

# Militant

Solidarity price £1

Inside...

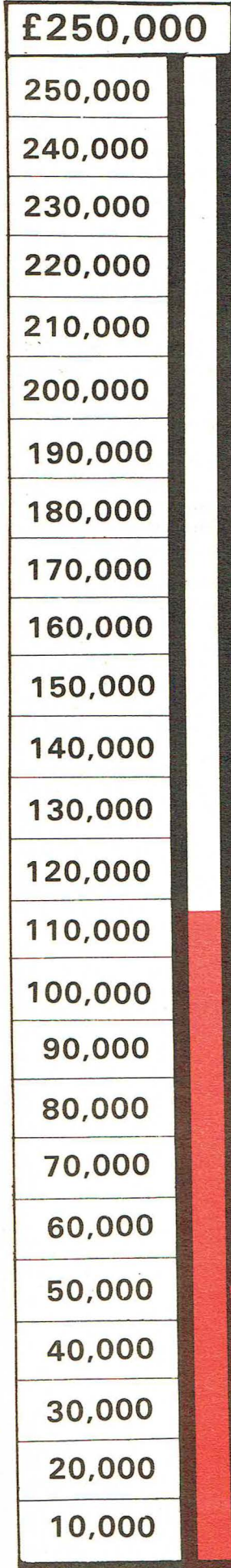
The miners

See pages 7, 8 and 9.

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 826 5 December 1986

## Militant Fighting Fund



# The great gas swindle

**MILLIONS OF people have been conned by the Tory government into parting with their savings for shares in British Gas. A staggering £100 million has been spent on advertising, underwriting fees and promotional perks to sell off a public asset. A hard-sell advertising campaign like this would be illegal in 'free enterprise' America.**

In no way can the Tories pretend that this act of privatisation will bring competition into the industry. A huge state monopoly will be converted into huge private monopoly. The exercise is a cynical bid to raise government revenue, to finance their massive dole bill. They hope to avoid the need to put up the taxes and fool enough voters into giving Thatcher a third term of office.

Consumers will suffer from rising prices. Union leader John Edmonds has shown that prices could be cut by ten per cent and British Gas would still be making high profits, from a vital source of energy for millions.

Workers in the industry, who have seen their numbers cut by 14,500 over the past five years, face further attacks, as profits for the shareholders becomes the prime motive for management. On wages, BG have offered the lowest rise in the public sector. A ballot of NALGO members in the industry has rejected industrial action by only 800 out of 28,000. An internal management memo has reported disappointment in the poor take-up of shares by employees. That is because

By John Flynn  
(NALGO National Gas Committee)

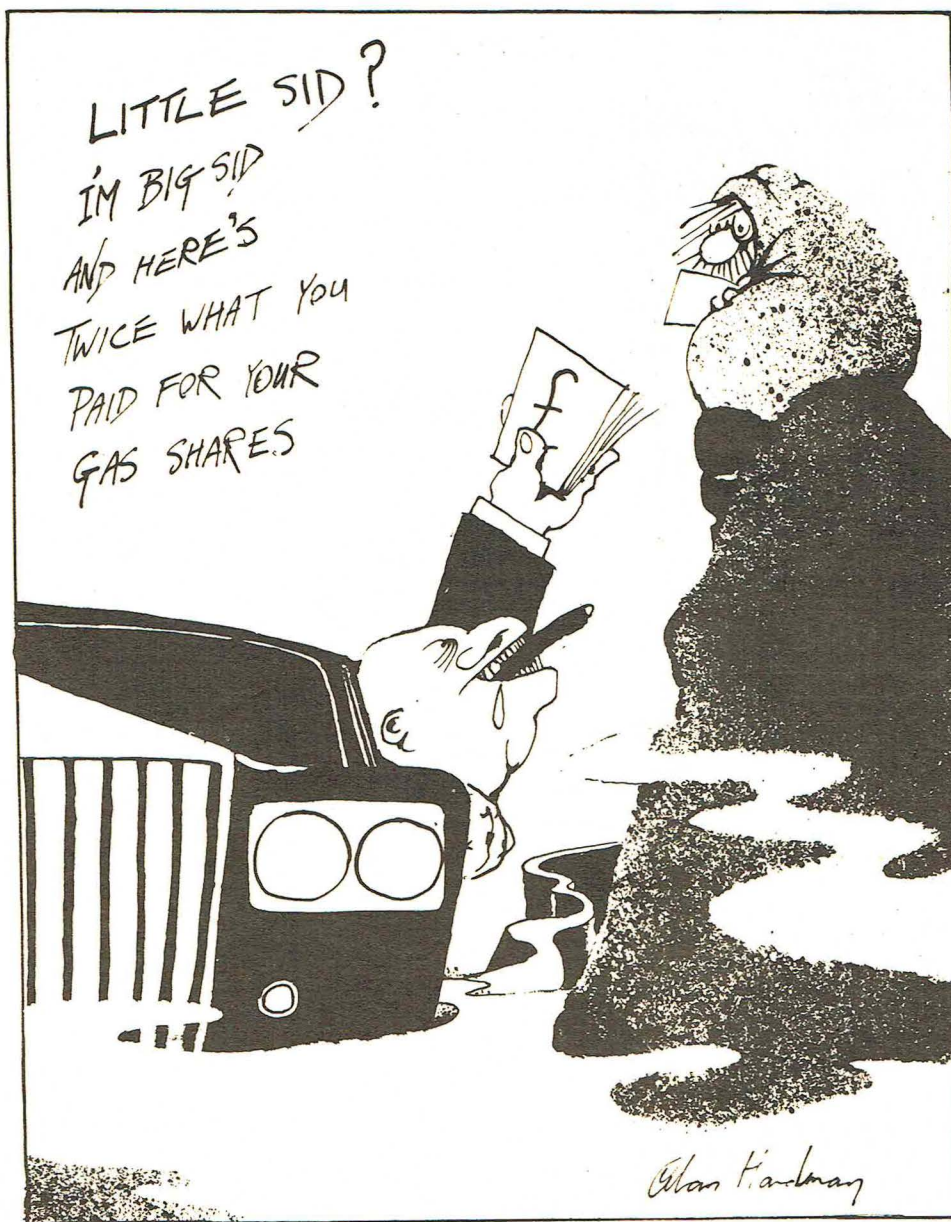
and John Merrell  
(NALGO E Midlands Region) (both in a personal capacity)

they have no confidence in privatisation.

Shareholders will make a quick profit. A premium of 20-25p on each 135p share is expected as soon as trading begins. But long-term prospects for the company are bleak. The gas under the North Sea is bound to run out. Small shareholders will see their life-savings at risk from a stock market crash. As with British Telecom and the others, millions will sell out to the big banks, insurance companies and pension funds. British Gas will become just another capitalist monopoly.

NALGO National Gas Committee supports the Labour Party policy for renationalisation. Labour must state unequivocally that it will take back British Gas, with compensation only on the basis of need. But it must not be managed as it has been. What could better illustrate what is wrong with the present form of nationalisation than the fact that the present board of directors is to remain in charge.

British Gas, and other public industries must be placed under the democratic control and management of the workers, both in the industry and outside, so that gas can play its part in an integrated plan for energy supply that is designed to meet social need, not the greed of profiteering speculators on the Stock Exchange.



## One week to go

OUR FIGHTING Fund now stands at £107,800 11 year old Anthony Miller of West London has given one month's pocket money, £15, in response to our appeal to all readers for at least a week's income by 10 December. John Dale from Clowne has sent £500. Rush your donation in now. See page 3.



## Bumper sales weekend

HAVE YOU drawn up plans yet for the weekend of action from 12-14 December to build the sales and support for *Militant*?

Sellers should make sure of extra factory sales on the Friday morning. As well as the Saturday street sales, you could set up a table in your shopping centre to sell the *Militant International Review*. A door to door sale on Sunday would round off the weekend nicely.

This activity will also help raise a lot of fighting fund money to get the new target off to a good start. We will now be printing an extra edition dated 19 December (which will last until 9 January) to give time to visit regular readers with the special seasonal issue. After a good Christmas and New Year break we will be preparing for our biggest ever sales campaign to set the basis for a more frequent *Militant*.



# Militant

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## Printers' anger

THE TUC General Council's latest refusal to take action against the EETPU's strike breaking at Wapping will stick in the throat of all union activists. September's TUC Congress, in defiance of the platform's recommendation, instructed the General Council to reopen the case against the electricians.

Since then more detailed, cast iron evidence has been produced of the collusion between EETPU national officers, and senior representatives of News International. In her book 'The End of the Street', Linda Melvern has unearthed News International minutes affirming that Hammond gave the go-ahead for Murdoch's charade of announcing the appearance of a new paper, the 'London Post', to be printed at Wapping, and then behind this facade to transfer his existing Fleet Street titles to the 'Fortress.'

Under questioning at the February General Council, Hammond declared that only local EETPU officials had been involved, 'innocently', in recruiting labour for the (mythical) 'London Post'.

Murdoch moved to dockland to evade union restrictions and hard won conditions and wage rates. According to Melvern's evidence the EETPU national leadership acted as recruiting sergeants for his union-busting operations. Even now as the TGWU belatedly disciplines its drivers who cross the Wapping picket line, scabs with EETPU cards are running the presses inside.

All Norman Willis could offer in justification for the TUC's timidity was to say 'a man cannot be tried twice for the same offence.'

But this legalistic doublespeak drew the understandable retort from the print union leaders: what is the point of remaining in the TUC, if other affiliated unions can blithely steal our members' jobs.

It would be a serious error, however, for the print unions to desert the TUC. The battle for fighting trade unionism must be waged inside the trade union movement. And that includes the campaign for the expulsion from the TUC, of what is now a company union—the EETPU. Print activists know anyway of the hesitations of their own union leadership, and are therefore campaigning *within* their unions for a more determined stand. Outside the TUC, the main body of organised trade unionism, they would be open targets for poaching and scabbing.

But the TUC leaders must be held to account. *The Times* Clerical Chapel demands a recall TUC. They have abdicated any pretence of defending workers in struggle. They have been subsumed by the doctrine of so-called modern trade unionism. Strikes, unions themselves, apparently are unpopular; 'old style' class conflict should be replaced, with unions taking up broader issues—the environment, culture, sport (all no doubt worthwhile in their own right). Changes in the structure of the workforce require unions to represent workers individually, not by traditional collective action.

In fact there is nothing modern about this approach. It is turning the union clock back to the nineteenth century insurance societies, before they evolved into fighting class organisations. And from here it is only a short step to embracing one-union, no-strike, sweet-heart agreements, in the Hammond mould.

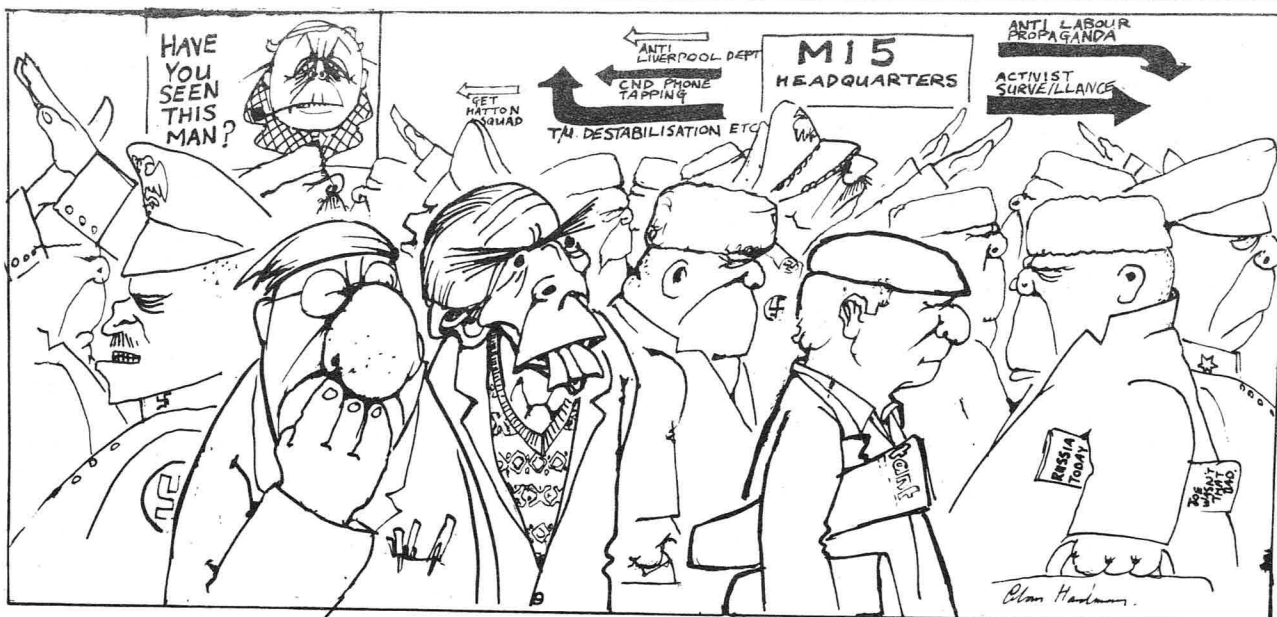
Union leaders like GMBATU's John Edmonds have pushed these 'new' theories. But GMBATU gas workers, who only by the narrowest majority have just rejected a national strike, might well ask what support their General Secretary could have won from the TUC if they had taken on the government. Embattled NUT members might want to question Fred Jarvis, who also voted to ignore the EETPU's strike breaking.

Workers like these know there is nothing new about modern management's attitude, as Murdoch proves. And it will not be combatted by unions sponsoring rock concerts.

25 November was 'Black Wednesday', when the TUC refused to uphold the most fundamental trade union principles, against the willingness of the EETPU to undermine them.

But the growing number of workers covered by union collective bargaining agreements, the 3.5 million still in traditional closed shops, will not allow the emasculation of their organisations by a TUC leadership more divorced than ever from the realities of working life.

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MY GOD SIR!!! I BELIEVE WE'VE BEEN INFILTRATED BY THE WORKING CLASS

## Labour must expose M15

THE GOVERNMENT'S attempt in Australia to prevent publication of a book on MI5, written by one of the service's former officers. Peter Wright, is turning into a long-running farce. But the pitiable performance by the Labour leaders should also be treated with derision.

With the Australian judge ordering the handing over of confidential British government documents to Wright's solicitor, the Tories may be compelled to drop the case altogether, to avoid total embarrassment. Their complete inconsistency will be exposed. They conived in the publication of Chapman Pincher's book on MI5, which was based so much on Wright's inside knowledge, that he received half the royalties. Yet now they are blocking Wright's own book, in the name of protecting state security!

But where is the Labour leaders' vigorous campaign to make clear to the electorate, the full implications of the contents of Wright's book? He blows the gaffe on MI5's attempts to

assassinate Egyptian president Nasser, to bug the French and Italian embassies and to plot against the 1974 Labour government.

Why are the Labour leaders not publically explaining that MI5, the security services and armed forces far from being the loyal servants of elected governments, devoted to defence against foreign aggression, are in fact bulwarks to protect big business and the monopolies? As the plot against Wilson proves, the state apparatus as it currently exists could pose a future threat to the rights of the labour movement, including the right to vote.

### Legalistic issues

But Neil Kinnock and others concentrate on the purely legalistic issues—was the Attorney General informed of the government's decision not to prevent Pincher's book etc.

Kinnock, declaring on TV his "patriotism and commitment to Britain," actually condemned the Tory

government as being "casual in its commitment to maintaining the integrity of the security services," for not acting against Pincher.

'The integrity' that is, of a service that plotted against one of Kinnock's predecessors, a democratically elected Labour prime minister. And which, if rumours are true, is responsible for bugging phone calls from Kinnock himself, to the defence lawyers in Australia. 'Consistency' for Kinnock would mean blocking all books, all accounts of MI5 activities. Would we ever have known then of the moves against Wilson?

The Labour leaders seem desperate to prove their trustworthiness to the ruling class and its hired agents. But to be worthy of the trust of working people, they have to be prepared to take decisive action when returned to office, against the capitalist domination of the economy and state. And to launch a public campaign for it now.

By Jeremy Birch

## Cunningham's retreat-Byrne

TONY BYRNE, recently elected leader of Liverpool Labour council, told Martin Lee for *Militant* that for the first time in his life he had started to "feel that free speech was in doubt."

He said that straight after last week's NEC meeting regional organiser Peter Kilfoyle had telephoned him to read out the most important part of the NEC's resolution. This related to the setting up of an inquiry into alleged breaches of the constitution.

Byrne said that he would tell the inquiry that he had "signed a categorical assurance of my absolute

commitment to the rules and constitution."

He said, in relation to the threat of disciplinary action, that "nothing they do would surprise me."

"I am a member of the Labour Party and not even loosely connected with a newspaper as others are. But when a pack gets running then it is not uncommon for them to be blinded."

He recently attended the Association of Metropolitan Authorities quarterly meeting on 27 November, at which Labour's environment spokesman, Jack Cunningham, made some revealing remarks about the party's commitment to restoring

Tory cuts.

Cunningham had said that 1987 would be an election year and that local Labour leaders should think very carefully about statements that they made "or commitments entered into by Labour councils in advance of the next Labour government."

"Cunningham said that he was particularly alarmed that local Labour leaders were going around the country saying that they expected to be 'bailed out' by the next Labour government," said Byrne.

"He warned Labour authorities to take 'extreme caution' when entering into short term debts to bridge the gaps in expenditure.

"What I found surprising," said Byrne, "was his comment that he was not going to restore Tory cuts in local authority spending.

"Labour's front bench have every right to ask for full co-operation in getting Labour elected, and they have my absolute commitment in that.

"But in the light of the billions of pounds cut by the Tories since 1979, and the hardships suffered by working class families we have to ask: what will happen about the home helps, meals on wheels, class sizes and the full range of council services, especially the attacks on housing?

"I pressed Cunningham on the rate support grant and

he said that Labour would 'do no more than stop the year by year decline (of the rate support grant). But any expansion would have to come out of an increase in economic growth.'

"On housing subsidy Cunningham said that Labour would lift the ceiling on the present level of allocation but local authorities would have to make judgements on whether they can afford the finance for housing programmes themselves.

"In other words", said Byrne, "there will be no increase in housing subsidy, or anything done about the crippling debts which cities like Liverpool will have to bear."

He said that it will be difficult for Labour to win votes without any commitment to increase grants for local services.

"While I don't expect that a Labour government could restore grant levels overnight to 1979 levels, I would expect 'as a minimum' for that to be done in the lifetime of one parliament.

"Since 1979 Liverpool alone has lost £185 million in rate support grant, £30 million on education grants, £69 million in housing subsidy, and £150 million in Housing Investment Programme allocation.

"It is impossible for me to get Labour voters to accept that these cuts cannot be restored.

## Don't buy the Sun

THE PRINT unions fighting for jobs at Wapping have launched a new campaign to shatter Murdoch's paper sales.

The boycott, which has been running with some success since the third week in the dispute, is to be reorganised and given a new boost, starting in the London area.

The 'point of sale campaign' aims to involve all active trade unionists by sending stewards to all outlets between 7am and 9am daily, to hand out leaflets urging people not to buy Murdoch papers.

Organiser Mike McCarthy said: "If we achieve substantial success in the London area then we can build up support groups throughout the country."

Those in the London area who want to join the campaign can contact Mike McCarthy at London POS Boycott Campaign (Tel: 01 831 7291 ext 254 or 246.)



# Marxist victory for N West Labour Women

**THIS YEAR'S** North West Labour Party Women's Conference has elected a Regional Women's Committee with a two thirds majority in favour of Marxist ideas. This is despite the many attacks on Marxists in the North West area.

The Conference also adopted a number of resolutions detailing a socialist approach to the major issues confronting working class women.

One of the most important of these was a resolution calling for the low pay campaign to be continued in conjunction with the trades unions. The conference also agreed to support a party of labour in Northern Ireland and congratulating the DHSS and other workers who have fought sectarian threats.

The conference rejected a Cooperative Party resolution congratulating the NEC for upholding the constitution and expelling those who had contravened it. The motion

clearly referred to the recently expelled Liverpool Labour Party members.

An emergency resolution from Liverpool Women's Council was agreed instead, which reaffirmed support for the 47 Liverpool councillors, saying: "We call on the NEC to drop the investigation into the Labour group only weeks before likely byelections. We oppose any suggestions of imposing candidates in these 47 likely by-elections."

"We call on the NEC to drop the investigations into Knowsley North and the suspension of Broadgreen and St Helens Labour Parties."

By Margaret Creear

## West Mids

FOR THE first time a Marxist, Judy Griffiths, has been elected to the West Midlands Regional Women's Committee of the Labour Party.

# LPYS calls anti-apartheid action

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists National Committee have called a national 'oppose Benetton' day of action for Saturday 13th December.

It is in support of the 25 Glasgow LPYS members who were arrested after occupying and picketing Benetton's Knitwear store to expose big business links with apartheid.

The LPYS in Glasgow have highlighted the role of companies like Benetton who profit from the apartheid cheap labour economy and the racist system.

Benetton, which advertises under the slogan "The United Colours of Benetton", is just one of the British companies which profits from the

apartheid regime.

In April this year the LPYS conference heard Moses Mayakiso, leader of the Metal and Allied Worker's Union (MAWU), speak of the struggle of 1,000 sacked workers at Sarmcol (a subsidiary of British Tyre and Rubber BTR). From there the LPYS has taken up the campaign building links between British workers and workers in South Africa.

Moses Mayakiso is just one trade unionist who will spend this Christmas in prison. The LPYS National Committee is urging branches up and down the country to join the campaign supporting the Benetton 25, through leafletting and collecting money, on the 13th.



BBC TV'S Newsnight programme put Southampton Itchen LPYS branch on show last Monday, as part of a series on how the political parties were trying to win the youth vote in a marginal constituency.

The LPYS branch did a survey of 5000 local youth on their opinions on various issues, and held a "Rock the Tories out" gig.

Thatcher (LPYS member Gavin Marsh) was chased through the shopping precinct by a herd of thirty youth armed with Christmas spray, string and foam. Many of the 100 plus crowd at a 'trial of Thatcher,' shouted questions attacking the Tories. Thatcher, unable to justify her

government disasters, resorted to handbag-bashing the crowd and being booed off.

Combined with the successful gig in the evening when 120 attended, 53 people signed up wanting to find out more about the LPYS.

Stop press: But the following evening local right-wingers unconstitutionally convened a Labour Association meeting, to start an inquiry into *Militant* supporters, but were compelled to abandon the meeting after delegates' protests.

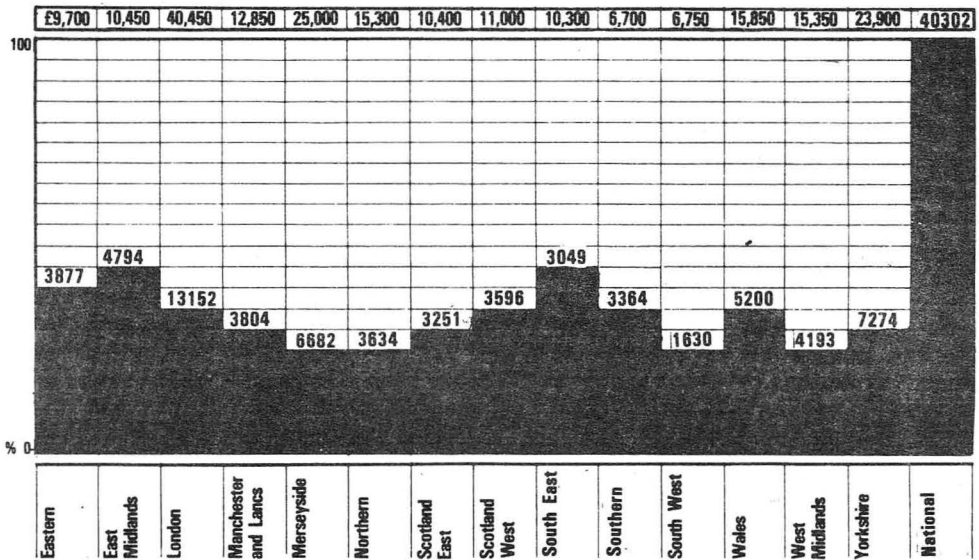
# Get your share in Militant

**DONATIONS OF** a week's income or more sent into our Fighting Fund set us on course for a huge total before Christmas.

Thousands of pounds was sent in the last week and we expect an avalanche of donations in time for the next issue of the paper. With just one week to go before our target date we need all readers to rush donations in.

Kevin Dupe, a member of Newport East LPYS, has sent us two week's wages totalling £100. Joe Singh, a Glasgow printer, sent us £100 towards the appeal for a week's income and redeemed his pledge of £50 given at the Albert Hall Rally. Jon Johnson, Plaistow, gave £100 and Barry Neddham of Southampton LPYS gave us his week's income of £40. Hugh and Jackie Henry, from Strathclyde, have sent us £175. Ann Lynch, a single parent student in Glasgow has given £50.

These are just a few of the thousands of readers who have so far responded to our appeal. If you haven't yet sent us a contribution, don't delay! Give yourself and others the best Christmas



present the working class could have by ensuring that *Militant* has the cash to move towards a twice-weekly paper.

## Campaign now

The Winter Draw tickets are going down well. One seller in Andover sold £6.50 worth on a Saturday paper sale. Have you sold out of your tickets yet? If so send off for more. Socials at this time of year are always good

for raising fighting fund so make sure there's one in your area.

And in the days leading up to Christmas don't forget to rattle your collecting tins in front of the Christmas shoppers. A small fortune can be raised on the streets at this time of year. Sellers in West London raised £84.44 and in Ipswich and Colchester £35.14. In Mussleburgh, sellers raised £40 in collecting tins and sold 25 papers in just two hours.

The marvellous success for *Militant* supporters at the North West Regional Women's Conference was rounded off with £324 collected for the fighting fund.

Donations also include: F Wilcox Oldham TGWU £4; Mitch Brent Leeds ASTMS 507 £10; Irene Littlehampton £5; Kaye Guerati Andover SOGAT expenses £5; Rob McHugh Manchester £5; Greven Macher Netherlands £200 pledged at rally; P Stamp Leicester CPSA £15.

# In Brief Witch-hunt news

## Sparkbrook

SPARKBROOK LABOUR Party, the right wing dominated constituency party of Roy Hattersley, has voted "in a spirit of Party unity" to re-admit back into membership Kevin Scally, Amir Khan and Mohammed Rafique, who had previously been expelled for "attacks on the Party".

The media claimed they were kicked out for advocating black sections, but particularly with Kevin Scally, they were expelled as a result of the witch-hunting atmosphere created by the right wing's attacks upon *Militant*.

In the presence of Hattersley, the chairwoman, without any prior notice, read out a well prepared resolution which explained the reasons

for their change of heart—for example (c) "The time taken by the NEC of the Party... which could otherwise have been directed... to mobilising the electorate on Labour's policies" and (d) "the considerable cost of court cases".

The right wing even invoked the argument that expulsions and splits would be "used against us by a hostile press".

The day after Sparkbrook's meeting the NEC did exactly the opposite in the case of Merseyside when they launched a new attack on the left by setting up "costly" inquiries into Tony Byrne and Knowsley North, which will be "used by a hostile press" to damage the Labour Party.

The move by the Sparkbrook rightwingers is partly explained by a shift to

the left in the party, particularly in the Sparkhill ward.

Sparkbrook is an inner city constituency with enormous social problems. *Militant* welcomes this belated decision to reverse these expulsions and would agree that the Party should concentrate on putting forward Labour's policies.

By Bill Mullins

## MP's threat

JOHN RYMAN, Labour MP for Blyth Valley in Northumberland, has threatened to resign if the national leadership does not hold an inquiry into "irregularities and *Militant* infiltration" in the Blyth Constituency Labour Party. He has said that he would stand as a "Labour against *Militant*" can-

didate in a by-election.

Ryman, who has long had a reputation for eccentricity, has begun to feel the growing discontent of both Labour Party members and Labour voters within Blyth. It appears that he may be about to quit his "career" as a Labour MP.

Apart from anger at Ryman's outburst, a real fear exists that the NEC may follow the precedent they established in Knowsley North by bypassing the local party and imposing their own candidate.

## Ban on sales

ANOTHER MP to join forces with the right in attacking *Militant* has been former "left" Ron Davies. At a general committee of the Caerphilly Constituency Labour Party on 14 November, the right-wing succeeded in gaining a majority for a motion which attempts to

proscribe *Militant*, going way beyond party conference or NEC decisions.

The motion, which had the full support of Ron Davies, states that membership of *Militant* tendency could be proved by: selling the *Militant* (other than by a recognised retail outlet); making financial or other contributions to *Militant*; organising or participating in meetings or events on behalf of *Militant*; being employed by *Militant* or its affiliates.

On the same day as the general committee, George Wright, Regional Secretary of the Welsh TGWU and well known witch-hunter, suspended a large left-wing TGWU branch after the sudden disappearance of its minute book. Its delegates were therefore unable to attend the meeting and vote on the motion.

By Militant reporters

## Liverpool rally

DESPITE A boycott from a handful of party members 300 people from Liverpool, Knowsley and St. Helens attended a rally to mark the first anniversary of the suspension of the Liverpool District Labour Party.

£933 was collected towards the councillors' court case and a statement was passed unanimously committing party members to continue the fight for party democracy. As Les Huckfield pointedly asked in last week's Tribune, "When will Walworth Road realise that you can't change the politics of Merseyside through constitutional devices."

By Martin Lee



# The anti-racist polici

**LIVERPOOL CITY Council has a record second to none in fighting racism and discrimination against blacks. Between 1983, when Labour took office, and the end of 1985, the council, in Liverpool 8 had:**

- ★ Spent £48m on housing.
- ★ Rehoused 1,730 families.
- ★ Built 978 dwellings.
- ★ Carried out large scale improvements to 1782

dwellings.

- ★ Demolished 2,100 empty slums.
- ★ Carried out major landscape work.
- ★ Rebuilt 150 shops.
- ★ Spent more on housing in Liverpool 8 than any other local authority's total housing budget.
- ★ Whenever the council has not been obstructed by the NALGO boycott of Sam Bond the percentage intake of blacks has ranged between 20 and 30 per cent of overall intake.
- ★ Appointed race advisors

to all the community schools.

- ★ Introduced the first ever anti-racist code of practice for all schools in Liverpool.
- ★ Co-ordinated parent support groups for primary schools in Liverpool 8.
- ★ Increased the number of black people in receipt of homehelps and meals on wheels from 0.3 to 13 per cent.
- ★ Introducing further child care facilities for Liverpool 8 families.
- ★ Introduced mother tongue facilities in nurseries.

★ Built a fully equipped modern sports centre in Liverpool 8.

- ★ Upgraded youth facilities so that now the majority of the city's facilities are situated in Liverpool 8.
- ★ Improved funding for youth projects within the area.
- ★ Funded at least 32 voluntary organisations in Liverpool 8.
- ★ Liverpool 8 grant aid projects and organisations received far more funding from the council than any

other area in Merseyside.

- ★ Up-graded funding to these organisations to nearly £2 million per year.
- ★ Campaigned for further funding from government, resulting in the establishment of:
  - Race relations unit.
  - Ethnic library service.
  - Chinese social work unit.
  - Multicultural support centre.
  - Language centre.
- ★ This council spends more per head on the black population than any other council in the country.

**IN THE light of this record, it is outrageous that Liverpool City Council should have been attacked as 'racist'. In a widely publicised book, *The Racial politics of Militant in Liverpool*, a group calling itself the Black Caucus repeat all the lies, distortions and sweeping allegations which they have made about *Militant* and Liverpool City Council over the past two years.**

Its publication coincides with the latest barrage of attacks on the council by the Tories, Liberals and Labour's right-wing national executive committee. It also comes out before 47 Labour councillors are to appeal to the House of Lords against the fines and disqualification from office imposed by the District Auditor.

Black *Militant* supporters in Liverpool examine the history of the Black Caucus and defend the record of the city council.

THE CONFLICT between the council and the Black Caucus began two years ago when the council appointed Sam Bond as its Principal Race Relations Advisor. The Caucus, believing that the job should have gone to one of their own supporters, immediately objected to this appointment. Their subsequent campaign against the council was backed by all those opposed to the council's stand against the Tory government. The right wing Labour leadership also jumped on this bandwagon, to help justify their shameful witch-hunting of Marxists from the Liverpool Labour Party.

The book reveals that Black Caucus members themselves had gone to great lengths to get one of their own supporters into Sam Bond's job. When the plan

backfired, they immediately cried foul and accused the council of discrimination.

For the Caucus, what was at stake was more than just a job. The appointment of an outsider was seen as a threat to the position which they had built up over the years. Every single race relations job in the city up to this point was held by one of their supporters. They had a virtual monopoly over a range of government and local authority grants under the control of a network of unaccountable organisations dominated by Caucus supporters.

The book attempts to present the dispute as a conflict between the "black community" and the "racist" city council. To back this up, the authors weave a web of distortions and virtually re-write the history of events before and after Sam Bond's appointment. The authors counterpose their own "consensus" and fundamentally reactionary approach to the question of race to that of the council, which they dismiss as "colour blind and purely class based." This is perhaps the most important aspect of the book, but in order to understand the politics of the Caucus, it is necessary to give a word of explanation about the group itself.



Neil Kinnock and John Cunningham being welcomed by Black Caucus supporters when they visited Liverpool 8.

population over the whole period of this struggle has been enormous." Carried away by illusions of being community leaders, the Black Caucus decided to stand their own candidate for the Granby ward (home of most of Liverpool's black community) in the May

council elections. Their candidate along with the Liberals, made the Bond issue a central feature of their campaign. He was decisively rejected, as Labour secured its biggest ever vote in that ward. The Black Caucus candidate received 477 votes to Labour's 2,287.

## Race relations officialdom

THE POLITICS of the Caucus are a peculiar mixture of crude black nationalism and right-wing reformism. Their "consensus" approach to race, is rooted in the establishment ideology of "race relations" which became institutionalised in the mid-1960s, as a direct result of the Labour government's retreat on its commitment to socialist policies on immigration controls. The Race Relations establishment was set up to preach the new gospel of "integration through limitation."

One aim of the right wing Labour government was to use the newly established Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission (both later amalgamated into the Commission for Racial Equality) to check the rise of black militancy. From its inception, the race industry has come under fire from the most radicalised sections of the black movement.

### 'Black bourgeoisie'

In his book, *A Different Hunger—writings on Black Resistance*, the veteran anti-racist campaigner, A Sivanandan, comments: "It (the Commission for Racial Equality) has successfully taken politics out of the black struggle. It has, together with the

(Race Relations) Board, created a black bourgeoisie to which the state can now hand over control of black dissidents in general and black youth in particular." In another reference to the new "black bourgeoisie" he says, "They had to be allowed to move upwards within the existing system so that they would not threaten to transform it into a different system."

Through this process of attempting to "absorb" black discontent through the creation of a black middle-class, and through its particular outlook on the "race problem," the race relations officials inevitably find themselves on a collision course with those genuine anti-racist forces which seek to expose the real class nature of racism.

This dispute is part and parcel of the class struggle that has been raging in Liverpool between the city council and the state, represented in this instance, by the race relations officialdom.

The whole Black Caucus book is littered with race relations jargon. Blacks are referred to as being "ignored" and "disadvantaged" as opposed to "oppressed" and "exploited". In opposing a "class" stand on race, which bases itself on working class unity and links the fight against racism to the wider struggle against capitalism, the

Caucus, reflecting their own self interest, effectively accommodated themselves to the strategy of token reforms, which mainly take the form of a few highly paid "Race Advisor" jobs for middle class blacks.

This is what lies at the heart of their 'consensus' approach, which amounts to making deals with Liberals and Tories, or anyone else willing to offer a few perks. There is no prospect of achieving anything but the most minor reforms, but the Caucus are quite happy with this, so long as they themselves are the beneficiaries of whatever concessions are on offer. In exchange for a few jobs, the Caucus are happy to defend the status quo.

### 'All party consensus'

Thus for the Caucus, the biggest obstacle towards racial justice in Liverpool has not been the capitalist system, not Thatcher's ultra reactionary government and its massive assault on public spending in the inner cities, not the local Liberals, but the Labour leadership of the city council!

To them this reactionary and racist government is not the problem, nor are the Liberals, because both are prepared to throw a few crumbs in the Caucus' direction.

Thus, throughout the book the caucus argue the case for an "all-party consensus" on race, and attack Labour for its "simplistic, workerist, anti-Toryism, anti-Liberal rhetoric". The book accuses Labour of breaking the consensus on race when in 1981, opposition Labour councillors successfully defeated a Liberal motion that only paid lip-service to equal opportunities at a time when the Liberal administration were actual-

## No base in community

THE BLACK Caucus dates back to 1980, when the Liberal controlled city council invited the local Community Relations Council to appoint representatives to sit on a new Race Relations Liaison Committee. These 'representatives' subsequently called themselves the 'Black Caucus'. The present Caucus, however, consists of 12 members who first came to prominence in 1983, when their little clique staged a 'coup' which resulted in the removal of some of the original Liaison Committee members.

The new group, composed of lecturers and highly paid 'race experts', have always claimed to have been elected by the black community, but they have never come forward with any details about this election, except to say that they invited 70 black organisations to take part. These have never been named. In fact, immediately after this mysterious 'election', a number of black organisations attacked them as 'bogus' and protested to the ci-

ty council that this new group was not in anyway representative of the black community.

Community Relations Councils are part of the government sponsored race relations establishment, supposedly governed by representatives of affiliated organisations, which include the three main political parties, the churches etc. In no sense are they black organisations under the control of the black community.

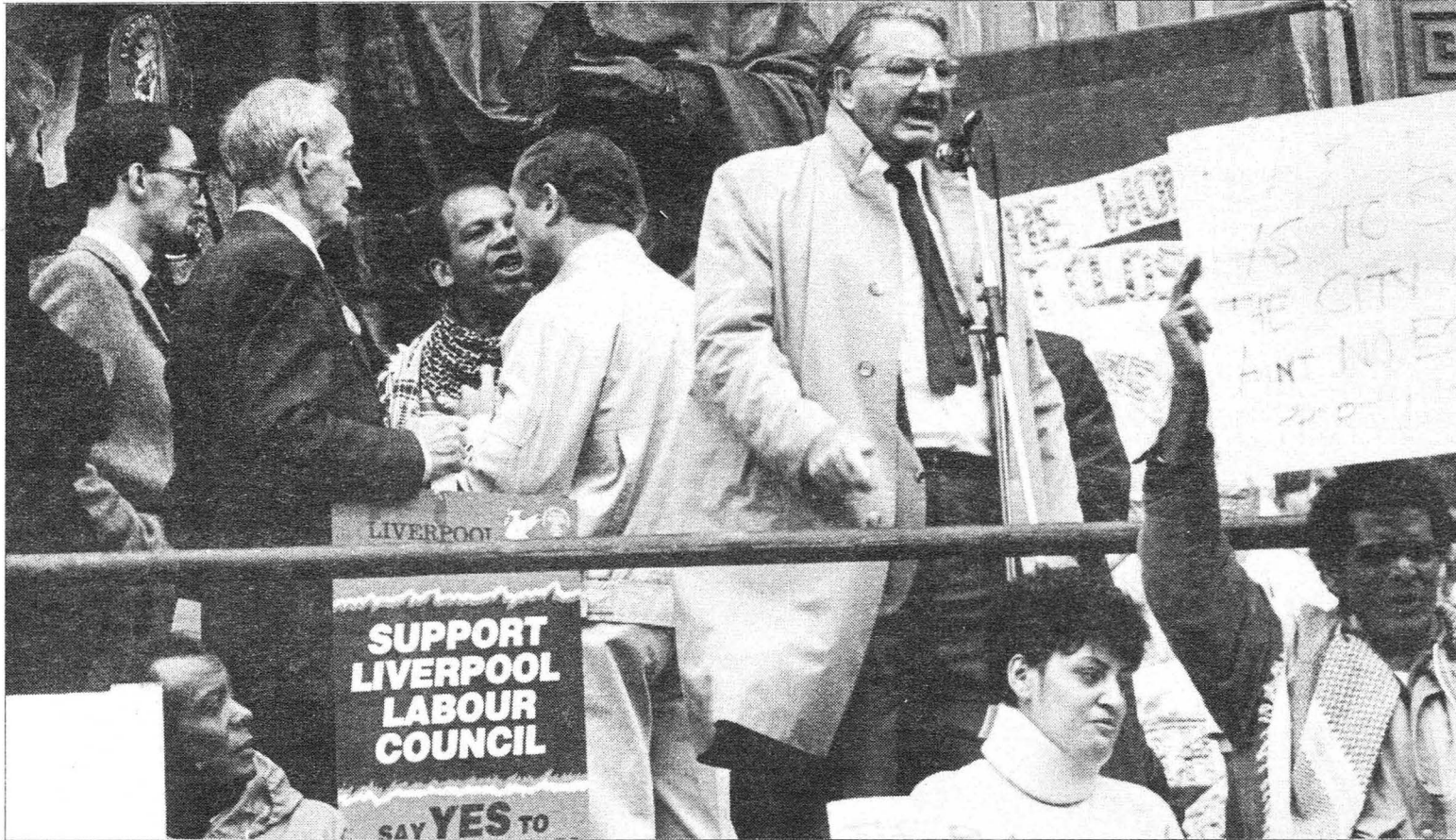
In Liverpool, the CRC is dominated by a network of institutions and grant aided projects. The Caucus group which took over the CRC in 1983 are mainly drawn from these projects, not from 'black organisations.' Despite their high public profile and media support, most of these self appointed black representatives are looked upon with contempt by Liverpool's black community.

The book boldly states that "the damage done to the Liverpool Labour Party's standing in the eyes of many sections of the black



# es of Militant

## A reply to the Black Caucus



Black Caucus supporters heckling and disrupting Eric Heffer MP, as he was speaking at an anti-unemployment rally in Liverpool. He later left the platform in protest.

ly cutting back the council workforce and slashing services.

A Labour amendment, moved by Derek Hatton, demanded that the Liberal council "increase the job opportunities for both black and white workers" by "lifting the moratorium on the filling of vacancies within the authority." The Labour amendment further called for "immediate discussions with the local authority trades unions as to how jobs could be created in order to improve the services of the city council: full consultation would then take place with the black organisations in order to ensure that there would be no discrimination in the re-employment policy."

The policy of Labour then, as now, was to fight for meaningful, concrete reforms for black workers, linking this struggle to a wider campaign against the Tories and their system. This class approach, which obviously finds no sympathy among the Liberals and Tories, the Caucus condemns as a breach of the 'consensus on race.'

### Liberal hypocrisy

At no time have the Liberals or Tories in Liverpool ever acted in the interests of the local black community, a fact fully documented in the book itself. But apart from a few mild criticisms here and there, the Black Caucus have always gone

along with the hypocrisy of their Liberal friends, so long as there was something on offer for themselves.

The narrow aims of the Caucus become even more apparent in their attitude to other Liverpool employers. The black employment record of Liverpool's private sector is one of the worst in the country. This is well documented in the book. When, however, the Caucus gave evidence earlier this year to the House of Commons Employment Committee, they cited Littlewoods, Liverpool's largest private employer, "as an honourable exception." In fact Littlewoods admits to a scandalous record of black employment, much

worse, in fact than many other private employers. Only 22 (or 0.8 per cent of Littlewood's 7,000 strong workforce in Liverpool are black, yet the Caucus have no compunction about describing Littlewood's as "an excellent example of a good employer", simply because the company employs a specialist 'race advisor' (a Caucus supporter!) and are prepared to dole out token grants to black projects.

The Caucus hold up Littlewood's as model of "achievement", yet since that company just took on its race advisor in 1982, only one black girl has been promoted to senior sales.

## Sam Bond—the outstanding candidate

THE POST of Principal Race Relations Advisor to the City Council was obviously viewed as a plum job by the Caucus and their supporters. The book contains a series of anonymous statements of 'evidence' to show the appointment of Sam Bond was 'rigged'. In fact, the Labour councillors who sat on the interviewing panel scrupulously adhered to all the correct procedures. In the book, the Caucus acknowledge that most of the Labour councillors on the interviewing panel were not *Militant* supporters. So much for the charge that Sam Bond was a '*Militant* plant.'

The council agreed to three Caucus representatives on the interviewing panel. The present chairman of the Caucus, and one of the joint authors of the book, was himself one of the candidates for the job.

Caucus supporters, along with Sam Bond, were then interviewed by councillors and Caucus members. Some Caucus members on the panel were also referees for those they were interviewing, a highly irregular procedure. Imagine the public outcry if a Labour councillor acted as 'sponsors' for job applicants whom they also interviewed. It is hardly surprising that



Sam Bond.

the Caucus expected one of their own supporters to get the job. But on the day, Sam Bond proved to be the outstanding candidate, a view unanimously endorsed by all the Labour councillors. But then the Caucus cried foul, criticising the interviewing procedure, and even claiming that Sam Bond did not have the support of his union, NALGO. In fact, the whole interviewing process was referred to and ratified by NALGO's National Emergency Committee.

A CHAPTER of the book, *Militant's war against the black community*, deals with the events following Sam Bond's appointment. It asserts that *Militant* "rather than attempting to resolve the problem in a constructive way, chose instead to launch an all-out ideological offensive against the black community."

There was, of course, no "offensive" against the black community, but the city council has remained steadfast in answering the Caucus politically. For their part, the Caucus, unable to take up the political arguments, resorted to a crude campaign of rabid denunciations of the council as "racist," active collaboration with the reactionary enemies of the workers, including Tory ministers, and the use of threats, intimidation and outright violence.

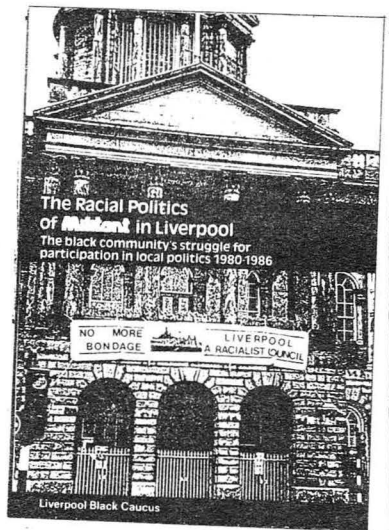
Black Caucus supporters have violently attacked female Labour councillors. The council have since catalogued a list of 14 separate incidents of violence by Caucus supporters, including an attack on Sam Bond, assaults on councillors and an instance where six Labour Party members were beaten up.

The Caucus have gained only the most negligible support from the

black community. The same hold, true of their claims of mass support within the labour movement. They did win the support of a few constituency parties and a handful of ward branches (largely because of the confusion that surrounded the dispute in its early stages) and also of a number of trade unions who were reluctant to oppose the local NALGO branch's boycott of Sam Bond.

### Abject failure

But, as the book admits, the main support for the Caucus comes from a small minority grouping around the Communist Party and other sects, the "soft-left" Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC), right wingers in the Labour Party, including five Labour councillors whom the Caucus praise for voting against the council's illegal budget, and, of course, Neil Kinnock. Because of their abject failure to win any significant support either from the council's Labour group of the District Party, the Caucus have denounced these labour movement bodies as 'Stalinists' and 'democratic centralists' and have given full support to Kinnock's witch-hunting campaign.



The Caucus are forced to concede to the overwhelming support for the city council within the labour movement, when they admit, with a bit of wishful thinking, that "*Militant's* formal demise has largely come about through external pressure and intervention from the Labour Party leadership and from the court cases brought by the District Auditor."

The opportunist wheeler-dealing of the Caucus have driven them into a position where they now look towards building an alliance with either the 'soft lefts' centred around the Liverpool Labour Left and LCC whom they look to "to fill the vacuum left by the expulsions and surcharging" or, more specifically, with the Liberals, who have promised to sack Sam Bond.

## Class unity

LIVERPOOL'S BLACK population is one of the most down-trodden communities in Britain. For years they have had to bear the full brunt of capitalist oppression.

As staunch defenders of the capitalist system, the Liberals when in power, pursued a policy which was absolutely disastrous for the black community. After ten years of Liberal rule, Labour inherited a situation where less than one per cent of the council's workforce were black. The old council housing allocation system operated by the Liberals was blatantly racist, contributing to a process which has condemned most black families to ghetto conditions. Of the 3,000 "meals on wheels" provided daily by the council, only nine went to black families.

This was the Liberal record, which Labour set out to change with a campaign to strengthen the unity between black and white workers in common struggle against racism and capitalism. Despite the efforts of the Liberals, the Black Caucus and the leaders of NALGO, who have maintained a boycott of Sam Bond, the present city council have launched a determined fight to defeat racism. But this is only the beginning. In the coming period, irrespective of whether the Liberals regain temporary control of the city council, the aroused working class movement in Liverpool will play a decisive role in the struggle to sweep away the rotten racist society along with the minority of millionaires who profit from it.

*Militant* recognises the special oppression which afflicts black people and women within capitalist society and has been in the forefront of every fight against racism and for equal rights and opportunities. But it is through the united struggle of all working class people to establish a socialist society, that the problems of black and white workers will be solved.

"Working class people of all colours must unite against the exploitative, oppressive ruling class. So let me emphasise once again—we believe our fight is a class struggle and not a race struggle." (From *Seize the Time* by Bobby Seale, founder and joint leader of the Black Panther Party).



## The insider trading scandal

# Capitalism breeds fraud



Ivan Boesky—fined \$100 million

**STOCK EXCHANGES** on both sides of the Atlantic have recently taken a tumble. The reason—a mysterious fraud called "insider trading". MICK BROOKS looks at the opportunities share dealing gives the very rich to line their pockets illegally.

A FEW weeks ago, Dennis Skinner MP, quite rightly called the Stock Exchange the biggest casino in the country. One argument in favour of casinos, though, is that usually the punter can assume the croupier is on the level. If the croupier were to walk round to the other side of the green baize and put his shirt on the red you might quite reasonably suspect that something was up.

The new financial leviathans created by the "Big Bang" are supposed to give speculators impartial advice on where to put their money. The same institutions are also betting large sums of their own money at the same time. And these very institutions are chock full of eager employees with an insider's knowledge of which way the markets are likely to move.

The whole situation is riddled with potential conflicts of interest. This is supposed to be safeguarded by "Chinese Walls" between the departments. (The Great Wall of China was there to seal off the people of the "Middle Kingdom" from the surrounding barbarians). All this means is that nobody is supposed to talk to anyone else—an assumption which is particularly unrealistic while long liquid lunch hours remain the norm in the City.

Opportunities for enrichment abound because of the orgy of takeovers which have accompanied the rising "bull" market in shares. This boom has not been accompanied by any increase in manufacturing investment. The big corporations have sought substance by eating each other! The result is the creation of financial conglomerates like the Hanson Trust with no industrial logic to their operations. Takeover is very often the prelude to butchery—just hanging on to the profitable bits.

In the USA, for instance, last year's volume of takeovers was a \$175 billion record, while 1986 is likely to see a haul of over \$200 billion. Over the past year Britain has also seen a stew of multi-billion takeover bids—Argyll for Distillers, Elders IXL for Allied Lyons and then for Courage, Hanson Trust for Imperial, Imperial

for United Biscuits, GEC for Plessey and so on.

Merger mania invariably means a rise in the price of the victim company's shares as the predator goes in for the kill. Inside knowledge of a takeover bid is a quick ticket to a fortune. Computer surveys show that over 90 per cent of share prices of companies threatened with takeover went up just before the bid. Clearly somebody is in the know, and making good use of that knowledge.

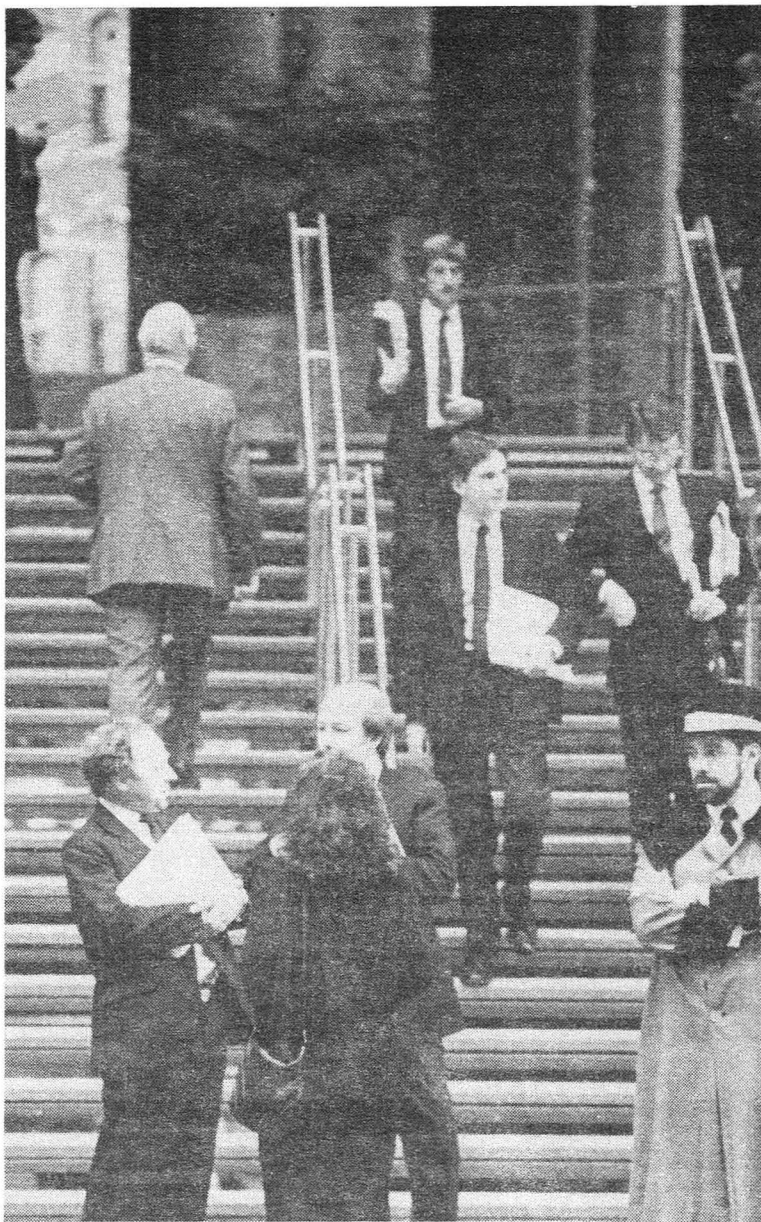
What is new about the present wave of takeovers is that the piranhas have started eating the sharks. What British and American capitalists lack in drive to invest in their countries' future they make up for in inventing new money-making pieces of paper. Likewise financial journalists have invented colourful new expressions like 'white knights', 'poisoned pills' and 'golden parachutes'—all part of the new lexicon of takeovers.

### Corporate raiders

Let us just take "junk bonds" for now. Normally a bond is valued because it supplies a steady revenue derived ultimately from the unpaid labour of the working class. A "junk bond" only pays from the fruits of a takeover and is only issued to finance a takeover. Thus the USA has seen a new breed of "corporate raiders", a sort of financial rag-and-bone merchants, who take bites out of firms much bigger than themselves in order to get bought off with "greenmail". "Arbitrageurs" who act as financed intermediaries, have appeared, spotting a soft touch and sinking their teeth in, only to sell out to a real bidder.

Though the process is more organised in the States, the "Golden Mile" too has seen assaults like that of Elders IXL on firms four times as big, takeover bids financed by money capitalists who see a bigger "take" in merger than in real investment.

This is where our white collar criminals come in. Geoffrey Collier was an executive of the merchant bank, Morgan Grenfell, probably on about £300,000 a year. Morgan



Lloyd's new headquarters in the City of London.

Grenfell was approached by Robert Maxwell to manage his bid for the engineering firm AE, which was already being wooed by Turner and Newall. Collier used his inside information to make a quick killing. He was found out only because he was shopped. The news of Collier's dismissal was followed the next day by word of another scandal. Clearly Collier is just the tip of a Titanic-busting iceberg.

Ivan Boesky was a financier with a seemingly infallible nose for a takeover—and so for a rising share price. In fact he was in cohorts with Dennis Levine of Drexel Burnham Lambert, the finance house that specialised in junk bond issues

for takeovers. Boesky even got to the stage of setting up a profit sharing scheme with Levine.

### Microphone

Commentators have now sourly discovered that Boesky was not a genius—he just knew something they didn't. The US Securities and Exchange Commission reacted sternly to the scandal, fining him \$100 million.

This is not the end of Boesky's world. Just before the news broke he was able to unload shareholdings of \$4.40 million on the market. As one financier commented: "It's the irony of all

## Gut reaction

IN ITS editorial on insider trading, *The Economist* was remarkably frank about why big business should be concerned about this kind of fraud.

It concedes that there are good economic and legal arguments for taking a soft line. Insider trading, it says, can cause share prices to move faster than they would otherwise, thus "generally improving the way economies work." Legally, insider trading "is hard to define and police."

"Good arguments" agrees *The Economist*, but "they miss the point... they fail to recognise that what matters is the gut reaction of millions of ordinary people whose savings fuel the market and whose votes can turf out of office politicians who favour free markets and private property. People who are lucky enough to live in capitalist democracies can easily forget that open markets and property rights have been the exception in man's history. They are there conditionally, the main condition being that they are seen to serve the interests of the many, not the greed of the few."

In other words that means — capitalism serves the greed of the few, so as to maintain the pretence that it benefits the many, we must come down heavily on fraud otherwise they will be voting for a socialist government which will stop the legal as well as the illegal rackets.

ironies. The biggest inside information is that Boesky is being put out of business and he gets to trade first".

For Boesky had done a deal with the SEC. For the past three months he has been walking round Wall Street with a hidden microphone. One source told a journalist "No one knows where it will lead. Fear is rampant".

The line between legal and illegal rip-offs on the stock markets is in practice meaningless. Capitalism breeds opportunities for fraud and the people to take advantage of those opportunities. So, watch this space.

## Left and Right

### Sick system

THE REAL crime of Ivan Boesky, the Wall Street trader who has just been fined £100 million for 'insider trading', was being too good at being a capitalist.

When his wife once commented on the beauty of the moon, he replied: "What good is the moon if you can't buy or sell it?" He sometimes wore a T-shirt which said: "He who owns the most when he dies wins." In the end he admitted that his greed was a "sickness in the face of which I am helpless."

The only difference between Boesky and the rest of the "sick" capitalists is that he took 'free enterprise' morality to its logical conclusion and exposed what a racket the system is. He is now paying the price. A cure for their sickness is available, however. It is called socialism.

### Just a gambler

WHILE BOESKY'S insider trading made him a millionaire, Geoffrey Collier, the British dealer who has been charged with the same offence, has puzzled his colleagues

with the modesty of his ambitions. They cannot understand why someone thought to be 'earning' £300,000 a year should risk his career and reputation for a profit of 'only' £15,000 or so. One colleague told *The Economist* that "Mr Collier is at heart a gambler, who gets a thrill out of taking risks". But don't the Tories keep extolling the virtues of taking risks. What is the Stock Exchange but a glorified gambling casino? It is the whole system which should be in the dock.

## An example to follow

SALES IN Pollok have shot forward thanks to the efforts of one new enthusiastic seller. From an average of 35 sales, George has pushed the sales in the last three weeks to 68, 76 and last week 100. He has set up a paper round of 35 in his own immediate area and other sellers now feel obliged to follow the example set.

The excellent information we have carried on events in the CPSA is repaid by the sales achieved among the civil servants. At the recent special pay conference over 200 papers were sold. Sales at local offices should now be stepped up.

Lee Waker tells us his sales vary from 7 to 16 each week. A good

week includes a union meeting or a successful public sale. The bottom line of 7 is guaranteed by the round of regulars that he has established. The 'bread and butter' of a more frequent *Militant* will be the regular sales that we can set up now.

Not content with banning individual issues of *Militant* the South African authorities have now put a banning order on all copies. While we thank them for the compliment we assure them that they will fail utterly in their attempts to halt the growth of Marxism.

By Gerry Lerner



# The enemies within



**Chris Herriot, sacked Monktonhall miner, reviews Ian MacGregor's book *The Enemies within: The Story of the Miners' Strike*.**

**A VICIOUS restructuring programme is underway within the coal industry, with pit closures, mergers and thousands of jobs being shed 'voluntarily'. The attack on 'King Coal' was inevitable given the destruction of Britain's manufacturing and basic industries.**

The miners' strike of 1984-85, if successful could have turned the tide. It gave hope to millions. A victory for the miners would have stopped Thatcher in her tracks and probably brought about her downfall. An incoming Labour government would have been under tremendous pressure to introduce socialist policies and initiate fundamental change. The miners fought like lions, but found themselves let down by the leaders of the labour and trade union movement.

The ruling class was fully aware of the stakes being played for. They prepared for a confrontation they knew to be unavoidable, if they were succeed in cowering the organised working class.

They chose as their champion, Ian MacGregor, who had all the credentials for a top union-basher. He was, if you believe the claim in his book, born into a strike-breaking family.

"I had been too young to be involved in the General Strike of 1926, but I remember my father's concern that a few union leaders should not be allowed to use their men to hold the country to ransom, and that my two elder brothers drove tramcars in Glasgow to keep things moving."

He followed their fine example ten years later when, as a manager he was "confronted with my first strike".

"It never occurred to me that there was any solution

other than to shin up onto the roof and run the overhead crane myself to keep the job going."

In America MacGregor built up a reputation for strike-breaking and union-bashing. He retired in 1977 as chairman and chief executive of the Amax corporation.

But since 1975 he had been a "non-executive" director of British Leyland, appointed by the then Labour government. It was to him that Thatcher turned to 'restructure' the British Steel Corporation (BSC).

Having served out his apprenticeship by butchering the steel industry, MacGregor finally arrived at Hobart House on 1 September 1983 as chairman of the National Coal Board.

Such things as people's livelihoods were no concern of his.

"My argument was that coal was only valuable if somebody wanted to buy it and therefore it was only valuable if the cost was right."

On 6 March 1984, the irreconcilable differences between men and management exploded into the inevitable industrial confrontation.

Much distortion and outright untruths have been told of the development of the strike and of its organisation, and MacGregor does not shy from repeating them: "At nearly all the Scottish pits the men called for a vote. At nearly all of them they were reluctantly allowed to do so on a show of hands—and at nearly all of them they voted overwhelmingly *not* to strike."

In fact, the majority of Scottish pits voted in favour of the action and almost all readily joined the dispute. Monktonhall Colliery, fresh from an isolated 8 week strike followed by the short-working and lost wages of



Miners' picket meets the full force of the state in their battle for jobs.

the 3 months overtime ban, voted decisively against the strike. Yet, accepting the democratic wishes of the majority, the pit was 100 per cent solid.

MacGregor claimed that a minority of militants—never more than ten per cent—intimidated the remainder into joining the dispute.

How can ten per cent of the men picket ninety per cent into submission? The force of argument won the day. Indeed the Scottish courts declared the strike perfectly constitutional.

According to him striking miners were "carefully trained storm-troopers" and not men spontaneously rising to oppose the threat to their livelihoods and to their communities.

A "tidal wave of intimidat-

**MacGregor encouraged the use of maps to identify the homes of each miner. Red pins indicated those loyal to the strike, orange for those considered approachable for a return, green for definite weariness and blue for those who had caved in.**

tion and thuggery" was blamed, for the fact that by March 15 only 11 pits out of 171 in the British coalfield were working normally.

The reality of the situation was that unarmed, defenceless pickets wearing T-shirts, jeans and training shoes faced an organised, disciplined, para-military police force using steel-toe-capped boots, truncheons, shields, helmets, horses and dogs. Striking miners were intimidated and harassed by massive police invasion of their villages.

Needless to say MacGregor makes no mention of the injustices and brutality meted out to loyal NUM members. And to cap it all, the Board stepped in to sack many of the most loyal and active members. Over twenty months after the dispute, hundreds of men remain sacked.

Throughout the dispute MacGregor encouraged his Area Directors to use maps outlining the homes of each individual miner for each in-

dividual colliery. Red pins indicated those men completely loyal to the strike, orange for those considered approachable about a return, green for definite weariness and blue for those who had caved in. In fact, after the strike, when the NUM in Markham No 2 Colliery in North Derbyshire were conducting the political fund ballot, the lists of NCB employees obtained from management still had the map reference locating their home beside each name!

'Profiles' of each mineworker were built up containing every tiny scrap of information that could be found. (At an interview with the colliery managers to 'review' my sacking, I was told I had been positively identified following a bus

containing strikebreakers in my car and hurling abuse at them. I don't have a car and I don't drive). The Coal Board had a network of informers and also employed security firms to 'observe' pickets.

The police also played their role in the gathering of 'intelligence' and "the two methods together became a formidable force... No praise can be too high for the work of the police."

Important "intelligence" collected was passed on and exchanged at every level, right up to "the daily meetings at the Department of Energy, where representatives of all other ministries involved met at 10am every day."

All this information and 'intelligence' gathered was put to great use in the 'back to work' movement initiated by the Coal Board. MacGregor actually exposes the 'spontaneous' organisation of the 'National Working Miners' Committee.'

He tells of David Hart, an Old Etonian with "obvious connections" with No 10, who travelled 35,000 miles in three months organising secret meetings. With the help of Tim Bell of Saatchi and Saatchi, half a million pounds was raised from big business to fund the strike breaking committee and to finance legal actions against the union.

The Board were determined not only to break the strike, but the NUM as well. The formation of the strike-breaking committee was the first step in their plan. Ken Foulestone, Robert Taylor and the other stooges were to initiate court action against the NUM which the NCB could not undertake, for fear of provoking solidarity from the wider trade union move-

"communicate and talk frankly." He was also "not surprised to find David Basnett and Ray Buckton... quite approachable and open."

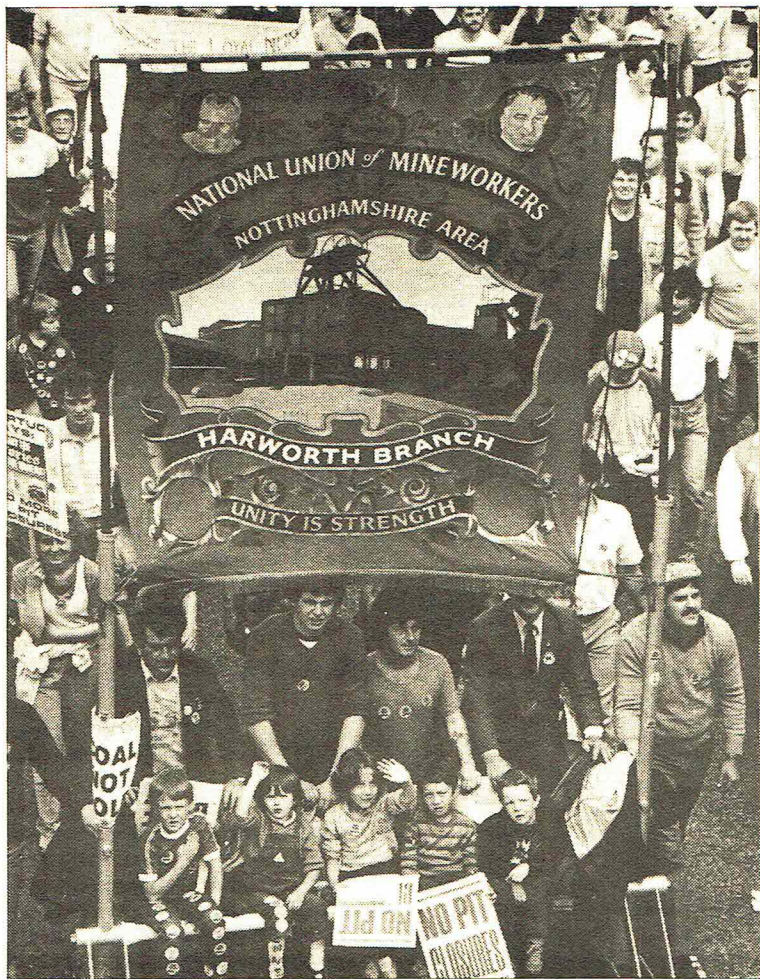
Nevertheless, the miners refused to be humbled and returned to work with pride and dignity. The press, the media, the DHSS, the police, the courts, the NCB and the government had been ranged against them. And MacGregor failed to achieve his goals—the NUM has not been irreparably smashed and his aims for the NCB, have not been achieved. His defence now—"It is simply not possible to turn round a great enterprise like Coal in three years..." even with some fifty thousand job losses since 1983. Now, with a 'new face' at the top and using the title 'British Coal', the NCB have announced that their target for profitability will have to be put back a year.

Sir Robert Haslam, MacGregor's replacement, is trying to foster a different image. But in the September issue of *Management News*, he states, "... There is an expectancy that, after I have been chairman there will be a marked change in our industrial relations policy and practice—But the need is to harness the good features of this mood without sacrificing in any way the principles that have been so painstakingly established."

But there is little scope for further contraction of the industry. The Tories and the Coal Board talk in terms of applying surgery to save the industry. MacGregor's threat to 'liquidate' the steel industry is in danger of being carried through at British Coal. Sooner rather than later the miners must fight again and make a stand.

Let us draw on the experience and the lessons of the 1984/85 strike to save our jobs and secure a future for the generations to come. We owe it to David Jones, Joe Green and all the victims of Tory savagery.





## NUM defends Notts jobs

**IN NOVEMBER 1985 the Notts area NUM predicted that pit closures, mergers and cut-backs, would lead to 5,000 job losses in the Notts area before March '87. The UDM, with the encouragement of their Coal Board pay masters, poured scorn on this devastating prediction.**

The UDM praised and reaffirmed the Coal Board's commitment to the working miners in Notts, saying that the Coal Board fully intended to exploit the coal reserves in the Notts area, and that no pit closures were planned in the immediate future.

The Coal Board's intentions were to exploit the Notts area. But it wasn't coal reserves that were to be exploited, but the miners themselves.

In the past 12 months alone 5,000 to 6,000 jobs have been lost, and a run down of over 20 per cent of the mining industry in Notts achieved, with four months of the projected deadline still to go.

Coupled with the job losses, is the management's all-out race to produce more coal at less cost to the Coal Board. They are pushing to break productivity records with the inevitable cost to the health and safety of the miners. Accident rates are now soaring, with the pit against pit, man against man attitude of the present Coal Board regime.

Under-managers at one pit are going round having hand inspections. They ask to see men's hands, and if they consider a man's hands are not dirty enough, he has to report to the Deputy Manager at the end of the shift for a reprimand.

This and other demeaning actions against men are having a serious effect on morale at pit level. Men are afraid to say anything for fear of reprisal. NUM members seem to be subjected to special treatment, and arbitrary disciplinary measures are often meted out to them. Large numbers of UDM members now wish to become members of the NUM, but intimidating tactics by the Board are frightening them from doing so. But even so, there is a steady stream of men now rejoining the NUM. Even with redundancies and sackings the NUM membership is remaining steady at about 4,800 to 5,000, whereas the UDM membership has slumped to 15-16,000.

The NUM has 25 per cent of the membership in Notts, but has 70

per cent of all face workers, and therefore has control over production in the pits.

New incentive agreements that the Board are intending to introduce in the future are advantageous to face workers at high productivity pits, but out-by and surface workers, the vast majority of UDM members, would certainly suffer and lose money in these new agreements.

Lynk and the UDM certainly have problems looming in the future. The Board's current tactic is to go over the heads of the union and put the new incentive proposals direct to the men. The NUM must oppose these agreements and explain to the men that they are designed to divide the out-by and surface workers from the face workers, and therefore leave a section of workers on low pay and in a difficult position to fight.

### Incentive scheme

Also any money gained on an incentive scheme can always be recouped by the Board in the future, by raising norms, imposing bad contracts and various other means once they have divided various sections of the workers at pit level.

The UDM are deliberately hiding these facts and the Coal Board's intentions for the future of the mining industry, from their members. The leaders of the UDM are willing accessories to the Coal Board and Tory government's plans to lower the standard of living for mine workers, decimate the industry and finally privatise what is left of the British mining industry for the profits of the large multinationals. They will concentrate on the highly profitable, easy to extract coal reserves, which when exhausted will be shut down and the mining communities will be left as vast wastelands.

The campaigns by the NUM against the Coal Board and the Tory government's plans must be stepped up. An incoming Labour government must revert back to the 1946 Nationalisation Act immediately it takes power, reinstate all miners sacked for their part in the '84 strike and for alleged offences since the strike ended and introduce massive investment in the coal industry along the lines of the Plan for Coal agreement.

**By Steve Betts**  
(Notts NUM executive committee, personal capacity)

# The battle against Spencerism and the UDM

**THE UDM breakaway from the NUM has reawakened memories of a similar development in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Miners Industrial Union broke away from the Miners Federation of Great Britain.**

**By Simon Duerden**

as it prevented them operating effectively for their members.

Of course Spencer always asserted that his union was not a "company union". On occasions he was able to wring small concessions from the coal owners, usually over small local issues. But at no stage did he seriously challenge their domination of the coalfield.

All the coalowners encouraged Spencerism at their own pits. In many collieries membership of the Industrial Union became a condition of employment. Indeed, in the new mining communities of Blidworth, Bilsthorpe, Clipstone, Welbeck, Edwinstowe, Ollerton and Harworth miners' houses, local shops and community facilities were also owned by the local coal companies. Thus non-membership of the Spencer Union also meant homelessness as well as unemployment.

### Intimidation

But despite this intimidation the bulk of Nottinghamshire miners initially resisted the pressure to join the NMIU. In June 1927 Spencer could only claim 500 members compared to the NMA's 13,500. But as the depression deepened and grinding poverty began to affect the Nottinghamshire pit villages, as well as those in the rest of the country, the pressure on miners to leave the NMA began to have its effect.

Membership of the NMA fell steadily until in 1935 only 8,500 remained out of a total of 43,600 employed in the Nottinghamshire coalfield. Not all those leaving the NMA joined Spencer, many became non-union.

By 1928 Spencerism had spread to other parts of the British coalfield with 273 branches being claimed in 8 counties. But only in Nottinghamshire, and to a lesser extent South Wales, was Spencerism either long lasting or widespread.

In Nottinghamshire, as a result of the coal owners' victimisation and the recession, many NMA activists could not regain employment in their pits following the 1926 strike. And as the owners refused to recognise the NMA they could not effectively collect union dues on colliery premises. The trespass laws were frequently invoked when attempts to do this were made.

The NMA obviously suffered from financial problems. In 1927 they were forced to stop employ-

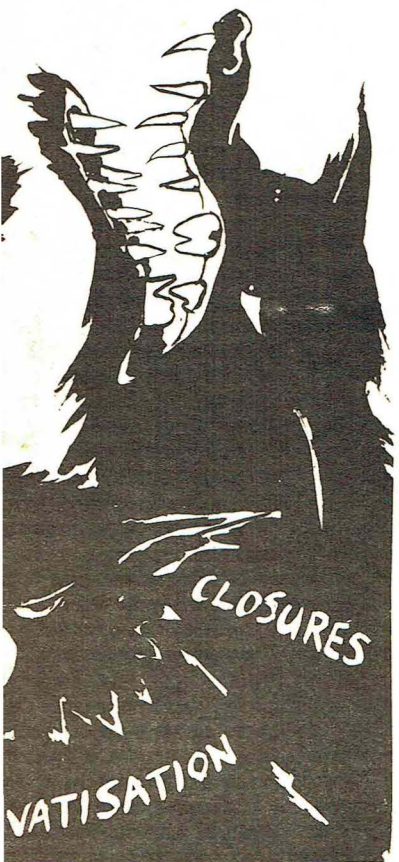
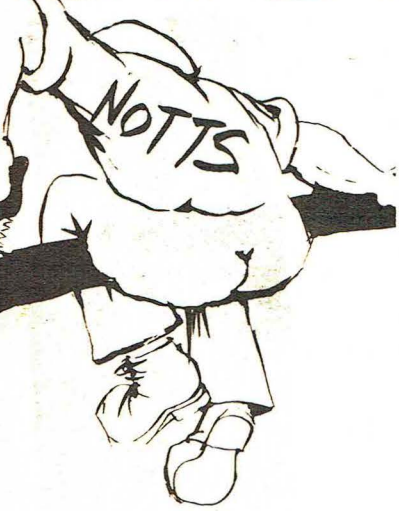


ing two of their four full time officials. But remarkably the NMA managed to survive. Partly due to the determination of many Nottinghamshire colliers to keep their union going, and partly by using victimised miners to collect the dues. In 1932 19 collectors were operating in the coalfield, 8 of whom were paid for by the TUC. These dedicated men were forced to collect the dues on roads outside collieries and by going door to door.

In 1928 the TUC organised a



# inist sm DM



## Bolsover NUM

THE UDM'S efforts to build in the Derbyshire coalfield have proved a pathetic failure.

Even though the majority of miners in the area went back to work before the end of the 1984-85 strike, only a tiny handful have enlisted in the scab union. Last week miners at Markham No 4 colliery walked out, when two UDM members from nearby Bolsover were sent for training on a new machine. Management managed to end the dispute by announcing that these men had been removed "at their own request."

At Bolsover itself (which, although in Derbyshire, comes under the Notts NUM area) things are also looking bleak for the UDM. After the majority of Bolsover miners voted in last year's ballot to stay in the NUM, every miner was forced to go through an interview with the personnel manager to get their money paid to the NUM. Even after this the UDM is still recognised by management, instead of the NUM, and retains negotiating rights and facilities. A Bolsover miner spoke to *Militant* about the latest developments:

LINBY  
(NOTTS)  
ON TOP OF  
THE SITUATION  
40%+  
AND WINNING

"We've known right from the start that we had a majority for the NUM, but the UDM has been in power. Two weeks ago it was said in *Coal News* that they would recognise a majority of men at a pit, not an area, for a union. One of the UDM committee men even admitted in the *Derbyshire Times*,

NOTTS NUM  
SUPPORT  
STRIKE



Photo: Jacob Sutton

that we had the majority of men at the pit.

"The men are cheesed off now with what's happening. We are proud that this is the only pit in the Notts area where the NUM are in the majority, but we still haven't got recognition, and its look like we're going to have to go to court

for it.

"We weren't happy either to hear a Notts NUM official tell us he disagreed with us going for it, that we were rocking the boat. I can see it coming to the point where there'll be no coal turned at Bolsover if this carries on."

move against Spencer. As the world economy began to recover from the depression so demand for coal rose. Output began to rise in all the British coalfields, more miners were required and consequently miners began to realise that they were in a much stronger position.

The removal of Spencerism from the British coalfields began in South Wales. By the mid 1930s as the mining villages began to recover somewhat from the ravages and poverty of the depression, new left-wing leaders such as Arthur Horner, were emerging. Horner edited a fortnightly paper *The South Wales Miner* which had a circulation of about 3,000 but was read by all the activists. This paper played a major role in organising the left throughout the coalfield.

Under Horner's leadership a plan was drawn up and implemented to smash Spencer's South Wales Miners' Industrial Union. A successful campaign of recruitment was launched at the Emlyn collieries. A strike was then called which forced the coal company to break off relations with the SWMIU and recognise the South Wales Miners' Association as the miners' legitimate representatives. This was followed rapidly by similar events at other pits where the SWMIU were operating.

Following a successful recruitment campaign at Nine Mile Point Colliery, the SWMA began a stay down strike. Backed by local villagers and other local miners the stay down strike spread to seven other collieries. The local rail unions refused to transport SWMIU men to scab. Such was the determination of some of the miners involved in the stay down strike, that they suffered permanent damage to their eyesight. The strike was successful, and in 1938 the SWMA was able to force the South Wales coal owners to sign an agreement absorbing all South Wales miners into the Federation and closing the SWMIU.

The destruction of Welsh Spencerism was a great boost to the Federation, but Nottinghamshire remained the crucial problem.

On 17 November 1936 a strike began at Harworth Colliery over the issue of dirt deductions. This dispute was caused by the company deducting money from the men's wages in lieu of the amount of dirt mined with the coal. The men felt that the company was deducting excessive amounts. In response the company insisted that when the strike finished all the men would have to join the NMIU. In a ballot 1,175 voted for the NMA and only 145 for Spencer.

The Federation quickly realised

that Harworth gave them the opportunity to end Spencerism and established a national levy for the Harworth strikers. Eventually in April 1937 a national ballot was held over the issue of national strike action in support of the NMA at Harworth. It was quite clearly understood that if a strike occurred its aim would be the elimination of Spencerism from Nottinghamshire. In a 98.9 per cent turnout 444,546 voted for a strike, with only 61,445 voting against.

At Harworth regular violent clashes between police and strikers occurred as the police escorted scabs into work. The Harworth strikers were the first victims of the 1936 Public Order Act, which had been made law supposedly to deal with Mosley's British Union of Fascists in the East End of London. As happened in the recent strike, indiscriminate police intimidation and violence against the whole of the local community was used. Massive press coverage of the events ensured that Harworth remained firmly in the limelight.

### Company village

The National Council for Civil Liberties commissioned a report on the events at Harworth. The report condemned the Barber-Walker Company in the following terms:

"The village is practically owned by the company. I am satisfied that the company have used their economic power to deprive the men of their civil right of freedom of assembly."

The report was also critical of the police and correctly accused them of conniving with the coal owners. In fact Major Barber, chairman of Barber-Walker, was also chairman of the Nottinghamshire County Council and of the County's Standing Joint Committee which controlled the local police.

At this juncture the government was forced to intervene. The improved economic climate had brought with it widespread struggles by the working class. Transport workers were also engaging in struggle at the time. The government's over-riding fear was of a national miners' strike, which would have invoked massive support from the rest of the working class. Consequently it exerted strong pressure on the coal owners to prevent a national miners' strike.

Initially the Nottinghamshire coal owners resisted, but eventually they were forced to accept a fusion between the NMA and the NMIU. This was agreed to by the Federation's national leadership. The two unions were dissolved and on 1 September 1935 a new union,

the Nottinghamshire and District Miners' Federated Union began its life.

The new union belonged to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. It had five full time officials, 3 from the Spencer Union and 2 from the NMA. George Spencer became the new president. Future full time officials were to be elected by a coalfield ballot.

A ballot in Nottinghamshire overwhelmingly ratified the fusion. But many ex-NMA members were so disgusted with the fusion that they refused to join the new union. In fact the NMA had consistently rejected the idea of fusion during the period of the Spencer Union's existence. Nationally the left were bitterly disappointed. They felt the overwhelming ballot victory of 1937, had given them a great opportunity to smash the NMIU and rebuild the NMA.

Even worse the acceptance of fusion was not accompanied by guarantees for the Harworth strikers. When work resumed on 31 May 1937 only 350 out of the 1,000 strikers were re-employed, those getting work being decided by the drawing of lots. Four weeks later 16 men and one woman, who became known as the "Harworth 17", were tried on riot charges and 12 were sent to prison.

There are many similarities between today's UDM and Spencerism, and tribute must be paid to the NMA and NUM loyalists from both the 1930s and 1980s, who stayed loyal to their respective unions despite all the hardships. The NUM loyalists in Nottinghamshire today are the workers' leaders of tomorrow.

As in the 1930s, in general the Nottinghamshire pits are far more profitable than those in most other coal fields. However this has not saved some Nottinghamshire pits from closure, like Hucknall. More will undoubtedly follow, when British Coal decides to show the Nottinghamshire miners the same iron fist which has been closing pit after pit in the rest of Britain's coalfields. As in the 1930s management are refusing to recognise the miners' national union. Consequently the NUM finds extreme difficulty in representing its members in Nottinghamshire. As with the Spencer Union the UDM is backed by the Tories, the press and big business.

There are however differences between Spencerism and the UDM. Spencerism was forced onto the vast majority of Nottinghamshire miners against their will. Today, while many UDM members are now realising the error of their ways and rejoining the NUM, a majority of Nottinghamshire

miners did vote to leave the NUM and form the UDM. It will be these men's own experiences that will show up the UDM as the bosses' union. The UDM has little support outside of Nottinghamshire, as miners realise that only a strong, united NUM can defend their interests.

Spencerism lasted as long as it did because it followed the defeat of the miners and the sell-out of the 1926 general strike. These defeats set the British labour movement back on its heels and enabled the ruling class to trample on the working class until the mid 1930s.

### Labour government

The UDM however will not enjoy a similar lifespan. Whilst the miners' strike of 1984/5 was undoubtedly a defeat, it was not a major defeat on the scale of 1926. Indeed, it now seems likely that as a result of the increased class conflict and class polarisation resulting from the miners' strike, that a Labour government will come to power.

The struggles at Wapping, Silentsnight and of the teachers, prove the working class has not been cowed by the miners' strike. However, if a Labour government does come to power, it must be pressed to not only reinstate all the sacked miners, but, unlike the second, Ramsay MacDonald Labour government, which did little to stop the coal owners' onslaught, it must force British Coal to stop the persecution of the NUM in Nottinghamshire.

The future of further and ever more bitter class battles will affect every section of the working class, and will transform the consciousness of thousands of Nottinghamshire miners, thus destroying the UDM and re-uniting the British miners.

The ruling class have always placed enormous importance on splitting the ranks of the miners. They understand their continuing economic role as the vanguard of the working class. Thus it is vital, not only for the miners but also for the rest of the working class, that the miners are united. There can be no unity with class traitors such as Lynk and Prendergast. Instead a campaign of persuasion needs to be undertaken to win the UDM rank and file back to the ranks of the NUM. But the NUM must recognise that its federal structure allows the possibility of splits and divisions. A proper *National* Union of Mineworkers needs to be created, which would prevent area leaders resisting and organising against the decisions of the national union.



USA, France, Netherlands, Basque country

# Reagan on trial



THE IRAN arms scandal has seriously weakened the Reagan administration. There is even occasional talk in the big business press of an 'Irangate', and Reagan going the way of Nixon.

While it is most likely that further revelations and sackings of cabinet members lie ahead, it is extremely unlikely that Reagan will be forced out of the Presidency.

US big business is faced with rising revolt in the former colonial world, arms talks with the Russian bureaucracy, and a debt-ridden, sluggish economy. The last thing

they want is the trauma of the replacement of a President.

They will exert all their influence to keep Reagan in office, while strengthening their control over him through new advisors. They are already receiving the help of the Democrats, who realise that the deeper the crisis becomes, the more the credibility of the Presidency and the system as a whole will be damaged.

Almost unbelievably, the labour leaders have nothing to say on the crisis. They should launch an immediate campaign for decent wages

and living conditions, and jobs for all, linked to the demand that Reagan must go. They should organise the unions' resources to stand labour candidates in all future elections, and offer US workers and youth an alternative to big business policies.

## Recovery

In the absence of such a campaign, Reagan will have the opportunity of trying to recover in the coming months. In spite of his recent breach of the Salt II agreement



Reagan cannot smooth away the crisis. Up to £30 million from his secret arms sales to Iran has been channelled to the Contra terrorists in Nicaragua (above).

on nuclear arms limitation, he will most likely try for a new agreement with the Russian leadership, as a way of strengthening his hand.

He will more likely than not succeed in this, as Gorbachev—under pressure also to limit military spending—will consider that he can get a better deal from a weakened Reagan than from a new and probably stronger President after 1988.

Reagan's dealings with Iran, and the diversion of the money from the arms sales to the right-wing Contras in Nicaragua, have increased opposition at home to involvement in Central America. Over 80 per cent of Americans oppose this money going to the Contras.

But this increased opposition does not rule out the possibility of manufacturing incidents such as "a Sandinista invasion of Honduras", and Reagan as US Commander-in-Chief sending in the troops. This is one way to get round the need of channeling future aid for the Contras through the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Faced with the problem of getting more aid for the Contras, falling political support, and especially if the new economic recession comes before the 1988 Presidential election, Reagan may well take this road.

However, there is one thing which the Iran arms deal seems to have changed. It now seems certain that if an invasion of Nicaragua takes place, there will be organised and open opposition from the word go.

The past ten years have been a period of abnormal quiet for US society. From 1975 to 1985 there was no foreign war, no revolt of the especially oppressed minorities, and a substantial decline in strikes.

## Economic crisis

This was the calm before the storm. Economic crisis deepened over this period. The US national debt, which had accumulated to reach \$914 billion by 1980, doubled over the six years since then to reach \$2,000 billion. Real living standards fell 10 per cent between 1979 and 1986.

1985 to 1986 have seen a renewed strike wave, as workers resist the burdens now being placed on their backs.

1986 was ushered in by the shuttle disaster, and is coming to an end with the debacle of Reykjavik, scandals in Wall Street, Reagan's loss of the Senate to the Democrats in the November elections, and now the Iran crisis.

The year has also seen increased preoccupation with the colonial

revolt in the Philippines, South Africa, Haiti, Chile and Central America. The events of 1986 are the storm-lightning that precedes the approaching storm.

As this storm unfolds, the US working class will see US big business even further exposed. In the coming recession, despite all the concessions workers have made, unemployment will rise to 10, 12 per cent and more. Further cuts in living standards will be demanded.

## Opposition

Workers will turn to the unions, strengthen them, and move towards political independence by breaking from the Democrats over the next five to ten years. Even if the US becomes embroiled in a war in Central America, this process will still take place. It may be temporarily postponed, but will then proceed on a higher level as chauvinism wears off, and a mass movement in opposition to the human and economic costs of war develops.

The past months have shown the potential for a labour party. In the November elections, unions spent \$15 million to support the Democrats and mobilised tens of thousands of their members into reluctantly supporting this party of big business.

These resources should have been used to build a labour party and put up labour candidates.

112 million people—63 per cent of the total voting population—did not vote because they correctly believed that there was no difference between the two parties, and that neither kept their promises. In an earlier poll, 51 per cent said they would vote for an anti-big business candidate if they had the chance.

The rising dissatisfaction is shown in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial of 26 November, where it speaks of "the air of unease that hangs everywhere".

Day after day the corruption and inefficiency of big business is there for all to see. What is needed is a mass, trade-union-based labour party to offer a socialist alternative.

In the cataclysmic events that impend, US workers will rise to their feet, and industrially and politically challenge US big business. When they do, they will arouse workers, peasants and youth from Iran to Nicaragua, from the Philippines to Russia, in a united struggle to end Stalinism and capitalism, and establish a democratic socialist federation on a world scale.

From Sean Heron in New York

## France

CHIRAC'S RIGHT-WING government in France has been rocked by a mass movement of university and school students which brought over one million students onto the streets—the biggest student protest since May 1968—as a result of proposals to drastically change the higher education system.

At the moment any French student has the right to go to the university of his or her choice. The government proposes to double the registration fee and to introduce selection methods which would end the automatic right to higher education for all.

The government is also trying to introduce partial funding from big business, opening the door to the eventual privatisation of the university system.

The capitalist press have been quick to claim that the movement is "non-political". This is completely untrue. It shows the mounting anger and radicalisation of French youth which has resulted from the government's reactionary policies, including attempts to tighten up citizenship laws, and a huge increase in police powers which have turned some parts of France into 'no go' areas for youth.

The same press claims were made in May 1968. Then, the student movement brought the class polarisation of French society to the surface, exploding into a revolutionary situation.

A similar polarisation is developing in France today. Notice of impending working-class struggle has already been served on the government by the public sector workers' protest strike in October.

The government has been forced to agree to look at the proposals again. However, students are calling for their complete removal. Universities were occupied on Monday and another monster demo called for Thursday.

Only by linking their struggles to

those of the working-class will any long-term reforms be won. By calling for a 24-hour general strike to unify the struggles of workers and students, linked to the demands of ending the privatisation scheme and reversing public spending cuts, a chain of events could be set in motion that will lead to the downfall of the Chirac government.

By Simon Kaplan

## Basque poll

THE AMERICAN shipping company, United States Lines (USL), announced on 24 November that their trans-atlantic and round the world services would be closed down.

1,200 of their 2,000 workers world-wide—of which 1,000 in Europe—were unceremoniously dumped. With blatant contempt for the interests of their 123 Dutch workers, and of Dutch employment laws, the company tried to sack them without compensation.

The workforce immediately occupied the office to secure the payment of their wages. The occupation is 100 per cent solid.

This is remarkable, because the white-collar workforce is paid way above the average wage. Less than 20 per cent of them are organised. But without a union, even the best-paid workers are unprotected.

The action committee meets two to three times a day, and the workforce meets daily. The workers feel confident. The transport union is backing their action, and has sequestered £1.3 million of USL funds through the courts to secure the wages. The occupation will continue until the results are achieved.

As an older staff member, who has been with USL for over 25 years and now a member of the action committee, remarked: "Two weeks ago I could never have believed that this would happen.

We'll make sure that they don't get away with it."

Messages of support to: USL Occupation Committee, c/o Marja de Boer, Seattleweg 17, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

By Ton Hesp  
(Member of PvdA, Dutch Labour Party)

## Netherlands

LAST SUNDAY's regional elections in Spain's Basque country have produced a political deadlock, with no party in the majority.

The Socialist Party (PSOE), in power in Madrid, emerged as the biggest party with a mere 18 seats (a loss of one) out of 75. This was a result of the recent split in the conservative Basque nationalist party, PNV, reducing it to 17 seats.

The major Spanish capitalist parties were reduced to a derisory four seats between them. But with PSOE discredited by the austerity policies imposed from Madrid, the result shows the absence of any clear alternative.

Supporters of the Spanish Marxist paper, *Nuevo Claridad*, took part in the campaign under the banner of the Socialist Left Coordinating Committee, making several broadcasts on national and regional TV and radio. Putting forward Marxist policies, they called for critical support for PSOE.

The PSOE leader, Benegas, will try to form a coalition government, either with PNV or with other nationalist factions. Working people could expect nothing from such a government, which would, moreover, be so unstable as to be virtually impotent.

The situation highlights the general crisis in Spanish society. A solution to the problems of the national minorities, and of workers throughout the country, depends on the struggle for a socialist alternative.



## USSR, Book review, Poland

Book review:

# GORBACHEV THE PATH TO POWER

By Christian Schmidt Hauer. Published by Pan Books. Price £3.50.

THE SOVIET budget and economic plan for 1987 were passed at last month's session of the Supreme Soviet ('Parliament' of bureaucrats). Growth of 4.1 per cent is planned.

The centrepiece of discussion was the latest instalment of Gorbachev's reforms: legalising small-scale private enterprise in 29 branches of services and industry as from next May.

Labour chief Gladsky admitted that the bureaucracy had "not been meeting consumer demand for goods and ser-

vices fully". Soviet workers will see this as the understatement of the year.

The measure will legalise a section of Russia's flourishing black market, which is a direct result of the incompetence, mismanagement and corruption which paralyses the official economy in all the countries of Stalinism (as illustrated by the interview with a Polish worker, below).

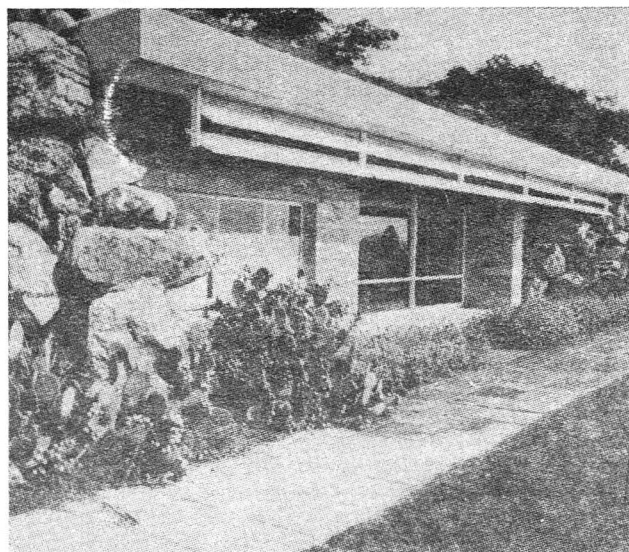
Absent from the reforms is any hint of transferring real powers of control and prevention of abuse to the workers

themselves. Yet it is a basic idea of socialism that only the working class can plan production democratically and develop the economy to the full.

Gorbachev's reforms have the impossible aim of using the disease to cure the symptoms. No lasting improvement can come about until the workers break the privileged bureaucrats' stranglehold on power, and take direction of society into their own hands.



Luxury yachts and country houses are enjoyed by the ruling bureaucracy under Gorbachev as well.



"... EMOTIONS flicker over a face of unusual sensitivity like summer breezes on a pond..."

This lyrical description, surprisingly, is about Soviet Leader Gorbachev. Even more surprisingly the author is quoting Denis Healey.

This description sets the tone for the book. Illusions in Gorbachev's reforming zeal are illustrated in the author's conclusion:

"Will peace and common sense have a better chance under Gorbachev against automatic rearmament and the superpowers' irrational rivalry? Is Gorbachev good not only for Russia, but also for the rest of the world? The answer is a conditional Yes—especially if the west helps him..."

In reality Gorbachev's efforts are an attempt to provide a new lease on life for the Soviet economy which is suffering the consequences of bureaucratic mismanage-

By Mike Waddington

ment and corruption.

The cause of the problems is indirectly reflected in the book, though blamed on Gorbachev's predecessors: "Brezhnev endeavoured to re-establish a closed society by opting for 'confidence in the Party Cadres' ... In doing so he gave the bureaucrats—who under Stalin had been in perpetual fear of their lives and under Krushchev in fear of their posts—a sense of peace... Yet they used peace only for personal benefits; their communal links served corrup-

tion; and their stability became stagnation..."

In 1985 Gorbachev removed 16 of the USSR's 64 ministers, and replaced 20 per cent of local officials and 25 regional party chiefs. He has used the anger of the workers at waste and corruption to hit at the worst examples of graft—the better to defend the privileges of the rest of the bureaucracy.

He sacked his rival for power, Romanov, amidst rumours that he had demanded the use of an antique dinner service, once belonging to Catherine the Great, for his daughter's wedding. The party ended in the traditional drunken smashing of the service!

Gorbachev hopes to restore the record economic growth rates of the past through reducing and decentralising the top

bureaucracy. A great weakness of the book is the lack of any perspective for Gorbachev's reforms, based on the experience of the many reform programmes tried in the last thirty years.

The major reforms by Malenkov, Bulganin, Krushchev and Kosygin—usually a complete reversal of previous reforms—had less and less effect. Growth improves temporarily, only to slow down again in a shorter and shorter period, due to the dead hand of the bureaucracy.

## Desperation

Paradoxically, Gorbachev has taken greater personal power in a shorter space of time than any other post-Stalin leader. This is a measure of the desperation of the regime, pinning its

hopes on the skills and vision of an individual.

How far can Gorbachev go? Krushchev claimed that he removed 900,000 bureaucrats in his time, a combination that led to his downfall, which Gorbachev understands. The author of the book compares Gorbachev to Peter the Great and his reforms of the 1700s. Quoting an admirer of Peter, he writes:

"Here the mighty monarch makes the greatest effort and yet he achieves

nothing; he has fewer helpers; with ten men he pulls a load uphill, but millions lean against it; how then can his work progress?"

This neatly sums up Gorbachev's position. The millions within the bureaucracy have obstructed reform in the past. Gorbachev, in any case, is merely seeking to escape the reckoning of the Soviet working class with the "mighty monarchs" of today.

# 'The workers must take control of production'

Extracts from interview with a leading representative of the workers' underground in Poland.

## Housing

Housing is undoubtedly the number one social problem in Poland. Getting a flat is the biggest problem facing young people in Poland.

Many young couples, including ones with two or three children, have to share a flat with parents, brothers or sisters, etc. And the brothers or sisters are often married, with children of their own.

The prospects of getting a flat are very remote. It has been estimated that, in certain cities, if the pace of construction stays the same, those at the bottom of the list will get a flat in 30-35 years' time!

On the other hand, the select elite have no problems. Those with money—owners of private businesses, for example—can afford to build luxury villas. Those with contacts—people in the bureaucratic apparatus—are given flats by their place of work, or admitted into subsidised "cooperatives" for the privileged few.

A full solution is only possible through social control of the management of housing resources and the construction industry, and a workers' plan for housing construction. For the moment, we are demanding a general freeze on rents, the abolition of rent for sub-standard housing, and a property surtax on the villas and penthouses of the private businessmen and Party apparatchiks.



Solidarity demonstration in 1980 demands "independent self-governing trade unions."

## Industry

Poland's economic resources—its plant and machinery, its minerals, its whole infrastructure, the

skills of the working class—are being squandered and devastated before our eyes.

There are three basic reasons:

firstly, appalling bureaucratic mismanagement, from the Planning

Commission and the ministries down to the mine or factory;

secondly, the current economic strategy, amounting to the deliberate application of a 'robber economy' to increase production and service the foreign debt;

thirdly, managerial corruption, fraud, theft and criminal incompetence.

These are things every worker sees every day. When you add it all up, it looks like a conscious policy of sabotage. A worker puts in an eight or even ten hour shift, only to see his work obstructed by organisational chaos, the product of his labour wasted, expensive machinery left rusting in the yard.

He loses his productivity

bonus because obsolete equipment breaks down, supplies don't turn up, there's another power failure, or because management can't allow production to be higher than month, as it would set a precedent and might mean the factory will be given increased norms for the future!

For years now, investment has been channelled into showcase projects, with little basic modernisation. As a result, factory buildings are crumbling, production lines are being held together by string, saliva or the ingenuity of the workers, and the average age of machinery is increasing year by year.

The workers must take control of the means of production.

The struggles in the factories are mostly economic ones: pay and conditions ... although protests over political victimisation are not uncommon.

Inflation has hit all working people very hard since martial law. We are still suffering the consequences of the unprecedented price rises at the beginning of '82. This has been compounded by inflation of 20-30 per cent every year since.

The effect has been a substantial increase in the number of working-class families living in absolute poverty. The vast majority get by from month to month, but have no savings and no chance of replacing worn-out goods, improving their homes, taking vacations, etc.

Our reply is to demand automatic cost-of-living adjustments, otherwise known as a sliding scale of wages.

The form of these struggles varies greatly. Most frequent are short, spontaneous strikes. Longer strikes also occur, but they aren't typical, since management usually gives in at once, or calls in some local Party official, in which case he gives in.

The biggest problems normally come afterwards, since the factory involved automatically receives special attention from the security police.

Please don't think on the basis of what I've said that the workers are striking all over Poland today. The strikes have involved a relatively small proportion of industry.

Still, in the context of the defeat of the workers' movement suffered with the imposition of martial law, what we are now seeing is a revival of the combativity of the working class, although the process is only just beginning.



# Seeing the light of socialism

Dear Comrades,  
For sixteen years I have been reared in a purely Tory environment, from my father's army occupation and my present military school.  
Until a couple of years ago I was blinded by this at-

titude. I was wholeheartedly racist, resented anything politically left of Thatcherism and I looked down on the working class. Thankfully I have 'seen the light' and am now a *Militant* adherent.  
Now that I have seen

through Thatcher's propaganda and utter lies, I take pains to explain to others the reality and inhumanity of Thatcher's regime.  
Yours fraternally  
David Beacher  
Kent

# Nutty Norman's nightmare

Dear Comrades,  
I thought Norman Tebbit was a loony, going on about the BBC's left wing bias, but for a moment I thought he had a point.  
I wasn't able to make the *Militant* Rally this year, so I was delighted when I looked at the following day's *Daily*

*Record* and saw on the telly page that BBC2 were showing highlights of the rally on a special programme. Admittedly it was on late, five past midnight, and it was only on for 10 minutes, but "Rally Report 86" would be well worth staying up for.  
But no, Norman is a

loony. I realised that the rally in question wasn't the *Militant* but the Lombard RAC Rally.  
Ah well, maybe next year.  
Yours fraternally  
Stephen Smellie  
East Kilbride

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## Economising with truth

Dear Comrades,  
The Republicans chose to ignore or downplay the real issues in the 1986 Congressional election.  
These were economic developments taking place which could have hurt Republican candidates if they were disclosed and so were withheld until after the election.  
The elections took place on 4 November. Not until 7 November did the US Labor Department release their statistics that 1.4 million more people had exhausted their jobless benefits.  
General Motors waited until 6 November to an-

nounce that it was closing 11 US plants—with a loss of 29,000 jobs.  
The Reagan administration waited until 6 November to tell us that 123 banks had already failed this year.  
Nissan and Toyota Car Companies announced on 6 November that they would make cutbacks both in Japan and the US.  
White House Budget Director James Miller announced on 6 November that more than \$50 billion in cuts would have to be made to balance the 1988 budget.  
Yours fraternally  
Betty Traun  
New York

## The heavy cost of Thatcher's mean years

Dear Comrades,  
As Christmas approaches thousands of people in Sheffield face a future blighted by debt.  
A recent report has shown that hundreds of thousands of pounds are owed in the city as the big firms encourage credit deals.  
The sharp increase in debt is blamed on high unemployment, short-time working and reduced overtime.  
Among the most serious debt cases are those involving secured loans where homes are put up against debt. Houses have been repossessed by finance companies, leaving families homeless.  
In 1983 the Tories promised "a home-owning democracy", but increasing numbers of workers are finding that it is the bank and finance companies who own their homes, cars, TV's, fridges, clothes...  
I look forward to the time when we 'repossess' the wealth stolen by the bankers and finance sharks.  
Yours fraternally  
Dave Milsom  
Sheffield



Homeless on Euston station.

Dear Comrades,  
The welfare state is falling apart if my family's experiences are common.  
My seven year old boy was 'indefinitely' off school—a result of the teachers shortage.  
Then I took my daughter for a hearing test, she had needed a minor operation before, it was only a routine check-up.  
She failed the hearing test, and will need the operation repeated. Sent down to the admissions desk clutching our form, I casually asked about how long before she might be

admitted.  
Two years was the equally casual reply. Two years! Even my girl said she'd be 13 by then, hardly worth bothering. What about the two years of damage to her schooling if her hearing isn't quite right?  
If the Labour leaders can't hammer the Tories with what they have done to our basic services what are they playing at?  
Yours fraternally  
Jeremy Birch

## Reluctant press

Dear Comrades,  
Reagan and Thatcher are two of the chief promoters of terrorism, their hypocrisy on the subject must be an embarrassment to them at times.  
Who is terrorising El Salvador and Nicaragua?

Reagan aided and abetted by Thatcher.  
Reagan's credibility has sunk very low, his lying about Gadaffi, and now arms being supplied to Iran in exchange for the release of hostages.  
Why are the established press reluctant to print the truth about Reagan and Thatcher?  
Yours fraternally  
JA Lester  
Blackpool

## Ghana letter

Dear Comrades,  
I am a *Militant* supporter in far away Ghana, and had been watching with keen interest the role the paper is playing to set things right in Britain and the world in general.

It is obvious that the Tories are losing support, so it is a foreseeable fact that the total transformation of Britain into socialism is in sight.  
Comrades, rally behind *Militant* because we want peace in this world.  
Yours fraternally  
JH Kuranchie  
Ghana

## Labour council hounds 'criminal' flyposting

Dear Comrades,  
Recently two *Militant* supporters were arrested for flyposting in Exeter. They were charged with suspicion of criminal damage but this was dropped and we were just cautioned.  
The local council (Labour controlled) wanted to prosecute, but the police advised them not to.  
This enthusiasm by the Labour council is politically vindictive in the extreme. They have already fined *Militant* for previous

flyposting.  
The situation poses dangers for all left wing groups but also for Anti-Apartheid, CND and other campaigning groups. If the Tories or Liberals ever got power they could use this precedent to attack CND etc.  
The Labour councillors should stop this vindictive behaviour and stop hounding *Militant* supporters.  
Yours fraternally  
Name withheld  
Exeter

## Penalising the poorest

Dear Comrades,  
I had been waiting some time to hear from the Scottish Education Department about a grant application for the three year course which I'm doing.  
I received a letter from them this week informing me I would not be receiving the Mature Students Allowance of £685.  
To be eligible for this you must be 26 and over, and have worked three out of six years preceding the course.  
As I had worked for ten years before going back into education, I did not foresee any problems. However, according to the SED I did not earn £4,000 per year in any of the jobs I did.  
Of course I didn't, I was always a low paid worker and never earned more than £60 per week.  
Now I am being penalised for this to the sum of £685. Are the SED not aware that 46 per cent of all Scottish workers are low paid?  
Yours fraternally  
Student, Queens College  
Labour Club, Glasgow

## Classified ads

15p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-Display £2 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.

- Wanted—Co-op Stamps. Loose or in books. All proceeds to FF. Send c/o Circulation dept, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.
- *L'Avance Socialiste*, the French Marxist paper for youth, socialist and communist workers. Order now from: *L'Avance Socialiste*, BP no. 705, 75531 Paris CEDEX 11, France. £10 for 12 issues.
- Lenin and Trotsky on Rosa Luxemburg (40p inc. postage). Luxemburg Reform or Revolution (£3 inc. postage). Order from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

- Congratulations to Darren Reid and Debbie Guilfoyle in Coventry on the birth of their son. From Tim and Elise.
- *Militant* poster blanks (A2 size). Order yours now—cash in advance. £20 per 1,000 (inc p&p). Box 5, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.
- *Militant* Meetings —
- Sheffield Monday 8 December, 7.30pm. "Labour must fight the Tories", at 'The Shop', 283 Prince of Wales Rd, Sheffield.

**Videos for Christmas**  
Lenin, Trotsky and the Russian Revolution (15 mins) £3.  
The Great Frame Up—Stalin's Purges (15 mins) £3.  
Teamster Rebellion—USA 1934 (35 mins) £3.  
Chile on the Brink (20 mins) £5.  
Liverpool Fights the Tories (35 mins) £3.  
For hiring add £5 returnable deposit. To buy simply select titles and add £5 to total cost for blank tape and postage. (3 or more titles add only £3).  
Available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB. Order early to avoid disappointment!

The following speeches on important issues for socialists are available from World Socialist Books. If you want something to bring about to reality after the Christmas pudding, take up this special offer.

## Tapes for Christmas

1. The origins of Bolshevism (1860-1900). Woods
2. The Rise of Bolshevism (to 1917). Birch
3. The Russian Revolution. Mullins
4. The Life of Trotsky. Grant and Hemson
5. The Theory of Permanent Revolution. Silverman
6. The Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. Taaffe
7. The Chinese Revolution of 1944-49. Taaffe
8. The Colonial Revolution (China and Cuba). Brooks
9. The colonial Revolution and South Africa. Hemson
10. The South African Revolution (rally 6/86) Sejake, Simpson, Nellist
11. The Colonial Revolution Today. Birch
12. The Latin American Revolution unfolds. Walsh
13. What is imperialism? Cross
14. Chile on the Brink (March 85). Taaffe
15. The Nicaraguan Revolution. Saunois
16. Ireland and Permanent Revolution. Venton
17. Ireland to partition. Venton
18. Anglo-Irish Agreement—No Solution (6/86). Grant
19. The Rise of Fascism in Germany. Birch
20. The Spanish Revolution 1931-39. Woods

21. The French Popular Front of 1936. Ramage
  22. The early history of the trade unions. Hopwood
  23. The General Strike—1926 and today. Boyle
  24. Has Thatcher weakened the unions? Jarvis
  25. Marxism and Black Nationalism. Lee
  26. Slavery and Black resistance. Frampton
  27. Historical Materialism (1961). Grant
  28. Historical Materialism. Cross
  29. Dialectical Materialism. Pickard
  30. The relevance of Marxism today. Grant
  31. The Origins of the State. Silverman
  32. Is Britain a police state? Edwards
  33. The causes of the post war boom. McKee
  34. World Famine. Waddington
  35. A Charter for Women Workers. Redwood
  36. "You can't expell ideas" (Rally July 86). Grant
  37. The Socialist Way Forward—Debate. Taaffe and Johnstone
- All tapes £1.25. 5 for £5, please add 10p per tape for postage.
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Please send me tape no's . . . . .  
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National Union of Students conference

# Face up to Tory onslaught

THE NATIONAL Union of Students (NUS) has its conference this week. Students will need to mount a huge campaign to stop the Tories devastating education.

The effect of the Fowler review, the threat of student loans, the further fall in the real level of grants, cuts in education spending and an accommodation crisis make this one of the most vital NUS conferences for years.

It will be a major test for the Labour Student leadership of NUS who have not outlined a convincing strategy to defeat the Tory attacks.

For four years the Executive have concentrated attention on lobbying back-bench Tory MPs. But with a general election loom-

ing, even this limited approach has been abandoned. The only response to the Tories' attacks this term has been an unsuccessful day of action. The anti-loans campaign has consisted of a drive for individual students to "pledge themselves to oppose the introduction of loans"

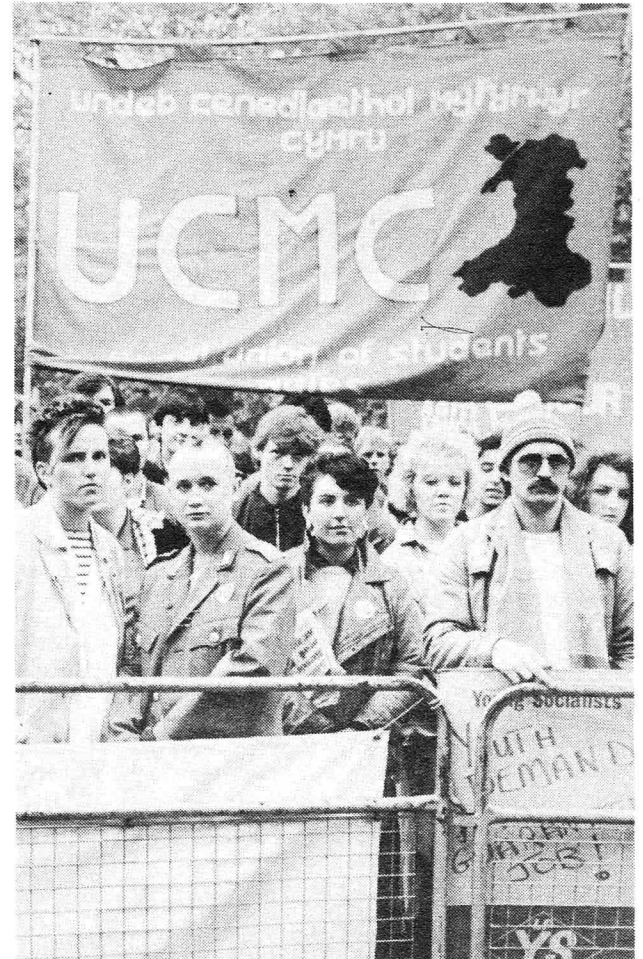
Delegates should support the campaigns (proposed by colleges influenced by Socialist Students in NOLS) based around a national demonstration, rent strike and week of action on student financial support. But even these methods of struggle are limited. Like the national leadership's plans, they are purely student-based.

Militant supporters will argue for this campaign to be linked to

the labour movement. This will mean continuing the campaign on grants and education cuts, linking them to joint action with campus workers to resist cuts and with low paid public sector workers for a decent pay/grant rise.

Student action must be supplemented with a campaign for 24 hour shutdown by students and workers at all education institutions through the Education Alliance. Joint action can be a launching pad for a rank and file alliance of public service workers against attacks on the public sector. It will also pave the way for the NUS to campaign for affiliation to the TUC.

The future for students is dependent on fighting alongside the labour movement.



Students on LPYS demonstration against Tories.

## Students want action on housing crisis

BENEFIT CUTS have forced many students into appalling conditions particularly in the big cities. On average, students are calculated to spend 79.4 per cent of their grant on housing!

But the NEC resolution on accommodation just calls for the Tory government to "radically alter its housing policy" and incredibly encourages students to "use

squatting as a means of finding alternative accommodation and to highlight the plight of homeless students."

How can you substitute a tactic of sheer individual desperation for a concerted campaign? Glasgow College of Technology students call for a crash house building programme with a target of one million homes per year.

Students can't just beg

Thatcher for more money, every gain has to be won, using the strength of the movement. Our resolution calls on the next Labour government "to nationalise the land and take into common ownership the construction and supply industry, the building societies and banks who base house building on the profit motive and instead place it under the democratic control and management of the

community."

If students take up a lively campaign amongst the working class in the unions and in the estates we could win massive support and start to abolish the miseries of bad housing we face.

**By Douglas Blackstock**  
(President, Glasgow College of Technology Students Union, personal capacity)

IN THE guest speakers ballot John Macreadie, Tony Mulhearn and Jeanette Herratty, a victimised NUPE member from Liverpool University have been nominated.

In the ballot for emergency resolutions delegates should back an emergency motion from PNL calling on the executive to direct its campaigning work on South Africa to exposing Consolidated Goldfields following Barclays withdrawal.

THE NUS leaders are dampening action in the hope that Labour will be elected. But they are refusing to campaign openly for a Labour vote in the election, arguing that it is against the NUS constitution. Delegates should support the amendment from Sussex University calling for NUS to campaign for a Labour vote at the election.

## Students and workers fight victimisation

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY students and campus trade unionists demonstrated in support of Jeanette Herratty, a cleaner and NUPE steward who has been told she cannot return to work after having a baby in the New Year.

In a debate before the demonstration 250 students and 150 workers greeted Jeanette with warm applause. Only nine people, (all Tory students) opposed the motion.

They argued for "Victorian values", that Jeanette knew the conditions of employment and that she would still have the job had she been a good worker! They said it was Jeanette's own fault for getting pregnant in the first place!

Jeanette warned the bigoted chinless wonders "You may have your blue

cheque books now—but you won't be able to live off your mummies and daddies forever"

When the march reached Senate House, Cheryl Varley (convenor of MASO and expelled socialist), Jane Kennedy (Liverpool NUPE) and Tommy Dutton (University NUPE steward) were among the speakers.

In the event, the University Senate meeting did not even discuss the question, but a number of gains were made. NUPE are now looking to launch a recruitment campaign among those cleaners not in a union and irreversible links have been made between students and workers.

**By Tom Brown**  
Liverpool University Labour Club (personal capacity)

## Our fight for our nursery

THE POLYTECHNIC of North London calls itself an equal opportunities college and a "poly for the whole community". But parents like myself need convincing of this claim.

The Poly's nursery was founded by the Students Union but is now run by management. It only has 30 places to cater for 6000 students and over 1000 staff. It is also very expensive charging £30 a week to look after a toddler from nine to five. Dinner alone costs 60p per day, more than the ILEA charges for a growing teenager.

Most students get no extra grant to cover this expense. Many parents drop out and many others don't even enrol as there is little hope of get-

By Julie Frost

ting a place. The wait, if you put your child's name down at conception (like Eton) can be as long as 18 months.

### First step

The Labour Club and Students' Union have launched a childcare campaign demanding free on-site nursery provision at every polytechnic site.

This would be a necessary first step to opening up education to a large section



Students and campus workers need a well-staffed nursery.

of the population previously discriminated against, parents and in particular women.

This campaign, united as never before, has won the backing of the Poly nursery unions—all sections of staff have been fired with enthusiasm. For years NALGO members who run the nursery have seen working conditions deteriorate; any complaints have met veiled hints of closure from the Poly.

The nursery is short staffed and workers are told extra staff would have to be paid for by raising parent's fees. All equipment, toys, pencils, paint etc are either gifts from parents or staff or through fundraising events like car boot sales.

The nursery does not even have basic equipment like a washing machine or an in-

cinerator for soiled nappies, so illness is rife. Three members of staff are, at the time of writing, off with diarrhoea picked up from the children. Nobody is sent to replace them, so the other three have to cook and look after 30 children.

Staff and parents are at the end of their tether. The campaign shows the way out, demanding sufficient funds, facilities and staff to look after babies and small children in the existing nursery and for three new nurseries.

Labour club members are organising a speaking tour to include all union branches, workplaces and Greater London Labour Party branches and ILEA union branches, to put pressure on ILEA to release the resources needed.

Militant Student Bulletin. Issue No 2 December 1986. Now available from Militant Publications, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

### Benefit disco

Hangers' Xmas Benefit Disco. Wednesday, 10th December, 7-11.45pm. Wandsworth Civic Suite, High Street, SW 18. With the Forest Hillbillies, Answers on a Postcard and disco. Admission £3 (£1.50 concession). For tickets ring 646 0260.



# Industrial Reports

## Silentnight 18 months on

**IT IS now 18 months since Silentnight workers came out on strike at the Barnoldswick and Sutton factories in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and an end to this dispute is still not in sight.**

Yet even as the second winter brings rain, wind and flu to the picket lines, the strikers still display an extraordinary warmth of energy and spirit. "It's a cold war" said one striker, "but we can stand the cold. Tom Clarke sacked us all last year for striking, so we've nothing to lose. We're determined to fight until we get our jobs back."

Inside the factories, however, the mood is decidedly wintry. In recent weeks, twelve redundancies

**By Linden Stafford**  
(Skipton Labour Party)

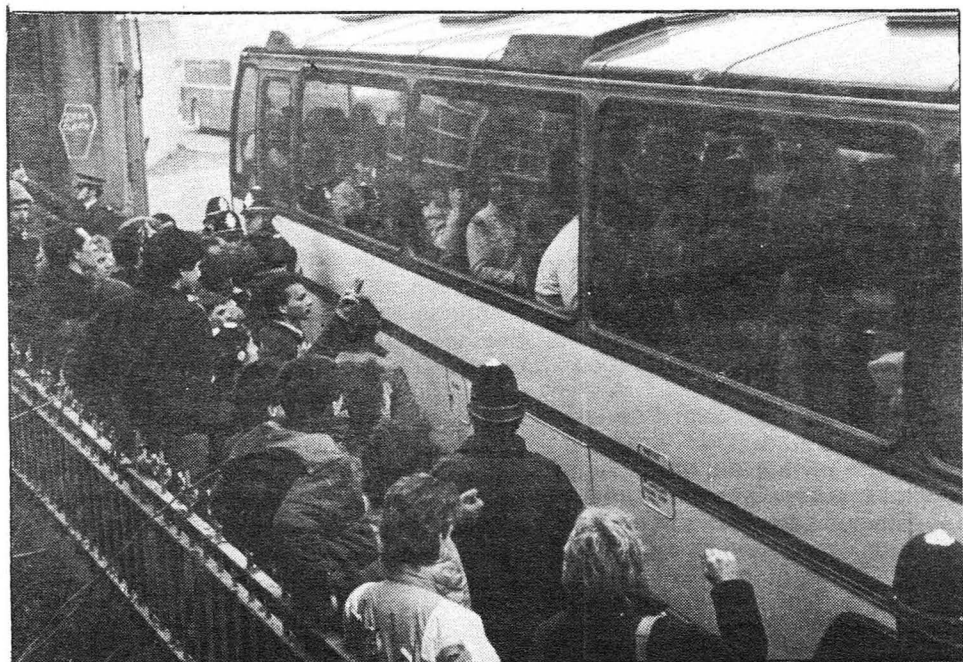
have been made, and now the scab workforce have been offered a meagre 3 per cent rise. A number of new workers come straight from the dole office, not knowing what's going on at Silentnight, but many leave when they find out.

Scab workers are faced not only with the pickets' rock-solid presence, but also

an atmosphere alternating between bitter depression and icy panic, as well as the constant threat of redundancies and lay-offs, with no union to protect them.

Sometimes the buses leave the factories carrying people who were being taken in only 15 minutes before to start their shift!

Much of the strikers' activity, though, takes place far away from the picket lines. Even after all this time, they are actually busier than ever, with heavy schedules of meetings to address all around the country each week. One striker addressed 55 meetings in one week in Nottingham. Another striker



Mass picket at Silentnight in March confront scabs in special bus. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

is attending a conference in France.

New support groups are continually springing up around the country. Hundreds of Silentnight strike supporters have been taking part in the national shop leafletting campaign, which has already borne fruit.

Despite the Co-op's failure to introduce national blacking of Silentnight products, more and more individual Co-op societies are now refusing to sell Silentnight beds. Five Scottish Co-ops, including East Lothian (Edinburgh), and Newcastle, Birmingham, Rochdale and Oldham Co-ops have recently joined the blacking campaign.

So, although the Silentnight Group as a whole has announced a half-year profit of £1.43m, as long as the dispute continues management will foresee a bleak future for Silentnight Beds.

During that half-year, the Group raised some cash by selling its rights in a spring system for £1m, and also selling off one of its subsidiaries, Custom Built.

In their efforts to recapture some of their lost share

in the bed market, Silentnight have brought out a so-called 'new' range of beds, but they are having to spend over £1m in television advertising to launch it.

The *Financial Times*, reported in October that "All has not been calm and bright at Silentnight for a couple of years", advised its readers that "prospects for growth" in the long term were uncertain.

### New record

But the strikers still face a long battle. The national leadership of the union, FTAT, have not had the courage to escalate action either within the rest of the Silentnight Group or in the union as a whole—even though the Silentnight strikers have proved the solidarity of ordinary rank-and-file members.

The Silentnight strikers have also brought fame to this small and previously little-known union, and have given it the reputation of being a fighting organisation.

Yet although the FTAT leaders have declared their willingness to keep this strike

official, the union has not paid out any strike pay since last August.

To help finance the fight against Silentnight, the *Silentnight Strike EP* featuring Janet Cooke and other unemployed musicians from Colne and Bradford was released on 1 December.

Assistance has been given by Red Wedge, and Paul Weller of Style Council provided some of the recording time. The record is available by post from Cocanus Records, 36 Knotts Lane, Colne Lancashire (tel. 0282-867722 /869722) for £3 (including postage), or from record shops in North-West England.

If, as the Tories tell us, we live in a free society, then Radio 1 should be helping *The Silentnight Strike Anthem* to become the cult record of Christmas 1986, and the strikers would make a million. In the meantime, normal industrial and political action will continue through the winter.

Please send donations to: Strike Fund, 9 Frank Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 5AE (tel. 0282 816709).

Photo: Trevor King



Silentnight pickets.

## Dave Nellist defends Rolls Royce workers

**TWO THOUSAND** Rolls Royce workers lobbied Parliament on 26 November to oppose the firm's privatisation. Tony Cross asked Dave Nellist, MP for Coventry South East, what message he had given to the Rolls Royce workers from his constituency.

Firstly, my total opposition to the legalised theft of Rolls Royce. I explained that when RR collapsed in 1971, the Heath government took it into public ownership in 24 hours. Since then, hundreds of millions of pounds of public money has been invested in the company and tens of thousands of jobs have been sacrificed.

Now the company is in profit the Tories want to reward their friends in the City and risk Rolls being asset-stripped or bought by Pratt and Whitney or GEC to eliminate competitors.

Either option would have devastating implications for manufacturing jobs in Coventry, among both Rolls Royce workers and the dozens of sub-contractors who supply the company.

Coventry Climax is literally next door to RR. Five years after it was privatised, only a fifth of the original 3,000 jobs remain. Competitors were hovering like vultures over its entrails. The collapse of Climax at the beginning of October has already led to several small engineering firms going bust.

Tony Cross: Defence Minister Archie Hamilton claims that most RR employees like the idea of privatisa-

tion. What do you think of that view?

Last Wednesday's marvellous rally and the mass meetings before, give the lie to that. I challenged Hamilton to debate his claim in front of Rolls Royce workers but he ignored the invitation. So Rolls Royce stewards at RR Parkside organised their own opinion poll. Of 1,400 manual workers, 1,196 have signed a petition opposing privatisation.

### Cancelled debts

To make the company more attractive to speculators the Tories intend to cancel £250m of debts to the government. The government does not even intend to take any of the money raised by selling the shares. It will remain in Rolls Royce's accounts and be used largely to pay shareholders' dividends. This would be fraud for an individual, but the Tories can legalise it.

How would you answer claims that Jaguar's privatisation has worked so this will benefit Rolls Royce workers?

Jaguar workers were sold cheap shares as a sweetener for privatisation. The Tories are offering RR workers 'special arrangements' to buy shares, but even if they take all they're entitled to, it will not amount to workers 'owning' more than three to four per cent of the company.

They would get a lot more income and control of the company

by continuing to build the strength of the shop stewards' combine.

Jaguar workers have had to take industrial action recently against the sharp increase in track speed. Jaguar's success is almost totally dependent on US sales which are almost certain to decline when the American economic bubble bursts next year and the exchange rate falls.

Such investment as has taken place in Jaguar has been when it was in public ownership. It will have major problems financing the further research and development needed to match its competitors.

Rolls Royce under private ownership would face a similarly precarious future, as the aerospace engine market is dominated by two US giants which dwarf Rolls.

To stop privatisation, we have got to put forward a socialist alternative to the present way of running nationalised industries, which is totally dominated by capitalists. MacGregor and Edwards for example have ensured that many workers see no difference between private and state ownership in their day-to-day working lives.

We must fight for the policy agreed at Confed conference in 1982 for the full public ownership of the aviation industry— aerospace, engines and avionics and the planning, coordination and integration of the industry.

It should involve control of the industry by the labour movement with a majority of elected, account-



Dave Nellist talking to GEC workers in Coventry.

table union delegates on its management board.

Financial advisers to the government on Rolls Royce privatisation are NM Rothschild and Sons Ltd on whose board of directors sits RR chairman Sir Francis Tombs. Just fancy that!

### "Pincer movement"

The best way to frighten off speculators is by a pincer movement—a guarantee from Labour's leadership of full renationalisation of Rolls Royce and

British Aerospace and a determined campaign using the considerable muscle of the unions.

Reasoned argument alone won't stop the Tories. Not a single Tory MP has been prepared to campaign against their government on any case of denationalisation so far. The Tories are at one with their class on this question.

The way to stop them is to show that the labour movement is as solid against privatisation. We can only guarantee a future for the aviation industry if it is fully integrated through socialist planning.



# Industrial Reports

## Rail union ballots Underground members on privatisation fight

ON DECEMBER the eighth, the NUR will commence a ballot for industrial action among its fifteen thousand members in London Underground Limited. The ballot starts on the eighth, and finishes on the 22nd of December, and is over a number of issues.

The main issue is 'tendering'—which is private companies taking over all aspects of work from catering to maintenance of signals.

What this means for NUR members is competing for their own work, with conditions that have been won over the years being destroyed overnight. Wages that are not great could have to be cut by anything up to 35 per cent, just to keep the work.

There has not been one day since the Tories have been in

power that they have not attacked or thought about worsening conditions on the railway. These latest attacks are the worst underground workers have faced since the Tories came to power. A 'Yes vote' must be secured to defeat these attacks, but a yes vote is not enough in itself. Preparations should be made now for industrial action.

The only action the Tories and the LUL board will listen to is industrial action. That is why preparation for action must be taken now. The ballot result will not be known until the fifth of January, but material should still be produced along with the holding of more meetings to get to any member who still does not know what these proposals mean.

By Andy Viner



Photo: Tina Carroll  
Nove picket line

THE TRANQUILITY of the Cheshire countryside was shattered when 25 strikers and LPYS members gathered outside a previously disused barn, just outside Winsford.

The barn is the new headquarters of Nove Leather, previously based in Liverpool, where a dispute over union recognition has been in progress for five months.

The 'reward' for Nove's 'loyal workforce' (ie scabs) is having to travel 30 miles every day, to work in a draughty, cold farm building.

Nove's dictatorial boss, Ron

Novelli, moved his operation to Winsford to escape the picket line put up after Janet Bowman, the TGWU shop steward, was sacked.

On hearing about the picket, Novelli contacted Winnie Murphy, a local councillor and demanded his "democratic right" to put his side of the case.

When Councillor Murphy asked him about the democratic rights to strike and join a union, Novelli, threatened, "I'm going to talk to Neil Kinnock about you!"

Obviously, the Labour leader's talk of a "new partner-

ship" with employers gives a lot more comfort to the Ron Novellis of this world than it does to ordinary trade unionists.

The picket was supported by local railway workers and water workers who were working near by. Local TGWU stewards have pledged support for any future action.

LPYS members in Winsford are determined not to allow Nove Leather to use Winsford as a scab town. Novelli will have to learn that he needs to travel a lot further than 30 miles to escape the long arm of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

## Mullins defends left unity

KEVIN MULLINS, recent Broad Left candidate for general secretary of health service union Cohse spoke to Mick Barwood about the election campaign and the forthcoming assistant general secretary election.

I would like to thank all those in the Broad Left, Young Socialists and readers of *Militant* for the magnificent support they gave in the recent general secretary campaign. We got a substantial vote and many new supporters were won to the Broad Left as a result of our campaign.

At the recent Broad Left conference in London on 2 November two candidates were proposed to run for the post of assistant general secretary which is vacated by the new general secretary Hector Mackenzie. They were Glyn Robinson, a full time officer in the Yorkshire region, and myself.

I was proud to be selected as the Broad Left candidate. It is with regret therefore that I have to announce that I will not be standing. My decision results from the unfortunate actions of some on the left who have decided that irrespective of the Broad Left decision, they will support Glyn Robinson.

It has become clear that a substantial number of left officers and others will be supporting him regardless of the Broad Left's decision—opening the way for a split in the left vote and a right wing victory.

In the interests of unity and a left victory I will not be standing, in order for the left to unite around one candidate.

*Militant* supporters meanwhile, will continue to play their usual active role in building the left regardless of the obstacles created by right or left. Our main objective remains to break the right wing control of our union using open and democratic methods. This is the way we will transform the union into an organisation really fighting in the interests of the members.

A fuller article next week

## Coventry Climax 'saved' by Sven but at what cost?

"IT'S A typical trick. Sack you and then say 'you can have your job back, but on our terms'. Still in this city nowadays, people are glad to have any job."

This was how a Jaguar security man, whose son works at Coventry Climax, summed up the latest developments at the troubled fork-lift truck makers.

Inside the Jaguar social club, the receiver told the Climax workforce, to whom he had issued redundancy notices three days before, that he found it difficult to contain his enthusiasm for what "looks like a tale of happy ever after for you all."

The Swedish company Kalmar has brought Climax and the new boss ("nobody calls me anything else but Sven") told the workers that he was offering them temporary contracts for fifteen weeks, after which "we will negotiate normal employment with each employee with no cuts in pay."

The fate of 80 workers in the engine division is still unclear. The British firm Cronin has bought this part of the company but has not committed itself to keeping all the jobs.

As workers left the meeting, they came face to face with a truck in the new company's colours. But despite the stunts, promise of a £3m cash injection, and attacks on the ex-owners for "mismanaging the company on the principle of divide and rule," by the statement that although "not anti-union", Kalmar will not sign an agreement with the unions "until we have assessed the situation", because "not everybody wants to be a member of a union".

Workers must ask themselves whether these apparently benign bosses want to open the door to non-unionism, and if so, why.

Understandably the overwhelming mood of the workers is one of relief that the months of uncertainty have ended. But the cost comes in the loss of pension and other rights, taken away by a break in continuous employment.

Kalmar say they will re-employ everybody after the fifteen weeks on temporary contract, but, as with every capitalist concern "nobody can guarantee any job" unless it's good for profits.

## Lewisham Nalgo vote to stay out against Labour's Tory tactics

LEWISHAM NALGO members are still on strike despite the local Labour council's Murdoch-style tactics.

The council, which has already locked out staff, has sent a letter to all strikers saying they have broken their contracts by walking out

They gave no guarantees against victimisation but said if we were not back at work by 2 December we would in effect have suspended ourselves.

An issue of safety in a small housing advice centre has escalated. Last Friday a mass meeting of 1,300 voted by four to one to carry on striking. This came after the Nalgo NEC had made the dispute official and ratified our strike pay but at the same time recommended a ballot!

The council have taken advantage of this capitulation to Tory law to use stalling tactics, hoping to wear down Nalgo members. But they have only made most members more angry. Hundreds demonstrated outside the Labour group meeting on 1 December.

The group disregarded all the

union pressure and all the resolutions from Labour Party wards and constituencies and the Local Government Committee backing the strike.

Some trendy 'new realist' councillors hurled insults at strikers and Labour party members alike. They are now known to have suppressed a report by the council's own central safety unit which recommended screens at the housing advice centre, the very demand which sparked off the dispute.

They voted to carry on their own peculiar Tory form of 'negotiations'. The strikers have been buoyed up by the great support we have got from other local authority workers.

Post Office and railway workers have respected our picket lines. Civil servants at the local DHSS have refused to work with Lewisham council while the dispute lasts.

Messages of support and finance to Lewisham Nalgo hardship fund, Shop 5, Eros House, Brownhill Road, London SE6 2EG.

By Gordon Hull (Lewisham Nalgo)

## McCarthy and Stone strike



McCarthy and Stone picket—help welcome

IN A 'new and sinister' turn of events (to quote one building industry journal) the dispute at the McCarthy and Stone, Cedar Road site in Sutton over sackings could soon be spreading to other building sites in London, including docklands.

'Foxglade', a new brickwork subbie which had been appointed to continue the job turned out to be owned by Surrey-based W&S Brickwork.

The unions are already unhappy about the number of men employed direct by W&S (30 out of nearly 200) and the firm's refusal to let the unions exercise the right to 'examine the books'.

Housebuilders such as Ideal (Trafalgar House), Heron, Bovis (P&O) and Walter Lawrence

were warned that unless W&S is removed from Cedar Road their sites which employed W&S men would face disruption. Although W&S director Phil Norket claimed there was no evidence to link his firm and Foxglade, W&S pulled off the site within a week.

Despite an injunction, ballots conducted at the site by the T&G and UCATT produced only one worker against strike action in support of those sacked and the unions have made an application to have the injunction lifted.

Donations and messages of support to J Callaghan, 55b Goldstone Rd, Purley Surrey.  
By Steve French (Camden UCATT)

## London sparks sacked

IN RESPONSE to a trade union being organised in Tri-Electrical in Central London last Wednesday the management sacked 16 electricians.

At once all 26 electricians downed tools. Barry Bailey senior shop steward explained the issues behind the dispute to Joanne Coyle and Paul Kearney.

Tri-electric are contractors for an American company called Nico who are notorious for union bashing in the United States. We formed the union because of atrocious health and safety conditions on the site (65 Kingsway, London). This in-

cluded a series of accidents plus the handling of asbestos. Management had wanted to sack four workers and transfer four to another site—the union's position was "no transfers, no redundancies."

On Wednesday morning the two sites had a joint meeting and elected Barry shop steward. On Wednesday afternoon the management handed out 16 redundancies, mainly to the newly elected committee. The members voted there and then for strike action.

Since then they have been campaigning for support. The London School of Economics Labour Club which is close by the main site has given support.

Donations and messages of support would be gratefully received and should be sent to Barry Bailey, 274 "Missenden", 2 Neville Road, London SE 17 2HY.

There will be a picket day from 7.30am to 6.00 pm. Barry Bailey is keen to speak at all meetings. Contact him on 708-0338.

## National walk-out by NCU

THE CLERICAL section of the National Communication Union staged a national walk-out on 24 November at the end of core flexi-time, 3.30pm.

We are demanding a 10 per cent pay increase without strings. The company are trying to get widespread changes in working practices including a major regrading exercise.

The union is imposing bans: on overtime, short time cover of higher grade duties, the introduction of temporary and casual staff and cooperation with the Customer Services System computer.

Management tried widespread intimidation to undermine the action. In Brighton pay was stopped of people they said should have been at work until 5 pm to answer phone calls from the public. And suspensions were threatened if any further action is taken.

They have misjudged the mood of the workforce during the ballot and now, 90 per cent of the Brighton workers joined the walk-out and four formerly non-union members have recently joined.

Attac's on the flexible working agreement must be resisted nationally. On this and the comprehensive industrial action strategy wider information and involvement of the membership by the national leadership is necessary. The members are eager for action and will respond to a decisive national lead if an active campaign is launched.

The Engineering Section and higher grades union STE are both balloting over pay. Unity in action would help pave the way to victory on pay and the creation of one powerful union through merger.

By Chris Huggins, West End branch and Clive Walder, Brighton.

## Hull council strike against victimisation of JSSC secretary

ABOUT one hundred Hull council parks workers, overwhelmingly young, struck for the day last Friday in support of sacked shop steward and secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Alan Shadforth.

A few hundred other council workers came to the dinner-time rally, mainly dustmen who were recently on strike.

Unfortunately, many shop stewards did not understand the nature of the council's attack and therefore many departments did not see that their own stewards' jobs and conditions were also under threat—particularly with privatisation coming next year.

The poor response was further compounded by the assembly points being changed by the police at the last minute and finally the march being called off even while more workers were arriving.

Alan Shadforth pledged that the smiles on the faces of right-wing Labour councillors would be removed by

a political campaign inside the Labour Party.

To this end, five council workers joined the Labour Party and parks workers agreed to lobby the next Labour group meeting. And a mass canvass of a ward where three of the "gang of five" are councillors is to be arranged.

The campaign for Alan's reinstatement will continue while he is supported by a members levy. But the JSSC must quickly heal the wounds of this serious setback, by rebuilding the strength and confidence of council departments and shop stewards committee for even more bitter battles likely over privatisation next year.

It is hoped that the JSSC will take over *The Organiser* produced by local Labour Party and Young Socialist members during the campaign, and use it as an official bulletin to organise and educate the membership in preparation for future struggles.



# Militant

Students' conference

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Rolls Royce

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Insider Trading

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## CPSA votes NO to poverty wages

THE CPSA Special Pay Conference on 27 November was a victory for the Broad Left, and all those in CPSA seriously fighting low pay. Delegates decided to pursue a £20 a week increase, plus demands for a 35 hour week and six weeks annual leave, in full knowledge of the implications. Conference was a real success, despite the protestations of the right wing and the Communist Party Broad Left '84, that these exercises in democracy are unnecessary.

Mark Serwotka (DHSS Methyr Tydfil) in winding up this debate explained that no-one had argued against any element of the claim, nor against the now recognised fact that to win it, an all out strike would be needed.

Right wing and Broad Left '84 opposition was confined to a technicality in the motion. But despite this it was passed by 75,359 to 55,137.

It was clear from the reception that greeted John Ellis, that most delegates had no respect for him as their 'leader'. They showed it too

By Bill Boyle

in their rejection of the right wing's attempt to have the NEC pay claim even debated.

Steve Dunk (Inland Revenue HQ) successfully moved his branch's motion for increased London weighting, and "severely censured" the NEC for the 1986 London weighting award.

But the motion from Land Registry, Lytham, moved by Chris Baugh, which attempt-

ed to lay down a strict timetable to prevent the NEC wriggling out of any actual preparations for action on pay next year, was defeated. Conference felt it was too restrictive, and was sceptical that a joint claim could be drawn up with the other civil service unions in the timescale outlined. Normally such a strict timetable would be unnecessary. However, the failure of the NEC to do anything on pay last year forced several branches to table such an exceptional motion.

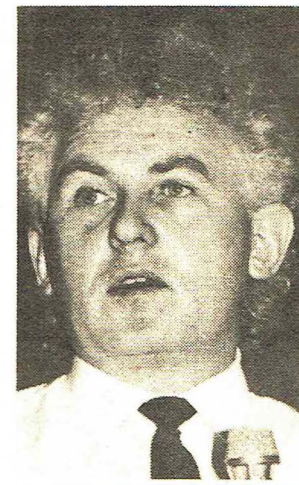
Many delegates felt that the opposition of Broad Left '84 was merely because *Militant* supporters had moved it.

So a looser motion from the Scottish Office (BL '84 controlled) calling on the NEC to initiate a campaign of action was passed, with Broad Left support. CPSA

activists will now have to ensure that the NEC pursues with vigour the conference demands to eradicate civil service low pay.

### Broad Left

A Broad Left lunchtime rally attracted 350 delegates, who enthusiastically listened to Eddie Spence and John Macreadie. It is clear there has been an extremely high turnout for the General Secretary/Treasurer election so far. John Macreadie's vote is increasing substantially, but not surprisingly, so too is that for John Ellis, stimulated by the extensive media campaign into the union. The right wing have spent a fortune sending individually stamped envelopes to all branches where they traditionally receive support.



"I will fight for the full £20," said John Macreadie addressing the Broad Left rally.

If those sections of the union which traditionally have supported the Broad Left vote well, all the indications are that John Macreadie can win. That is the task for the next few days. For with him as General Secretary, CPSA members can be confident that the decisions of the conference will be implemented to the full.

### What We Stand for

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

## Knowsley arrest sensation

LABOUR PARTY right-wingers informed the media on Merseyside early on Friday 28 November that the police wished to interview a Knowsley North councillor, Dave Kerr, about an alleged assault. The story was carried in morning news bulletins by Radio City.

Sean Hughes, MP for Knowsley South, had even informed his constituency party the previous night that "the police are about to announce the arrest of a leading Knowsley North councillor." Yet only on the Friday afternoon was Dave Kerr, vice-chair and press officer of Knowsley North Labour Party, interviewed by the police and charged.

The assault is alleged to have been on Tony Glover, a cousin of Knowsley 'Labour against Militant' councillor, Peter Fisher, Dave Kerr has stated publicly that he has not seen Glover for two years and has no wish to see him.

Glover was employed, for some months in each case, at the Cantril Farm unemployed centre and the housing organisation, Shelter.

He has been convicted of stealing £200 from the Shelter money box.

Earlier this year, he submitted an affidavit to the Labour Party NEC containing details of meetings he claims to have attended, at which the downfall of the then MP, Robert Kilroy-Silk, was plotted and various other conspiracies were hatched.

### Witch-hunting depths

Today, mouthpiece of the witch-hunters in Knowsley North, on 26 November, the same day that the NEC decided to hold an inquiry into the Knowsley North party, contained a centre-page spread on Glover's allegations against local party members. This article was photocopied and circulated to delegates to Knowsley South Labour Party.

There are apparently no depths to which the right-wing are not willing to sink in their attacks on socialists.

ENCOURAGED BY the right wing's authoritarian methods in Knowsley North Labour Party, Knowsley District Labour Party has sent out a circular aiming to prevent *Militant* supporters being included on the panel of council candidates.

The circular asks those wanting to be candidates to sign a form listing "any and all organisations" which they may be members of, and to declare that they are not a "member of or a supporter of the *Militant* tendency."

It makes clear that not filling in the form "may result in the deletion of your name from the District Labour Party panel."

These apartheid methods of the right wing, used to discriminate against socialists, will not prevent *Militant* gaining support in Knowsley.

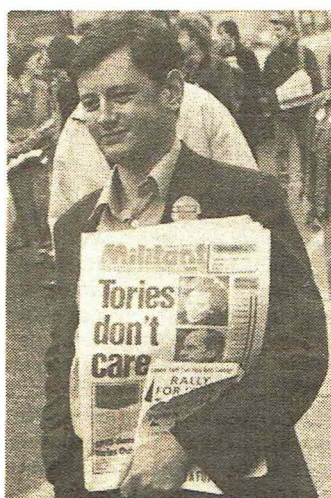
By a Militant reporter

Every party member and organisation should protest vigorously against the NEC's actions against Knowsley North Labour Party, which is being singled out for punishment because of its consistent opposition to the NEC's efforts to trample on democracy within the party. Rush protests, with copies to left members, to the NEC before 17 December.

Become a **Militant** supporter

Name .....  
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Send to  
3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB



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