 million for building work.

Part of the debt was caused because the Public Services Agency, which subsidises the cost of running the bases, was short of money. MPs have condemned the agency's inefficiency—but call for more competitive tendering as a solution.

But when Liverpool council was accused of raising debts in its battle for more resources, councillors were surcharged and debarred from office. But then building missile sites is far more important than building houses for Liverpool workers.

With a little help from their (Tory) friends

WHEN IS a Tory not a Tory? When she is in Liverpool and votes Liberal, "just to get you lot out!" This was the comment of one Tory woman canvassed in Anfield ward for the local elections.

Not only was she voting Liberal but was actively campaigning for them in another ward. Who said something about extremists infiltrating the Liberal Party?

From a Liverpool Young Socialist

Changing the rules to suit the cuts

A LETTER sent to households from the chairman of South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority paints a bleak picture. For the third year running a spending limit far below what is required has been imposed. The letter says "...the protection of lives and property in South Yorkshire is being sacrificed in the name of economy."

However the government has solved the Fire authority's problem of being unable to fund the minimum manning levels—it recommends employing 28 fewer fire fighters than before.

From Dave Milsom

'Bath the baby in the washing up bowl'

Social security insult to mother of three

EVEN BEFORE the new social security regulations came into force, those on benefits have become victims of callous, bureaucratic DHSS regulations.

By Ben Eastop

In February a single parent and mother of three in Coventry was told by the DHSS that she should bath her baby in the kitchen sink or the washing up bowl.

Mrs Vervoort asked for the decision not to give her a single payment for baby clothes and blankets to be reviewed. But the answer was still no. She was told that "if the child has to be taken out then he should be wrapped in one of the claimant's sheets".

"I think it was disgusting", Mrs Vervoort said. "When the baby was born I refused to bring him out of hospital until I got the money for some clothes. In the end the health visitor lent me some clothes".

Because she survives entirely from benefits Mrs Vervoort is at the mercy of DHSS officials—virtually everything she does is controlled by guidelines. She was told to do all her washing by hand and dry it in front of the fire, even though her son habitually wets the bed.

"Once, when it rained for

several days, the washing piled up in the kitchen and went mouldy. When I asked the DHSS about it they gave me a list of questions to answer: How long did you leave your washing? Did you rewash it afterwards to remove the mildew? Why didn't you hang it outside?"

"I've got no heater up in the bedroom, so the DHSS told me that we should all sleep in the front room downstairs", Mrs Vervoort explained.

'I was literally in tears, I knew they wouldn't give me the money'

"The principal child health visitor said that my baby is a cold baby and should be kept warm. My heating allowance has been cut from £4.50 to £2.20"

Now with the new social security regulations even the £80 maternity grant, which Mrs Vervoort used to buy a pram and a cot, will be abolished.

"I could never afford to repay a loan", she said. "After the baby was born the DHSS said that I had to go round the town asking the banks for a loan. But I didn't want a loan because I knew I couldn't repay it."

"I went to the Halifax where



Mrs Vervoort with her baby and son.

Photo: Ben Eastop

I'd had an account before I split up with my husband. They refused me, but still the social said they wouldn't give me the money.

"I was literally in tears, because I knew before I set off round the town that they wouldn't give it to me. The health visitor was mad at me

for going out anyway. She said: 'What would have happened if you had had a haemorrhage, or passed out.' I was exhausted and fuming.

"Why should I have to struggle just to live. I should be able to have the things that I need."

TV REVIEW

THE BBC'S documentary *Black and White* clearly exposed racial prejudice which exists in Britain and highlighted the very subtle way it has developed.

By Kevin Dale
Bristol West LPYS

Using a concealed camera and recording equipment, two journalists visited Bristol to test how widespread racial discrimination was. Tim Marshall is a white journalist and Geoff Small is a black journalist. Their stay in Bristol was filmed on the hidden camera as they attempted to check into bed and breakfast accommodation, flats and bed-sitters, and to get jobs and sign up for sports clubs.

The method they used was for Tim to follow ten or fifteen minutes behind Geoff to test the reaction of landlords, employers and publicans.

Some openly discriminated. Whilst checking bed and breakfast accommodation Geoff was turned away at several places, which a short while later offered a room to Tim.

This was reflected in the job applications. When Geoff went for a pub job he was politely told to come back later to see the landlord. As he left customers and bar staff

burst out laughing because they knew he wouldn't get the job.

Sports clubs told Geoff that they were full up, but offered membership to Tim. At nightclubs Geoff was told it was couples' night only, but later let Tim in on his own.

Such discrimination came as no surprise to the black community in Bristol, which was chosen for the programme because the city has the national average of black people—about four per cent of the population.

Underhand

But the documentary surprised many white people, particularly at the underhand way some people displayed their prejudice. Of course not all white people discriminated and many treated Tim and Geoff no differently.

Racial discrimination is against the law—but these laws were openly broken. Why is this?

Obviously the Tory press, particularly the gutter journalism of tabloids like the *Sun*, has played a role in fostering the poisonous ideas of racism. Areas like St Pauls have been labelled no-go areas, but other estates like Laurence Weston in Bristol, with no large black population, still have their share of the trouble.

Black and white

Hidden racism revealed

The local press coverage of the *Black and White* programme was a case in point. It claimed that one woman featured on the programme showing racial prejudice had hundreds of threatening phone calls and death threats and had to call the police. On checking this Tim Marshall found that she had received just five phone calls.

Racism is a political question and needs to be taken up vigorously by the Labour Party. The Labour Party Young Socialists have a proud record on fighting racism and want to see the Labour Party launch a national campaign on the issue.

In the programme Geoff would never have known that he was being discriminated

against had he not been followed by Tim. This is a frightening development of racism which must be overcome by a multicultural education system, real opportunities in jobs and housing, and cultural development of leisure and entertainment facilities.

But ultimately no laws, or even education, can eradicate racism from a class-ridden society. Racism is fostered by the appalling social conditions encouraged by capitalism which turns whites against blacks.

Black and white workers, especially the youth, can defeat racism, but only by uniting together to defeat the Tories and conquering the system they represent.

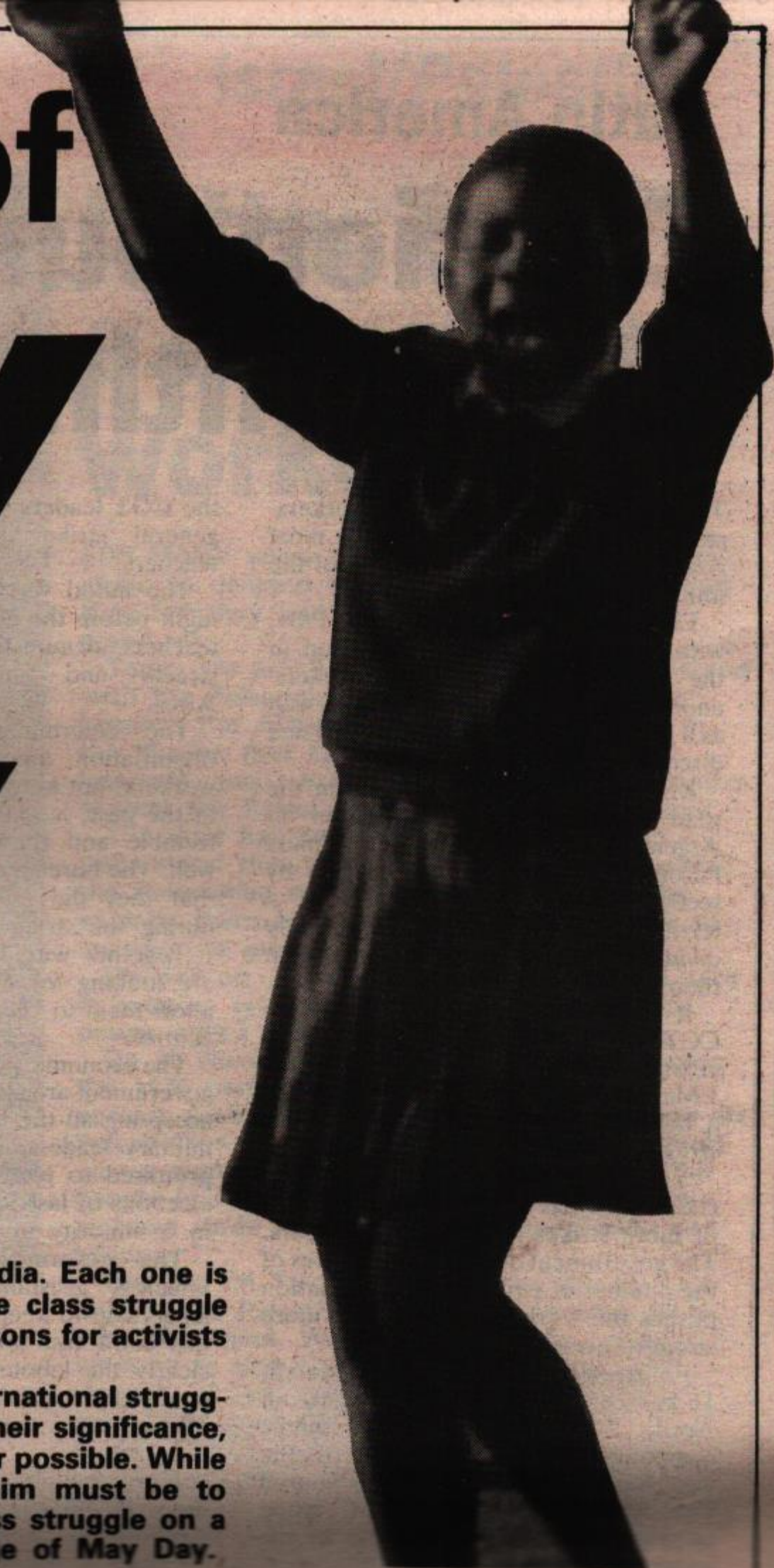
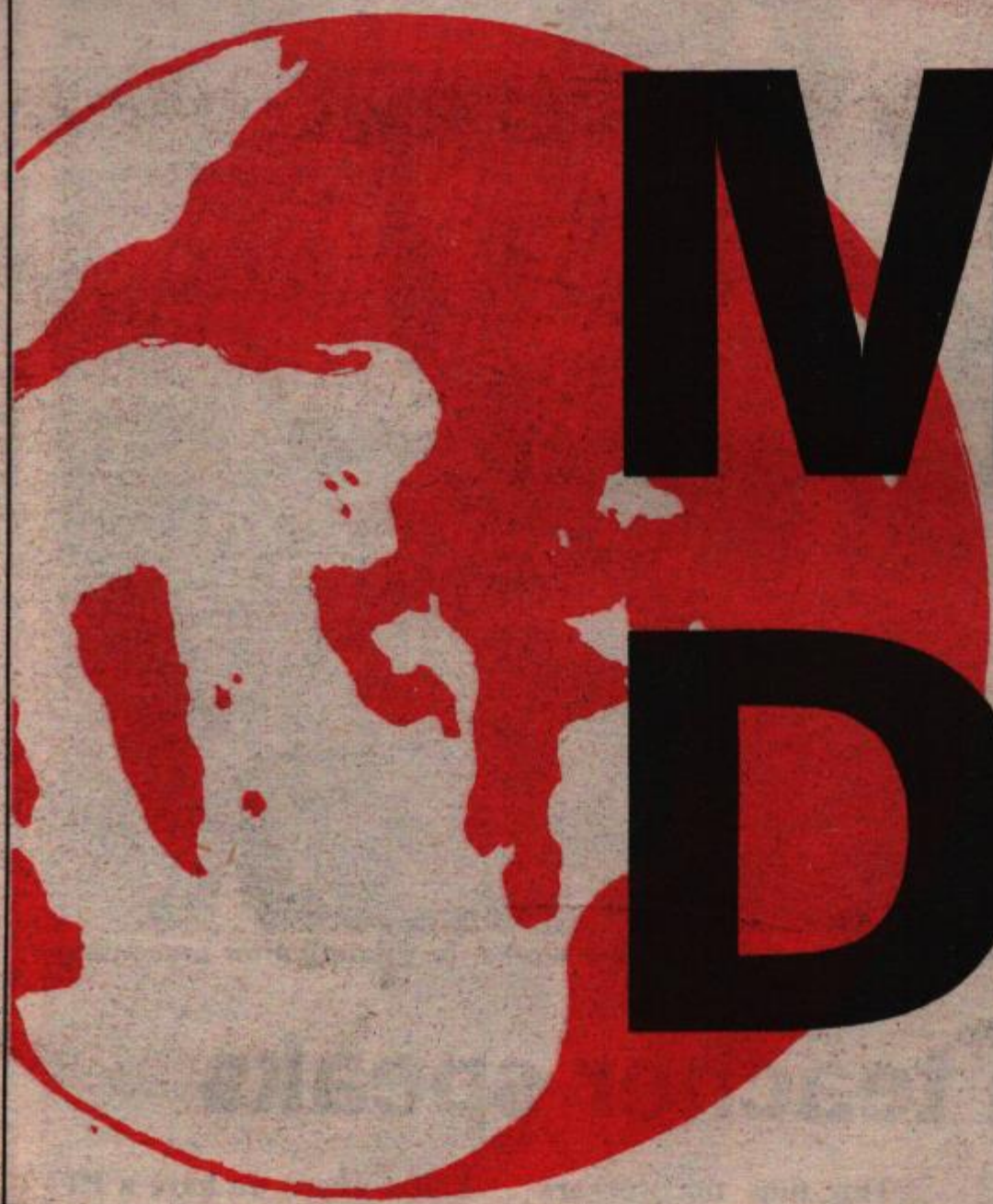
MERSEYSIDE BLACK AND ASIAN MILITANT SUPPORTERS

Send international fraternal greetings for May Day

- ★ Smash apartheid in South Africa
- ★ Fight racism internationally
- ★ Support workers' solidarity world wide

The message of

MAY DAY



MAY DAY is the traditional celebration of international working-class solidarity.

For Marxists this does not mean one-off 'left' speeches and ceremonial processions. Action in support of working people fighting for their rights in other countries is a priority all the year round.

May Day is an occasion for highlighting this vital task. Most of the reports on these pages are from activists in the countries concerned, describing struggles which—for obvious reasons—have been distorted, obs-

cured or ignored by the capitalist media. Each one is significant in the development of the class struggle internationally, and has important lessons for activists in other countries.

Militant supporters should raise international struggles in the labour movement, explain their significance, and organise solidarity action wherever possible. While strengthening those in action, the aim must be to deepen our understanding of the class struggle on a world scale. That is the real message of May Day.

South Africa

Ja baas no more from us!

By a black South African railway worker

I AM a railway worker and I will stay away from work twice in the next ten days. On Friday 22 April I will stay away to commemorate the deaths of my comrades who fell on that day in our strike last year. And on May Day because that is workers' day.

It is important to show solidarity. As individuals there is very little we can do, but we can work wonders when we are united in a union. The strike last year changed my life and I think the lives of other comrades as well. The bosses we work for know we will no longer be bullied into submission. It will be 'Ja baas' ('yes boss') no more from us!

Last year on May Day we had a meeting with other workers. We got to hear of their problems, and though they think this year may be different because the government banned so many organisations, I think we must have a meeting, because we cannot stop where the government says we must stop. Our comrades in commemoration will show that we are still strong.

Some comrades are beginning to lose strength so our meetings will recharge their will.

When you go on strike you always have the idea that somebody may lose their life. Perhaps you. But you never think that it will be your best friend who will be shot. But there is no battle without casualties.

We owe it to those comrades who died last year to organise more forces so that we can win to the end. We are fighting because we know that we are right, and when you know you are right there is no force that will change your mind.

More and more people are joining in the battle now. You see people are prepared to fight and with more forces we will conquer. It is important for our union to get support overseas. We hope workers in Britain will help us in our struggle.



22 April 1987: Striking railway workers fight back against SA police on the streets of Johannesburg.

Stop the hangman Botha

By Ian African youth in S Africa

THE FATE of the Sharpeville Six has drawn great interest both nationally and internationally. Friday morning, 18 March, three days before Sharpeville day, the six were to be hanged.

Probably, on Thursday evening the hangman was preparing the ropes in order to break the necks of the six comrades whose crime is to be 'part of the crowd' that killed Joseph Dlamini, the black deputy mayor of Sharpeville.

Barely three weeks before refusing clemency to the Sharpeville Six, the State President P.W. Botha granted it to a former policeman, George John Sindane, who was sentenced to death for what the judge said was 'cold-blooded' murder of an innocent youth.

This year the State President halted the murder trial of six soldiers in

the Windhoek Supreme Court who face charges of murdering Immanuel Shifidi, a strong SWAPO member and former Robben Island prisoner, at a public meeting at Katatura township in November 1986.

Yet the Sharpeville Six are to be given the rope for the killing the state admitted they did not causally commit. Strange how bourgeois justice works.

P.W. Botha's partisan way of granting clemency is not surprising either. The government is driving towards the October municipal by-elections and faces the right-wing problem. The government wants to be seen to be strong in executing strong 'justice' and maintaining strong security.

One way of doing this is to strangle the life out of the Sharpeville Six, not that they are legally blameworthy, but because they need

to be made an example of. Other manoeuvres have been the cross border raid into Botswana and an assassination of a ANC officer in Paris.

The 41 comrades on death row are due to hang too. They are militant youth and workers whose 'crimes' were committed in the laboratory of struggle. They don't have to hang. And we do not have to appeal to the capitalist governments to pressurise the SA government as the sole strategy of saving their lives.

We have to rely on the pressures that can be asserted by the working class nationally and internationally.

This will build our movement and strengthen international working class solidarity necessary in the long term to enable us to 'talk Russian' (in the tradition of the October revolution) to the racist capitalist state of Botha and the bosses.

Israel/Palestine



Palestinian youth in Nablus carrying a comrade shot by Israeli forces.

Letter from a Palestinian worker

FOR MANY years the Palestinian workers were afraid to demand their rights. In the end, when they felt they had nothing left to fear, they stood up.

Today we ask if the Israeli workers have stood with the Palestinian workers. We answer 'no', because the Jewish workers live constantly in the illusion that Zionism represents their interests, and are a tool in the hands of Zionism against the Palestinians with whom they work.

The time has come for Israeli workers to understand that there is no difference between the Palestinian workers and himself. Zionism exploits them both. It divides them in order to increase its profits.

We call on Jewish workers to join hands with Palestinian workers and to conquer the state power which oppresses all workers.

On 30 March 1988 Land Day (commemorating the 1976 general strike and demonstrations against Arab land confiscation in Israel, when six Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces—Editor) was a sign of solidarity with our land and our people in the (occupied) territories, who have suffered three months from the oppression and killings.

You see on TV what is done by the Zionists against the Palestinian people in an attempt to steal their land. We call upon all the world's workers to demonstrate and identify with the struggle of Palestinian workers against the repressive state machine.

We call upon the Jewish workers to join the struggle against the oppressor of both of us. I call on all workers in the Middle East, especially in Occupied Palestine: competition between workers helps the exploiters.

Workers of the world, unite against world capitalism, Arab reaction and Zionist barbarism.

By MM, A Palestinian worker

Bitter health disputes in Israel

ALMOST DROWNED in the press coverage of the Palestinian uprising, there has been a series of prolonged and bitter disputes in the Israeli state health service that make the disputes in Britain's NHS look like a storm in a tea-cup.

Almost every section of health service workers has been involved. The strikes, overtime bans and works to rule are almost all aimed at achieving parity in wages and shift payments with the hospitals run by the Israeli trade union federation, the Histadrut.

In February, after a 12-day strike of clerical, maintenance and cleaning workers, the government invoked emergency powers to force 'vital workers' back to work, although at the time 7,000 stayed out.

Hospital physicians have continued

their own sanctions, either refusing to work beyond the shifts for which they are rostered, or refusing all but emergency treatment. Anaesthetists have, in any case, been carrying out their own sanctions for six months so, in effect, only emergency operations are possible.

In March a series of one-day strikes were launched by 7,000 microbiologists, biochemists and laboratory and blood bank workers over pay. On the first day's strike, these workers even refused to provide any emergency staff.

In addition, there has been a long-running battle between the government and the workers of the Magen David Adom (Red Star of David) which runs the only national ambulance and blood transfusion service.

The government wants the MDA to introduce sweeping cuts that would mean the elimination of six of the 22 stations it runs throughout Israel. The workers have threatened strikes and sanctions. In the end, only a last minute (and temporary) climb-down by the government stopped the seizing up of the national ambulance network.

These strikes are taking place at a time when the Israeli capitalist class is urging government cuts in education, health, social services and public transport. They are an anticipation of even greater class battles that will take place in the future as Israeli workers are forced to defend their living standards.

By Peter Jackson

Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan

The capitalist media present the Russian troop withdrawal from Afghanistan as a major setback for the Soviet Union. Is this true? What is the outlook for the Stalinist regime in Afghanistan? A Marxist explanation of the background to the latest events, and the perspectives, will appear in *Militant* soon.

Forward to socialism and the First Division
Millwall Militants
A team that dared to fight

MSF Stevenage
craft sector send May Day greetings to all our comrades fighting for socialism

Margaret Thatcher says homosexuality is alien.
The LPYS of Nottingham South say homosexuals are human and have the right of all workers to live and fight for socialism

For a decent education, a living wage and a socialist future.
May Day greetings from Bermondsey YTURC.

For a Marxist councillor.
From Bournville Militant supporters.

Stafford YTURC say:
"Youth unite and fight"
No retreat, no surrender, forward to socialism!
Fraternal greetings from Conisbrough Militant supporters

████████████████████
Nuevo Claridad, Spanish Marxist paper, greets socialists around the world

████████████████████
Militant supporters in Bootle Women's Section
Neither Harley Street nor the backstreet, but a socialist NHS.

████████████████████
Oxford Militant supporters. Support socialist revolution worldwide!
Oxford East LPYS says build a school students' union
Educate youth for a socialist future!

For workers' unity. Socialistiki Ekfrasi
Cypriot Marxist paper

Cardiff University Militant supporters say students and workers unite to defeat Baker's bill
Defend education, fight for socialism

May Day greetings from Militant supporters in London Postal Engineering NCU(E)
For a fighting socialist trade union

Kent University Militant supporters
Workers and students unite to defeat the Gerbill

=====
May Day greetings to the workers of the world from
Marxists in Israel - Palestine.
PO Box 26097 Tel Aviv

Fight racism, smash capitalism. For workers' unity and socialism.
Lambeth Labour Party Young Socialists.
Norwood, Vauxhall Streatham

=====
North Staffs Militant supporters
say down with the Tories, down with the bosses.
Forward to socialism

Trotsky's grand speak at Militar

MILITANT IS proud to announce that Esteban Volkov, grandson of Leon Trotsky, will be speaking at the Militant rally on 19 June in London's Alexandra Palace.

He is campaigning for the political rehabilitation of all the victims of Stalin's purges, including his grandfather, murdered in 1940 by agents of the Stalinist regime, after a life struggling for a socialist world and against the betrayal of the Russian revolution of 1917.

ROB SEWELL relates the tragic, but inspiring story of Trotsky's family, and Esteban's early years of life in the shadow of Stalin's terror.

L EON TROTSKY was undoubtedly one of the greatest revolutionary figures in history. 48 years ago he was brutally murdered by a Stalinist agent.

His contribution, together with those of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, has laid down the theoretical foundations of scientific socialism.

Trotsky's co-leadership, with Lenin, of the Russian October revolution, his organization of the Red Army, his work in founding the Communist International and his struggle with Stalinism, are a colossal testament to his outstanding ability and commitment to the socialist revolution.

His assassination on 20 August 1940 was no mere revenge attack by Stalin. It marked the culmination of a systematic campaign by the bureaucracy to physically eliminate all the old Bolshevik leaders and all those who had any direct connection with the October revolution. Those who stood in the path of creating a totalitarian regime under Stalin were to be wiped out.

Stalin's purges

T HE ISOLATION of the revolution, in an economically backward country, had resulted in the growth of a privileged bureaucratic caste hostile to socialism. Stalin was the figurehead of this alien elite.

To carry through a political counter-revolution against October and consolidate its privileged position, Stalin needed to destroy all the vestiges of workers' democracy.

The Left Opposition founded by Trotsky set itself the task of defending the political gains of the revolution and the interests of the proletariat generally.

This was not simply a struggle of ideas, but represented the clash of opposing class and material interests. It involved not just debate, but expulsion, sackings, beatings, frame-ups, exile and murder of Oppositionists.

The defeat of the Left Opposition in November 1927 was not due to the superiority of the ideas of Stalinism, but the difficult objective position - isolation, material backwardness, weariness of the proletariat and the delay of

the world revolution, which strengthened the hold of the bureaucracy.

Stalin used the expulsion of the Opposition to exile Trotsky in early 1928 to Alma Ata, and then to the Turkish island of Prinkipo. He was accompanied by his wife, Natalya, and elder son, Leon Sedov (who was forced to leave his wife and son in Moscow).

Sedov played a key role in the Left Opposition and became Trotsky's political collaborator, devoted to the defence of genuine Marxism.

In January 1931, Sedov went to live in Berlin to work on the Bulletin of the Left Opposition. At this time Trotsky's elder daughter Zina, having been forced to leave her daughter behind in Leningrad, arrived in Prinkipo. She was accompanied by her young son, Seva (now Esteban Volkov).

Her husband, Platon Volkov, had been arrested and deported to Siberia in 1928 for his Opposition views. Trotsky's younger daughter had died of consumption at the age of 26. Her husband had also been deported to Siberia. What happened to their two children is unknown.

When Stalin deprived Trotsky of Soviet nationality in February 1932, all his family automatically became stateless emigres.

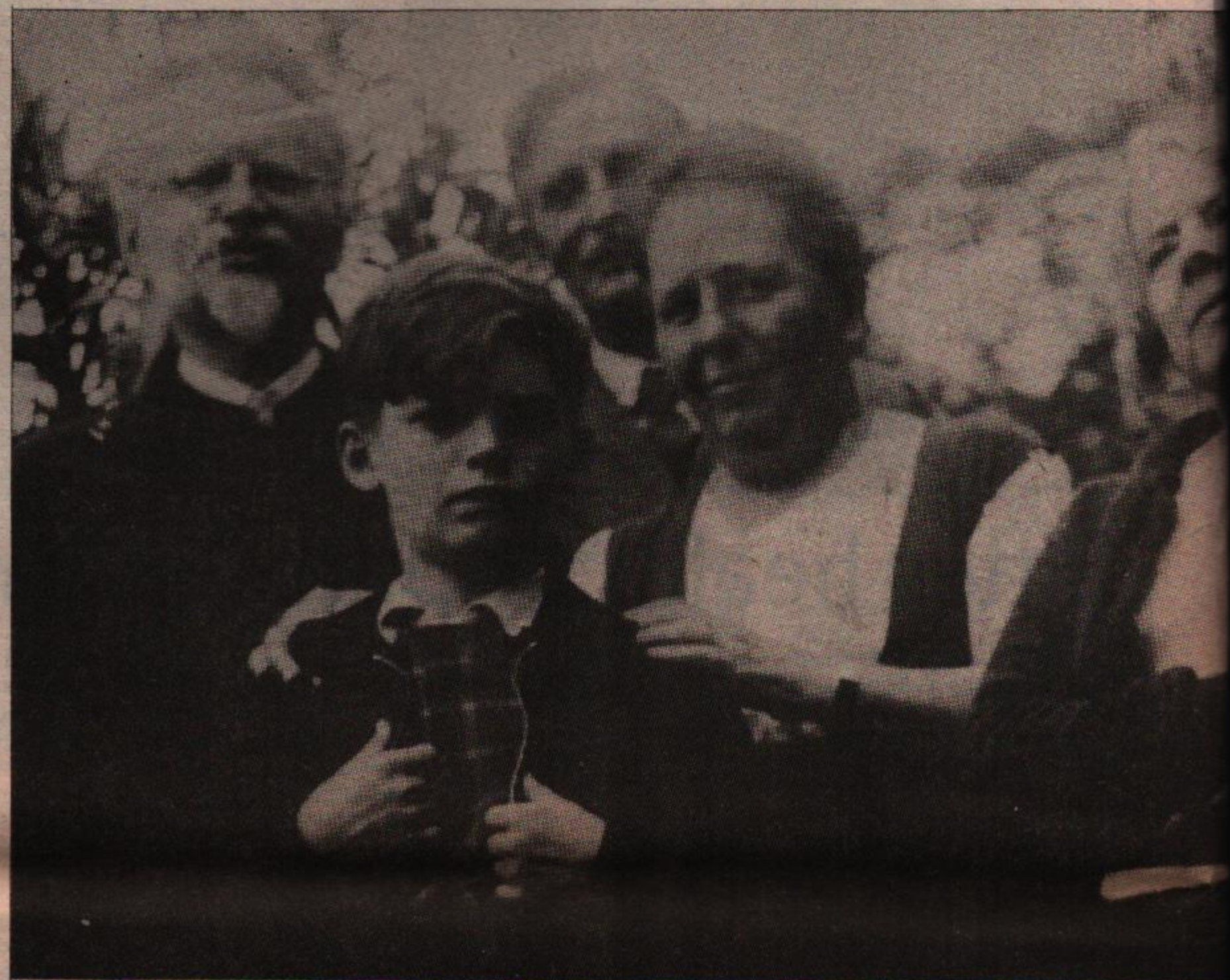
The pressures of family separation, the death of Nina, and the continual persecution of the Stalin secret police, placed enormous personal strain on Zina, which affected her mental state.

After some persuasion she went to Berlin for psychiatric treatment. With some delay Seva went to join her, but within a week of his arrival Zina tragically committed suicide.

Leon Sedov, with his close friend and companion, Jeanne Martin, assumed responsibility for Seva. Before they were all forced to flee from the Nazis in March 1933, Sedov managed to telephone his brother Sergei in Moscow to break the news of Zina's death. That was the last time they spoke to one another.

In 1934, the murder of the high-ranking bureaucrat, Kirov, was used as a pretext to launch large scale state repression by Stalin. He was probably assassinated on Stalin's orders or Stalin connived at his murder.

It was the opening phase of the monstrous frame-ups in the Moscow Trials which led to the exter-



The young Esteban Volkov (Seva) in Mexico with (l to r) Trotsky, Alfred and Marguerite Rosmer and Natalya

mination of Lenin's close comrades and millions of others between 1936-38.

As early as March 1929, Trotsky had predicted: "There is only one thing left for Stalin, to try to draw a line of blood between the official party and the Opposition. He must at all costs link the Opposition to attempted assassinations, to preparation of armed insurrection, etc."

In 1928, the Oppositionist G V Butov, Trotsky's secretary in the War Commissariat, was framed, imprisoned and tortured. He died after a 50 day hunger strike. J Blumkin, after having visited Trotsky in Istanbul in 1929, was



Trotsky's daughter, Zina.

executed. Soon after, Oppositionists Silov and Rabinovich were shot, after an unsuccessful attempt to link them to 'espionage'.

Trotsky wrote in his diary (Ap-

ril 1935): "Alexandra Lvovna Sokolovskaya, my first wife, who was living in Leningrad with my grandchildren, has been deported to Siberia..."

The letters from his son Sergei, who was a professor in the Institute of Technology, stopped arriving. On 1 June, he wrote: "He (Sergei) is in prison; now it is no longer guesswork..."

The first Moscow Trial caught Trotsky under house arrest in Norway. The bulk of work in exposing the frame-up was left to Leon Sedov, the principal organizer of the International Left Opposition.

The second Trial opened in January 1937 on Trotsky's arrival in Mexico. As with the first, the two principal defendants named were Trotsky and Leon Sedov, accused of forming an alliance with Hitler and the Emperor of Japan to destroy the USSR.

At this time, Sergei was rearrested in Siberia and charged with the attempted poisoning of factory workers under the instructions of his father! His first sentence in Siberia was five years in a labour camp.

Whilst there he met a number of Trotskyists who organized a widespread hunger strike lasting 132 days. He was ordered back to Moscow in early 1937, accused of mass murder, but refused to break under torture. His ultimate fate is unknown, like tens of millions who perished in Stalin's death camps.

Stalin's secret police, the GPU, began to send agents, into the ranks of the Opposition, their task to disrupt the movement and eliminate its leaders. In Paris, Sedov lived in constant fear of his

life, having narrowly escaped assassination at Antibes and Moulhouse in 1936 and 1937.

Shortly afterwards Erwin Wolf, Trotsky's young secretary, was murdered by the GPU. Sedov had been warned by Ignace Reiss, a GPU chief who broke with Stalin to join the Trotskyists, that he was on top of a murder list. Reiss' body was later found riddled with bullet holes.

A certain 'Etienne' Zborowski, due to his knowledge of Russian, assisted Sedov in his work on the Bulletin in Paris. Twenty years later, at the American Senate Committee on Internal Security, he admitted to being a Stalinist agent whose job was to infiltrate the Trotskyist movement, report on its activities, particularly report on Sedov and Trotsky.

His almost weekly reports were read by Stalin personally. Zborowski testified that he had informed the GPU about the movements of Ignace Reiss.

He had also informed them of the whereabouts of W Krivitsky, another high ranking official who had broken with Stalin, whom the GPU attempted to assassinate in Marseilles. (They tracked him down and murdered him in 1941).

Sedov, under the strain of overwork and ill-health, was advised by Zborowski to enter a certain clinic for a routine appendicitis operation.

It was run by Stalinists. After a speedy recovery, Sedov suffered an unexpected relapse. He died, delirious and in pain on 16 February 1938. It is presumed he was poisoned. It was stated at the Senate Hearings that his doctor was 'a GPU man'.

son to t rally

Militant RALLY

ALEXANDRA PALACE

19 JUNE 1988

12-6 pm £6 in advance
£7 at the door

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Return to MILITANT RALLY: 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.
Ring rally hot line 01-533 3311 ext 227.



Trotsky's sons. Sergei (top) and Leon Sedov (below).

Trotsky's murder

TROTSKY ASKED Jeanne to come to Mexico with Esteban to live with them, but she refused. She also prevented Esteban from going alone, despite Trotsky's pleas. Eventually, after a long delay and much acrimony he was taken over to Coyoacan by Alfred and Marguerite Rosmer in August 1939.

By this time, Rudolf Klement, the key organiser of the founding Congress of the Fourth International, had been kidnapped and murdered by the GPU. Stalin had become obsessed with the need to silence Trotsky.

A special assassination squad was organised, involving GPU agents fresh from Spain and leaders of the Mexican Communist Party.

In the early hours of 24 May 1940, Trotsky and Natalya were suddenly woken by a burst of gun-fire. Two hundred shots were fired into their bedroom as they laid face-down on the floor. Fortunately, they were only slightly wounded.

They could hear Seva calling 'Grandpa' from the next room. They dashed in to see him. His room was on fire from an incendiary bomb and he had vanished. A trail of blood led out onto the patio. Trotsky found him being comforted by the Rosmers after being wounded in the foot.

"The true rehabilitation of Trotsky would be the restitution of historic truth and the publication of his works in the Soviet Union."

It was soon discovered that one of Trotsky's secretaries had been kidnapped during the raid. The body of 25-year-old Sheldon Harte was found a month later buried in a lime-pit.

The raiding party consisted of 25 Stalinists headed by the leading Mexican CP'er David Siqueiros, who had been involved with the GPU death squads in Spain. The ring leaders were arrested and imprisoned, but released in March 1941 for 'lack of material and incriminating evidence'.

Soon after the attack, Trotsky wrote a short pamphlet entitled *Stalin Seeks My Death*, in which he states: "I can state that I live on this earth not in accordance with the rule but as an exception to the rule".

He knew that he had very little time left and was eager to finish his biography of Stalin. The end of the Spanish civil war saw a steady stream of GPU agents released for other duties,



Memorial stone in Mexico City.

especially in Mexico after the Siqueiros failure. The net was closing in.

With the direct assistance of 'Etienne' Zborowski, a young Stalinist agent Ramon Mercader (alias Jacson, alias Mornard) wormed his way into the Trotsky household, by seducing the American Trotskyist Sylvia Agelof who was close to the Rosmers.

After much planning, Mercader was allowed to visit Trotsky for the second time on 20 August 1940. Under his mack he concealed an ice pick with a sawn-down handle. When they were alone in Trotsky's study, Mercader stood behind him and drove the weapon into Trotsky's head.

Amazingly Trotsky fought off Mercader's attempted second blow. The assassin was then overcome by the guards. In the arms of his wife, Trotsky said: "Natasha, I love you. Seva must be taken away from all this..."

Trotsky turned to his secretary: "Tell the boys not to kill him. He must talk." After an emergency operation he fell into a coma and died, aged 62, on 21 August.

Lying through his teeth, Mercader denied he received his orders from Stalin. He retreated into silence throughout the trial and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for murder.

His mother had also been involved in the plot, being also in the pay of the GPU. On her arrival in the USSR soon afterwards, Beria, the head of the GPU, presented her personally to Stalin who decorated her with the Order of Lenin for her part in the murder.

Stalin also awarded the Order of the Hero of the Soviet Union to Mercader, to be held by his mother until his release. That came on 6 May 1960. He left for Cuba, then Prague, then on to Moscow. It is understood that he died of bone cancer in Cuba in 1978.

For five days Trotsky's body laid in state, where about 300,000 people, mostly workers and peasants, filed past to pay their last respects to the martyred revolutionary.

On 26 August the US State Department categorically refused to allow Trotsky on the soil of the

USA -dead or alive. The following day his remains were cremated.

Natalya Sedov continued to live at Coyoacan with Seva/Esteban Volkov, who was just 14 at the time of his grandfather's murder. She continually campaigned for the rehabilitation of Trotsky, Sedov, and all those murdered by the Stalin regime.

Despite the so-called 'de-Stalinisation' under Khrushchev, Natalya received no reply to her requests. The totalitarian bureaucracy could never allow the complete rehabilitation of all the murdered Bolsheviks. Natalya returned to Paris in 1960 where she lived with friends until she died in January 1962 aged 79.

Throughout these years Esteban Volkov also campaigned vigorously for the victims of Stalin's repression. He stressed it was not just for his grandfather, but for all those who gave their lives in fighting against the degeneration of the revolution.

Last November Esteban said that "the true rehabilitation of Trotsky would be the restitution of historic truth and the publication of his works in the Soviet Union."

This can only come about with the overthrow of the Stalinist regime and the restoration of workers' democracy.

Book your place now

MILITANT CARRIES on today the struggle waged by Trotsky and his family. So there could be no better place for his grandson to argue for his grandfather's rehabilitation than the *Militant* rally, Britain's biggest indoor political meeting since the war.

It is an event not to be missed. But the news that Esteban Volkov is to speak will lead to a rush for tickets. So if you want to be sure of getting yours, don't delay another day. Fill in the form below and reserve your place at this historic event.

Struggle for a better world

TROTSKY wrote a moving tribute, entitled *Leon Sedov - Son, Friend, Fighter*:

"He was part of both of us, our young part. By hundreds of channels our thoughts and feelings daily reached out to him in Paris. Together with our boy has died everything that still remained young within us. Good-bye, Leon, good-bye dear and incomparable friend.

"Your mother and I never thought, never expected that destiny would impose upon us this terrible task of writing your obituary. We lived in conviction that long after we were gone you would be the continuer of our common cause. But we were not able to protect you. Good-bye Leon!

"We bequeath your irreplaceable memory to the younger generation of the workers of the world. You will rightly live in the hearts of all those who work, suffer and struggle for a better world.

Revolutionary youth of all countries!

Accept from us the memory of our Leon, adopt him as your son he is worthy of it - and let him henceforth participate invisibly in your battles, since destiny has denied him the happiness of participating in your final victory."

After Sedov's death, Trotsky's grandson, the 12 year old Seva (Esteban) remained with Jeanne Martin. On 19 September 1938 Trotsky wrote to him:

"My dear little Seva: I am writing to you for the first time. Our poor little Leon always kept us informed, Natalya and me, about your life, your development and your health. Now Uncle Leon is no more. It is necessary for us to establish direct communications, my little grandson..."

"You are a big boy now. I must talk to you about a very important matter, about the ideas which were and are still common to your mother, to your father, to Uncle Leon, and to me and Natalya.

"I am very anxious to explain to you face to face the great value of the ideas and objectives which have brought about so much suffering for our family, which is your family... I have complete responsibility for you, my grandson, in my own eyes, in your father's eyes, if he is alive, and in yours."

May Day greetings from

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign

- ★ No to YTS conscription
- ★ No to slave labour
- ★ Organise trainees to fight back
- ★ For a mass unionisation campaign

Supporters of *Inqaba ya basebenzi*, journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, in Cosatu, Sayco and the UDF send revolutionary greetings to *Militant* and its supporters worldwide

- ★ Support Congress youth and workers in the struggle to smash Inkatha!
 - ★ Fight to save activists on Death Row!
 - ★ Mobilise to defeat the bosses and the state!
 - ★ Build a mass ANC on a socialist programme for national liberation, democracy and socialism!
 - ★ Labour to power in Britain on a socialist programme!
 - ★ Viva ANC viva!
- Phambili nomzabalazo wabasebenzi!

Fraternal greetings to Militant from Marxists in Lothians LPYS branches

West Edinburgh
Central Edinburgh
Leith

Niddrie
Portobello
Musselburgh

Livingston

Militant supporters in Broadgreen ward, Liverpool, say forward to the election of a Marxist Labour councillor

May Day greetings from Black Country Militant supporters
Expel the Tories not the socialists

Fraternal greetings from Militant supporters on the Gmbatu Youth Committee, Scottish region

Liverpool West Derby Militant supporters
For a workers' MP on a worker's wage

Birmingham Militant carworkers
The fightback has started

Stirling University Militant supporters
Smash the Poll Tax!
Non-implementation now!

Socialist Echo, Australian Marxist paper, says fight for socialism world wide

Offensiv

Swedish Marxist paper, sends May Day greetings
Workers of all countries unite!

Forward to a socialist Labour Party and a workers' MP on a worker's wage.
Ipswich Militant supporters

Hackney North and Stoke Newington LPYS say Labour must fight for a future for working class youth

Witch hunts don't win elections.
Forward in unity on a socialist programme.
Harlow Militant supporters

Militant supporters in Ogmere Labour Party send May Day greetings and ask when will Ray Powell be on a worker's wage?

★
Victory to the British seafarers
For workers' unity in action
Vonk and Unité Socialiste,
Belgian Marxist papers

Met. District Nalگو Broad Left

says fight local government cutbacks

Militant supporters in Breckfield, Liverpool
For a socialist Labour council and a socialist Labour government.

Support Benn and Heffer
For a socialist leadership!
Sefton Militant supporters.

Bridgend Labour Party Militant supporters send fraternal greetings
Support the Liverpool 47.

★
Offensief, Dutch Marxist paper, sends May Day greetings to British Marxists.

★ For a socialist trade union and Labour leadership
★ Workers' leaders on workers' wages
NCU Brighton Militant supporters

Moulsecomb Militant supporters send May Day greetings to all workers, and urge Moulsecomb voters to support Sheila Hall in Brighton borough council elections on 5 May.

Liverpool, the first of many to come... watch this space
Greetings from Swansea West LPYS

Mossley Hill Militant supporters send fraternal greetings to all comrades

May Day greetings to the South African comrades in their struggle for socialism
Rochdale and Oldham Militant supporters

MAY DAY GREETINGS


Greetings from Militant supporters in Coventry South East Labour Party
Fight for a socialist leadership.

Militant supporters in Wrekin CLP send fraternal greetings—forward to socialism—no expulsions

Sink the Tories. For a national ferry strike.
Portsmouth LPYS branches

Margaret on the guillotine 1988.
Basildon LPYS.

BEAT THE BIGGEST MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN BRITAIN!



CHESTERFIELD MAY DAY

11th PEOPLES MAY DAY MONDAY 2nd MAY 1988

DEMONSTRATION

SPEAKERS
Arthur Scargill Tony Benn MP
Margaret Beckett MP Jack Dash
International Speaker

ASSEMBLE
10.00am
Chesterfield Town Hall
Move Off 10.30am

ENTERTAINMENT

NEW SQUARE 1.00-4.30pm
Flying Camel/Meli-Antu/Jali Musa Jawara & Band

LIBRARY LECTURE THEATRE 1.30-5.00pm
Young & O'Toole/Ranting Sleazos/The Chuffinelles with 3 Go Mad/Makvirag

STREET ENTERTAINMENT
Lizzie Dripping

***CHILDRENS ENTERTAINMENT*(Winding Wheel)**
Pinxton Puppets/Cinema Kid

WINDING WHEEL 8.00-11.00pm
Swan Arcade/Makvirag/Dick Gaughan

PLUS!
Full Market/Stalls/Chess Championship
Five-a-side Football Competition

Chesterfield & District Trade Union Council

TGWU Militant supporters and friends

send socialist greetings to all brothers and sisters and to the newly elected general executive committee.

We look forward to seeing all progressive socialist policies and those remitted resolutions of 1987 BDC being campaigned for and built upon. This would enhance our opposition to deregulation and privatisation of public transport industry.

Greetings from Militant supporters on CPSA NEC

- * For the re-election of a Broad Left NEC and a socialist-led CPSA
- * Replace the ideas of 'new realism' with the vision of socialism
- * No privatisation of the civil service
- * For workers' control of a socialist planned economy

Chris Baugh, Dawn Castle, Steve Dunk, Steve Ion, Amanda Lane, John Macreadle, Doreen Purvis, Kevin Roddy, Danny Williamson,

No more Tory cuts, fight for local services, no job losses.
Manchester women's council Militant supporters

Lee Park Militant supporters say:
"Thatcher beware—the tide is turning."
For four workers' MPs on workers' wages
Wirral and Birkenhead Militant supporters

'New realism' — new struggles

Norway

MASSIVE WORKPLACE opposition to the austerity measures of Norway's Labour government has given rise to a rank-and-file rebellion in the powerful LO (trade union federation) and widespread support for an 'illegal' one-day general strike.

Over 300,000 workers defied their national union leaders and struck on 11 March against new wage laws. Support would have been even greater but for the sabotage by the bureaucracy. Rail union bosses even threatened their members with expulsion if they took part.

These developments mark a turning point in Norwegian politics. This former model of Scandinavian 'stability' has entered a new period of working-class militancy which has already catapulted it to number 3 in the international strike league.

The fact that an unofficial strike call mobilised such a formidable show of force is tremendously significant, against a long tradition of working-class discipline and waiting for official sanction before striking.

Even more significant is the upheaval it has provoked within the LO.

The Oslo regional leadership of the LO suffered a humiliating rebuff from their members when they opposed participation on 11 March. Their refusal to challenge Gro Harlem Brundtland's Labour government cost them their jobs, as they were voted out and replaced with a new pro-strike leadership.

The developments in the capital foreshadow similar challenges to the right wing throughout the trade union movement, and at a later stage in the Labour Party as well. The labour bureaucracy have been warned: workers are not prepared to sacrifice their past gains, but they are prepared to sacrifice leaders who will not lead.

From a correspondent in Oslo

New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND'S Labor Finance Minister Roger Douglas has given politics a new word: 'Rogeronomics'. His policy, however, is not new—it is a monetarist programme that would have done Thatcher proud, and has earned hearty praise from big business.

Workers have taken a different view. Following its re-election last August, Labor is now trailing the opposition National Party 16 per cent in opinion polls, and party leader Lange has become the most unpopular premier this century!

The working class has been forced into industrial struggle, with long strikes in the public sector. As in Australia, the leadership has stepped into a whirlwind of opposition to its privatisation plans.

On 14 March (the NHS day of action in Britain —Editor) nurses, teachers and airport staff staged a one-day general strike against the 'corporatising' of their industries in preparation for privatisation.

Lange's Minister for State Industry has warned his leader: "No government has the right to sell off state trading enterprises to his cronies." The parliamentary Labor Party has been split, with all but two backbench MPs deserting the chamber during an emergency debate on asset sales.

Swing to the left

An unprecedented crisis has developed in the government itself. Lange and Douglas have had a long-running public feud over the scale of tax cuts for the rich, with the Finance Minister's Thatcherite tendencies proving too much even for his leader. The background to Labor's crisis was last

November's party conference, which saw a massive swing to the left.

The left won the party presidency and a majority on the National Executive. A motion was passed condemning the Labor government and calling on it to institute a "democratic socialist economy".

Another motion introduced what was called a 'Tony Benn clause' to rein in the parliamentary right wing. It enables conference alone, by a two-thirds majority, to put party policy on the election manifesto.

Workers in Britain, confronted with an epidemic of 'new realism' among the Labour and trade union leaders, will follow with interest the struggles of the New Zealand workers to pull their leadership back into line and rebuild their party on fighting socialist lines.

From Bruce McKenzie in Sydney



Greetings from SOUTHAMPTON
Labour Party Young Socialists
Tell Neil:
We take it to the streets
Be Vital Get Militant

For an end to the horrors of capitalism. Forward to socialism internationally.
Stevenage Militant supporters.

Militant supporters in Liverpool LPYS say release the Sharpeville Six. For a socialist South Africa.

Greetings from Militant supporters throughout Britain in NUCPS (National Union of Civil and Public Servants)
★ Re-instate Ian Williams
★ For a socialist leadership in the civil service
★ Forward to socialism

Militant Builder

sends May Day greetings to construction workers throughout the world
Issue 4 available now

No return to the back streets

Defend abortion rights

Fight for real right to choose

Defeat Alton

For a fighting Labour women's organisation.

Militant supporters on London regional women's committee

For a socialist fight-back against the poll tax

- Jim McVicar—Balllleston
- Chick Stevenson—Queenslie
- Larry Flanagan—Castlemilk East
- Stuart Bates—Shawlands
- Yvonne Noble—Riddrie
- Eddie Nolan—Pollok
- James Murphy—Strathaven/Busby
- Hugh Henry—Erskine
- Tommy Williams—Paisley Shortroods
- Richard Manser—Paisley Gallowhill
- Derek Flood—Renfrew Moorpark Labour candidates—council elections in West Scotland

Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

London Region

May Day greetings from Militant supporters in the following branches:

Barking
Dagenham
Bermondsey
Poplar

Harrow
Brixton 1st
Uxbridge
Hackney

Camden No 1

and shop stewards and branch officers in
Division 3 Division 4 Division 5

'Those who would be free must strike the blow'
ORGANISE

France 1968/1988

Month of Revolution

CLARE DOYLE, author of the new book on France 1968: Month of Revolution, spoke to Kevin Ramage about the momentous events of 20 years ago.

"Twenty years on, it portrays the greatest general strike in history. May and June 1968 in France shook the world, capitalist and Stalinist alike, shattering un-Marxist theories about revolution being a thing of the past.

"All the conditions for a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism were there, except a leadership who understood what was happening and encouraged the workers to take power into their own hands. "France 1968 has enormous lessons for this generation of youth and workers internationally. It confirmed the theory and perspectives of *Militant* and its confidence in the working class. It showed in action the huge power the proletariat has in the modern capitalist world.

"When it moves to take control of society it can draw behind it all other layers including the middle class. Today the working class has an even greater weight and strength than in 1968.

"If such a movement could happen then in the period of world economic boom, then it is even more possible today with mass unemployment and poverty reaching explosion point.

"It is true that in 1968, students in Germany, America, Spain and Britain imagined they could 'ignite' revolution everywhere. But the movement only acquired truly revolutionary proportions in France, where ten million workers were involved, in the general strike and in massive factory and workplace occupations.

"The Communist Party was the main working class party in France; it still has a strong base in industry. The Communist union leaders maintained that this massive revolutionary movement was simply a wages' strike, and tried to head it off into safe negotiations.

"They welcomed the chance to shift the movement onto the parliamentary plane, using the excuse that the army and the police were too strong. In fact, at the height of the events, both army and police were totally unreliable. Those armed bodies of men, supporters of the state, would have crumbled if they had been told to move against the factory occupations.

"For the last twenty years, the possibility of new '68s has been only just under the surface. This explains the Chirac government's rapid retreat in 1986 when the youth moved onto the streets in protest at so-called education reforms, especially when the union leaders threatened a general strike.

"The book explains how the failure of the Communist and Socialist parties to put forward the programme of bold socialism in 1968 and after, meant it took 13 years before there was a government of the Socialist and Communist Parties. The Socialist Party had to be rebuilt from the members of the CFDT union federation.

Counter-reforms

"The 1981 Mitterrand government initially carried through big reforms for the millions of workers who voted for the left parties.

"But as it didn't tackle the fundamental question of ownership and control in society and carry through a socialist programme, the reforms became counter-reforms. Disillusion led to the Socialist Party's defeat in 1986.

"Now the right wing government's unpopularity makes a victory for Mitterrand likely, which would build up a head of steam for new Assembly elections.

"I hope the book will be used for discussions amongst workers, youth, housewives and even pensioners asking-'could it happen here?' Given the discontent in British society and the enormous power of the working class, then 'everything is possible', to use one of the slogans of May 1968".



May 1968 on the streets of Paris.

Power of workers obscured

COMING UP on Channel 4 is a '68/88 Season' (of 10 days!). But on the 20th anniversary of the most historic events of the post-war period, what is in store? We have already seen Daniel Cohn-Bendit-Dany the Red-(now a Green) searching Europe and America for a vestige of revolutionary zeal amongst his fellow youth leaders of that era and being sorely disappointed. More of the same is to follow!

We see tantalising snippets of momentous battles with the forces of the state in Chicago, Berlin, Prague, Northern Ireland. Most significant of all are the scenes of the workers' occupations in France and their historic struggle for control over society.

Power to the Imagination, part one (to be shown on Friday 29 April) promises not to 'alter' events with hindsight, by presenting purely newsreel footage and interviews from the time. But selection and editing and a complete absence of explanation can still leave you in the dark as to the fundamental processes taking place.

You get a picture of great turmoil in society, particularly amongst the youth-the post-war boom generation. A very young Mick Jagger explains that the

outburst of rebellion against all the old mores and standards in society was a luxury the better off youth could afford. Willy Brandt's son declares that changing society is not a question of a small minority taking action; for success, a majority of workers must be involved.

These are amongst the few lucid comments in the programme. When the workers are involved-in their millions in the greatest general strike in history-they are given minimal coverage.

As in all the other productions celebrating 1968, the principal actors in the greatest drama of that year-the French workers-are reduced to a minor walk-on role! The second part of *Power to the Imagination* proceeds to drown great revolutionary events in a welter of reminiscences and pseudo-sociological and 'political' analysis by 'participants' and academics.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit's reply to fellow student leader Alain Krivine's comment that a clear programme was needed, is that that was not the problem! The historian, E.P.Thompson talks of an "ego-trajectory" (?) and a "drama that went down big, but very soon exhausted itself." So

that was that! Asked why there were no workers in this round-table discussion or interviews with participants in the great strike in France, the director, Udi Eichler replied: "Well, this programme only looks at things one way". Too true! But it seems to be the same way as all the rest of the producers and directors!

The commissioning editor for this Channel 4 series, in fact, sees '68 as "profoundly, a change of culture" and little more! He denied that the programmes were the product of "media lefties reliving a Golden Age", but this would be the kindest description!

The revolutionary events of 1968 are belittled; couldn't happen again, couldn't succeed; an aberration and at best, an explosion of exuberant rebellious youthfulness that may have shocked but never shook the world.

What an opportunity to explain how close the world came in 1968 to a revolutionary and socialist transformation of society! But only Marxists who understand what happened could present such a history. As yet, we don't have the resources, they remain in the hands of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois distortors!

Mitterrand needs class campaign

SOCIALIST PRESIDENT, Mitterrand, has won a clear victory in the first round of the presidential elections. Mitterrand was seen by most workers as the best placed candidate to defeat the right. He won 34 per cent of the vote, to the 19 per cent secured by his nearest right wing rival, prime minister Chirac.

By our French correspondent

The results are clearly a major setback for the right. On the morning after the results were announced there was a sharp fall in the value of shares on the Paris Bourse.

The election confirms the enormous opposition that has built up against the policies of the right wing coalition that has ruled for the last two years. It now seems certain that Mitterrand will go on to defeat Chirac in the second round on 8 May.

However, the 14 per cent share of the vote for the ultra-right

candidate, Le Pen, of the racist National Front, is a warning to the labour movement.

In the last decade, despite eight years of a socialist presidency and a socialist majority in the assembly for six, France has seen unemployment and increased poverty, particularly in the inner-cities. This has provided a breeding ground for the NF.

Much of Le Pen's support comes from discontented middle class people and more politically backward workers, desperate to find an answer to declining living standards.

With 28 per cent of the poll in Marseilles, the NF, at least in electoral terms, has replaced the Communist Party as the largest party in France's second largest city.

Lavishly financed by big business the NF has whipped up support with racist demagoguery, blaming immigrants for the shortages in society. But the leaders of the workers' parties have completely

failed, now and in the past, to conduct a serious campaign against racism to counter the NF.

The workers' leaders have limited themselves to denouncing Le Pen's policies as "morally objectionable," without putting forward a class alternative, and explaining that it is capitalism that is responsible for the problems of French society.

Neither the Socialist nor Communist leaders support the call to give immigrants the vote. Instead they have been trying to show that they are more patriotic than the right. Mitterrand has presented himself as the candidate who can "unify" France and restore "consensus" and social peace.

The next two weeks provide the opportunity to win over those workers and others who have misguidedly voted for the NF. That needs a campaign based on equal rights for immigrants, the elimination of poverty for all and the carrying through this time of the programme of socialism.

FRANCE 1968

MONTH OF REVOLUTION

Lessons of the General Strike

CLARE DOYLE

FORTRESS BOOKS are proud to announce their second title, *Month of Revolution-Lessons of the General Strike, France 1968*, by Clare Doyle - to be published on 4 May. The cover price is £2.50. But order before 15 May and you will get a copy for £1.60 post-free. Better still, why not order five or ten for your workplace, local Marxist discussion group or to sell in collage.

Order now! Please send me.....copies of Month of Revolution. I enclose £.....(Please make cheques to Fortress Books)

Name.....

Address.....

Send to Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL

I pay a mortgage for my bed

TONY, CAROL and their daughter depend on Invalidity and Social Security benefits to try and make ends meet. Tony suffers from an acute form of arthritis for which he has been told there is no cure. I know Tony personally and can see when I take his *Militant* that he is very often in pain. He told me the other day about the problems created by his need for an orthopaedic bed:

"I needed an orthopaedic bed. The DHSS said they couldn't help, that it was Social Services' job. Social Services said the best they could do was a hos-

pital bed, which would only be a single. You don't get doubles in hospitals.

"I then wrote to the Orthopaedic Beds Advisory Service (OBAS) and they sent a representative round who took down the details of my illness and sent them to the factory so I could get a bed made according to my needs."

With no help from the DHSS, Tony and Carol agreed to buy the bed. OBAS recommended that Tony pay monthly through a finance company, First National Securities. The cost of the bed was £880, but with interest Tony agreed to pay £28.70 a

month over a 48-month period.

However, tucked away in the small print of the agreement was that interest payments can vary. After 12 months of payment, Tony had paid £348 but only had £101 deducted from the bill. With other financial worries, he has reduced his monthly payments to £18.

Unscrupulous

Carol showed me the bill, which now states they must pay £18 a month for 89 months. We calculated that without any more variations, they will pay a

total of £1,970 for the bed!

Naturally they are bitter and angry. "I wouldn't have got the bed unless I needed it," said Tony: "I thought the interest rate was fixed. I wish now that I had never taken it on. You can't get out of the hole. We pay a mortgage on a bed like most people pay on a house.

"It's unscrupulous against people who can't afford it. They are a robbing load of bastards. A lot of elderly people buy these beds; how the hell can they afford it?"

"With poll tax and having to pay 20 per cent of

rates, it's going to get worse. I'll pay them £5 a month and they can put me in prison for all I care. It's legalised robbery. It has caused rows and arguments, enough to drive you to suicide."

"I would be better off with Tony dying," said Carol: "I wouldn't have to worry about making the payments. I refused to put my name to it."

"Most insurance companies wouldn't give me life insurance or a mortgage," said Tony: "but they will give you loans to drown you. The whole system is corrupt. You're right; it was a billionaires' budget.

It's all geared up to the rich. If anyone's having a collection to assassinate Thatcher, I'll be the first to put something in."

Tony follows the news on TV and gets angry at the ineffectiveness of the Labour leaders. "The Labour Party should be standing up and fighting" he says: "Some unions are fighting; Kinnock should take a leaf out of their book. He's a wet lettuce leaf. You get more sense out of a cabbage. If he had my money, he might shout a bit more."

By John MacKay

Where to find us

EAST SCOTLAND

For details of meetings contact: Andrea Charles-031 659 6187.

STRATHCLYDE

For details of meetings contact: 041 221 1443.

NORTHERN

For details of meetings contact: Bill Hopwood-091 276 1736.

MERSEYSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Richard Venton-051 260 3111.

Liverpool: Marxist discussion group.

8 May and fortnightly 2, Lower Breck Rd. 7.00pm

SOUTH WEST

For details of meetings ring 0272 631471.

Exiled South African trade unionist Nimrod Sejake tours to speak on 'For a socialist South Africa';

Bristol: 3 May Shepherds Hall, Old Market, 7.30pm

Exeter: 4 May

University 1.00pm

Plymouth: 4 May

Students' union lounge,

Polytechnic 8.00pm

Swindon: 6 May

YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Henry Gregory-0709 371250

Hull: 1 May

South Africa's struggle for socialism. Speaker from

SALEP

White Hart pub, 7.30pm.

Halifax: Marxist discussion

group.

Every Wednesday 8pm, Grif-

fs pub.

4 May: The Russian Revolution

Sheffield: Lessons of France

1968 Monday 23 May

S.C.C.A.U West St 7.30.

MANCHESTER/LANCS

For details of meetings contact: Mike Johnson-061 273 8648.

Manchester

1 May, 10.30am -4.30pm

Women's May Day school

Moss Side Leisure Centre

Moss Side precinct Moss

Lane East/Princess Rd

Subjects: Women in South

Africa, women workers and

NHS plus workshops

£1 waged, 25p unwaged.

Childcare available.

EAST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Andy Jackson-0602 623112.

WEST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Bill Mullins-021 552 7624.

WALES

For details of meetings contact: 0222 736682

EASTERN

For details of meetings contact: Teresa MacKay 0473 713179

SOUTH EAST

For details of meetings phone 01 533 3311

HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY

For meeting details phone 0703 786879

Southampton: Redbridge

Marxist discussion group

Every Wednesday,

7, Goodwin Close, Millbrook,

2pm

5 May: The economic slump

and the working class

LONDON

For details of meetings contact: George Roberts-01 739 9123.

SELL Militant

REPORTS ARE coming into our offices of successes up and down the country on our estate sales drive.

By Gerry Lerner

Over 100 sold so far in Pollok over the weekend! Following their successful sale in the previous week of over 100 (see report of the poll tax meeting issue 893) sellers lost no time at all pushing last week's back page feature on the poll tax. Comrades started off well selling

12 copies at the Levensdale hospital on the Friday morning, following that up with a magnificent sale of 60 on Friday afternoon at the Pollok shopping centre!

Brighton sellers have been concentrating their efforts in building support for Labour's candidates in the local elections. They still found time to make massive sales in the Moulsecoomb area with 140 sold over the weekend! On average they were selling to one in every three houses! 32 were sold in one street and 29 in another!

Exmouth *Militant* sellers sold 40 papers at a meeting where Ken Livingstone was speaking.

A seller in the Rotherham area visiting people who had previously stopped getting *Militant* found that seven out of 10 people seen were prepared to take the paper regularly. One woman told

our seller that her husband (a miner) had really enjoyed the paper and she gave £3 to the fighting fund.

The next week she bought a copy of *Militant International Review* and a copy of *Liverpool a city that dared to fight*.

Supporters in the St. Luke's area of Southampton sold 40 papers just by going round to see people who in the past had expressed an interest in *Militant*. They hope to turn all 40 into regular buyers of *Militant*!

We also heard reports that the disreputable rag the *Liverpool Echo* carried a letter from the Managing Director of Westminster Management and Investments Lancashire Limited complaining that wherever he goes he meets someone selling *Militant*! Keep up the good work Merseyside sellers! Send in reports of sales in your area!

Marxist best seller

LIVERPOOL-A CITY that dared to fight reached a milestone last week, with sales passing 5000 copies. Orders are still pouring in from individuals, libraries, bookshops and trade union branches.

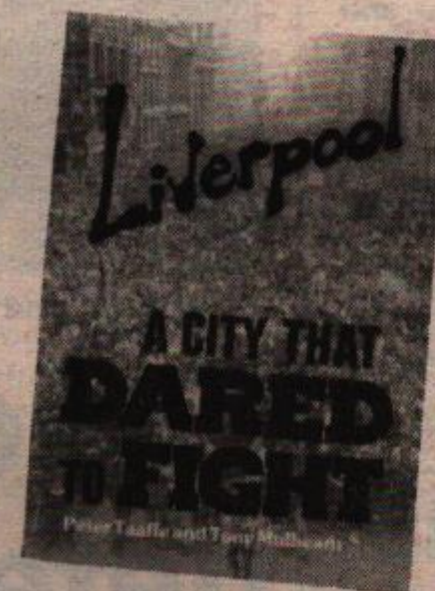
By Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn

Essential lessons for every worker.

£6.95 plus 90p postage.

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Box 141 London E2 ORL.



MARX MEMORIAL MEETING Marx's ideas and their relevance today.

Thursday 5 May, 7.30pm
South Bank Polytechnic, London Road, Elephant and Castle tube

Speaker: Ray Apps

Dulwich: 11 May
Allbrighton Centre
Dog Kennel Hill Estate
East Dulwich 7.30pm

Deptford: Stop the poll tax!
Stop the poverty sharks!
5 May Victoria Pub
Grove St. SE8, 7.30pm

Become a Militant supporter

YOUR NEXT STEP...
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT!

I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name.....

Address.....

Tel:

or telephone 01-533 3311 NOW!



What we stand for

- * The immediate introduction of a 35 hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- * A minimum wage of £135 a week, tied to the cost of living, for everyone including sick and disabled people.
- * Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, and the health service etc.
- * Opposition to the Tories' anti-trade union laws and reversal of attacks on 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.
- * Workers' management of 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.
- * 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.
- * A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving 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.

Book in demand

Dear Comrades,

As soon as I heard that Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn were to publish their book, *Liverpool—a City that Dared to Fight*, I ordered it from our local library.

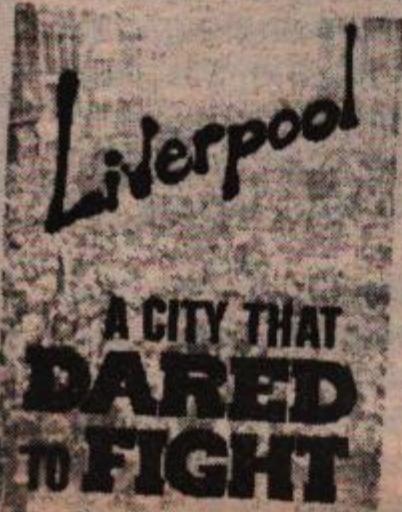
Bearing in mind that this part of North Yorkshire is a very Conservative area, I didn't expect there to be any great demand. You'll be pleased to hear that I couldn't have been more wrong! When I eventually received my copy there was a card attached which read:

BOOK IN DEMAND— There is a WAITING LIST for this book. Please return it as quickly as you can, if possible before the due date.

This demand for the book shows how people are eager to learn what really happened and how the lessons of Liverpool are relevant to working people everywhere.

I shall suggest to North Yorkshire county library that they order extra copies.

Kevin Wilson, Skipton



Disgusting treatment of elderly people

Dear Comrades,

When my grandma applied for mobility allowance over a year ago, she was refused because she could walk between the front door and the front gate.

She could not walk any further than this, but the assessors pointed out that she could then get into a car. My grandad can drive, but he was 78 and considering giving up within a couple of years. They could only afford to keep the car

because he maintained it himself as he was a mechanic.

The assessment for mobility allowance has got stricter. If claimants can show they can walk even a negligible distance, they will be refused. Disabled organisations now advise potential claimants not to show assessors any ability they have to walk, even if it is only a few metres.

As a disabled person, I find I have to fight to get

benefits I need and to overcome the segregation and discrimination inherent in this system.

But I find it particularly disgusting that my grandparents and other old people should be treated like this after working for over forty years. Obviously the Tories and the bosses believe in old people enjoying their retirement as long as it costs them nothing.

Stuart Bracking, Lancaster

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Airport safety scandal

Dear Comrades,

The other week only the quick actions of an air traffic controller avoided a disaster at Gatwick airport. Two planes, one taxiing and one landing, almost collided on the runway. A warning from the controller gave one of the pilots time to steer on to a grass verge. Otherwise hundreds of people could have been killed.

This latest incident only serves to further highlight the dangers due to crowded skies and airports. There have been numerous near-

misses already this year, but they have been dismissed by the Civil Aviation Authority as 'very rare' and 'one in a million'.

The Gatwick incident apparently occurred because both planes were using the airport's emergency runway because of repair work on the main strip. Incredibly the second busiest airport in the world has only one runway, despite repeated calls by pilots' organisations for a second one.

The safety of the travelling public can only be as-

sured when we have a publicly owned, workers' controlled, integrated transport system which is run as a service taking into account people's needs.

Under capitalism, the bosses are quite prepared to wait for a disaster until they do anything, as an anonymous circular put out by pilots' organisations last year explained: "It may well take 150 corpses spread around Gatwick's green fields to change things".

Andy Walker, Middlesbrough Labour Party

Maternity leave

Dear Comrades,

Mike Pullin writes (8 April) that the demand for maternity leave 11 weeks before birth is inadequate and that women should have the choice to give up work at any time during pregnancy. Proper health care for pregnant women is essential and it is wrong that women are forced to work right up to giving birth because they cannot afford not to.

Also it is wrong that many women are forced to give up their jobs before taking maternity leave because of their hazardous nature or because they face too many problems with their pregnancy to continue work.

However, a demand to campaign on must be something that women feel is achievable, which 11 weeks before birth is, rather than an unachievable

demand that will be dismissed out of hand.

A campaign for improved maternity leave must go hand in hand with improved health and safety at work to enable women who wish to work to stay during pregnancy, with the right to move to a less hazardous job at the same rates of pay.

Complications of the pregnancy, morning sickness, etc, should be acceptable reasons for lateness or absence. Pregnancy is not an illness!

Similarly, full pregnancy leave is not the complete answer. Nine months isolated at home, possibly with other children, is not necessarily the best health care for women. The home can be just as hazardous and hard work as full-time employment.

Ann Bannister
Liverpool.

Country strife

Dear Comrades,

I have been reading *Militant* and was disappointed that so much emphasis is put upon the injustices of the inner cities, while ignoring the many problems within the rural areas.

At present I work at a fairly large factory in my home town, as an assembly worker on the welding section. I am a temporary worker hoping to be taken on permanently (I was told this last year, so there is no guarantee and no reason to be exceptionally hopeful).

In my experience as a temp worker within a rural

area (where there is little or no work) I feel there is much to be recognised and reported.

For one, as a temp I have no entitlement to any sick or holiday pay; two, no right to complain about working conditions and three, no right to voice an opinion unless you want the sack.

And finally, just to show how bad the place is, the union (TGWU) has lost most of its members and is just on the edge of being disbanded.

A Gloucestershire
worker

'Brilliant' nurses

Dear Comrades,

My mother recently had to go into hospital for a small exploratory operation.

She described the nursing staff as 'brilliant and totally dedicated'. However she was appalled by the lack of facilities available for even minimal patient care and told me about the bitterness and resentment that nurses felt towards the government.

Old people with broken limbs need special attention and yet nurses were unable to spend time with them or keep them in hospital for observation, because of cuts.

In addition to this, the hospital could not even afford pillow cases and my mother had to sleep on a pillow wrapped in a cloth!

An east London Militant
supporter



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.

□ New sticker available in rolls of 250. 'One day general strike—Defend the health service'. Other stickers: 'Kick out the Tories', 'No to slave labour on YTS', 'For a socialist South Africa', £2.50 per roll. 'Militant for labour and youth' enamel stud badges £1 each. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg 50p each collecting tins £1 each, 10 or more 75p each.

Available from Fighting Fund Dept, 3-13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25 per cent P&P. Cheques payable to Militant.



Tony Benn and Eric Heffer.

Leadership to defeat Tories

Dear Comrades,

The Labour Party leadership campaign has again caused the media to foam at the mouth at the merest hint of Benn and Heffer being elected.

A recent edition of *The Economist* shows just afraid the bosses are of left-wing leadership by recommending that Kinnock "ought to go further, and pitch... a vision of a non-socialist party of the left, no longer in political thrall to the trade unions".

As if this wasn't enough, the article then went on to recommend that David

Owen be brought back as leader of the Labour Party!

Workers will not be taken in by such nonsense. Run properly, the election campaign would give an opportunity to recruit such workers in their thousands to the party.

The individuals are not overly important — the policies are. The campaign is not just to elect Benn and Heffer, but to prepare the groundwork for the final defeat of Thatcher and the Tories.

Dave Gorton, Peckham
Labour Party

One rise per family

Dear Comrades,

In recent negotiations over new contracts for employees of the Middlesbrough *Evening Gazette*, a woman whose husband also works for the *Gazette* was told she was getting a very

small pay increase.

When she enquired why, she was told it was because a rise had been given to her husband and they only needed one per family!

Jon Driscoll
Middlesbrough.

SUMMER CAMP '88 Workers Education Group Saturday 6—13 August

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£40 for the week; £5 for children 5-14 yrs.
Book your holidays now! Send in £10 deposit.
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Business As Usual—

Now available on video (From Warner Home Video)

The feature film "Business as Usual" has been released on video. The film is about a strike against sexual harassment in a Liverpool shop in 1983 and can be of particular use to Trade Union Branches, Labour Parties and Labour Party Young Socialists branches.

For those of you who haven't seen the film take the chance to see it now on video.

The leading character played in the film by Glenda Jackson is based on Militant supporter Audrey White who led the original dispute.

MAY 5TH

Wanted — councils that fight the Tories

WORKING CLASS people have no alternative. There must be an overwhelming vote for Labour in the 5 May local elections. The poll tax, the Housing Bill and the council cuts must be fought, and fought hard.

Local authorities must stand up and defend the working class. In Liverpool, we want to make sure that the struggle of the 47 surcharged and disqualified Labour councillors is not in vain.

In Belle Vale centre, shoppers had the unusual sight of a 'young Tory',

Marmaduke Ponsoby-Smythe, waving his *Financial Times* in their faces and trying to defend Thatcher's record.

The 'Tory' was in reality Labour councillor Rob Owen and this was a Labour street meeting. But one woman was so angry at the Tories that she ran up to him, shouting: "You know what you want to do luv? You want a copy of this". She then waved a copy of *Militant* in his face!

This is an area where unemployment reaches 80 per cent among the youth.

Labour has been elected time and again despite the media's attacks because the Tories and their Liberal shadows do nothing for local people.

One old woman was nearly in tears as she was to lose £5 a week as a result of benefit cuts. Working class people need leaders who are going to fight for our class and for socialism as consistently as Thatcher does for her class and for capitalism.

By Peter Grue and Peter Sibald

May Day greetings from Liverpool's surcharged councillors
Carry on the fight to defend jobs and services
Many thanks to all comrades who have contributed to the '47' defence fund
Onward to socialism with a fighting socialist leadership.

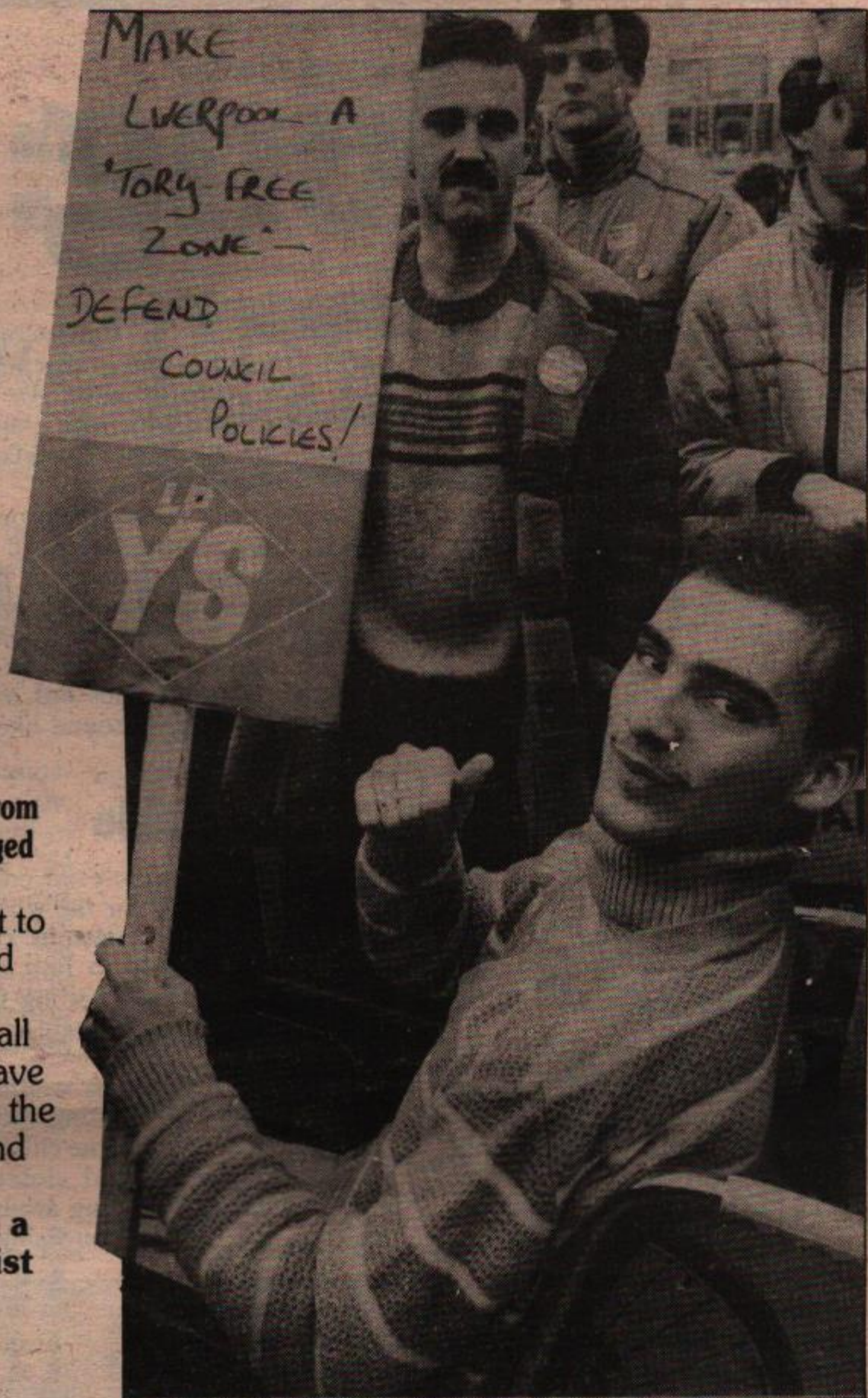


Photo: Viv Seal

Gateshead council

"Not just prophets of doom"

MALCOLM GRAHAM, who is standing as a Labour candidate for High Fell on Gateshead council, knows what it means to have to fight.

Until last July he worked for Ever Ready, a factory which at one time employed 1600 workers but when he was made redundant, there were only 200 workers left there. He was convenor for 12 years

He told us: "Being a steward is the best training you can get, fighting for your class. You have to deal with both the individual and collective problems of the workforce. I was negotiating with Hansen Trust so I've had to face the hardest.

"There's nowt much different about Gateshead from other working class areas. The main issue is that people have no money. People have been stunned by the new Social Security Bill.

"They don't know much about how it operates, only that they haven't got any money. We'll have to make sure people

realise that this is the Tories' fault, not the local DHSS staff.

"Another issue is youth unemployment, when young people are going on schemes which don't give them a future. Housing repairs are a big local issue. Tory cuts have caused this, but we need a Labour council that will fight for a revitalisation programme and fight for housing repairs.

"I've canvassed many times before in different areas and I've never seen such a strong mood for Labour.

"We've got to get people involved in the Labour Party. We need campaigns on housing, against the poll tax linking in with the unions, raising the need for a boycott. We've got to make sure we're not just prophets of doom and gloom. We've got to show what we can do. That means we've got to fight."

By Ged Grebby

"Proper jobs for young people"

DERYCK MARSH is standing for Holystone in North Tyneside. He is a clerical assistant at Longbenton DHSS. At 24, he will be the youngest councillor on North Tyne council for decades.

"I want to get away from the chauffeur-driven, big belly and cigar image young people tend to have of local councils. Local politics isn't closed off for people under 40. We must show what a fighting Labour council can do for youth.

"I'll do all the day to day 'dog shit and fence-mending' jobs. But as a

Marxist councillor I want to represent local people like the Liverpool city councillors, defending jobs and services and fighting for proper jobs for young people.

"The main issue will be the poll tax which will make nine out of ten local people worse off. The benefit changes will affect a lot of people as well.

"The Tories have no basis of support here, but people tend to vote just against the Tories. We want to create enthusiasm for Labour. The only way is through mass campaigns

particularly around non-compliance with poll tax.

"My background in the Labour Party Young Socialists has taught me how to campaign and given me the best political education in the labour movement.

"I've never been on canvasses when people on the doorsteps talked so much about the working class. One old bloke told us that you can't expect anything more from the Tories, that we should do what they did in 1917-get rid of the Tory buggers!"

Tories ignore ILEA ballot

THE PARENTS' ballot on the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (Ilea) gave a resounding 'No' to the Tories' plans.

By Joanne Martin, Hackney parent

Nearly 55 per cent of the ballots were returned, a higher percentage than voted in the Ilea elections. Of these, 94.3 per cent were against abolition.

All the Tories' propaganda on the Education Bill is about 'parental choice'. But after the ballot they say our choice is irrelevant! As they proved when they abolished the Greater London Council (GLC), the Tories have contempt for democratic votes. They now claim that it is the opinion of the ratepayers that counts, not the parents!



Photo: Steve Gardiner

School students protest at Baker bill.

Two parents told a recent meeting of Hackney parents how arrogant Baker had been when they lobbied him about the proposal to abolish Ilea.

Baker hadn't even bothered to look up from his desk while the parents explained what they felt about the proposals. While one of them asked: "If you

believe in parental choice, will you abide by the decision of the parents' ballot?", Baker was fiddling with his papers.

Then he looked at them for the first time and said: "We make the decisions." Baker is supposed to be the smooth and pleasant face of Thatcher's government!

This episode shows that

while the ballot was a propaganda victory, the only thing which will change this government's mind is a programme of mass action. As the new term starts, meetings are already taking place to decide the next stage in the campaign.

Jobs and services are threatened. There have already been one-day strikes but workers and users of the education service can see it is up to us to save education in inner London.

Teachers and other Ilea employees, backed by parents, will need to take action, including all-out strike if necessary, to stop millions of London school children being thrown on the scrap heap before they even begin their lives.

The ballot was a good start, but only the start, of the real campaign to save education.

London schools:

43 per cent cuts?

IF THE Tories abolish Ilea, and spread responsibility for London education around the 13 inner London boroughs, Ilea's finance department say there could be cuts of around 43 per cent.

Predictions

Their predictions are based on what the government think Ilea ought to have spent. The Tories' 'needs assessment' for Ilea was £580 million in 1987-88 but the authority actually spent £1,015 million.

If the government tell local councils to make cuts of this order, the boroughs will either have to fight or make cuts. When the Tories start to phase in poll tax in

1990, the initial sum will be £100 per adult. If the Tories don't allow councils to raise any more than this, huge cuts will occur.

They calculate that spending on schools could be cut by 36 per cent, school meals by 63.5 per cent, further and higher education by 50 per cent, adult education by 70 per cent with further huge cuts in the youth and careers service.

Ilea Broad Left says:

Defend state education
Abolish the Tories—save Ilea

◀ Industrial reports ▶

Working for P&O- No cushy number

LOTS OF people have said to me in the past that the ferry workers are on a cushy number: "All they do is sit around drinking duty-free beer."

My doctor knows what it is like to work on the ferries, because he has had to come to my home three times in the past to treat me for exhaustion and various flu viruses that I have picked up at work.

I was so ill that I couldn't even make it to his surgery. He tells me he has the same problem with all his patients who work on the ferries and he has begged me to stop working on them.

I am a steward on P&O ferries and this is our 'cushy number': Start work at 7.30 am. We go to our cabins, get changed and report to the head waiter in the restaurant at 7.40.

The first job is to strip all the tables, change the table cloths and lay the tables up again. The passengers are already queuing up by the time this is done, so we let the first 50 in and commence to serve them breakfast.

The crossing to Calais only takes 75 minutes and in that time only four stewards have got to serve up to 65 people with grapefruit, cereals, full breakfast, toast, tea and coffee.

To give these people the proper service they require, we have to move fast. In the restaurant the passengers see the steward calmly walking around the tables doing his job. What they don't see is when the steward goes out into the galley and runs around like a lunatic.

Irritable

You see, there is only one cook preparing the food for the whole restaurant and the steward can get to the grill only to find the other three stewards waiting for food, so you have to wait your turn.

While the steward is waiting, his passengers are getting more and more irritable and the cliffs of Calais loom closer and closer.

When you are running around like this, the 75-minute crossing is

over before you even realise it and the passengers often return to their cars still chewing a piece of toast and putting their sausages into a doggie bag.

Needless to say, the passengers are not happy with the service and don't give you a tip, which we depend on to boost our wages.

So the ship docks in Calais and the passengers leave the restaurant. To look at the empty restaurant, you would think a tornado had swept through it. The tables are littered with dirty plates and cutlery, bits of toast, knocked-over pots of tea and marmalade-covered napkins.

All this has to be cleared, washed up and laid back on the tables in 30 minutes, as by this time a new set of passengers is queuing up at the door for the return journey. No sooner do we get the tables laid up again than we have to straighten up our ties and open up for the next 50.

The first trip serving breakfast is nothing compared to the rest of the day. From the second trip

onwards, we serve full meals as well-steaks cooked to order, which means more waiting, chicken, fish, scampi, gammon, cold salads, different vegetables, different potatoes, as well as starters, aperitifs, bottles of wine, sweets, cheese and biscuits—all this silver-served in 75 minutes.

Is it any wonder people don't get the service they expect and don't leave us a tip?

Once again we have 30 minutes to clear all the leftovers and lay up again before the next 50 are knocking at the door. This continues six times a day for 13 and a half hours without a break.

As well as laying up your tables, the floor has to be hoovered, the dumb waiters stocked up and every steward has a set of stairs to check at the end of each trip, clearing yet more rubbish and, most disgusting of all, mopping up the vomit.

Have you ever boarded a ferry, and there are empty coke cans and half-eaten sandwiches on the stairs? That is because the stewards just haven't got enough

time to do the job properly.

At the end of the day, we are dead on our feet. All this, and P&O want us to work more hours for less pay, with less stewards! Come off it, Sir Geoffrey!

The example I have given you has been a waiter in the restaurant, but it is the same for all of us—the cafeteria, constantly serving and clearing food all the day, the bar and lounge stewards always on the go.

The shelves in the duty-free shops have to be constantly replenished and the poor old 'compacta' steward, who is the binman on board ship, has to clear everybody's rubbish and his machines don't even work. Piles of rubbish often build up and the germs fly around the air-conditioning system.

No wonder I am always ill and my doctor begs me not to do it. Those people who think we have a cushy number, think again!

By Carle O'Hare
Dover P&O striker

General council backs NUS

AFTER WEDNESDAY'S TUC general council meeting, John Macreadie commented: "The censure of the EETPU carried on the general council by 27 votes to 15 will be like water off a duck's back to Mr Hammond. The demands for justice for the sacked print-workers and the principles of the trade union movement have been flouted."

"The suspension of the EETPU from congress 1988, moved by Arthur Scargill, seconded by myself and supported by Brenda Dean, which was rejected by 28 votes to 13 after legal threats, would have met the overwhelming approval of trade unionists."

John continued: "Any refusal of the general council to oppose the adult training programme would come as a bitter blow to unemployed workers". At the meeting, John had opposed a further meeting with Norman Fowler on these proposals because it was clear that no further meaningful concessions would be forthcoming and it would again allow the Tories to treat the unions with contempt.

John called upon those leaders meeting Fowler not to surrender any of the five principles established in the



Seafarers' picket at Dover on Monday.

past by the TUC: voluntary enrolment; quality training; employee status; the rate for a job and a guaranteed job; and trade union approval.

John welcomed the general council's support for the NUS. He then repeated his call, made at the general council, that if the NUS called for assistance, the full council must immediately be reconvened to organise the solidarity the seamen request.

IN AN escalation of the dispute, Belgian ferry company, RMT, which is jointly owned by the state and P&O have offered Belgian seafarers the same contract as P&O workers in Britain have already rejected. The socialist union voted 100 per cent and the Catholic union 98 per cent against accepting management's proposals.

The fight is now on throughout the whole of Europe. As is

becoming apparent, ferry operators internationally, in their quest for bigger profits are hell bent on smashing the unions, no matter the consequences.

On Friday 9 May, there will be a meeting between NUS representatives and Belgian seafarers in Ostend. It is important that rank and file strikers from Britain are present to lobby this meeting.

Sheffield direct works

TGWU MEMBERS from Sheffield City council direct works department have come out on indefinite strike over management's attempt to implement new working practices.

These would mean more flexible working, with drivers having to do labourers' work and vice versa. Ultimately,

they will lead to lay offs.

The union called an all-members meeting and got backing for strike action. At the last meeting between union and management, council leader Clive Betts, although TGWU sponsored, voted in favour of the management plan. This action incensed many members of his own

union who are now calling for sponsorship to be withdrawn.

Militant supporters are taking this issue into the Labour Party to ensure that the council workers' case is given a fair hearing.

The strike is totally solid at the moment and now has the backing of the joint shop stewards committee, whose

members have been instructed not to handle plant, machinery or materials. If any victimisation takes place as a result, the JSSC recommend all the members in that area to walk out. This has already happened in one depot.

By Chris Weldon.

NGA conference

THIS WEEK the National Graphical Association (NGA) conference meets in Blackpool.

Since the *News International* dispute, there have been major job losses in the newspaper industry as one after another of the dailies has moved out of Fleet Street. Manchester and other regional centres have also suffered.

Thompson's *Reading Evening Post* had around 100 NGA members five years ago. The figure is now less than 40.

In Oxford, members were given notice of their agreement and offered big redundancy payments. At the same time, new workers were being recruited for up to £100 less, with those not opting for redundancy going down to the new rates or being made redundant at the state minimum terms.

The resolution calling for nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management tackles the problem of newspaper ownership head on. Those which call for non-British nationals to be banned from owning more than one paper, or for no owner to own more than one paper, do not.

Established wages and conditions have been undermined by new technology. The union must step-up recruitment in these areas where often non-union workers are employed.

This applies especially where there are YTS. Of course, chapels must continue to fight for an increased number of traditional trainees.

The main issue facing conference is again that of amalgamation with the other print union, Sogat. Wapping brought home to many members the need for one print union.

Despite delays, it is important that talks with Sogat continue. Proposals should be put to members soon.

Members are angry that Gordon Colling, the NGA member of the Labour Party national executive, supported the closure of *Labour Weekly* and *Socialist Youth*, leading to redundancies. The accountability of Labour MPs, called for by Solent branch, should also apply to union representatives.

By Ian Warrick, Oxon and Berks personal capacity

CPSA elections:

'moderates' propaganda ignored

DESPITE THE interference of the press and the unconstitutional circulation of material attacking the Broad Left (BL) by general secretary John Ellis, reports from around the country suggest that the CPSA executive elections are going well for BL candidates.

Many members consider the activities of Ellis to be a serious affront to the democratic procedures of CPSA.

Constitutionally, the role of general secretary is that of an independent arbiter during elections. Therefore, not only is the members' circular issued by him, which accuses BL candidates of "the grossest deceptions", an abuse of his position, it has also put the

elections in danger of being declared null and void.

A complete re-run of these elections looks a distinct possibility now. No doubt this is the intention of the right wing, desperate to avoid further defeats. It seems that democracy is only acceptable if it is to their benefit.

IRSF deal

The major issue of these elections is pay. Right-wing 'moderate' group propaganda has contrasted the 4 per cent offer to CPSA members with the 19 per cent won by some members of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (IRSF) and suggests that their leadership

of the union would strive to obtain the same deal.

Unlike the know-nothings of the right wing, however, CPSA members are not fooled and are suspicious enough to know that 'all that glitters is not gold'.

The cost to IRSF members has been very high indeed. What would a similar deal mean for CPSA?

In effect, right-wing leaders are prepared to accept up to 20,000 job losses, mainly in DHSS and DE, destruction of promotion prospects, casualisation and the spread of YTS throughout this union's civil service grades. In short, they are prepared to preside over the wholesale slaughter of CPSA mem-

bers' jobs and conditions of work.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that numerous reports of Broad Left victories are being recorded in the ballots.

Hypocrisy

Members are increasingly seeing through the hypocrisy and treachery of the right wing and '84 groups and recognise that only through the election of a BL executive will the union be able to stand up to the Tories and fight to protect the interests of all our members.

By Chris Baugh

Tube attack must be fought

THE FUTURE looks bright for DIY enthusiasts, if for no-one else, on London underground (LUL). Management intend to introduce far-reaching new work practices which will mean, amongst other things, the creation of a grade of Station Assistant.

This grade will be expected to be "messengers, perform litter cleaning, graffiti removal/covering and minor maintenance (of the sort many people do at home on a DIY basis)" according to a management document.

Thirteen stations at the

northern end of the Metropolitan line will be used as a pilot scheme. This group will be run by an area business manager who will have the power to hire and fire. All 169 staff currently employed on the group will have to apply for the new jobs, of which there will be about 140.

Greater flexibility will be expected—like doing three people's jobs. Some grades could lose £3000 per annum. The workforce will be on two year contracts and will not be covered by existing union agreements. They will be tested to see if

they are suitable and if they get the job will have to undergo constant job monitoring.

Every station affected will go 'open station' which means no ticket collectors. Some will be single-manned throughout the day!

The man appointed as business manager is a known right winger, so union activists' jobs could be threatened.

After the Metropolitan, it is intended to move on to other areas in a rolling programme. The National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) at national executive level

have been discussing this document with LUL since January this year. It was leaked to union activists at a district council meeting, which immediately demanded that the executive cease negotiations.

The district council has since launched a campaign throughout London against the proposals, to include mass meetings. Underground workers may also be balloted later if management go ahead with their plans.

By an NUR member

AEU: rights merger plans blocked

THE NATIONAL committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) has agreed to consider merger with another union only if the AEU's democratic structures are maintained.

The 68-46 vote represents a blow to the plans of right-wing leaders Bill Jordan and Gavin Laird for merger with the electrician's union, the EETPU.

However, the right wing have maintained their grip on other aspects of policy.

On wages, a proposal to campaign for a £150 minimum time rate, with a minimum £30 a week increase, was defeated. The background to this was very instructive of the way the right wing, but also many of the lefts around the 'Communist' Party (CP) operate.

An amendment to reduce the claim to £125 minimum, and dropping the £30 minimum increase was moved by a CP member. The thinking behind this, presumably, was that there was more chance of it getting support from the delegates, regardless of what was required by the membership.

But the right wing saw it as a sign of weakness and argued that no amounts should be used at all. The union will consequently go



Ron Todd and Jimmy Airlie (AEU) at Dundee debate, Scottish TUC.

into negotiations with the engineering employers with no clear claim.

Existing policy on single-union deals was ratified. Intoxicated by their own chauvinism, the right wing pointed the accusing finger at Ron Todd and the Transport and General Workers Union, rather than Ford, for the Dundee pull-out.

The union will go ahead with the negotiation of single-union deals, seemingly regardless of what the TUC says.

Ron Brown had his sponsorship withdrawn follow-

ing the outcry over the mace affair in parliament, with right-wing president, Bill Jordan, expressing "absolute disgust" at the action. He also described marxist MP Dave Nellist as part of "Labour's fifth column".

Accommodate

The national committee backed Kinnock and Hattersley for the Labour Party leadership but although there were 41 votes against, the left did not push Tony Benn and Eric Heffer.

Although the leaders of the AEU are continuing their charge to the right, the attempt by many of the lefts to accommodate themselves with the likes of Jordan and Laird have done nothing to undermine their position. On the contrary, what they have created is a vacuum on the left which needs to be filled by those prepared to fight consistently on the issues of jobs, wages and conditions.

By John Killen, EC 3 broad left, personal capacity

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

Brighton posts

AN UNOFFICIAL strike by 1000 postal workers in Brighton and Hove brought services to a standstill last Wednesday.

One of the strikers explained why: "The dispute is over bulk and rebate mail, in other words, bills and leaflets. Many workers depend on this for overtime. Now, management are saying it has to be delivered in our own time, during our normal rounds. Some of us will lose £30 a week as a result."

"The local paper said that we were happy with the proposals. If you went into the sorting office and said that, you'd

get kicked out!

"The local union leadership has done sod all. They are supposed to be there to support us but all they have said is that they can only advise us, not back us up. A lot of the blokes are fed up with the union."

"Management have sent out letters to every worker saying further industrial action will lead to immediate suspension. Incredibly, UCW leaders have signed a joint statement with the Post Office condemning the action and conceding management demands."

By Martin Smith

Popplewell on pilfering

JUSTICE POPPLEWELL has ruled at the Employment Appeal Tribunal that off-licence proprietors were acting lawfully when they sacked a group of workers who failed to identify who was responsible for stock losses that were being suffered.

This judgement gives carte blanche to bosses to carry out blanket dismissals of workers who are entirely innocent, if they claim there is evidence of dishonesty or incompetence.

By Mike Waddington

Lambeth council

LAMBETH COUNCIL'S Labour leaders, Linda Bellos included, have announced they won't be standing for re-election at the group's AGM next week.

This decision follows opposition by the trade unions and Labour Parties to Bellos's £60 million cuts package which

would have meant 2000 job losses.

The local government union, Nalگو, are currently balloting on non-cooperation with the council's compulsory redeployment policy.

By a Lambeth Nalگو member

'Quiet exit' in the city

MORE THAN 10,000 jobs in the City have been lost since last October's crash according to the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union. The total is still rising.

Firms are increasingly making redundancies a few at a time, the 'quiet

exit' method, to avoid bad publicity.

Staff are now being told about redundancies over the weekend and advised not to come in on Monday morning. Others are escorted off the premises for fear of sabotage.

Militant

**Vote LABOUR
on 5 May**

See page 17

Vote NO to Poll Tax

N. Ireland DHSS strike

THOUSANDS OF workers joined strikes at N Ireland DHSS offices on 26 April after 260 workers at the Derry office walked out in reaction to a threat from the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA).

A member of their union, the N Ireland Public Service Alliance, declared: "Our members are not prepared to be intimidated by anyone".

Reaction from other DHSS workers was swift. Staff at 11 offices spontaneously took strike action. It was expected that all the 34 offices would join the strike.

Derry Trades Council issued a statement deploring the INLA threats and fully supporting the strike.

In 1986, when Catholic workers at the Lisburn DHSS were threatened with assassination by the Ulster Freedom Fighters, 4,000 workers reacted with strike action. Again these workers have shown the way forward. This movement must be built on.

By Billy Linn,
chair, DHSS Section
Committee, Nipsa

Further report next week.

IN THE 5 May local elections, workers throughout Britain can express their opposition to the Tories' social security cuts and the poll tax.

By Alan McCombes
(Govan Labour Party)

The overwhelming majority of ordinary people face deep cuts in their living standards.

Strathclyde Regional Council calculates that in the West of Scotland, 18.5 per cent of claimants have gained from the social security changes, 4.2 per cent have remained the same and a staggering 77.3 per cent have been plunged even deeper into the mire of poverty.

Councillor Larry Flanagan, who represents Glasgow's Castlemilk housing scheme, told *Militant* of an elderly couple in his ward, whose monthly rent and rates bill has soared from £8.61 to £101!

But the issue that overshadows everything else in Scotland is the poll tax. With registration now taking place, working-class communities are fighting back.

Big anti-poll-tax meetings are now a regular feature of life. Thousands of houses are festooned with window posters proudly proclaiming NO POLL TAX HERE.

Registration officers, paid 40p for each comp-



Photo: Steve McTaggart

Anti-poll-tax campaigners lobbying Scottish Labour Party conference.

leted registration form they collect, have found that they would be more profitably employed digging for gold in Glasgow Green.

In some areas they are being followed down the streets by protesters with loudspeakers, telling tenants their rights.

Wipe-out

The implications of the poll tax are now sinking in south of the border as well. Working-class households in Wales will be hammered by the tax in two years' time. A family of three in the Rhondda will be £423 a year worse off than now.

The Scottish district elections will see the Tories routed. In Glasgow, where they are already reduced to five councillors out of 60, they could face a complete wipe-out.

Labour should be enormously strengthened, despite the opportunism of the Scottish National Party, who have adopted, at least in words, a more militant position on the poll tax.

But the Labour hierarchy in Scotland should not interpret a landslide on 5 May as an endorsement of their idea of a low-key campaign against the poll tax.

An overwhelming victory will be a mammoth rejection of the tax and a mandate to Scottish Labour to escalate the battle to force the Tories to retreat.

Profiteers

At all the local anti-poll-tax meetings the most enthusiastic applause is invariably reserved for speakers who call upon Labour councils to lead the fight against the tax and defy the law if necessary.

This tax is more than just another malicious act of revenge by Thatcher against the working class. It is a calculated attempt to reduce local

authorities to glorified community councils and turn services over to private profiteers.

For Labour councils therefore, as well as for Labour voters, this is a struggle for survival.

After 5 May, with a commanding position in dozens of councils throughout Scotland, Labour must grasp the opportunity to spearhead mass action against the poll tax and, on behalf of all the workers in Britain, inflict the most serious defeat on Thatcher since she came to power in 1979.

Youth and the poll tax - see page five.

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£30,000 by Wednesday

WE HAVE to raise £30,000 by next Wednesday, 4 May, to reach our Fighting Fund Target of £50,000. Send us your cash today!

A reader in Glasgow sent us £100; and M Roberts from Leicester sent £70. J Knight from Stockport sent us two days' pay of £43.65 and R Johnson of Rugby LPYS donated half a week's wage of £36.50. £50 was collected at the AEU National Committee.

We urgently need this cash to pay for our present and future expenditure on leaflets, posters, pamphlets etc., to assist the fight against the Tories.

Of course, £30,000 is small change to the likes of Christopher Heath, a merchant-banker. His salary alone was

£2.5 million last year! While millions suffer from Tory cuts in benefits, the tops of big business can expect salaries of over £100,000, plus a company car, full medical insurance, index linked pension, corporate shares and bonuses!

May Day will mean our readers rededicating themselves to the struggle for socialism. What about holding a social or some other fund raising event for the *Militant*? A jumble sale in Bermondsey raised £100. A sponsored swim from a London reader raised £27.60.

May Day demonstrations and rallies also provide an opportunity for fundraising. Hackney supporters raised £80.70 in extras on the sale of *Militant*. £30.47 was raised by Newcastle Poly

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	1405		1570
2 South West	941		1270
3 London	4385		7080
4 East Midlands	1255		2530
5 Scotland West	1040		2520
6 Eastern	913		2260
7 Manchester/Lancs	1094		2890
8 Merseyside	1733		5000
9 Southern	706		2020
10 Yorkshire	2090		5950
11 Northern	1100		3270
12 Scotland East	668		2150
13 Wales	734		3510
14 West Midlands	800		3960
15 National	2489		4000
Total	21354		50,000

Militant supporters from the sale of stickers. Leon Sudard, aged 10 years, raised £5.52 selling stickers.

Thanks to this weeks contributors including: M Collard, Southwark, £35; B Magulre, Stockport, £20; Steve German

and Heather Hetwash, both from Taunton, £10.10 and £5 respectively; a reader from Heald Green, Stockport, £10; S Miller, Coventry NCU, £8; A Carson, Leicester, £5; and Maria Ware, Bristol, £5.