

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

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865

Thousands homeless as Tory landlords prosper

Homes before profits

WHEN MARK Hazlehurst from Wallasey arrived in London, he was offered a job at £1.68 an hour with accommodation at £15 a week 'graciously' provided by his new employer.

"We were taken back to a tiny three-bedroomed flat with a very small living room, kitchen and bathroom. Two people shared each bedroom and six the whole flat, all paying £15 a week. With thirty such flats the boss, was raking in £2700 a week."

Ruthless

Many people come down to London to find jobs but the only people who find streets paved with gold are the most ruthless landlords.

Half a million homeless in Britain makes this the worst housing crisis for decades. The Tories' ridiculous solution is to place

housing at the mercy of private speculators.

Already seven thousand families are forced to live in bed and breakfast establishments in London alone. Amongst them are people whose council homes have been privatised and mortgage owners whose houses have been repossessed.

Government cut backs have meant a 70 per cent reduction in council house spending and a 60 per cent cut in building since 1979. (See feature page 5). But despite rapidly rising house prices in the south, the private sector has not filled the gap.

Tory-controlled Westminster council in London

would be Thatcher's model local authority. They are selling off council flats as they become empty. They push homeless people into bed and breakfast at up to £200 a week or 'hotels' like the fortress near Heathrow guarded by Alsatian dogs. They now threaten to dump homeless people in portakabins on Barking marshes!

Greedy landlord

The government's proposed new housing bill plans to further cut council housing and push up council rents so that private landlords can 'compete'.

Hostels and bed and breakfast establishments will have a fine time and not just in London. The "free market" does not offer any choice. When 16 year old Liz Patterson left her home because she

wanted some independence she tried the YMCA.

"It was fine for a while but I was one of only six girls there, the other 50 were senile old men, teenage lads on probation and divorced husbands. The whole atmosphere was lethargic."

Liz now has a good landlady but they are a rarity. "Bedsit land is heaven for greedy landlords, packing in tenants like sardines and charging ridiculous amounts for squalid rooms. If they offer you a bowl of cereal a day it becomes bed and breakfast and they can charge what they like."

That is Tory housing policy. Labour councils, unions and tenants associations must resist their plans and fight to defend, expand and improve council housing.

Labour Party Conference Militant Meeting

Tuesday 29 September,
7.00pm. Wagner Hall, Brighton

Speakers: Peter Taaffe,
Ted Grant, Tony Mulhearn,
John Macreadie

Inside

Council housing
up for grabs

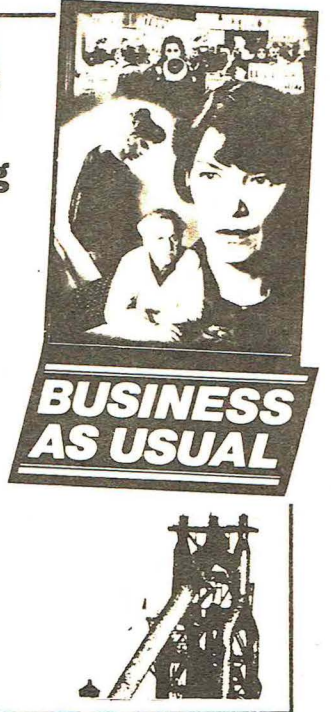
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EMERGENCY

Save the YS

LABOUR'S NATIONAL Executive has launched the biggest attack on the Young Socialists (LPYS) since the 1950s.

It will recommend that democracy in the regions is abolished and that the age limit is lowered, even though a Party consultation showed overwhelming opposition to these moves.

The vote was 16-8, with Eddie Haigh of the TGWU voting against, in line with his union's policy.

Union and Party members must bombard their Labour Party conference delegations and national executives with letters and resolutions demanding opposition to this disgraceful attack.

For full story, see page four.

The Executive was at sixes and sevens as to what form changes to the method of selecting MPs should take. They voted 19-8 to support the principle of changing the present system, but could not decide what alternative method to recommend!



Photo: Andrew Moore (Reflex)

More and more families will face the misery of eviction under new Tory proposals.

John Macreadie interviewed

A militant on the TUC

THE FIRST ever Militant supporter has been elected on to the trade union movement's highest body, the TUC General Council. He is John Macreadie of the civil servants' union, CPSA. His election is a landmark in the history of the unions.

Even during the week of the Congress, John emerged as a significant figure in the trade union movement. He stood up for the traditions of fighting trade unionism against all the policies of despair, of 'new realism' and no strike deals. As the representative of many poorly paid civil service workers, John's election is a victory for all the millions of low paid looking for action from the TUC leadership.

John Macreadie spoke to Ian Parker during the TUC:

"I think we've seen this week that in every industry in Britain workers are under attack and facing problems. There is a tremendous responsibility on the Trades Union Congress and the General Council, to try and explain to workers why we've been facing all those problems and to put forward a strategy that can solve them.

"When a union leadership fights for its members, that's the advert it needs for recruitment."

My feeling this week is that many in the trade union movement feel in absolute despair. Hammond and Jordan don't see any way out of the problems of unemployment, factories closing, the decline of industry, cuts in public expenditure.

So, they look to sweetheart deals with the bosses, in an attempt to get a quiet life. This is further compounded by the helplessness they feel about the defeat of Labour and the re-election of the Tories.

These sweetheart deals are not just a disservice to their own members, they are a danger to the whole labour movement.

The right wing are placing all the emphasis on image, some people would say gimmicks. They say that there's nothing else we can do but try and reach the best accommodation we can with the government and the employers.

As I've said before: yes, we should welcome any improvement to the services unions provide their

members, but they are not the deciding factors in recruiting and keeping members. John Edmonds, one of the main architects of 'new realism' should realise that when a union offers its members a way forward, with its leadership actually fighting for them, that's the only advert it needs for recruitment.

Struggle

What the CPSA delegation is trying to do this week is to tell delegates that the trade union movement is still potentially the greatest force in British society. The Tories understand that, the capitalist class understand that. That's why they spend millions of pounds every day, trying to lull us to sleep, trying to divert us away from our task. We are the only organisation that stands to stop the Tories from attacking working people.

We should be using that strength to organise workers and to explain to them that where workers are in struggle the trade union movement will stand shoulder to shoulder with them. We must support the fights going on in communities all over the country to try and defend civil, social and public services. And we must say to the government: "You've gone far enough." Although that argument hasn't found great support at the top of the trade union movement it will, we hope, give confidence to millions of workers within the TUC. Over a period of time they will compel their leaders to recognise there is no alternative under British capitalism but to struggle.

I regard it as a tremendous privilege to represent the CPSA on the General Council of the TUC. Never in my wildest dreams as a young worker and trade union representative did I ever believe that one day I would be asked to represent workers at the highest level of the trade union movement.

I will carry out the policies of the CPSA membership on the General Council at all times. Whatever capacity I hold, my first responsibility is to solve the problems facing CPSA members. The need to defend their jobs, the need to abolish the poverty rates of pay. The need to oppose privatisation. The need to see the vast extension of health and safety, of childcare and creche facilities. The need to improve the accommodation they are working in, and to win improvements in many other conditions of service. That's what I'm currently

working for as the Deputy General Secretary of the CPSA.

Therefore my role on the General Council will be to do whatever I can so that the movement helps us in the CPSA secure these improvements in the day to day living problems of our members and workers generally.

I will try to ensure in whatever way I can that the things we have been arguing about at conference are picked up at the General Council. That they do support workers in struggle, not just here in Britain, but internationally as well.

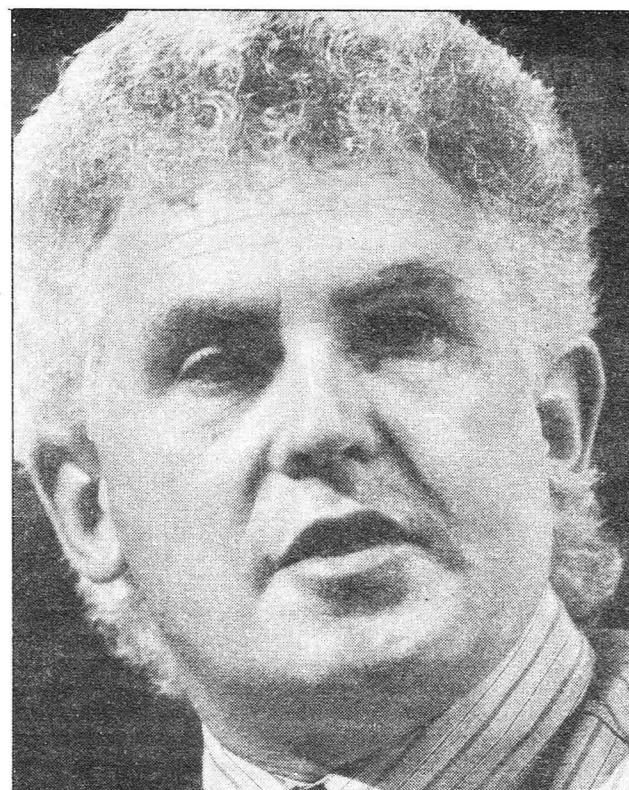
But I think what is clear as well is that the right wing in the trade union movement are very well organised, particularly at the Congress and amongst the top of the trade union movement. Therefore it's vital that the left inside the

General Council and inside the movement organises in support of socialist policies, in support of basic trade union principles, of defending the right to organise, the right to strike and the right to picket. And to actually build the trade union movement and to reject the defeatism and the collaboration with the employers. For example at Wapping when the electricians' leaders connived in the sacking of five and a half thousand print workers.

Confident

I will try and help to ensure that the left on the General Council and in the unions organise and fight back against these attacks on basic workers' rights.

The Tory press and their unappointed, unelected pundits, are trying to push the TUC away from its



John Macreadie speaks at TUC conference.

traditional task of defending the wages, jobs and conditions of workers. They are trying to turn us into some type of glorified insurance society.

But as the new generation of workers come into struggle many of the old leaders will be removed and replaced by young leaders prepared to fight. In every union we see that. And also the tide of democracy is on the increase.

When I spoke at the rostrum about the need for election of full time officials

and to give the unions back to the rank and file, I was met with a hostile reception by many of the union leaders. Well, I believe that this demand will be supported by increasing millions of workers who want to see democratic fighting trade unions.

So I'm very confident for the future, and I would say to people that they should ignore the premature obituaries written by the Tories and their friends in the press."



Feeling isolated? John Ellis, with CPSA's right-wing president, Marion Chambers.

Right-winger Ellis complains Union perks slashed

BEFORE THE TUC Congress had even finished Fleet Street was gunning for John Macreadie and the CPSA left. Under a front page headline "Militant hounding me out", the London Evening Standard revealed the plight of John Ellis, CPSA General Secretary.

The heart of every CPSA member must have bled, when they read of what he has had to endure. The "campaign of vilification and victimisation" against him has reached such levels that his Opel Senator car has been taken off him, and

he was told that if he wants a car to buy one himself.

Salaries

The new left-wing controlled national executive committee of the union has also cut the linking of his pay to that of a senior principal secretary in Whitehall and awarded him a mere £5 per week pay increase. To add insult to injury, his American Express Card to pay for 'official union business' is also to be withdrawn.

Even more galling to

CPSA members is the revelation that despite using these measures to go running to the press about 'victimisation', Ellis actually spoke in favour of them at the NEC.

CPSA members, many of whom take home less than £110 per week after tax, will not be slow to see the different priorities of Ellis, who receives over £26,000 per year, and the new national executive. They will back the actions of the NEC to bring into line the salaries of senior full-time officials. John Macreadie, the newly elected deputy general

secretary, refused to accept the £26,000 salary and credit card which went with his position and continues to draw the wage he was on as a national officer.

It is the bosses and the Tory press who always go on about the need for union leaders to receive the rate for the job. They want a tame, cosseted union leadership rather than workers' leaders accountable to, and living the same life style as their members.

By a CPSA member

Keep Labour socialist

Defend party democracy

MEMBERS AND supporters of the Labour Party are looking to next week's Party conference to launch the fightback to reverse June's electoral defeat with a commitment to socialist policies and a campaign to build the membership.

But there are ominous signs that many in the Labour Party leadership want the conference to launch a fight against the Party's socialist traditions, by wat-

ering down its policies to make them more acceptable to Labour's critics in the media.

At the same time, Party officials are trying to reduce the accountability of MPs to the rank and file and expel some of those who are fighting against these changes. The campaign to keep Labour socialist, defence of Party democracy and opposition to expulsions are all part of the same struggle.

Save Liverpool councillors from bankruptcy

THE FIGHT of the 47 surcharged Labour Liverpool city councillors is at a crucial new stage. The District Auditor has demanded payment of the huge financial penalties imposed on them. He wants £15,000 immediately and an agreement to pay £4,000 per month for a period of more than six years.

By Felicity Dowling
disqualified Liverpool councillor

Only agreeing to pay in instalments can now save the councillors from bankruptcy or the attachment of earnings of those in employment. One councillor would lose the right to practice law for the rest of his life. Failing to keep up with the payments would mean bankruptcy.

Time is very short. We have only been given until next Monday, 21 September, to raise the first £4,000.

It is no accident that the District Auditor has chosen this time to demand payment of the surcharge and his legal fees, nor that the instalments demanded are unrealistically high. The spectacle of the 47 rebels being humiliated, bankrupted and viciously punished, as their savings, possessions and homes are sequestered, is being used to discourage other councillors from following their example.

The 'Liverpool option' is again being discussed in local Party branches, Labour Groups and trade unions faced with severe cuts.

Labour's success in Liverpool in the local and general elections is a testimony to the disqualified councillors' achievements. The gains are intact and are daily reminders that Thatcher can be successfully defied. But some right-wingers are vilifying the 47 as much as our Liberal enemies. They would happily introduce cuts and their excuse for not



fighting the Tories is that the 47 have been abandoned by the labour movement.

The 47 have not given up the fight. Every possible way of reducing the figures will be used. But they and their supporters have no choice now but to try once more to raise the money from the movement.

The size of the penalty means that the only long-term hope is help from the unions at national level. But we are asking all who have stood with us to immediately organise emergency help. It would be a magnificent achievement to raise £4,000 a month and a decisive reply to the right wing.

We have to ask for the help of the whole movement not just to defend us in person from the bailiffs and bankruptcy, but to publicise the success of Liverpool as an example for the future struggles for socialism.

Rush donations, standing orders and requests for speakers, and make cheques payable to the Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, c/o MTCURC, Hardman St. Liverpool. Standing orders to A/c no 502 111 95 at the Co-operative Bank, Liverpool Branch. Phone Alex Dodswell on 051 709 4398 or 051 427 3071.



Stop the rampaging right

ON 12 September the *Workers for Socialism* campaign was launched in Wales, to spearhead the fightback against the watering down of Labour's programme. But an added significance was given to the Cardiff venue, with a lobby that very morning of Labour's 'Star Chamber', the National Constitution Committee, meeting for the first time outside London.

'On trial' for their socialist beliefs were Tony Wedlake and Chris Peace. But 150 ordinary Party members joined the lobby, confirming the determination of Labour's rank and file to fight for the soul of their Party.

The NCC members had to file past the lobby to a noisy reception, particularly Welsh witchfinder general, George Wright. He was greeted by the singing (to the tune of 'Part of the Union') of "You won't get him on the wage of a worker, till the day he dies".

Chris and Tony won a postponement until 10 October, because of the irregular way the hearing was run.

That afternoon 'a workers' MP on a worker's wage', Dave Nellist, addressed the cam-

aign rally.

The magnificent collection of £188 at the rally shows that young workers will sacrifice to build a party committed to changing society. In *Workers for Socialism*, they have found a campaign to steer the Labour Party back on course.

NOT ONLY *Militant* supporters have had to defend themselves against the Labour's right-wing leadership. Staff at the Party's Head Office have voted overwhelmingly to call a one-day strike on 22 September if redundancies announced by the National Executive Committee (NEC) are not withdrawn by then.

Members of the TGWU voted 67-1 and SOGAT members 8-0. The total vote was 99-4.

They lobbied Tuesday's NEC, which refused to let them in to explain their case that restructuring of staff and sound finance are achievable, and to demand withdrawal of

redundancies in view of the dramatic turnaround in the Party's financial position. Only the left voted for staff representatives to be admitted.

They point out that the predicted deficit of £711,000 for 1988 has been replaced by a predicted surplus of at least £122,000 without redundancies.

If the proposed redundancies are not withdrawn by 23 September, or if actual redundancy notices are issued, the unions will take their campaign to the Party conference to get delegates' support in convincing the NEC to negotiate at Brighton.

They stress however that "if, regrettably, industrial action during conference week becomes necessary, it will be disciplined, organised and clear-cut rather than 'disruptive'".

JIM HORTON from Stevenage was expelled by the National Constitutional Committee on Tuesday. Without allowing him to finish putting his case, the committee left the room to decide to throw him out of the Party.

Assault in Livingston

ANOTHER YOUNG Socialist has been viciously assaulted by witch-hunters in Livingston. But "Never, ever give up the fight", the words of a young person who approached us at Livingston bus station, is a typical reaction to our campaign against expulsions from the local Labour Party. Already over 1,000 signatures have been collected.

A public meeting, called as part of the campaign, attracted 50 people. The donation of £50 for the *Militant* fighting fund from an 18 year old shop steward showed the defiant mood.

Young Socialists lobbied Livingston Labour Party on

Sunday, 13 September. Lisa McGuire, a member of Nidrie Labour Party Young Socialists, was taking photographs of the lobby. Dave Flight, a member of Livingston CLP executive, grabbed Lisa and threw her against the wall. She fell to the ground with him on top of her, grabbing at the camera shouting "expose that film I want the exposures". He had to be pulled away by three other LPYS members. The police have pressed charges of assault against Flight.

At the meeting itself, the findings of the investigation committee were never taken. Many local union leaders signed the petition and had

written letters of protest. One was Robert Lamby, convener of Parsons Peebles, a factory fighting redundancies at the moment. It was decided that all the letters and petitions would never come to the CLP delegates. The protests of leading Scottish trade unionists against the possible expulsions were suppressed.

Despite the manoeuvres of Livingston CLP, young members of Livingston Labour Party won't be intimidated or persecuted, but will continue the campaign against the expulsions.

By Militant reporters

WORKERS FOR SOCIALISM



Campaign for Labour Movement Democracy & Socialism

Meetings

☆ ASTMS/TASS Merger Conference.

Co-op Hall, Mason's Avenue, Harrow. Lunchtime Saturday 19 September. Speaker: Terry Fields MP, & BLOC speaker (incorrectly advertised last week

as WFS/BLOC meeting).
☆ Maesteg Town Hall.
5 October 7.30. Speaker Terry Fields MP, Ian Isaac.
☆ Manchester Great Hall, Town Hall. 8 October.

Pre-Labour Party Conference Rally

7.30 Sunday 27 September
Brighton Youth Centre
Speakers: Eric Heffer MP
John Macreadie,
Terry Fields, Dave Nellist MPs
Get your Labour Party or union branch to sponsor Workers for Socialism—Contact organising secretary Dave Campbell 256A Halley Rd, London E12 6UA.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS FIGHT YTS SLAVERY



LONDON-Work with the unions

YOUNG WORKERS in Newham North West Labour Party Young Socialists were keen to fight against bad conditions on local YTS slave labour schemes.

But what could they do? Clearly it would take more than a few to letters to local employers to make them change their ways. So, the first step the YS took was to invite a district officer from the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) to speak at our next meeting.

He explained the Link-up campaign the TGWU have launched to get YTSers into the union.

"It's great," he said, "we haven't had to do this for years. I'm really enjoying going round leafletting workplaces and shouting through a megaphone to get people to join the union."

He was very keen to get YS members to help. "It's a lot better getting young people to recruit other young people than for them to just see two old men outside their workplace. Youth is the key to the union."

"More and more, lowpaid, non-unionised young people are replacing older, better organised workers. Especially in the big stores where they're taking on lots of part-time workers, often women, who they pay low wages."

East London YS branches have organised a Young Workers' Rally on 10 October. Its aim is to get YTS

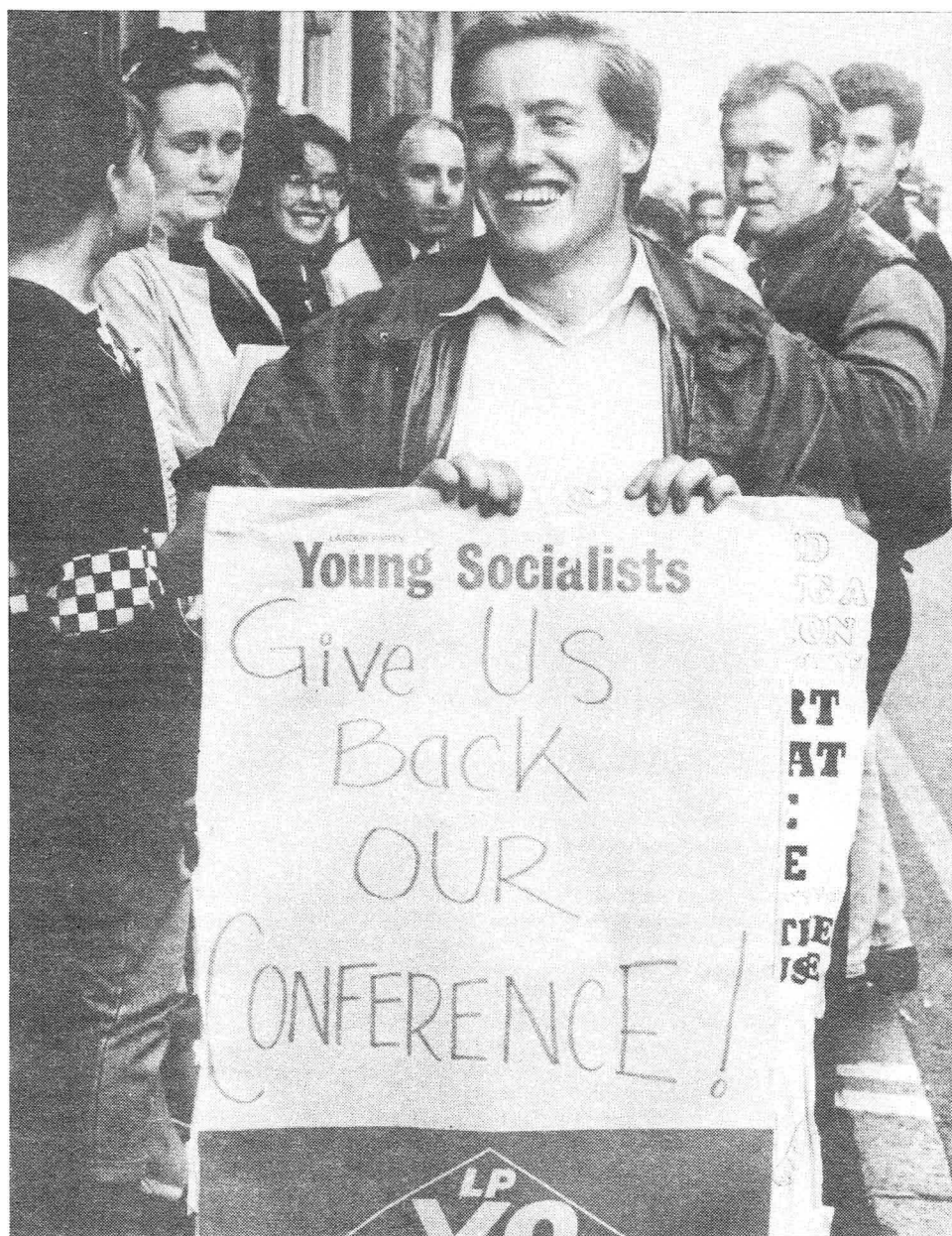


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

London LPYS members lobby Labour's Regional Executive against interference in their regional conference. The decision was postponed.

trainees and low-paid young workers together so as to help organise them to fight for better conditions and union recognition. When we told the TGWU officer about it and asked for help, he was very enthusiastic.

By the end of the meeting, he had agreed to let the YS use the TGWU hall and

circulate all the union's branches in the area. He invited YS members along the next time the union went down to a local YTS scheme. All this from one letter asking for a speaker!

The TGWU have made youth work a priority and will often be keen to get help from local YS

branches. An enthusiastic approach from your YS to local unions could lead to links being forged which will help to get young workers unionised and get many of them involved in the YS.

**By Sue Ayton
Newham North West
LPYS and London
LPYS regional
committee**

Emergency, LPYS under attack!

DESPITE THE magnificent campaigning of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), Labour's National Executive (NEC) have launched a wholesale attack on the Party's youth. They propose to lower the LPYS's age limit and tamper with its regional structures.

It is the most fundamental attack on Labour's youth since the 1950s.

The consultation which the NEC set up to undermine the LPYS, blew up in their faces. It showed overwhelming support for the LPYS (see *Militant* 864).

Now they have decided to completely ignore the views of the labour movement.

They are going to try and railroad swingeing attacks on the LPYS through this year's Party conference.

Age limit

An overwhelming 85 per cent of Party organisations who replied to the consultation opposed any reduction in the age limit. But the NEC have the nerve to recommend a constitutional amendment to Party conference which will reduce it from 25 to 22 years.

They have the brassneck to claim "a number and variety of organisations proposed that the age limit be 23 years". In fact, only 8 organisations out of 420 supported this idea!

The NEC are proposing another amendment that has no support at all from the consultation results! They want to completely abolish the democratically elected Regional Youth Committees and Regional LPYS Conferences.

This attack can only be seen as part of the increasing concentration of power in the hands of national Party officials. It is a first step to removing all members' democratic rights.

Once again, the NEC have blatantly ignored the rank and file's views in their enthusiasm to bulldoze through these attacks.

These blatant attempts to shackle one of Europe's most active socialist youth

organisations must be directly opposed by all sections of the Party.

Defence

Most Party members and trade unionists have witnessed the fighting, campaigning work of the LPYS. Now it is urgent they come to the defence of Labour's fighting youth. Make sure your local Party's delegate votes against the amendments. If you are a trade unionist, protest to your union executive and Conference delegation and make sure your union does not support the NEC's proposals.

By an LPYS member.

STOKE-"We hate the Tories"

"IF THE LPYS had run the election campaign, we wouldn't have a Tory government now," was one young worker's comment after a YS meeting in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The new YS members at the meeting were so enthusiastic that, instead of the normal summing up by the speaker, it exploded into the singing of football songs - with a few words changed to 'We hate Tories' and 'If you hate Maggie Thatcher, clap your hands!'

The Newcastle LPYS branch has begun a campaign against the Tories' proposals to make YTS compulsory. In just two days of lobbying the Job Centre, £37 was raised and hundreds of signatures col-

lected on petitions. There is so much anger among young people in the area towards the Government's attacks on youth, that many wanted to sign the petition twice. Some wanted to fetch their mates so they could sign. Even YTS vetters and careers officers signed.

Five young people joined at the meeting. One young worker who arrived late for the meeting sat outside till it was over and asked to join.

Unlike the Labour right-wingers, the young people at the meeting were confident we could defeat Thatcher as the school students did in 1985.

**By Paul Kelly
Stoke Central LPYS**

SUNDERLAND- MSC fines trainees

THE MOOD was almost revolutionary on one YTS scheme the LPYS visited in Sunderland, in a campaign which targetted offices, factories and schemes.

We spoke to over 150 people and only one thought YTS was a good thing. The rest described it as exploitation, slave labour and an attack on young people's freedom.

One young girl gave us an appalling account of how they squeeze every penny from young people. On her scheme, trainees were fined £5 for being late, having love bites, having long or spiky hair or smoking. They could end up owing the MSC money at the end of the week!

**By Alex Witt
Blyth LPYS**

DEFEND

DESCRIPTION

SOCIALIST

Paper Of the Labour Party Young Socialists

September/October 1987

30p

FIGHT FOR A FUTURE IN THE LPYS

SOCIALIST YOUTH must continue to play a crucial role in winning young people to Labour. Since it broke even last year, there can be no reason for the NEC to close it.

Resolutions of protest about the threat to Socialist Youth must be rushed urgently to Larry Whitty, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

HULL-"Don't push us"

"THE TORIES want to push us onto cheap labour, skivvy schemes. Well, we're saying to the Tories 'Don't push us, or we're going to fight back!'" So said 'Red Rambo' at a Hull Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign benefit where several bands played free for the campaign.

The gig, which raised £203, followed an open air rock concert and rally which was attended by 300 people. The event was staged to highlight government plans to conscript youth onto YTS.

Now we are going on to unionise the city's YTS centres, which employ over 150 trainees between them. Once this is achieved, we are convinced trade unionism will spread like wildfire amongst trainees in the city.

**By Ray Duffill
North Hull LPYS**

Council housing up for grabs



SINCE 1979, council tenants have faced enormous attacks. 70 per cent of money spent on public housing has been cut, rents are now higher in real terms than at any time since the second world war and there is a £20 billion backlog of repairs.

One million homes, mainly the better houses, have been sold. Most of the tenants left cannot buy because they are low-paid or on social security or do not want to because they live in tower blocks.

So now the Tories plan to sell off whole blocks and estates. Property speculators are greedily anticipating huge profits from £100 billion worth of council housing.

In 1985 the government set up the Urban Renewal Housing Unit (now known as 'Estate Action') to "encourage (a) sales of tenanted estates to private trusts or developers; (b) sales of empty property to developers for refurbishment for sale or rent".

Speculators

It works by holding back £75m of the government's capital finance allocation for councils. To borrow some of this, councils have to agree to sell off estates. In Birmingham the council has agreed to refurbish part of two estates at a cost of losing two thirds of the properties.

The Tories have turned the screw still further, with the Housing and Planning Act, which gives councils the power to evict tenants for the sole reason that they are selling off their estate or block.

They have given the green light to property speculators to asset-strip local authorities and leave councils with a declining stock of the worst estates. After being sold off, the properties will be re-sold or re-let at much higher rents.

The government says it wants all new private and housing association properties to be let on assured tenancies with no rent controls, which would mean rents in London doubling or trebling.

To make private landlords seem more attractive, the Tories are planning to stop councils from contributing to their housing revenue accounts from the rates. This will mean nationally an average increase in rents of 20-30 per cent. In Camden it is estimated to mean a 220 per cent rise.

They are also proposing to bring in a form of tendering for housing management, despite the Institute of Housing concluding in 1982 that private sector involvement in housing management could only work by stripping down the service offered to tenants to a bare minimum.

The effects of these attacks will be higher rents, a break-up of communities as tenants are evicted for sale, less choice for remaining tenants as the choicest estates are bought up, longer waiting lists for

By Richard Evans

Vice Chair, Birmingham Tenants' Federation

council housing and job losses.

NALGO estimates there are 54,000 white-collar jobs at risk, as well as manual jobs in direct labour organisations, caretaking, etc. There will also be a loss of democratic control through an elected local authority.

Privatisation has proved to be a nightmare for tenants. In July 1986 the tenants of the Hadrian estate in Tower Hamlets found out by accident that their estate was up for sale. Under pressure, the council sent round a letter of 'consultation' which ended: "If I do not hear from you I shall assume you wish to be rehoused elsewhere in the Borough". Tenants were given five days to reply.

Wandsworth council has 300 homeless families and spends £1 million a year on bed-and-breakfast bills, yet it has 900 empty houses awaiting sale.

Trade unions and tenants' groups should build links

Labour councils ought to be opposing these attacks. But, disgracefully, a number of Labour councils have approached the government about forming one of the four proposed new Housing Action Trusts, which, like Urban Development Corporations, will take control out of the hands of local authorities.

In Cantril Farm it was Knowsley Labour council who told tenants either to accept the Housing Trust set up by the government or else nothing would be done to their estate.

Labour councils must be prepared to mobilise local authority workers and tenants against the Tories' attempts to sell off estates. Councils should refuse to implement the Tory laws and not make tenants pay for cuts by increasing rents and rates.

Local authority trade unions and tenants' groups should build links and start a joint campaign against the threat of sell-offs. But the campaign should not confine itself just to defending the status quo. Council estates are so rundown after eight years of Thatcher government that many tenants think conditions cannot get any worse with privatisation. So we should be fighting for proper resources for repairs, renovation and the building of new houses.



Homeless man sleeping rough in Euston Station, London.

Homeless in East Kilbride

JUST OVER half the houses in East Kilbride, near Glasgow, are controlled by the government-appointed New Town Development Corporation. The District Council, who would be the main housing authority in most areas, have very little say.

Rents are high; the Corporation have vigorously carried out the 'right to buy' policy, and no new 'general needs' houses have been built for rent, while many Corporation houses are put up for sale on the open market.

These policies have caused a housing shortage, with almost 4000 on the waiting list. Most of these are second generation families, who are told they will have to wait anything up to five years for a house. Some young people born and brought up in the town have had to move out because they can't get a house for rent and can't afford to buy.

Mary, (not her real name) was made homeless along with her two children when she fled from a violent husband.

"The corporation didn't treat me well at all when I went to them," she told *Militant*. "They tried to make out I was intentionally homeless and that they didn't have to help me. It was so bad I left their office in tears."

"Eventually they put me in one of their homeless units

which could be a lot better."

Mary has been in the homeless unit for 17 months and has been told that she could wait another seven months for a home. She shares the unit with a second family and on occasions with a third, sharing the bathroom, kitchen and sparsely furnished sitting room.

She didn't complain about the treatment because she didn't know what her rights were. "They made out they were doing you a favour and you should be grateful to them."

Before the homeless unit, Mary and her children were in a hotel because there were no rooms at the homeless unit. Things could get worse; the Corporation are closing some of their homeless units even though only 61 out of 422 people who reported they were homeless found accommodation. Nobody knows what happened to the other 361.

The labour movement must campaign for enough money from the government to house the 4000 on the waiting list as well as the homeless. But the Council and the Labour Party should also campaign to take housing out of the hands of the Development Corporation. Then local tenants and homeless could have a say on what needs to be done for local housing.

Asbestos peril in Winsford

ON THE Crook Lane estate in Winsford, Cheshire, anger has erupted at the discovery that the removal of central heating systems by Vale Royal council is exposing tenants to contact with deadly asbestos.

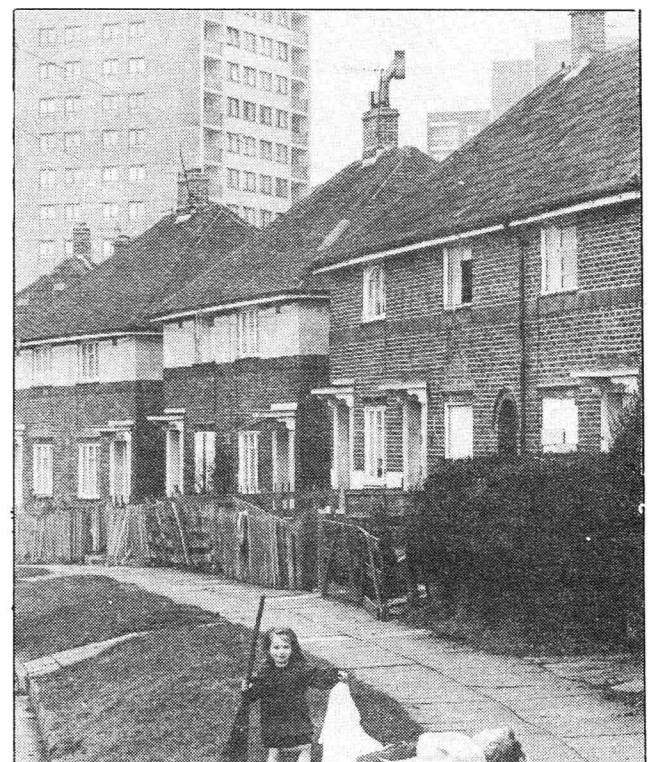
A *Militant* reporter spoke to Ken and Hilda Unwin, former leaders of the Crook Lane Tenants' Association who in 1983 launched a campaign against asbestos:

"At the start of that campaign we were very ignorant of the dangers of asbestos. We soon learned; we had to; our lives were at risk. But we won. We took on the Tory-controlled Vale Royal council and their bureaucrats and forced them to adopt a code of practice for the safe removal of asbestos. We also got a ban on the further use of asbestos in any property the council owns.

We won the battle, but we forgot one thing—you never trust the Tories. Now they're at it again. They're removing asbestos on Crook Lane and Wharton Gardens. Nothing is being said to the tenants; they don't even know that asbestos is being removed. The code of practice is not being used. The Tories don't care about our health, just getting the job done cheaply.

Tenants are at risk. There is no such thing as safe asbestos. The Tory council are guilty of criminal negligence. In one house a section of the asbestos flue pipe was found inside the ducting which warm air passes through on its way to heat the rooms in the house. It lay there undiscovered for two months.

When we contacted the senior environmental health officer, he claimed not to even know the work



Decaying council estate in Brighton.

had started.

We have organised a public meeting with speakers from other tenants' associations in the town. The tenants can only rely on themselves and try to link up with the local

authority trade unions.

We've beaten the Tory council once. With the backing of the tenants we'll beat them again and force them to use the agreed safety procedure. ♪

Spreading the message

"MILITANT TENDENCY claims everyone in Britain will see a copy of *Militant* newspaper during Conference week at the end of the month.

"It is part of a sales campaign aimed at doubling circulation by Christmas.

"Militant supporters selling the paper will knock on doors throughout the country as well as flooding into factories, trade union branches and student organisations". *Daily Mail*, 7 September.

Even the Tory *Mail* has caught on to our major sales campaign for Labour Party conference. The campaign will top the many sales successes, some of which are reprinted here, during 1987.

Already *Militant* sellers in Stevenage, where ten are up for expulsion from the Labour Party, have drawn up battle plans for each day of the campaign. They are organising a workplace sale each day, sales at YTS schemes, the local FE college, street and estate sales. They have a social and public meeting planned for the end of the campaign to attract the new buyers. And they have given a programme of all these activities to every seller.

If your area has not yet got organised, there is still just time to catch up.

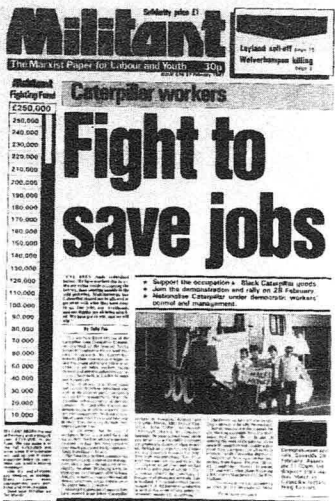
Phone in now to increase your order, and let us know of your success. But remember—the real success will be the number of new regular buyers and sellers that can be maintained in the weeks and months after. So, all out for the 50,000 sales during conference week!

Build Militant's finances.

"A POUND for a workers' paper." is the slogan the most committed workers and youth will respond to during the sales' campaign. All the extra selling activity should lead to a dramatic boost to our fighting fund.

Sellers in Oxford report

THE 50,000 CHALLENGE



February 1987. 180 sold on housing estate near Caterpillar factory in three days! 200 sold on solidarity demonstration.

that while leafleting the Cowley car plant, a worker who had already entered the factory gates returned to ask for a copy of *Militant*. He put his arm through the railings and pressed a pound coin into the seller's hand.

In Southampton three young female sellers raised £9 using the appeal sheets in the town centre. Make sure your area takes the appeal sheets and the rattling tins as well as the papers, out on every sale during this campaign

In work too, every *Militant* seller should ensure their workmates have the chance to read the paper, and ask them to show solidarity with our press by donating a minimum of a pound.

Workers have only ever been able to rely on their own papers, like *Militant*, to write the truth about the battles they are involved in, but they have also always had to fight to build a paper's finances. Take a leaf out of the strike struggles of the Minneapolis Teamsters led by American Marxists in 1934, and the essential role played by the strikers' paper—*The Organizer*.

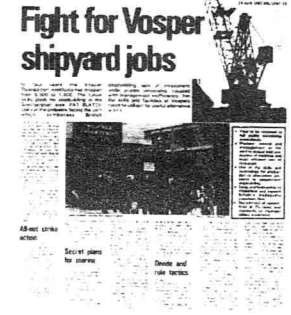
"The paper's circulation quickly leaped to 10,000 and it soon became self-financing. No price was set for single copies. People were simply asked to donate what they could. Salespeople carried sealed cans with a slot in which to receive contributions. These cans were frequently stuffed with dollar bills and as much as five dollars was paid for a single paper". *Teamster Rebellion*.

Left: March 1987. 340 sold during Basildon local referendum which rejects housing sell-off. 80 regular sales gained.

Below: March 1987. 300 sold in Killingworth (The North), 240 in Brighton (The South).



May 1987. 600 sold at CPSA Conference, hundreds more sold on picket lines and at offices.



April 1987. 29 sold outside Vosper's shipyard gates on first morning. Management broadcast a 'reply' to the article over the tannoy system.



April 1987. 301 papers sold on Bradford's Thorpe Edge Estate. One in four houses bought it.

Left and Right

President Neil

THEY ARE pulling out all the stops in Brighton to be ready for Labour Party Conference. At least the Ramada Hotel, where Neil Kinnock will be staying, is.

Skilled craftsmen are racing against time to finish an elegant hand-made wooden wall cabinet, fitted with a refrigerator, television, video recorder and bar.

The managing director of the company who are making it is rushing around to find an extra bottle of red wine to put in for Neil's benefit.

No doubt hotel staff are in a flurry to get the luxury rooms ready. They had better look smart, because appropriately after his election campaigning style, Neil is staying in the Presidential Suite.

Leading by example

THE POLICY of the Chinese Communist Party encourages businessmen and peasants to 'get rich'. And, so far as this dictum is concerned, the Party's officials certainly believe in leading by example.

For instance, a distillery in south-west China paid out 200,000 yuan (£34,000) in 'loans' to local dignitaries. A militia leader who took 55,000 yuan's worth of drink from the plant, pulled a gun on workers who suggested that he pay for it.

Central Committee member, Chen Yun, has denounced the Party's emphasis on profit, which he says, believes that "heaven will curse one who does not seek personal gain."

Chen's own son is unlikely to be among the damned. So is Party leader Deng Xiaoping's. They were both banned from being delegates to the coming Party congress because of their involvement in corruption.

What people want?

DAVID SULLIVAN, the proprietor of the *Sunday Sport*, the paper for people who need a dictionary to read the *Sun*, has bought a 60 per cent stake in the daily paper the *Star*.

Sunday Sport has zero news content and page after page of photographs of naked women. The *Star* is doing the same. "Say a couple of sets of nipples a day. We're not going to go mad," said the new editor. They were well over their target this week.

The owners say that getting seedier and seedier is giving people what they want. But a few months ago the *Star* asked its readers whether they wanted to keep their nude 'models'. The majority of people who answered said 'No'. The bosses obviously think there's too much money to be made from insulting women (and their readers' intelligence) to take any notice of this opinion poll.

Sellers didn't obstruct

BIRKENHEAD MILITANT supporters, arrested while selling papers in the precinct three days before the general election was called, have been acquitted by Wirral magistrates of obstruction.

No offence

Their defence lawyer informed the court that they had explained to the police "it was not an offence to sell newspapers and that they had had been doing so with permission from the council for five years". The magistrates were forced to accept that there was insufficient evidence that they were causing obstruction. The right to sell socialist



papers in the streets has been reaffirmed, and no doubt our sellers on the Wirral will be using this victory to full effect in the sales campaign.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales	789		4850
2 London	1384		9400
3 Eastern	419		3050
4 South East	322		2250
5 East Midlands	353		3250
6 Northern	494		4600
7 Southern	249		3100
8 Yorkshire	662		8450
9 Scotland West	197		3500
10 West Midlands	288		4850
11 Manchester	220		4050
12 Scotland East	101		2800
13 South West	72		1900
14 Merseyside	184		7500
15 National	1468		6950
Total	7,201		70,000

Militant

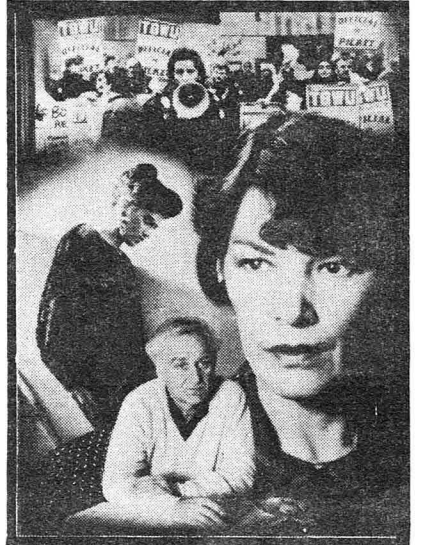
Price 10p

Inside

Interview with director Lezli-An Barrett—Pg II
 Review of the film—Pg II-III
 How to deal with sexual harassment—Pg III

Special supplement

Fight sexual harassment



BUSINESS AS USUAL

BUSINESS AS USUAL is far away from the fantasy escapist film generally on release. Its heroine is a working class woman at the centre of the 'Lady at Lord John' dispute in Liverpool over sexual harassment. The dispute lasted weeks and was the centre of attention for the whole of the Liverpool labour movement. It is not just a victory for one woman but provides a valuable lesson on how the labour and trade union movement should campaign against sexual harassment and for women workers.

AUDREY WHITE was the leading figure in the 'Lady at Lord John' dispute. The film *Business as Usual* is based on the story of her fight against sexual harassment, her fight to regain her job and her victory in this struggle. Audrey spoke to *Militant*:



I was sacked, dragged through the courts, nearly arrested, people were imprisoned, it was a thoroughly bitter dispute and newspaper reporters have come up to me and asked me silly questions like "Are you wearing a long frock to the premier?"

What do you feel about having a film made about you?

The film is not about me. It's about what happens to a lot of women, it happens every day. I was surprised at the number of people—men and women who'd suffered sexual harassment. On the picket line husbands, sons and daughters and women themselves told us of hundreds of incidences where women suffered harassment daily in some cases. Sexual harassment affected their health, it meant failing to get promotion or being transferred to lower grade jobs—even lost jobs.

Why does sexual harassment happen?

It happens because there is no protection in work. Women are not so well organised and people don't understand problems of sexual harassment. People blame themselves, think it's a joke, or a personal problem which they try and handle themselves. This dispute was one of the first cases of sexual harassment to be taken up by the trade union movement. It raised the issue in Liverpool in a serious way. Both men and women in Liverpool applauded the union for defending women shop workers.

Why is sexual harassment a trade union issue?

You would expect any worker to complain to the

union about the bad health conditions, it's the same for sexual harassment. I made a personal complaint to the person accused of harassment—he then sacked me and brought in the police against me. It was three members of my staff that were sexually harassed, they didn't know it was sexual harassment and made the complaint to me as their manager. I was sacked for just advising him his behaviour was unacceptable. This sort of behaviour is not acceptable anywhere. You stand more chance of being defended if you have the trade union movement to protect you.

Has the dispute made more women join the trade union?

Yes, whereas before women couldn't see the point of joining by themselves. They can look at

'Lady at Lord John' and see how a union can protect you even if there is only one member. The TGWU is recruiting thousands of part time workers—bar staff, cleaners, shop workers, homeworkers and getting a good response because wages and conditions are getting worse and worse under this Tory government.

How can the TGWU help women that are poorly organised?

It is not enough to pay the union dues weekly. Women have to be encouraged to become active. They need facilities, regular branch meetings in work time, creche facilities, branch meetings that are relevant. Often branch meetings don't mean anything and women's time is precious. Issues like sexual harassment should be dis-

cussed in unions before it becomes a problem, so that trade unionists are aware of the issues. Sexual harassment can happen between trade union members and it must be clear that it won't be tolerated and the union will discipline the harassers themselves. But to avoid this arising meetings should be held on topics such as sexual harassment.

Is the film true to life?

Glenda Jackson plays me and John Thaw plays my husband. Obviously some of the story is quite different, but whole scenes are exactly as they happened. It was a bitter dispute, yet it was a great victory. The dispute took place in 1983, during the General Election campaign. We were under constant threat of arrest because of the laws they used against us. Legally I was the only per-

son allowed to picket. I would never have won the dispute if I had obeyed the law. We picketed daily and petitioned the people of Liverpool. MPs and councillors joined the picket line and police hesitated to arrest them.

Was anybody arrested?

Yes, eight pickets on a quiet Saturday afternoon at 4pm. Seven men and one young school girl were arrested for obstruction and were held until 10 pm and then only released after pressure from MPs Terry Fields and Bob Parry. The young girl was very upset as she had been subjected to a strip search with the cell door open. Of the 17 arrests for obstruction that day which included street traders and pickets only one was a woman and she was the only person strip

sought. The outcome was that the police had to pay costs and complaints were made against the police and one policeman was disciplined.

Why is the film called *Business as Usual*?

Because the dispute was a test case for Tebbit's laws on picketing. The TGWU General Secretary had stated at our annual conference that as far as Tebbit's laws were concerned our union would do business as usual. And when I was taken to the High Court in London the barrister turned to us and said 'Business as usual' which meant we carried on our trade union activity of picketing and ignoring the courts, which is how I got my job back. We also organised pickets outside the Manchester and London branches of 'Lady

Continued



Women in the picture

BUSINESS AS USUAL is opening in the US, western Europe and Australia as well as Ireland. It was entered as the British candidate in the Montreal film festival. *Militant* interviewed the director of the film, Lezli-An Barrett.

What gave you the idea of making the film in the first place?

When I set out to make the film, I had to look for a vacuum in the market. Most films are about the bourgeois at play, nothing reflecting real life in Britain. I wanted to appeal to a mass, working class audience with a commercial film. I also wanted to put forward a positive image of working class people. Audrey's case was most definitely a positive image amongst the gloom and doom of Mrs Thatcher's re-election in 1983.

I'd read about Audrey White's case in 1983 in the *Militant* and the *Guardian*. Sexual harassment is an issue I've experienced in my own life along with definite

discrimination against women. I think I'm the only female feature director in Britain.

I wanted to create a positive example people would follow themselves. As well as supporting the trade union movement, it's also a lesson for it because sexual harassment hasn't been properly dealt with. It has a lot of lessons.

I'm not a feminist and don't believe in separate politics. In Audrey's case the pickets were mostly men, ex-dockers and construction workers organised in the TGWU unemployed branch.

Why was the film set in Liverpool?

Partly as a homage to the women who won the dispute but also Liverpool has a special place in politics. Things are not just black and white and I wanted to break down stereotypes in the film.

While I was in Liverpool doing research with Audrey and others, I came across the

history of the Tate and Lyle closure and interviewed some of the workers. After long negotiations and having faith in the company they were thrown on the stones. Kieron (the husband) had been a trade unionist, but failed and become right wing and sour and in many ways a broken man. This was included to give a wider, more complex view of society.

Some reviews have said or hinted that your portrayal of *Militant* is over-sympathetic.

I think the film is extremely objective. Many journalists probably just take their own views from other journalists—it's like Chinese whispers. They are not very likely to mix with ordinary people. Have they been to Liverpool? We did think of making up a different name for the paper but didn't see any point—why not be true to life? We could have made special banners in our Art department for the Liverpool Council rally, but the YS (Labour Party

Young Socialists) and trade unions brought their own.

What support did you get from trade unions in making the film?

Initially they agreed to put up some money. I approached the TGWU because they come off really well in the movie as I'd heard they invest their pension funds in the stock market. They promised £150,000 and it was being supported by a number of other unions. But Channel 4, the main financial support, pulled out.

What are you intending to do next?

I'll be working on a gangster film set in South London, then the story of my grandmother which is set against the background of the Spanish Civil War. Then I'm hoping to make a film probably called AWL (Absent without leave), based on fact about an unemployed man who joins the army in America and is sent to deal with a revolt in South America.

Fight sexual harassment

Continued from Pg 1



at Lord John' **Have the press treated you fairly?**

During the dispute, because it took place in the main street of Liverpool and had immense support, the press covered the dispute quite well, although they never attempted to explain about sexual harassment. But now the film is made I'm disgusted at the attitude of some reporters who have spoken to me.

I was sacked, dragged through the courts, nearly arrested, people were imprisoned, it was a thoroughly bitter dispute and newspaper reporters have come up to me and asked me silly questions like 'Are you wearing a long frock to the premier?' (a *Liverpool Echo* reporter). Nearly every single paper from the *Daily Express* to the *Liverpool Echo* wanted photos of me and the baby and wanted comments from me regarding the glamour and my impressions of having a movie made about me. Whereas I don't feel like that at all.

I helped write the script originally as a propaganda movie, sponsored by the unions for Channel 4, to explain the issue of sexual harassment to help other women. Now Cannon are using it to make money as with any other venture. While I welcome the film it doesn't change my life, but it might show other women in real life you can fight and win and the trade union movement does protect its women members.



Audrey White speaking at rally against low pay in Manchester.

Photo: Dave Sinclair



The police arrest a Young Socialist member on the picket line in the film.

Photo: Cannon Film Distributors.

Seri

BUSINESS AS Usual now on general release celebrates the marvellous victory achieved in the 'Lady at Lord John' dispute against sexual harassment in Liverpool in 1983. Although many of the best moments of the film are based on actual incidents during the strike, the film is not a documentary and therefore doesn't reflect the original dispute in exact detail.

For example, Audrey, the woman whose stand was at the centre of the dispute, had a background of involvement in the labour movement. Babs, played by Glenda Jackson, isn't directly involved even though other members of her family are. In the beginning she displays all the hesitancy and doubts of many women workers new to struggle but then demonstrates the leaps in consciousness and the growing confidence and tenacity of women workers once they decide to make a fight of it. All sorts of personal and practical difficulties

Glenda Jackson



Left to right: Lezli-An Barrett, Glenda Jackson, Audrey White.



Babs speaking at a rally.

Photo: Cannon Film Distributors.

ous business

re accommodated. One scene shows Babs making household arrangements, then riding off in an ancient bubble car to the childminder's, to drop off the eldest son for a 'Militant' paper sale.

Babs' husband, Kieron (John Haw) has been defeated in a fight against the closure of his own workplace and is sceptical of his wife's struggle, particularly as topworkers seem to have little industrial muscle.

The film also contrasts very sharply the glamorisation and exploitation of women in the interests of profit for the fashion trade with the real lives of women workers. This is summed up in the reopening of the boutique after refurbishment. The area manager is present, the shop assistants are dressed in the fashions they are to sell instead of their usual uniforms and bathing beauties are ready to dispense champagne to potential customers. The blinds are raised to reveal the

picket line!

The film portrays the role played by different sections of the labour movement. The unemployed branch of the TGWU involve themselves in the picketing. Relations with the full time official become strained as he offers to call off the picket before a definite agreement is reached. The members oppose this and remind the official that their subs pay his wages and they make the decisions. He pursues their more successful strategy with an air of disapproving resignation.

In fact the film is an excellent recruiting weapon for the TGWU especially in the link up campaign aimed at part time, unorganised workers.

Militant gave regular coverage to the dispute and its supporters played a key role in the success of the struggle. Considering the usual media attempts to ignore the influence of the *Militant*, it is refreshing therefore to see that

the main encouragement Babs receives is from her son, Stevie, a *Militant* supporter. The LPYS figures prominently on the picket line with its posters and Thatcher mask.

The *Militant* is shown being sold throughout the film and the dispute itself is set against the background of the city-wide struggle of the council. Babs speaks on her dispute at a rally alongside one of the now disqualified 47 Labour councillors. Many films and TV series have been set in Liverpool. But *Business as Usual* is different in that it stresses collective action, class solidarity and militant struggle as the only way forward from the exploitation and degradation which capitalism represents. Most of all it depicts a victory, rich in lessons for all the working class, and which deserves to be celebrated in this film which will undoubtedly become a classic in the labour movement.

Stopping the abuse

MILITANT HERE reprints extracts from an article by Lesley Holt published at the time of the dispute.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention, normally in the workplace and usually by men in a superior position. It can range from verbal comments to unwelcome physical attention, from pinching to rape.

It creates a hostile, intimidating atmosphere for women workers, which can in some cases undermine health and confidence and even force women to leave their jobs. Cases have emerged where women have actually had nervous breakdowns as a result of sexual harassment, as well as losing their jobs.

Sexual harassment is associated with poor working conditions and it is one of the hardest to combat because it appears to involve personal relationships. In fact, it has nothing to do with a man trying to establish a relationship, but is an attempt to assert his authority.

It is a product of society's attitude that women are only a temporary workforce and that women's real role in society is only in relation to men and that men can treat women as goods and chattels in the home and at work, an attitude that goes back as long as private property has existed, from slavery to capitalism.

The 'Lady at Lord John' dispute helped a lot of men both in the unions and outside to realise that sexual harassment is a class matter and cannot be fought by individual women. Giving a boss a slap in the face for being abusive doesn't solve the issue if your job is at stake.

Class issue

The picket outside the shop in the resulting dispute brought men and women together on a trade union and class issue. The picket actively involved men trade unionists and the petition also received the support of many men. There were some quite amusing incidents, such as one bloke whose wife went into the shop while he stood outside refusing to cross the picket line.

The 'Lady at Lord John' dispute has now inspired other workers in the area to become unionised and approaches have been made to the union.

Trade union action in a case such as this is vital. Individual women or indeed any trade union member cannot and should not be left to fight alone. We cannot have illusions in the law or in management. This is the weakness of a recent pamphlet produced by the National Council for Civil Liberties on this issue. Although the NCCL have played a good role in highlighting sexual harassment at work, their suggestions offer no real solution. They suggest things such as individual

retaliation. But most women would either be too embarrassed or would not be prepared to put their jobs at risk.

Other suggestions from the NCCL include agreements where management actually police sexual harassment. They rely on the goodwill of management. But in many cases sexual harassment actually comes from management.

Strong TU action

Goodwill from management can also be withdrawn at any time, unless backed by strong trade union organisation and strong action.

Tribunals as a means of sorting cases out are usually ineffective. As in many cases, eg equal pay or unfair dismissal, they rarely result in a woman getting her job back and in general they're weighted against trade unionists anyway.

In the case of Audrey White, not only did the management not want to know, but she has no right to go to a tribunal. Even if you can go to a tribunal, it means putting up with harassment for twelve months. Even where cases are won often it only results in compensation and not re-employment.

Neither can we have any illusions in the law. The police removed Audrey from the shop when she was dismissed and the company tried to use the law to stop trade union action. This shows that we can have no faith in legislation alone, unless backed up by trade union action.

The pickets were served with an injunction, accusing them of molesting and conspiring to do damage under Prior's Act. But because of the public pressure that had built up over the court action, the right to picket was actually endorsed.

The only further weapon management could have used would have been the Tebbit law, to prevent further action. But then the repercussions would have been to take on the whole trade union movement. Support, such as a £100 donation from the Merseyside dockers, was already forthcoming.

Despite all these obstacles the complete victory of the dispute, with the re-employment of Audrey with back pay and even a discount for union members was won. It was won by Audrey being in the union and secondly by the stand of the members of the branch.

This dispute has not only been an education to the pickets and to the trade union movement but also to the over four million unorganised shop and office workers. The trade unions have a vital role to play in defending women's rights at least in the workplace.

Women at work who are faced with low pay, abusive treatment or discrimination in promotion can only be defended by the trade union movement.

'I froze in my seat'

I WAS about eighteen and had been with the company for only six months. A customer rang up to say that he urgently required a small sample of some material. As the company was not far away, I promised that I would get the sample to him somehow. Unfortunately, the only person in the office with a car was the Managing Director, and after some persuasion he said he would take the sample down. To my surprise, he asked me to go with him.

"My boss had had a drink and no sooner had we driven around the corner than he put his hand on my knee. I froze in my seat and pushed his hand away, after which he asked me if I would like him to make love to me. I said "No thank you." I was desperately trying to change the subject until we reached the firm. The return journey was made in silence. It seems almost laughable now, but at the time was very frightening."

Do the business

This film shows the practical job that every marxist does in their day to day activity and the success possible when the ideas of marxism are translated into action. For once the real role of *Militant* supporters is shown instead of the usual slanders.

This means we should make sure that *Militant* is available to everyone going to see the film. We print here some of the dates and venues of the film, but check in the local papers to see when it is showing in your neighbourhood. Then arrange for sales before and after each showing. This way we can reach all the potential new readers enthused by the film.

Why not combine a trip to the pictures with a well organised sales drive to boost sales and support for *Militant*?

From 11 September London: Cannon Haymarket, Cannon Tottenham Court Rd, Cannon Fulham Rd, Swiss Centre Leicester Square
 Liverpool: Cannon Lime St.
 Outside London: 26 October Cinema City Norwich; 11 November Metro Cinema Derby; 13 November Chapter Cinema Cardiff; 22 November Corner House Manchester.

What we stand for

★ Trade union leaders must use the full force of the union's strength to ensure that men and women have equal conditions and benefits.

★ Equal pay for work of equal value.

★ Reduction of the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay, to create additional jobs and as a first step towards the dramatic improvement of working conditions.

★ Rates of part-time pay to be pro rata, as a minimum, with full time without any reduction of part-timers' hours.

★ For casual and temporary jobs to be made permanent where they in reality represent permanent positions.

★ Opposition to any attempts to lift the restrictions on the hours women may work, for example to Sunday trading or night-shift exemptions.

★ A universal maternity grant which reflects the material cost of pregnancy and childbirth.

★ Provision of childcare and nursery education by local authorities, combined with workplace creches—which must be under trade union control to ensure high standards.

★ Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service etc.

★ A minimum wage of £120 a week tied to the cost of living for all, including sick and disabled people.

★ A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.

★ Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 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.

Get active! Get organised!

THE SEXUAL harassment depicted in *Business as Usual* represents just one aspect of the degrading treatment of working class women.

In the last few years the Tories have attacked the living and working conditions of the whole working class, especially women. The cuts in the NHS along with privatisation have deprived women of jobs and have cut the pay and conditions of the rest. This has endangered the health and well being of thousands of women.

In spite of the technology available, over 17,000 women die needlessly every year of either breast or cervical cancer because of the lack of adequate screening and recall facilities.

The decline of council house buildings and spiralling prices for private houses and flats have condemned many families to substandard housing, bed and breakfast accommodation and even homelessness. Inevitably women, who still carry most of the burden of housework and childcare, suffer especially in these conditions.

Low paid

During the General Election the Tories boasted on their 'bulldog' poster "Over one million new jobs created since 1983—more than the rest of the European Community put together." They failed to mention Britain had also lost as many jobs as the rest of the EC put together—1.8 million compared with 1.7 million in the EC. But they also concealed the type of new jobs being created. They were almost all part-time, low-paid jobs often limited to temporary contracts. Part-time workers are now one fifth of the total workforce. Such jobs avoid protective legislation and other rights and benefits and have created an insecure and superexploited workforce.

Six million workers now earn less than £115 a week—the poverty level for Europe. Over 50 per cent of part-timers earn less than £1.50 per hour. Maternity rights have been cut and the Tories are now threatening to end protection against nightworking for women. This will put the physical safety of women travelling to and from work at risk and undermine their health especially those with young children who will not be able to find time for rest and relaxation during the day. These are the 'Victorian values' Thatcher so much admires—the

values of the sweatshop and the workhouse.

It is little wonder therefore that recent surveys have shown a move to the left amongst working class women. Amongst the unemployed and the poorest section of workers, the swing amongst women from the Tories to Labour was 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. Amongst women trade unionists it was 7 per cent compared with 1 per cent amongst men.

In drawing more women into the workforce, the bosses hoped they would be docile and submissive. But in the last few years, women workers and working class women generally have fought against Tory attacks in strikes for equal pay; against cuts in piece rates and cuts in public spending; against declining working conditions, pay and services provided to claimants in the DHSS. During the miners' strike we saw the mobilisation of whole communities where women played a prominent role.

However, many women workers in sweatshops and particularly fighting privatisation, have been left isolated as trade union leaders have failed to use the power of the movement to come to their assistance. All the modern techniques and images in the world won't attract women workers unless they are used to promote fighting policies to improve the lives of women and are backed up by a leadership prepared to carry

them out.

The struggle for a national minimum wage of £120 with pro-rata payments for part-timers, full rights and benefits for all workers, good, flexible childcare facilities etc. would attract thousands of currently unorganised women into the trade unions and encourage many thousands of those already in the unions to participate more actively.

Part-time workers are now one fifth of the total workforce

The small upturn in the economy which many workers will not have noticed, is now coming to an end. Another crisis looms around the corner. The days of post-war boom, of a gradual improvement in living standards, are gone for ever. Many women who are struggling to bring up children and give them a good start in life can see the hopeless future which now confronts the youth.

But we also have to cast our minds back to the post-war boom and recognise it for what it was. Although living standards did rise, women were still low paid, had to go on strike to get equal pay, faced totally inadequate nursery and other childcare provision and still carried the enormous burden of

housework!

It is completely unrealistic, particularly considering the record of the bosses in relation to women, to suggest there should be cooperation between bosses and workers to put capitalism back on its feet. Such 'cooperation' always ends up with workers making sacrifices and bosses making larger profits.

Why in any case cooperate with the very people whose system and policies have caused the crisis and the problems now confronting the working class in the first place?

Far from being 'old-fashioned' or 'utopian' the policies of *Militant* provide the only possibility of defending the rights of all workers now, as the struggle in Liverpool and the film itself clearly show. But such struggles have to be part of the fight to completely transform society along socialist lines where production would be for need not profit.

Working class women should join with *Militant* to defend themselves, to put an end to the system which keeps millions in poverty and which also produces sexual harassment and violence against women.

The nationalisation of the 200 monopolies and financial institutions under workers' control and management would give us control to plan the resources needed to end unemployment and poverty, to massively expand the NHS, childcare and other facilities and to provide good homes for everyone.



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**A Charter for
Women
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Argentinian workers vote for struggle

A NEW period has been opened up in Argentina with the partial general elections of 6 September.

A mood of deep opposition had built up to the attacks on living standards by President Alfonsín's Radical Party. The media myth that Alfonsín represented democracy and progress has been shattered.

The government's Austral Plan to boost the economy by austerity measures has failed, leaving behind closed factories and lower wages. Purchasing power has fallen by 13 to 60 per cent, varying from sector to sector, over the last four years.

Three million, out of a population of 30 million, are unemployed or underemployed. A new upsurge of inflation has started, with prices rising by 14 per cent in August—an annual

From a correspondent in Buenos Aires

rate approaching 200 per cent.

Neither the Radical Party nor the opposition Peronist party, the traditional mass party of the Argentinian working class, put forward clear proposals during the election campaign to solve these problems. Both concentrated on projecting an 'image'.

The Radicals appealed to the 'fear for democracy' factor: "If we don't win democracy will be threatened, because every time the Peronists get close to power there is destabilisation".

The Peronist leadership responded by presenting themselves

as 'responsible', as 'serious democrats', not threatening the system. They avoided organising mass meetings to politicise the campaign.

But behind the facade the mood was different. The social tensions were made clear in violent clashes between Radical and Peronist supporters.

Killed

Two youths were killed—one, a human rights activist, by the escorts of an army officer standing in the remote Tucuman area; the other, a Young Peronist, while spray-painting in Buenos Aires province. Several others were wounded.

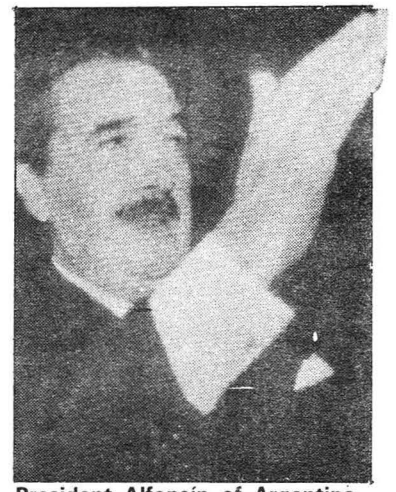
Overall, the Peronists received 41.5 per cent of the vote for state governors, mayors, and a number

of congress and senate seats. The Radicals were down to 37.3 per cent. What a change from 1983, when they received 52 per cent!

The election was followed by the cabinet's resignation and a mood of uncertainty as to the composition of the new government. With the Radicals in an extremely weak position, the collaboration of Peronists in the government is being suggested.

Yet workers are seeing the Peronists' victory as a victory for themselves. As a veteran Peronist told me: "Now we will be able to struggle better".

The Peronist leaders will not represent the interests of the workers. The Peronist 'Renovators' who have been elected are in the main ex-Ministers of Isabel Peron (1973-76), bureaucrats



President Alfonsín of Argentina.

and accomplices of the 1976-83 dictatorship. Their collaboration with the capitalist leaders can only lead to defeats.

But history has taught the new generation of activists a number of lessons. With thousands coming onto the streets to celebrate the Peronists' advance, one of the slogans was "Construir la patria socialista" (Build the socialist nation).

The revolution is flexing its muscles, but before it can destroy capitalism it must free itself from the net of the right-wing Peronists' policies, which hamper its every move.

Only workers' movement can re-unite Germany

EAST GERMAN leader Erich Honecker's visit to West Germany marks a further step in Russian leader Gorbachev's efforts to ease relations with western imperialism, to increase trade and limit the huge burden of Russian military spending. Previously, Moscow had vetoed such a trip.

But Honecker's visit, his nostalgic reception in his old home town of Neunkirchen and his roots in the local labour movement help to highlight questions which go beyond the manoeuvres of the Stalinist leadership.

What lay behind the partition of Germany in 1945-49? What is the mood of workers and youth on the east of the Berlin Wall (built by Honecker)?

In this article, a German correspondent explains the post-war struggles of German workers, pointing the way to future struggles that will end the rule of capitalism as well as Stalinism, and lay the foundations for a united socialist Germany.

HITLER'S DEFEAT in 1945 left German capitalism—which had put the Nazis in power—discredited and led to a workers' movement of insurrectionary proportions.

Before the Allied armies arrived, the workers had seized the factories and were organised in "Antifas" (anti-fascist committees). The 'liberating' armies were to quell these organisations in both the Soviet and capitalist military zones.

The mood of the German workers infected US troops. Massive demonstrations were organised by US soldiers demanding to be sent home.

While US imperialism toyed with the idea of de-industrialising Germany, the Communist Party (KPD) had mass support in both zones. But Stalin had no policy of international struggle against capitalism. All his policies were dictated by the national interests of the ruling Russian bureaucracy.

'Democratic'

Up to 1947 Stalin, hoping to continue his wartime alliance with the imperialist powers, put forward the idea of a 'democratic' (united capitalist) Germany. The KPD leaders, returning from exile in Moscow, had strict orders: private property was inviolate. Since the tasks of the day were purely 'democratic', anyone who raised socialist slogans was to be arrested.

Thousands of Socialists and Communists were imprisoned along with Nazis in Buchenwald concentra-



Gorbachev greets Honecker. (Right) Peace demo in East Germany.

tion camp in 1945-47; 70,000 died there.

In the 'Soviet' zone, political parties were reorganised from above, and the KPD and SPD (social-democrats) were merged into the Stalinist-controlled SED ("Socialist Unity Party").

The 'Soviet' administration began by pillaging East Germany and shipping industrial equipment to the USSR. But as the 'cold war' with US imperialism developed, and the possibility of reuniting Germany faded, Stalin realised that industry would have to be developed in the east.

By 1947, with capitalism shattered, most industry in the 'Soviet' zone had been nationalised. Under the guns of the Red Army a regime similar to that in Stalin's Russia was being created—based on state control of the economy, but with power in the hands of a bureaucratic elite, guided

by the Soviet administration.

The western Allies now understood that de-industrialisation in the West would make the East more attractive to workers. From this point massive US aid was pumped into the Western sector.

Barrier

In 1949 the Western powers proclaimed the Federal Republic of Germany and the 'Soviet' regime followed suit by proclaiming the German Democratic Republic in the East.

The vested interests of Stalinist and capitalist rule form an absolute barrier to reunification. Only the workers' movement, returning to its traditions of united struggle, on the common programme of workers' democracy, can build a united Germany ruled by the working people.



East Germans interviewed

A MILITANT reporter spoke to young East German workers.

What does the FDGB (official trade unions) do to defend your interests?

The FDGB is a stooge organisation of the Party. It is only there to implement the (economic) plan. People don't speak out because they are scared, but we can't possibly fulfill the plan.

Have there been strikes?

Yes, but you can only find out details from those directly involved. All the organisers are sent straight to jail, or else they are forced to leave the West.

Are you told anything about the Stalin era?

We know about it from West German TV, but in the DDR they portray it as if first there was Lenin and then Gorbachev.

Do you follow international struggles of the workers?

I hate Thatcher, and I was completely behind the British miners. But I could not understand why they lost.

Since Solidarity we are not allowed to travel to Poland except on organised tours. Solidarity was powerful, they had the power, but they did not have a programme or strategy to win. That was what was needed.

How freely can you discuss politics?

We learn to lie at an early age, when we learn to speak differently at school and at home. We can't discuss political issues openly. If you do you will be arrested.

What are some of the problems in the country?

The Party said all the grain must be harvested on a certain day, but they do not consult the farm-workers. The workers refused to harvest because it was the wrong time. The Party is making

out that we are on the verge of a microchip revolution. How can they use computers efficiently if they can't bring in the harvest?

We produce many high-quality goods, yet our shops are full of low-quality goods. Everything of quality is exported to the West. We have to wait 13 years for a car, and ten years for a telephone, if you have good reason to have one!

Officially we have no inflation, but household goods have gone up in price—lights have doubled in price in recent years.

What is the mood of the youth?

The youngest kids are becoming much more aggressive. They won't keep their tongues still, they won't respect officials.

We, the youth, will start the revolution. The older workers are more scared, but they will follow us.

Mussolini—the untold story

The Mussolini family at home; mother mending shirts; father running downstairs with his trousers half on to spread the news of his daughter's engagement; the family singing around the piano. These are the enduring images of the TV 'Blockbuster' *Mussolini—the untold story*.

The soap-opera presentation glosses over all the real issues which are presented by the rise of fascism in Italy in 1922. The real story remains untold.

The TV programme even begins after the march on Rome and thus avoids the key question. For Marxists this is not "why did Mussolini shave his hair off?" but "why was he permitted to seize power and destroy the organisations of the working class?"

The real 'untold story' begins in 1920 when the movement of the working class had reached such a stage that widespread seizures of factories and industries took place.

Leon Trotsky commented that at this stage "the rule of the working

class was an actual fact; all that was lacking was to organise it and draw from it all the necessary conclusions". The Italian socialist party leaders, the equivalents of the New Realists in the British labour movement today, took fright at the enormous power of the workers' movement and by September the advance came to a standstill.

Squadristi

It was only after this opportunity had been missed that the fascists staged their first major demonstration in Bologna by firing on the newly-elected socialist councillors and sending the squadristi into the rural areas in vehicles provided by big landowners. (The TV programme contained the word 'squadristi' once and no account of the activities of these murder squads was given.)

Having held back the workers' movement and made the first fascist actions possible, the Italian 'new realists' sought to win public opinion against the fascists by insisting that the workers take no 'illegal' action to defend themselves.



In this they had the sympathy of Citrine who praised the similar inactivity of the German labour leaders in 1933 on the grounds that calling a general strike against Hitler "might have led to violence"!

The TV programme dealt briefly but effectively with the final crushing of the socialist party and the burning of the presses of workers' newspapers but it made no attempt to explain Mussolini's actions except

in terms of his personal preferences.

In reality, the fascists organised elements of the middle class and the most backward elements of the unorganised workers into gangs financed generously by big business. They were only able to do this because these layers in society had lost confidence in the ability of the organisations of the working class to change society.

Personalised

Mussolini acquired such personal power, not because of some peculiarity of his personality but because of the social crisis which enabled him to eliminate all political opposition, all criticism of his actions and create the myth of his 'magical' leadership.

Any attempt to explain the events of the twentieth century by reference to the personalities of Mussolini, Hitler or Franco is doomed to produce the kind of trivial portrayal which wastes the efforts and talents of actors and actresses.

By Derek McMillan

Jobs to go in Lambeth

Dear Comrades, "There is no alternative but to make cuts" has been the argument of Lambeth council leader, Linda Bellos, at recent party meetings. Forgetting the stand of the surcharged Labour councillors and their manifesto commitment to no cuts in jobs and services, the right wing leadership are now preparing to make attacks on the living standards of local people. Rents are to go up, service charges are to go up, and there is to be a recruitment freeze to reduce the number of council employees by 1,000.

While Bellos is aiming for 'honest and open cuts' the political pygmies of the Lambeth Labour Coordinating Committee are arguing that the cuts should be neatly packaged—just like Labour's disastrous election campaign. In effect they are saying that council workers should be sent glossy redundancy notices.

However, at the time of writing the council trade unions and left councillors have made it clear that they are not prepared to accept any cuts in jobs and services, and already NALGO have had a one day strike to fill the 600 vacancies that now exist in the clerical departments.

Yours fraternally
Steve Nally
Vauxhall Labour Party

TUC's cheap ideas

Dear Comrades, I have just read an article in the *Daily Mirror* concerning the TUC conference. The article is made up of comments from various union leaders on what they see the role of unions to be in the future.

Norman Willis sees the first priority of unions to "set up facilities for cheap insurance, discount holidays, car breakdowns, mortgages, and our own banking and finance services, including TUC credit cards..."

Alan Tuffin, postal workers' leader remarked that a taxi-driver had told him that trade unions were finished and Tuffin himself felt that the TUC General Council had to realise that millions of people felt the same way.

Bill Jordan of the AEU felt that "union recognition deals with 'no strike' clauses are an integral part of new realism. They are a priority in saving jobs".

"No strike" agreements simply make it easier if anything for employers to get rid of workers as the need arises.

What is most disturbing of all about 'new realism' is the lack of any concern for the unemployed, low-paid workers or the millions of people struggling to survive under this government.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough

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Militant meetings

○ *Southampton* Marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7 Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Creche provided. Thursdays 7.30pm. Tel 786879 for details.

○ *Chorlton* every Thursday, The Southern Hotel, Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton. 8.30pm.

○ *Blackburn* every Wednesday. The Trades Club, 8.30pm.

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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Sickness of the NHS

Dear Comrades,

Last week I was unfortunate enough to have to go into hospital for a few days. From the time I got there all the talk from nurses and patients was about cuts. When I arrived I had to do without pillow-cases for a day because the ward had none. When I did get them they were paper ones. Several patients had to make do with paper sheets. When one patient spilt his medicine nurses had to scour the hospital for a clean sheet.

One of the surgeons was complaining that at least 30 surgical beds had been lost this year due to cuts at the hospital. Three wards had closed since Christmas.

I settled down to reading issue 862 of *Militant*. Brilliant! Cuts in the ambulance service, an article by Tim Harris. Alan in the next bed said "Is that the *Militant* you're reading? My daughter gets me that to read. It's a great paper". It turned out he was a retired ambulanceman. He said when he was a controller they had an emergency response time of six minutes to anywhere in Sunderland. Now he said, you might have to wait half an hour or more.

The doctor came round to look over his patients. Ted, who'd had his leg amputated was told he'd recovered so well he'd be out in a week or two. Ted said 'what about an artificial limb?' The doctor said that would be months yet...

From a reader in Berkshire

Dear Comrades,

The Yorkshire Evening Post carried a report of the inquest into the death of a 15 year old school boy following an operation in Fulford Grange Private Hospital, Rawdon.

Two things stand out from the inquest. Firstly, the anaesthetist in charge of the operation (who was moonlighting from St James) admitted it could have been five minutes before he noticed the tube and junction had parted.

Dear Comrades,

So the National Health Service is 'safe' under the Thatcher government. As someone who works 2.5 hours a day in a NHS hospital washing dishes (because postman's pay is not the most wonderful pay in the world) I see some of the cuts that Thatcher has made.

The beds are very rarely all full and the nurses are probably glad as they are run off their feet because of lack of staff.

Welsh camp success

Dear Comrades,

After the tradition of 12 years, the South Wales annual summer camp was held in the Gower peninsula.

The theme of this year's camp was international events with discussions on Britain, South Africa, Latin America, the Indian sub-continent and an analysis of world perspectives.

Yet the more modern equipment generally used in the NHS has a warning device for these situations.

Secondly the private hospital didn't have the facilities to deal with operations going wrong but had to rely on the NHS to provide these.

So beware of private medicine, it can seriously damage your health.

Yours fraternally
Alan Horne
Leicestershire

Waiting to see specialists also means long waits. Liz, my wife, who suffers from arthritis has been told that it could be between 12 and 15 months before she could be seen. Her doctor, shocked by this has arranged for her to see a specialist in Plymouth (20 miles away), but this could still be weeks or months away.

Yours fraternally
Andy Scott
SE Cornwall
Labour Party

All those who were able to attend booked for the 1988 camp and vowed to return next year.

As one visitor put it "where else could a family have such an enjoyable holiday in such surroundings for the cost of a day trip to Blackpool?"

Yours fraternally
Ian McDonald

Deadly profits

Environment
emergency



ACID RAIN, the destruction of the ozone layer and other 'environmental' problems are not accidents of nature nor are they unavoidable. They are the product of a divided society—the blind rush for profits under capitalism or the blind bureaucracy under Stalinism. Long after

damning evidence of dangerous chemicals or practices has been proved, production continues. Industrial lobbies are set up to pressure governments and firms by-pass legislation by moving production. Further evidence is concealed. The result is that millions of workers' lives are at risk.

The hole in the sky

THIS WEEK an international conference will sign the first treaty controlling the production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). At first sight this seems very remote from working class life.

But it could affect all of us. At present the dangerous effects of the sun's rays are moderated by a protective layer of ozone at a height of between 10 and 30 kilometres in the atmosphere. Much of the potentially deadly ultra violet radiation is absorbed by this gas, stopping it reaching the earth's surface.

However CFCs have been shown to release chlorine into the upper stratosphere, which destroys ozone and dilutes the protective cover of the layer. The concentration of ozone in the atmosphere is known to vary according to season, movements in the atmosphere and latitude. But more fundamental changes have been noticed in recent years.

Worldwide there has been an estimated 3 per cent decline in the ozone layer over the past few years. But more alarming has been the discovery since 1982, of a 'hole' in it, over Antarctica, during the spring.

Reductions of up to 50 per cent have been discovered by scientists. More recently another 'hole' has been found over Spitzbergen in the north Atlantic.

Skin cancers

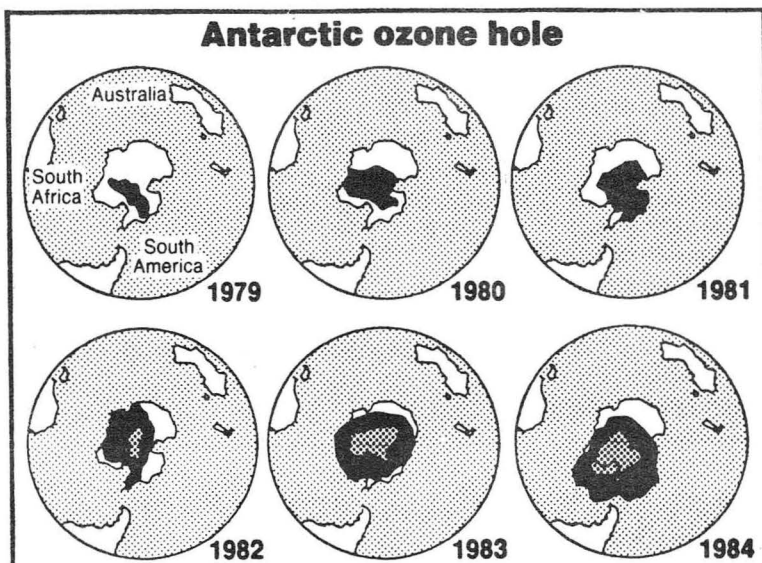
The US Environmental Protection Agency claims that the present rate of depletion would result in 40 million skin cancers and 12 million cataracts in the US alone over the next 90 years. On top of that would come climatic changes, the destruction of marine organisms, reduction of crop yields, the weakening of plastics etc.

The main culprit, the CFCs, are used in aerosol sprays, refrigerator insulation, furniture foam, fast food packaging, and as a cleaning material for electronic circuit boards.

Production of the commonest, known as CFC 12, increased from virtually nothing in 1940 to 450,000 tonnes in 1974. As a whole these gases are being put into the atmosphere six times faster than chemical reactions are destroying them, so not surprisingly the ozone has suffered. The chemicals can stay in the atmosphere for hundreds of years.

But why has nothing been done sooner? As long ago as 1976 a report from the Department of the Environment said that if emissions of CFCs remained the same there would be an 11 to 16 per cent ozone reduction.

Capitalist manufacturers tend to dispute the figures or blame the problem on other factors such as volcanoes. When chemical bosses have faced popular protests over health and safety in the richer western countries, they often head for the third world where desperate poverty can silence health doubts. Countries like India and South Korea have not been involved in discussions



The darkened areas show how the ozone 'hole' has grown year by year.



Demonstrators protest at lead pollution but the slogan could refer to acid rain or CFCs.

about reducing CFC production.

Nothing at all was done in Britain either. The government hint that a reduction of 20 per cent might be possible. In America massive pressure resulted in a ban on CFC use in aerosol propellants in the late 1970s despite big business opposition.

Now the giants of US chemical companies, such as Du Pont, are developing alternatives to CFCs. Pressure is being put on Britain to pledge a 50 per cent cut in production—no doubt because US firms sniff more profit. A senior EEC official admitted: "The reason the Americans have taken this high moral stand on CFCs is because they expect their chemical company Du Pont will make money out of it."

On the other hand the British based ICI is one of the world's biggest CFC producers and has in the past lobbied hard to keep production up. So far the British government has not even commented.

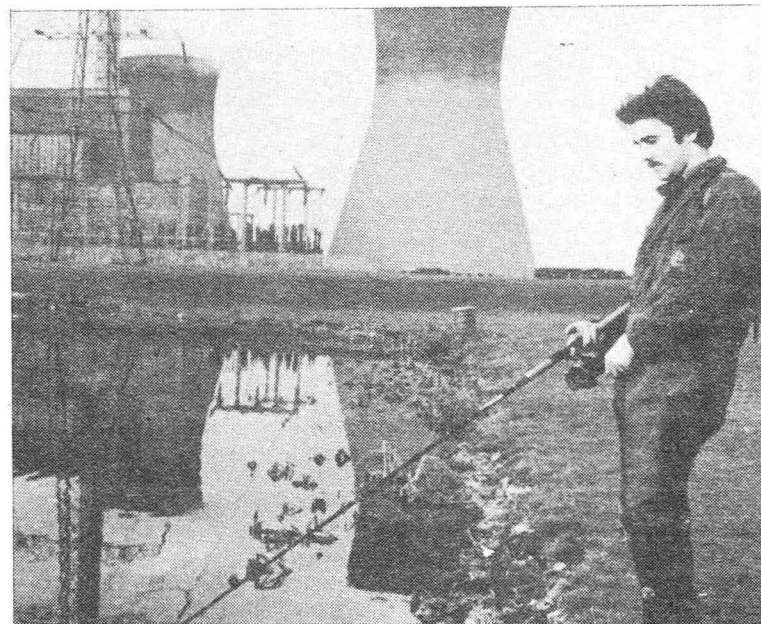
Capitalism is driven by the need for profits, at whatever cost. The cost of producing CFCs is the destruction of the earth's protection against radiation. It seems capitalism would rather see a hole in the sky than a hole in its profits.

This is no 'fringe' environmental issue—potentially it is a matter of life and death. Substitutes are needed and alternative work is needed for example for the 700 ICI workers employed on CFCs at present.

But who is to say that the substitutes, already on their way to realisation, won't create other problems?

We need day to day control over production and research by the working class. That is impossible in a capitalist society. Socialism is the only way to ensure that such threats to the very future of humanity are minimised.

By Tim Harris



Fishing in the shadow of a power station. How much longer will the fish survive?

Acid rain the killer cocktail

THE THATCHER government has refused to sign a treaty due to come into force on 2 September, to cut acid rain pollution by 30 per cent by 1993.

Twenty one countries have signed but international pressure has failed to move the British government's intransigence. The Swedish, Norwegian and West German governments are particularly angry, blaming British pollution for the destruction of their forests and lakes.

What is acid rain? It is a complex cocktail of pollutants, formed when sulphur dioxide and various nitrogen oxides emitted from factories, cars and power stations are changed chemically in the air. The main ingredients are sulphuric and nitric acid which fall as rain and snow.

The UK—and even the CEE alone—has long emitted more of these gases than any other European country; but as 70 per cent is blown by wind out of Britain, mainly to northern Europe, both Labour and Tory governments have done little to reduce the pollution.

Over half of West Germany's forests are now dead or dying, whereas only four years ago damage was limited to 8 per cent of trees. 18,000 Swedish lakes are poisoned with acid, of which 4,000 no longer have any fish.

There is increasing evidence that Britain is also affected. British rain is five to ten times as acid as it should be in the least polluted areas. More than one and a half tonnes of sulphuric acid per acre per year fall on Cornwall. In 1984 snow falling on Aviemore was black—and as acid as vinegar.

Scientists have been sampling Scottish lochs since 1978. But their findings have taken more than five years to be published. The Lake District has seen sudden and massive fish deaths in the 1980s. Trout put in the River Twyi in Wales—thought to be one of the cleanest rivers—died within 10 days.

Salmon and trout are beginning to disappear. Dippers have vanished from the River Wye. Otters, ospreys, natterjack toads and frogs have all been affected. Buildings are being eroded and even marble statues inside the Victoria and Albert Museum need restoration every year.

The Forestry Commission carried out a survey and said there was no problem. But this survey was not only attacked by the radical Friends of the Earth, but also by the Nature Conservancy Council, for looking only at those trees least likely to be affected.

The EEC has pressed for a 60 per cent reduction in pollution. UK minister, Waldegrave, first opposed the proposals, then struggled to have them diluted—to a 30 per cent reduction by the 1990s—then said Britain would ignore them anyway. Britain is the world's filthiest nation, exporting nearly 11 times as much sulphur dioxide as it receives.

Culprits

The main culprits are power stations, cars and heavy industry. Reduction of pollution means money being spent by industry or by government. Clearly the governments are not prepared to spend money or to force industries to do so; and 'market forces' are hardly likely to bring about the necessary reforms. The Tories have at last agreed that three—out of 41—power stations will be fitted with anti-sulphur equipment but only by 1997.

Reducing pollution will not make a short term profit for big business. But it would mean a better quality of life in the short and long term for the population as a whole. Capitalism will never go out of its way to reduce pollution, and even where laws have been passed, like the Control of Pollution Act 1974, they are either ignored or not implemented.

By Vivien Seal

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Reflex)

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report III)

Astms and Tass merger?

'Yes' to a united democratic union

THIS WEEKEND sees the conferences of two unions, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (Astms) and Tass, both discussing proposals to merge with the other into a "super union", the Manufacturing, Scientific and Finance union.

If the merger goes ahead, and the indications are that it is popular amongst members of both unions, it will become one of the largest TUC affiliates with over 650,000 members, mainly in the private sector but with a significant public sector presence.

Most of the big unions in the TUC have been the result of mergers and amalgamations over the last century. With the virtual disappearance of many crafts and the blurring of distinctions between trades, coupled to the recent downturn in union membership as a result of unemployment, the pace of mergers has quickened.

A basic tenet of the trade union movement is "Unity is strength". Mergers can result in a stronger workforce. Many Astms and Tass members work in the same industries. Amalgamation will make it harder for management to play one worker off against another. It would also make solidarity action easier between workplaces and within different sections of a single, bigger union.

Accountability

A larger union is also better placed to provide back-up services, such as welfare, legal representation, education and full time officers.

This is not the end of story however. Good organisation needs democracy and accountability. Activists need to ensure that the new rule book safeguards all the best elements of its predecessors.

It is easy in the present economic climate, with

many trade unions facing a decline in membership, for trade union leaders to view mergers as empire building exercises for themselves rather than putting the requirements of the members first.

Without doubt power in a large union, with the subsequent influence on the Labour Party and TUC, is an attractive proposition to many trade union leaders.

Most mergers have been initiated by manoeuvring at the leadership level rather than the demands of the rank and file. For activists and socialists this has to be approached from the position of solidarity and democracy. The amalgamation of unions should be welcomed, with the proviso that they have the best policies and the best possible democracy and accountability at all levels, to ensure that the aspirations of the membership, and not just the leaders, are fought for.



Ken Gill and Clive Jenkins

- ★ One union, one rule book.
- ★ Election of National Executive by membership.
- ★ Each branch to have direct representation at an annual conference.
- ★ Regular election of all full

time officials.

- ★ All officers to earn the average wage of the workers they represent.
- ★ Full integration of both unions at the earliest opportunity.

The viewpoint from Astms ...and from Tass

DELEGATES AT both the Tass and Astms recall conferences on 19 September face a stark choice.

By Gwyn Morris,
Astms No5 Divisional
Council (personal
capacity)

Both conferences will decide whether to ballot the membership on a merger. A 'Yes' vote also means accepting the draft rules of amalgamation. This is a legal document giving the basic rules of a new union and an agreement on procedures for convening a rules conference.

These rules, already accepted by both executives, would operate from January 1988 until a rules conference, assuming a successful ballot.

For many within Astms the draft rules are disappointing because the principle of representation from each branch has been sacrificed. Nevertheless the two to one majority in favour of direct branch delegation at the Astms conference was sufficient to increase the rules conference to 400 delegates from each union from 330.

Increase

This will mean on average one delegate from every other branch of Astms and for Tass a huge increase from their present conference strength of 165.

Most activists in both unions see clear advantages in a merged union. At a time of declining union membership, both unions have maintained their strength by incorporating

smaller unions and staff associations. The cutbacks being forced on unions such as the AEU and NUT will inevitably lead to a weakening of their collective strength.

Any move to strengthen union organisation during a time of belligerent attacks by the government and employers is welcome. To date discussions on merger have centred on the activists at branch divisional and national level. Given the go ahead for a ballot the decision will then effectively be passed over to the rank and file.

Contact

For Astms members in manufacturing and industry, the benefits of closer co-operation with Tass members at the same workplace will be obvious. Poaching of members has in the past led to some aggravation but a merged union would increase collective strength.

A substantial fraction of Astms in finance, publishing, universities and other industries will have little if any contact with Tass and for them the immediate benefits will not be so tangible.

The overwhelming mood in both unions is reported to be for a merger but there are many dissenters. Both unions should campaign at all levels for a merger to ensure success. Divisional councils within Astms already plan rallies but these should be spread to all areas with substantial membership and linked up with Tass branches.

Inevitably questions will arise over and above the ballot, centring on the full integration of the unions not just the national execut-

ives, and questions on the structure of the new union.

Militant supporters will be campaigning for a merger but also for democratic demands to ensure full rank and file involvement and the accountability of officers. The merger cannot be allowed to become the excuse for those with vested interests to produce a rule book protecting their positions and centralising power.

Both unions' members need full and speedy integration coupled with a strong democratic structure. This requires a campaign to mobilise the membership around the demand for democracy in the run up to the Rules Conference.

Workers for Socialism Meeting.

Speakers: Terry Fields MP, George Williamson, organising secretary of Broad Left Organising Committee.

Lunch time 19 September Astms/Tass Conference
Co-op Hall, Masons Avenue, Harrow (Opposite Leisure Centre).

Unity is strength

THE HUGE union which will emerge from a successful ballot looks set to grow even bigger over the next two years. It is well known that discussions have been taking place for some time between Astms and Tass, and other organisations with a view to a merger or amalgamation.

In fact, over 100 organisations, only six of which are affiliated to the TUC, have been approached. Many of these will be staff associations, especially in insurance.

Clive Jenkins, Astms General Secretary, in a recent statement expects the merged union to have over a million members by 1990.

SATURDAY 19 September will be the first real opportunity for Tass and Astms rank and file activists to have a say in the proposed merger of the two unions.

By Mick Cotter
Tass, London Metal
Mechanics

Both are meeting simultaneously in Harrow. If, as is expected, both agree to the principle of merger the way will be clear for a ballot of the membership, the result being expected by early 1988. Providing a "Yes" vote is returned, we will then proceed to a joint rules conference within six months.



Militant supporters in Tass would welcome a merger with Astms as one of the most momentous events in our history. The potential strength of the new union will be feared by both the employers and the right wing inside the TUC.

Traditions

Both Astms and Tass are on the left of the trade union movement. A democratic merged union would be able to galvanise their strength across the industrial and political spectrum.

A feature of the new union will certainly be modern methods of organisation but more important will be upholding the traditions of struggle inherited from both organisations.

Apart from the merger itself there are a number of secondary but important issues. One is the proposal to merge the various craft organisations which have joined Tass over the last few years into one craft section. This will be important in a merged union.

Engineering will be the most important single industry where the new union will be organising and here

all grades from shopfloor to management will be eligible for membership. The staff side will become unified at the time of merger and it is vital that the craft side is also united. We will then be able to present ourselves as the union representing all engineering workers.

This fact is obviously feared by the present leadership of the AEU whose own membership has been fast declining, but despite the antics of Jordan and friends our message to the AEU has to be: "Your place is with us in one union for engineering".

Shorter week

The AEU leadership has recently played a scandalous role in negotiations on the shorter working week, a fact that has not been lost on the AEU membership. We are confident that the days of Jordan and his associates are numbered and that the Astms-Tass merger will proceed. The creation of a strong, democratic new union which we should see over the next few months, hopefully will prepare the way for a future merger with the AEU.

Industrial Reports

Tyrants' charter-battle lines drawn

THE NATIONAL Miners' Broad Left holds its conference at a crucial time for miners. 60 pits and 80,000 jobs have gone over two years. Now Haslam and his cronies are determined to introduce six day working.

By Alex Shanks
Chair Scebta, Monktonhall
(personal capacity)

As a prelude, they have sought to impose a draconian disciplinary code. Haslam has made it clear that one of his aims is to rid the union of activists "if we feel actions by people are causing trouble." The industry is now on the threshold of another major dispute.

The threat of a national overtime ban is only the first shot in the campaign. But, for the first time since the great strike, the NUM appears to have the upper hand.

British Coal and their UDM puppets have boxed themselves into a corner, having ridiculed the NUM over their stance on the "independent empire", the UDM 'leaders' are now feeling the pressure from below as their members demand rejection of the code. Thus, the UDM find themselves pleading for small changes whilst demanding the Board stands firm over the main elements of disciplinary procedure.

Profitability

British Coal would prefer to minimise the damage to their hirelings whilst not provoking rank and file miners into action. The 77.5 per cent ballot result shows the fighting spirit of the miners.

Over the past year productivity records have been broken again and again, and an operating profit of £369 million achieved. Sir "Bob" would prefer not to allow the drive for profitability to flounder due to yet another national dispute.

However, with pressure from the Thatcher Government to stand firm and not allow a boost to miners' morale or to Scargill's standing, British Coal may decide to fight now rather than later. They may consider a backdown over the code would



complicate the imposition of "flexible working".

Defeating the board on the disciplinary code is a crucial part of the struggle to defeat the bosses' onslaught, although, "flexible working" is the real issue.

The Broad Left must see as its main task the preparation of the rank and file for the coming national struggle. Scargill and Heathfield stand virtually alone amongst our national leaders in recognising the necessity of industrial action to protect jobs and conditions. The Broad Left must agitate amongst ordinary workers to ensure the 'new realists' do not undermine our growing confidence.

Incredibly, George Bolton, Scottish Area President argues in 7 days against union policy and in favour of negotiating the introduction of 'flexible working'. His apparent capitulation to right wing ideas is exposed in the final paragraph of his article in the 'communist' weekly.

He says: "All past history of amalgamations, mergers and reunifications demon-

strates quite clearly that these matters are handled not by the rank and file, but by union leaderships. I find it extremely difficult to imagine that the UDM would become again part of the NUM without some element of discussion and negotiations that involves the leadership of the UDM and the NUM."

George shows he is not only out of touch with the membership but also ignorant of our union's history.

Pessimists, 'new realists' and compromisers will not safeguard our industry by sitting down to tea with management. Our jobs, working hours and conditions, and our communities will only be defended by building on our 'culture of militancy' by boosting rank and file confidence and through building the Broad Left itself.

STOP PRESS

Rumours are circulating in the South Yorks coalfield that British Coal have drawn up plans for the operation of Thorne Colliery on the basis of 'flexible working'.

Engineers-agreement must be opposed

THE JOINT negotiating sub-committee of the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) have reported on the "37 1/2 hour week and related matters, and procedure-manual grades".

AEU members at Manifold Industries, Leyton at a mass meeting passed a resolution rejecting the proposals and calling on the National Committee of the AEU to throw them out.

On 24 September a recall National Committee of the AEU will discuss the proposed agreement. After this there will be a national ballot. President Bill Jordan is selling flexibility for a 37 and-a-half hour week. There will not be an increase in jobs—only profits.

If accepted by the membership, the agreement would result in the wholesale destruction of conditions, with union organisation set back years.

Time and again the proposals give management the right to decide on conditions of working and shift patterns. Two sections are typical on domestic working hours: "...if after the fullest discussion, including a refer-

ence to the external stage of procedure, as agreement has been reached concerning the start and stop times it shall remain the responsibility of management to determine the times that shall apply".

Free hand

Again, on shift working "where production needs cannot be accommodated within the flexibility allowed...the employer may determine domestically a pattern of shift working to suit the particular needs of the establishment".

Clause after clause gives the employer a completely free hand to force changes in hours and conditions while the union agrees that at national level it "will not recognise officially or otherwise support any industrial action which is contrary to the provisions of their agreement".

Effectively this means agreeing a non-strike clause since the agreement covers all the major conditions and working practices. And all

this for a reduction of 1 and-a-half hours in the working week! Or is it?

The agreement says: "Where the normal working week for employers in the establishment...is already equal to less than 37 1/2 hours per week, there shall be no further reduction in hours for these employees," and, "working hours do not include meal breaks, washing time or other non-productive time. Where it has been customary in the establishment for any such breaks to be paid, that shall not be regarded as setting a precedent for implementation of this agreement".

Tea breaks, wasting time etc, are no longer to be paid—in some cases these add up to more than 1 and-a-half hours, so in return for giving up our traditional working practices and conditions we end up working the same, or even more hours than before!

One of the main arguments for a shorter working week has been to provide extra jobs. Yet the agree-

ment states: "that costs are not increased as a result of redrawing the working week", this ensures no extra jobs are produced.

Opposition to this agreement is a life or death issue. Some AEU members are asking what would be the point of remaining in the union if we give up our conditions of work and the right to strike.

Effective opposition needs to be organised by the Broad Left, resolutions must flood in to put pressure on the National Committee delegates to throw the agreement out. Every factory and branch must be visited and leafleted, the members must be made aware.

The proposals are the product of right wing "New Realism", but a campaign against them could revitalise the union and provide the basis for a new Broad Left leadership to put the union back at the head of the movement.

By John Edwards
London North District
Committee AEU
(personal capacity)

Glamorgan Firefighters

FIREFIGHTERS WILL be once again demonstrating in a major city in protest at proposed job cuts and other cost cutting exercises. This time it is 18 September in Swansea.

The West Glamorgan County Council are attempting to reorganise the brigade in order to save cash not lives. Since the abolition of the metropolitan councils, rate-capping and an audit commission report, other areas have attempted so-called cost cutting exercises. The FBU membership have so far been able to defeat these cuts in most areas, due to their resolve and militancy.

The background to this latest attempt by West Glamorgan has devastating implications not only for firefighters but also for the general public. During our 1977 strike over pay we had

overwhelming public support. We owe it to them to explain and fight off these dangerous proposals by strike action if necessary.

Basically, without going into the details of the proposals, the two main areas of concern will be the loss of 40 firefighters' jobs and the reduction in turnout to C and D risk fires from two appliances to one. C and D risk fires include housing estates etc.

Our responsibility is to our members and the public. We should therefore mount a campaign involving preparing them for national strike action, if necessary, in support of the firefighters and people of West Glamorgan.

By Paul McGrath
Neath
Matt Wrack
NE London FBU
(personal capacities)

London BLOC Conference.

The Crisis in the Public Services and the Fight Against Privatisation.

10.30 am to 5 pm, Saturday 24 October.
York Hall, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, E2.
Delegates should apply for credentials to BLOC, c/o 106 Draper House, Walworth Road, SE7.
Credentials are £3 for delegates and £1.50 for visitors. Please inform if you require creche facilities.

Militant

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For the sake of low paid

Bring Moat House to its knees

AFTER FIVE months on strike, workers at Moat House Hotel, Liverpool are determined to stick it out.

On Saturday 19 September a picket outside all Moat House hotels by the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) will coincide with the Transport and General Workers' Union "link up" campaign to organise workers in low paid and part time industries. *Militant* spoke to Tony Ely one of the Moat House pickets.

"We took home £62.30 for a 30 hour week but there was no overtime pay. You'd often have to put in extra unpaid hours just to clear your work. The chefs would do 50 hours just to cover work.

threadbare and some new staff didn't even get a uniform. Full time staff would be laid off at bank holidays and casuals taken on so they wouldn't have to pay double time.

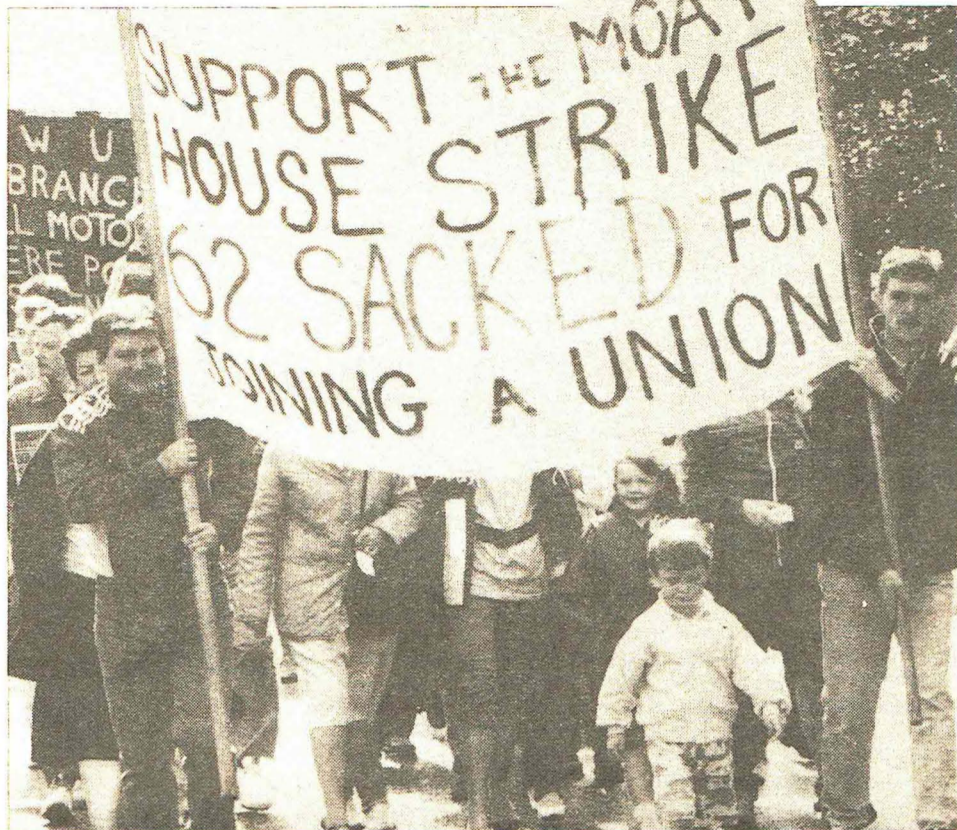
"We joined the union in February and made three

attempts to get talks with management but they wanted a list of union members before negotiations. We voted to take action from 1 April if management didn't listen to our grievances.

Profits

"The hotel must be making massive profits. A single room costs £58 and a twin room £75 and a breakfast costs £5.75. With 258 beds you can imagine how much profit they're making.

"After a couple of weeks on strike we realised it was



Moat House strikers on the march.

going to be a long struggle but we're determined to see it through. Our strike shows that people in low paid jobs do want to join unions.

"We welcome the TGWU link up campaign. If it's going to be a success, we need more national support as workers in the hotel industry are looking to us. If we win they'll fight too.

"After our experiences here we'd never work for a non-union firm again. You've got no rights without a union.

"We've had some unexpected support. The actor

Jimmy Nail was booked into the hotel but he refused to use his room and sat with us on the picket line until five in the morning.

"Some Irish football fans stayed here but when they found out about the strike they threw their cases out of the second floor window to their mates below and left without paying.

Players

"Now the football season has started, we're pressing Liverpool Football club not to use the hotel. The Professional Footballers' Asso-

ciation rep for Liverpool is meeting the PFA general secretary to discuss the situation. We hope that the Liverpool players will remember where they come from and not use the hotel. Thousands of working class fans look up to them and they should be setting an example.

"The marches were started with the help of the LPYS and we welcome the national picket. Our fight must be the start of a mass campaign nationally to organise the millions of workers in sweatshop industries."

Boycott these hotels

Bedford Moat House; Cambridge Moat House; Lamb, Ely; Peterborough Moat House; Blackwell Grange, Darlington; Exeter Moat House; Bournemouth Moat House; Brentwood Moat House; George, Colchester; Stifford Moat House, Grays; Harlow Moat House; The Heybridge, Ingatestone; Shepperton Moat House; Airport Moat House, Southend-on-Sea; Bucksburn Moat House, Aberdeen; Bramhall Moat House; Southampton Moat House; New Forest Moat

House; Hereford Moat House; Mount Olympus, Kidderminster; Chase, Ross-on-Wye; Elstree Moat House, Boreham Wood; Harpenden Moat House; Hemel Moat House, Hemel Hempstead; Hertford Moat House, Markyate; Stevenage Moat House; Grampian, Stevenage; Ware Moat House; Caledonian, Watford; Slatters, Canterbury; Dover Moat House; Tollgate Moat House, Gravesend; Blackburn Moat House; Leicester Forest Moat; Leicester Moat

House; Drury Lane Moat House, London; Woodford Moat House, Woodford Green; Forth Bridges Moat House, Queensferry; Liverpool Moat House; Star, Great Yarmouth; Maids Head, Norwich; Harrogate International; Viking, York; Northampton Moat House; Westone Moat House; Angel, Northampton; Hind, Wellingborough; The Royal, Nottingham; Banbury Moat House; Oxford Moat House; Telford Country House; Ardsley House, Barnsley; Rotherham Moat

House; Lorne, Glasgow; Dean Park, Renfrew; Orwell Moat House, Felixstowe; Ipswich Moat House; Newmarket Moat House; Newcastle Moat House; Kenilworth Moat House; Moat House International, Stratford-upon-Avon; Falcon, Stratford-upon-Avon; Grand, Birmingham; County, Walsall; Bromwich Moat House, West Bromwich; Gatwick Concorde, Gatwick Airport; Gatwick Moat House; Rose and Crown, Salisbury.

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What we stand for

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