

Militant

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celebrate
October 1917

See page three
for notice of
regional rallies

Tory crime pays!

Best walks free

IF YOU'RE a City fraudster or a Tory MP caught with your fingers in the till, you can expect a slap on the wrist in a British court today.

By John McKay

But if there's not enough to feed the kids and you're so desperate you turn to petty crime, don't expect any leniency. That's capitalist justice!

Last Monday, ex-Tory MP, Keith Best, walked out of the Appeal Court "a very happy man", according to his solicitor. And no wonder! He was guilty of buying 4,000 more shares than the law allowed him to when his government privatised British Telecom. But the judge had cancelled his prison sentence and fined him £4,500.

Keith won't have much problem paying that. It's just half the 'redundancy pay' he received when he retired as an MP! And he's still got the shares, which are now worth £6,000 more than when he bought them!

"It proves that if you can pay, you can get out," says Liz Brown, a mother who has just spent six months in Holloway and Borewood Hall prisons. "They've more or less given him

Liz Brown told *Militant* of the brutal conditions in gaol that often turn petty offenders into hardened criminals.

"Many are first time offenders," she says, "many of them young and in for silly things like shoplifting. At Borewood Hall they are so short staffed that some weeks you only get out to watch TV, bath and so on for one night a week. One officer was working a 70 hour week. If he hadn't been there, we wouldn't have been let out at all."

"After meals you must always be back in your cell. If you are not, you get locked out. If you get locked out three times, you go 'down the block', which is the punishment wing."

"Some girls seemed to spend most of their time there. The reason they have such rules is because there are so many of us and so few of them."

Scottish prisons erupt. See page 2.

a pat on the back and said 'hard luck for getting caught'.

"Inside, I met people in for shoplifting to get things for their kids. Keith Best didn't have that excuse. For him it's a way of life. A girl called Tara didn't actually commit a crime,

she was done for 'conspiracy'. Someone she had talked to about committing a crime had been pulled in for something else and told the police."

Keith Best and his fellow City fraudsters have escaped all this. The judge said that he might not have noticed he was breaking the law because it was not explained very well in BT's share prospectus.

But Best is a barrister and an MP in the parliament that passed the very law he broke!

Even City lawyers have commented that people might wonder "whether there isn't a cultural affinity between City types and the judiciary."

Indeed there is! City financiers, Tory MPs, judges and police chiefs have been to the same public schools, belong to the same clubs and mix in the same circles. No wonder they share the same outlook on life!

As Liz Brown says: "Tory judges don't really consider tax fiddles and share fiddles a crime. They know there's lots of other rich people doing it. The way things are going lately, with Mark Phillips's case as well, it's obvious there's one law for the rich and another for the poor. They're not even subtle about it!"

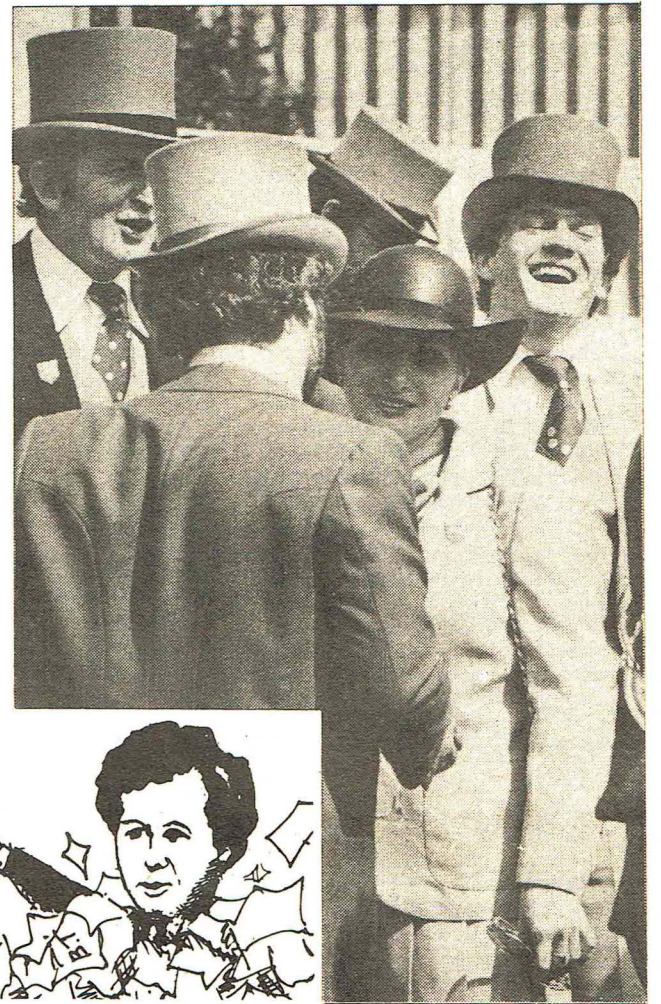
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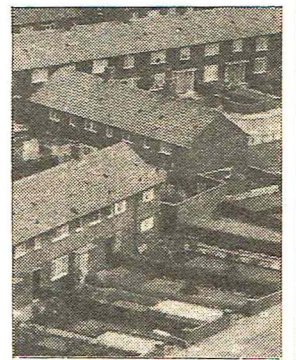


The rich can afford to laugh at the law.

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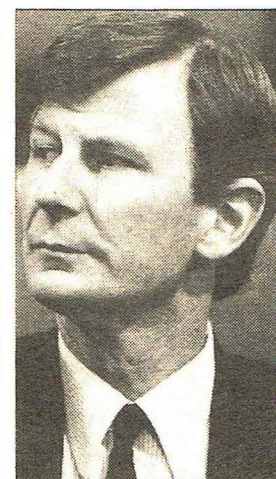
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Militant

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Labour's youth will not be curbed

THE RAILROADING through Labour's conference of the reduction in the Labour Party Young Socialists' age limit from 26 to 23, and the abolition of the LPYS regional structures, has nothing to do with building Labour's youth. It has everything to do with trying to curb the influence of Marxist ideas within the LPYS.

Acknowledging the sympathy which exists in the Party for the LPYS and its campaigning activities, Tom Sawyer, on behalf of the right, shied away from all out closure. Instead he initiated this more surreptitious attack through the age limit and curbs on the regions.

But Sawyer and his successor as chair of Labour's Youth Committee, Diane Jeuda, would like to crush all the democratic structures of the LPYS, and replace them with appointed committees of hand-picked representatives, with no real power to carry out campaigning decisions.

But the right have failed to grasp one very simple point. No socialist youth movement can be built on right wing ideas, and no youth movement can be sustained by stifling democracy. Does Diane Jeuda really believe YTS trainees will be attracted to Labour by not guaranteeing them a job at the end of their scheme?

The right will never be able to build an active youth movement in their own image. And their present manoeuvres will only alienate them even further from youth in the Party.

Even the NEC speaker who moved the establishment of the LPYS at the 1960 Party conference warned: "From time to time they (the LPYS) are going to do things which older people will not like... If you are not going to be tolerant, if you are going to be repressive towards them, if you are going to be paternalistic towards them then the Young Socialists will fail".

In Tory Britain of the 1980s, with all the attacks raining down on today's generation, the LPYS will be built despite the restrictions of the NEC. It is those who attempt to curb the ideas and democracy of the youth who will fail.

The real contempt that the Party leadership has for the teenagers they are now putting so much emphasis on, was laid bare on the eve of the quarter of a million strong 1985 school students' strike. The NEC condemned it, branding those taking part as "dafties".

Needless to say as a result, the only section of the Party which actually organises large numbers of under 23 year olds, is the Marxist led LPYS. The right wing led Labour Students and the trade unions would have great difficulty in providing under 23s to fill the appointed national and regional campaign committees.

No doubt the NEC will then argue that these committees should be exempt from the 23 age limit. The under 23s can make up the rank and file of the youth movement, but are not ready to lead it themselves, apparently. That must be left to older, more experienced Party members and trade union officials. That is the depth of the leadership's haughty attitude towards youth.

But their attacks will have little effect on the day to day campaigning work of the LPYS. The formal abolition of the regional conferences and regional committees will not stop LPYS branches co-ordinating work throughout their region and organising events for the region as a whole.

There is nothing in Labour's constitution which prohibits over 23s from selling *Socialist Youth*, or putting up LPYS posters or participating in LPYS street activities, which doubtless many will still do.

The right have gravely miscalculated. As a result of their decision, 23 to 25 year olds, many of them seasoned campaigners, will in addition turn their attention to the ward branches, constituencies and unions. They will push to turn them into campaigning bodies on the model of LPYS branches.

But for LPYS members the most important work will be the campaign against the Tories' YTS conscription, including the 19 November lobby of Parliament. Really building up the LPYS branches and strengthening the youth organisation has to be the over-riding commitment of every Young Socialist. This will provide the best platform to fight for a reversal of these decisions, and to fend off further attacks by the right.

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Sales campaign Building Marxism

WEEK ONE of our special sales has been a great success. Sellers in Halifax, Huddersfield, Oxfordshire, Central Scotland and Harlow have gone right over their target for issue 866 and are confident that they will do even better with issue 867.

30 copies were sold on the Ings Lane estate at Immingham, Humberside and 46 in just four streets in Forest Gate, London. These will become regular sales rounds and strengthen support for Marxist ideas.

New readers have shown many an old-hand how to sell *Militant*. In Chester, one sold 16 and raised £5 in donations. Two first-time sellers in West Wales sold 36 between

them, while two brothers in Leeds sold eight and three respectively, the three all at the solidarity price of £1.

A single parent in Tunbridge Wells has given us all a lesson in commitment—she sold outside the local BT depot, in the market place and outside the local college.

A big drive in the Kensington area of Liverpool led to a magnificent sale of 160 copies. Despite (or maybe because of) the witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters in Winsford, Cheshire, 30 copies were sold in less than an hour on the regular street sale.

There have been requests for extra papers to be sent to Aberystwth,

Cleethorpes and Liverpool, where they have sold out.

Student sales have been good, with the start of the new term. 270 have been sold so far at colleges in London and 190 in Manchester colleges. One seller at Thames Poly sold 25, round the halls of residence.

We are now well into the second week of this drive. We can congratulate ourselves on the sales achieved so far, but now we must consolidate the new sales into regular readers and supporters and build the base for a more frequent paper.

By Gerry Lerner

Scottish prisons erupt

THE SIMMERING anger in the Scottish prison system has boiled over yet again. Just as the protest ended at Peterhead, so at Perth jail another began.

By Ronnie Stevenson

As delegates at Tory conference repeat their ritual demands for more people to be imprisoned for more offences and for longer terms, the consequences of their brutal penal system can be seen on the rooftops of Scotland's prisons.

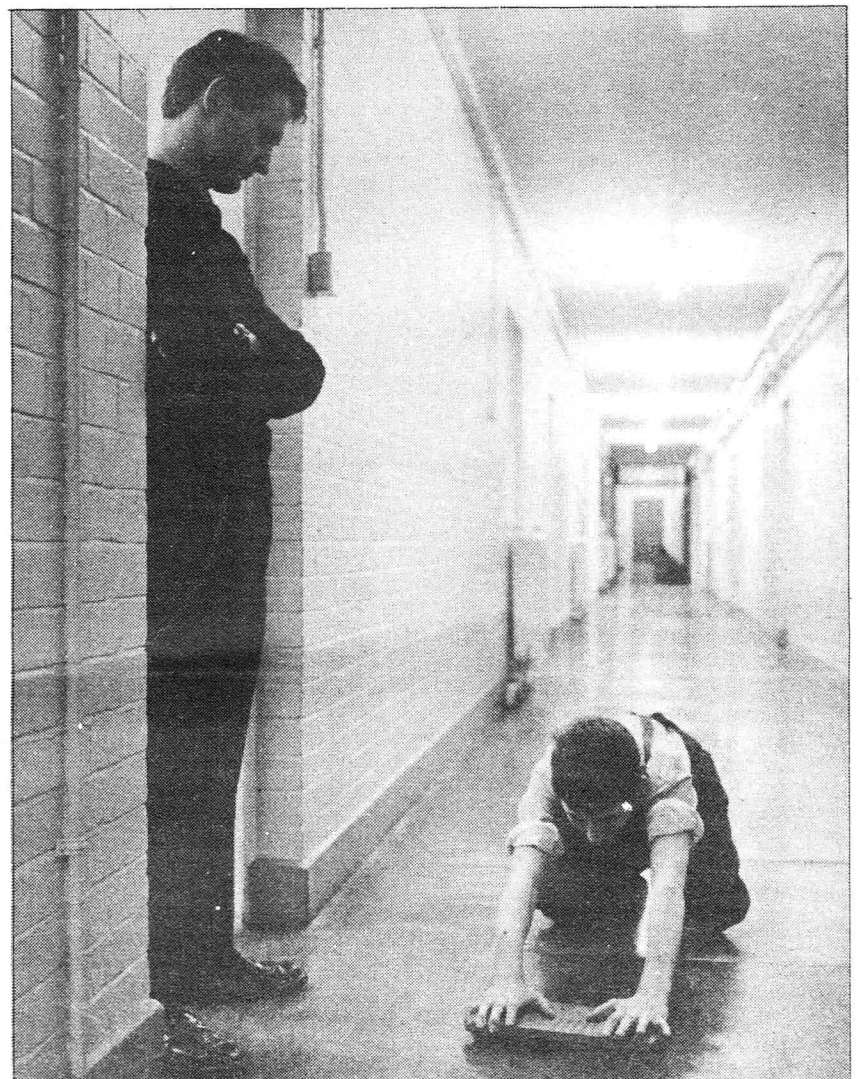
The economic savagery of the Tories and their system has resulted in a drastic increase in Scotland's prison population, increasing Scotland's lead at the top of Europe's per capita prison population league. 'Economic' prisoners, put inside for stealing less than the average company director gets in expenses in a week, form the bulk of the prison population. 50 per cent of Scottish prisoners are there for non-payment of fines.

The outbursts by prisoners have their basis in young men, with no hope, no future, and nothing left to lose.

The hardening of the parole system by the Tories seems to be being interpreted mostly severely in Scotland, so that most of the long termers have either given up hope of getting parole or do not apply in order to avoid the knock-back. The outbursts by prisoners have their basis in young men with no hope, no future and nothing left to lose.

Several of the prisons were built in the last century and are several hours travelling away from the West/Central Scotland area from where most of the prisoners come. There is overcrowding and under-staffing. Even the new one in Shotts is in an isolated, run down ex-coal mining community, extremely difficult for a young wife with her kids to get to see her husband.

All this adds up to sources of extreme tension. However "it's not the bricks and mortar but the regime", said Strathclyde regional councillor, Ken Murray, himself an ex-prison officer hounded by the Scottish Office prison department until he recently retired. "Scotland has a tradi-



Detention centre in Yorkshire, which specialises in the Tories' 'short sharp shock' treatment for young offenders.
Photo: Carlos Guarita (Reflex).

tional system with punishment and revenge being very much to the fore. The mass circulation media don't help either, creating the expectation that the prisons are for punishment and no place for the 'soft easy life'."

Ken Murray chaired an independent inquiry into Scotland's prison system, which revealed a catalogue of mental and physical abuse of prisoners. 71 per cent of prisoners reported that they had experienced brutality and 62 per cent that they had witnessed acts of brutality. Publication of the report on 9 November will add pressure to the commonly held view that something must be done. Improvements in the bricks and mortar are important and better staffing is necessary but the philosophy of the regime has to be changed.

Six weeks training for what can be a harrowing job and then thrown into the punitive sub-culture of the shop floor prison officers' regime, makes it difficult for even the best intentioned of prison officers to create an atmosphere of rehabilitation. Staffing ratios should enable them to build up better relationships with the prisoners but the government encouraged ethic of "punish them" is very powerful. Better ratios are often seen as making it "easier to control them".

Given the right training and insight into what gets people to prison, the better ratios would enable prison officers to show care and to help to sort out the many crises that prisoners face.

Instead there are calls for still a tougher prison regimes, for permanent SAS-type squads to smash up prison protests. The SAS were actually used Iranian-embassy style to break up the rooftop demonstration at Peterhead. This is the first time in recent years that sections of the army have been called upon to physically intervene against what is still a civilian protest, and represents a major escalation of the use of the state forces. Will they be used against the next factory sit-in or squatters' occupation?

The Tories aim to create more poor and dispossessed, more people desperate who might finish up in prison. A labour movement fight back outside and a labour movement led demand for prison reform inside, represents the only hope for sections of a generation for whom the bosses' only answer is repression. In particular the demand must be raised for an immediate labour movement inquiry into conditions within Scottish prisons.

Liverpool right-wing leader is forced out

HARRY RIMMER has resigned as leader of Liverpool City Council after the Labour Group voted by 42 to six against letting the Tory government 'redetermine' the council's budget.

By Dave Cotterill

Rimmer is an old-style right winger. His ascendancy was supposed to represent a triumph over the Militant Tendency. He was a proponent of 'co-operation', declaring that "history shows that confrontation is counter-productive". He even said that "Mr Ridley (the Environment secretary) was kind enough to say our approach was the right one".

Liverpool's crisis, like other cities, is so severe that it cannot be solved by 'co-operation' and talks.

Rimmer recommended the Labour group to throw themselves at the mercy of Ridley and to put up the rents in the hope that perhaps the kind Mr Ridley might give some more money to Liverpool. Unfortunately Ridley's kindness to Liverpool was expressed by rate-capping the council, leaving a £40 million gap between income and expenditure.

John Hamilton, former leader of the 47 debarred councillors, has said "that by 1990 the city will only

have sufficient revenue to service its debts, with nothing left for expenditure on housing maintenance or services".

Rimmer, the 'determined veteran' who, according to the press, would "give the new group a solid base on which to build for the future" has now had to resign. The membership of the Liverpool Labour Parties were determined to defend the policies of no cuts in jobs and services. Not one single constituency Labour Party voted for redetermination. The majority of the Labour group reflected this pressure.

Behind them stands the record of their predecessors, the 47, and the policies they fought on. "The question of the 47" said one Labour councillor, "dominates every meeting".

Implicit in Rimmer's resignation is a recognition that Liverpool's crisis, together with that of other cities, is so severe that it cannot be solved by 'co-operation' and talks. There are only two roads—either 'co-operate' with the Tories and make cuts, or fight for extra resources.

John Hamilton recently asked: "Why, out of all the leaders of Liverpool council over all the generations, should I have to be the one to be caught up in this turmoil?" Harry Rimmer has probably been silently pondering the same question.

But contenders for the newly-vacated position should also ask: "If I am going to defend the District Labour Party policies and the record of the 47, will I be able to stand the pressure that this turmoil will bring?"



Scottish youth strike called

A CALL for a Scottish Youth Strike on 5 November was made at the West of Scotland rally of the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign last Saturday. "Remember, remember the fifth of November; all out against the Tories"

became the day's slogan. £105 was collected in the street before the rally. "YTS is slave labour; you lot are doing a great job" said an old lady who gave £5.

Zeebrugge relatives demand justice

120 RELATIVES of those who lost their lives in the Zeebrugge ferry disaster have met survivors and legal advisors to discuss how to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

By Sue Haney

Naturally it was an emotionally charged meeting. All of us remain angry about the senseless loss of lives due to Townsend Thoresen's quest for greater profit.

But it was an extremely positive gathering. The stories we heard, such as that of a survivor who rescued over 20 people on that night, only to discover later that he'd lost his mother, sister, niece and nephew, only strengthened our resolve to bring those responsible, Townsend Thoresen and the Department of Trade, to justice.

A working party of 12

was elected, a mixture of survivors and relatives. David Tench of the Consumers' Association pledged his considerable support too. We will be meeting shortly to draw up a precise plan of action. The first event will no doubt be a lobby of Parliament when the Sheen report is debated.

A RESOLUTION has been passed by Manchester Withington Labour Party and sent to the Party's national executive (NEC), expressing sympathy with those who lost relatives and friends when the Herald of Free Enterprise capsized on 6 March.

It salutes the heroism of those crew, passengers and divers whose bravery saved many lives and totally opposes the attempt to pin the blame for the disaster onto the crew. It condemns the failure of the government and ferry owners to take necessary precautions

despite warnings, and it calls on the NEC to demand the grounding of all ro-ro ferries with full compensation to all displaced workers until all requisite safety measures have been introduced and sanctioned by the unions in the industry.

It calls on the NEC to fight for the nationalisation of the shipping industry under democratic workers' control and management with compensation to the shareholders on the basis of proven need.

Finally it calls on the NEC to approach the NUS and TGWU to convene an international conference of maritime and dock unions plus workers' organisations to organise a global fight for workers' control and health and safety at sea.

Anyone who supports this resolution should raise it at their Labour Party or trade union branch.

Inquiry

However, as Kinnock moves to the right, some of the Bradford North Party officers have resigned and started along the same road to the right. They have attacked Militant supporters, criticised the general election campaign and opened a national inquiry aimed at undermining Pat Wall as the MP.

If Bradford North's campaign was too left-wing, then how did Pat Wall win? All 21,009 Labour voters knew him to be a Marxist socialist, yet they poured out to vote. And how did Labour win locally, yet lose nationally?

There should be no inquiry, no expulsion of socialists for flocking to a marginal seat, and, judging by the result, enthusing Labour voters to turn out.

By a Militant reporter

The real dockers answer Kinnock

NEIL KINNOCK'S reference in his conference speech to "the docker earning £400 a week, owning a house and a car and a flat in Marbella" was greeted with laughter by Liverpool dockers.

Their average take home pay is £150 per week and that has only been won through struggle. "If there are any dockers on £400 per week" said one: "they are certainly not members of the working class, more likely the criminal class."

No dockers have a steady income. They have to rely on bonus systems and overtime.

Bob Beaumont, who works on the pilot boat said: "I don't know anyone on £400 a week. It's just an excuse to try and change the image and policy of the Labour Party."

"What Kinnock should have been talking about was the lack of security on the docks. In Liverpool the number of dockers has been cut from 10,000 to just over 1,000. Management say that is 200 too many. There are no dockers left in Manchester or Preston. Even the better-paid dockers in the south face the threat of the Channel Tunnel."

Dockers are preparing for a fight to defend their jobs, rights and working conditions. These have been partly protected by the Dock Labour Scheme, which the employers are preparing to get rid of, with backing from the government, to gain more power to hire and fire who they like and pay what they like.

This would threaten the wages and jobs of all dockers. They will be looking for active support from other unions, and also from Neil Kinnock.

By Lee Waker and Richard Knights
(TGWU members)

celebrate
October 1917

Liverpool	Sunday 8 November, 11-5.30 Liverpool Empire. Speakers—Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Tony Mulhearn, Sue Haney, Tony Byrne. Chair—Felicity Dowling.
Glasgow	Saturday 7 November, 7.30—1.00 Winter Gardens, Peoples' Palace, Glasgow Green. Speakers—Tony Saunio, Nimrod Sejake. Plus Ian Saville (the Marxist Magician), bands.
Swindon	Saturday 7 November, 11-5.00 County Ground Hotel, County Road. Speaker—Jeremy Birch.
Sheffield	Friday 13 November, 7.30 Sheffield City Hall.
Newcastle	Tuesday 10 November 7.00 Newcastle Guild Hall. Speaker—Peter Taaffe. Plus Ian Saville, Mike Elliot (comedian) and disco.
Nottingham	Sunday 8 November, 2.00—6.00 People's College, Maid Marian Way. Speakers—John Pickard, Ray Apps.
Stevenage	Saturday 14 November, 11.00—5.00 Stevenage College, Monkswood Way.

Labour conference '87

Reports by Tony Cross

Jobs for youth

LABOUR PARTY conference started with a mood of acquiescence with the leadership. There was little enthusiasm in the earlier debates. While the majority of constituency delegates voted with the left, many were reluctant to be seen openly opposing the leadership.

The National Executive (NEC) won its proposal for a policy review, even though it will turn into an attempt to ditch socialist principles.

But when the concrete issues which will have to be examined by the review came to be discussed, the NEC did not get everything its own way.

In the education and training debate the NEC displayed gross organisational incompetence in its recommendations on two composite resolutions on YTS.

They were moved by the TASS union and Leicester East. Both raised vital demands, including a guaranteed job at the end of schemes.

TASS's composite also called for the next Labour government to introduce proper schemes under union supervision and for the NEC to organise a demonstration and lobby of Parliament along with the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and union youth sections.

For Leicester East, Don Finlay reminded conference that the "much-maligned" Liverpool Council had introduced topping up to £55 per week for their trainees and guaranteed them a job.

Diana Jeuda, summing up, asked for remittance of TASS's resolution. The spurious grounds were that it was not practical to



Union representatives on the National Executive applaud the Party leader.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

guarantee a job at the same workplace.

This excuse covers the NEC's actual conviction that a Labour government would not be able to provide jobs for youth.

The proceedings turned to farce when TASS pointed out

that the other resolution, which the NEC was supporting, contained the same demand.

Diana Jeuda and her advisers responded by withdrawing support for Leicester East!

Despite the NEC's recommendation, conference passed the

TASS composite, but voted down Leicester East's.

So Party policy is now a guaranteed job for trainees and the NEC is committed to a joint demonstration with the same youth section whose work it has tried so hard to hamper.

Gould gets the bird

DELEGATES' RESENTMENT at the attempted 'yupification' of the Party came out dramatically in the debate on 'social ownership' and the economy.

Bryan Gould, was booed and heckled when he outlined his schemes for widening share ownership. He claimed that workers owning shares was an invasion of the private sector with the principles of social ownership and would "hand real power to working people".

By contrast, the NUM's resolution calling for a vigorous campaign against privatisation, the renationalisation of privatised industries and a commitment to Clause four was well received and passed on a show of hands. But it was defeated when it came to a card vote.

Conference voted for the UCW's call for a review of policy and a statement from the NEC next year which will supposedly reveal the true nature of the mysterious concept of social ownership.



Felicity Dowling meets the press after being expelled.

Behind closed doors

IN CLOSED session on Wednesday morning, the leadership succeeded in expelling surcharged Liverpool councillor, Felicity Dowling, avoided discussing the removal of Sharon Atkin as Party candidate in Nottingham East and narrowly won support for closing the Party's papers and sacking staff.

This record alone condemns the right wing's stewardship of the Party, but their own words added convincing proof.

Incredibly, Larry Whitty justified Felicity Dowling's expulsion by saying she was "guilty by association" of a conspiracy to

subvert the Party, through being secretary of the Liverpool District Party.

Despite the expulsions, the spectre of *Militant* haunted the finance debate. Sam McCluskie, moving the report, complained that "if as many of bloody you as are selling *Militant*" sold *Labour Weekly*, it would not make a loss.

But one delegate pointed out that *Militant*'s success was because its sellers believed in its message, while *Labour Weekly* was unable to win the same loyalty.

Dave Nellist MP, who was cheered even before he reached

the rostrum, pointed out that MPs giving five per cent of their salaries to the Party would end the financial crisis.

In replying, Larry Whitty admitted that the LPYS's paper, *Socialist Youth*, was being closed because of its political contents. The motion to save the papers would have been carried but for the fact that Nupe swung its vote behind the leadership to vote it down.

The finance report was passed, but by 3,954,000 to 2,556,000, a much smaller majority than the NEC had hoped for.

Councils under attack

MOST CONFERENCE delegates were horrified by an appalling exhibition by Jack Rogers of building workers' union, Ucat, when he summed up the housing debate.

He launched yet another attack on the 47 surcharged Liverpool councillors.

Rogers complained that Liverpool's supporters were "pretending other councillors aren't doing their job," and asserted that "Sheffield shows the way in many ways". There was laughter from many parts of the hall.

Liverpool West Derby called for support for the 47 councillors and for support for local government workers, tenants and coun-

cils who fight the cuts.

"The courts said the 47 were guilty," said the West Derby delegate. "but the people of Liverpool gave their verdict on polling day in the local government and national elections."

Rodney Bickerstaffe, moving a resolution from the public employees' union, Nupe, accepted that Labour councils should not break the law but called on them not to come into conflict with their workforces.

The right wing also insisted that the fight against the poll-tax be kept within the bounds of Tory legality. This was despite Willie Hamilton, from Glasgow Govan, pointing out that it

would soon be law in Scotland. "I can't find twenty per cent out of my dole money to pay this tax," he said. "We can't afford to wait another year for some sort of campaign."

He reminded conference of how Lloyd George's Rent Acts were defeated in 1915. A rent strike by Glasgow tenants had combined with industrial action and these methods could defeat the poll tax today.

David Blunkett in summing up the debate seemed to be competing with Jack Rogers in venom and distortion. He had to explain that the NEC supported donations to pay off the councillors' surcharge. But he could not bring himself

to do so without a snide attack on those councillors who have been witch-hunted out of the Party.

Again delegates were astonished to hear Blunkett explain the NEC's opposition to the resolution on the grounds that local government workers might go on strike at the behest of an insignificant sect.

He spelt out his real reason at the NEC, when he opposed it on the grounds that Labour councils would have to declare redundancies and put up rents in the present climate, and so would inevitably clash with their workforces and tenants.

The NEC's recommendations were carried.

Remember the working class

THE NEC was overturned on the issue of a minimum wage.

Lillian Murphy, a Nupe delegate, interrupted the waffle about £400 a week dockers with a reminder of the realities of life for millions of low paid workers.

"You can chase the yuppies," she said, "but don't forget the working class. Smoked salmon and the best cuts of meat are not for the likes of us, junk food is the order of the day."

Her take-home pay was £62 per week. "How many brothers and sisters in the Parliamentary Labour Party could survive on £62. It's less than the rise they've just voted themselves."

The resolution's mover was cheered for refusing to remit and the composite calling for a national minimum wage of £120 for a 35 hour week, pro-rata payments for part-time, home-workers and trade union rates for YTS trainees was passed.

Disarmament retreat to come?

THE DEFENCE debate was specially important this year because of the tremendous pressure being put on the Party to reverse its position of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The most blatant agents of this pressure were right-wingers, Eric Hammond and Bill Jordan. Hammond

and the EETPU leadership have invested their members' money in consultation exercises and polls designed to provide them with evidence that the Party's position on defence is unpopular.

The argument that unilateralism lost Labour the election was answered by

Martin Smith from Brighton Kempton. Labour got the worst of both worlds, he said, because the leadership said that it would spend the money currently wasted on nuclear arms on conventional weapons. So the tremendous benefits that could be gained from spending it in socially useful

ways went unexplained.

It is already clear that unilateralism will be one of the leadership's chief targets in the policy review. Despite protestations to the contrary, this was confirmed in the speech of Kinnockite, Joan Ruddock, whose career has been built in the disarmament move-

ment.

She talked about "using Trident politically", a phrase which is utterly meaningless unless it means using it in talks about multi-lateral disarmament.

But the Party's existing policy was reaffirmed when it came to the vote.

Liverpool council housing success

'We've waited years for this'

PROOF THAT Labour councils have an alternative to caving in to the Tory government's demands for cuts and sackings is rising from the ground in Liverpool.

By Martin Lee

Monuments to the achievements of the 47 disqualified and surcharged Labour city councillors are still going up—in bricks and mortar.

The latest to be unveiled is the £4.2 million project on the Cantril Farm estate.

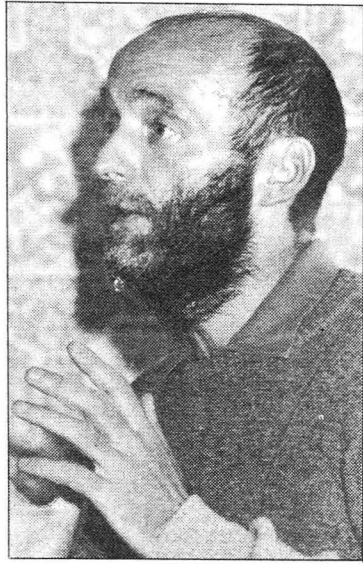
"It is a wonderful achievement. This is a model the rest of the country should follow" said Alice Coleman, an international expert on problem estates. Even the *Liverpool Echo* has praised the estate's facelift.

How ironic that the official 'opening' took place the same day as the 47 former councillors received a letter from the District Auditor demanding payment of £350,000.

Just a week later, as the 47 were stepping up their fund-raising activities, an exhibition was held at Croxteth to show tenants the plans for the next phase of work under the Urban Regeneration Scheme, which was planned by the old council just before they were forced out of office.

Tony Byrne, former leader of the council, described how Cantril Farm and Croxteth are being transformed:

"We aren't only building housing. We are changing the whole environment to one where people can live and bring up children. Cantril Farm and Croxteth are



"I would do exactly the same again"—

Tony Byrne, former council leader, now disqualified.

two of the most advanced examples of the success of the strategy. These parts of the city now have people who for the first time in their lives are able to live happily, in peace and security, knowing that their children can play safely.

"These two estates were the worst in Liverpool—it is now recognised they should never have been built in the first place. Both were hard-to-let; no-one wanted to go there and the majority there wanted to get out. Now if a property is vacant, people are clamouring to get in.

"All the houses in the estate are improved. The walk-up flats and maisonettes have had the

tops removed and been turned into houses and bungalows. People are given front and back gardens; new roads are punched through so that all people have road access to the front and space to keep a car within the boundary of their dwelling.

"Even such a simple thing means that relatives are happy to visit, because they can park outside the house, where previously they had to park 100 yards away. It also means a reduction in crime, less car thefts.

"Anyone visiting these estates will readily understand why all the effort was worthwhile, and why I certainly say that if I went back to May 1983, I'd start all over again and do exactly the same as we did in the four years we were here.

Testament

"The Croxteth exhibition exposes the lie often told about our administration not consulting people. Hundreds are being talked to individually at the exhibition and everyone's comments are being taken account of."

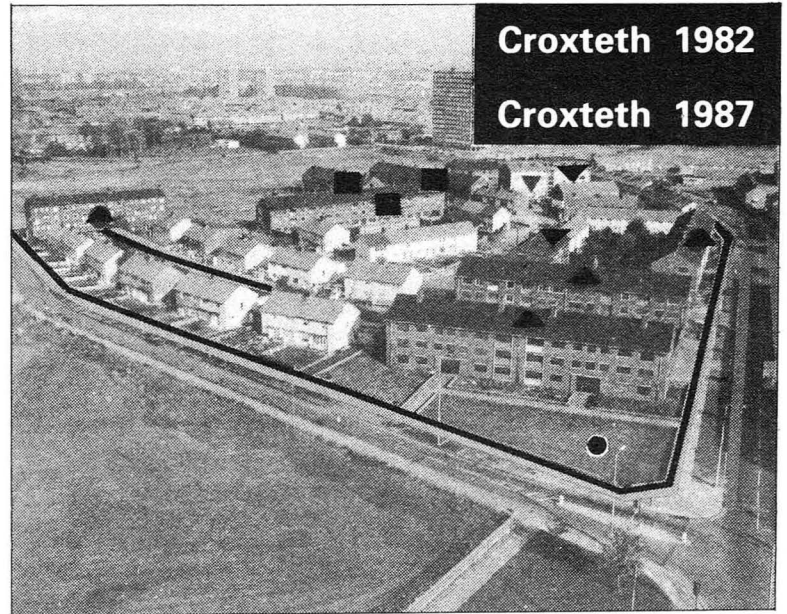
Some of these written comments at the exhibition are a testament to the 47's success:

"Will it really happen? I didn't believe it would ever happen. Thank God it did."

"Won't the shops be lovely?"

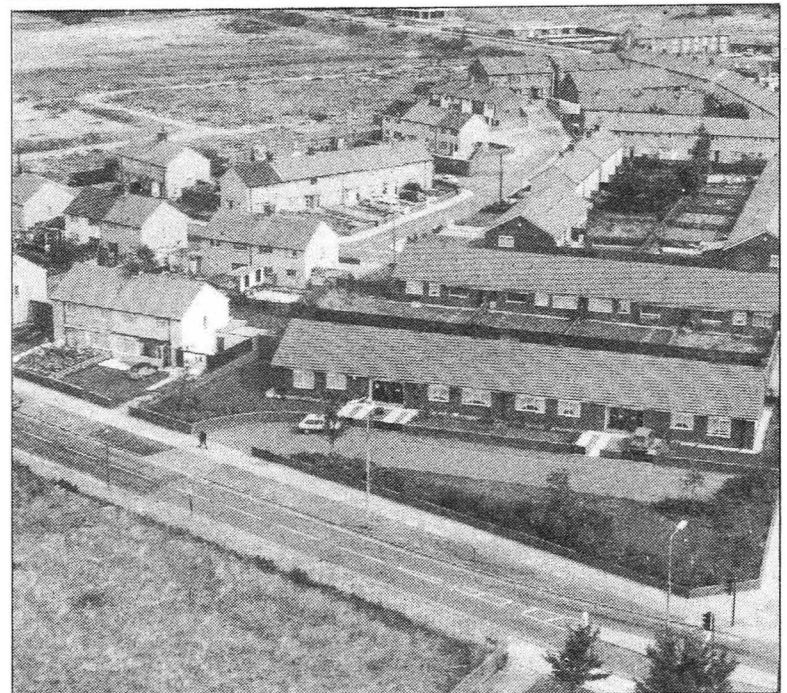
"Can we really choose our own railings and front door?"

George Knibb, Chair of the council's Building Subcommittee, who was born and bred in Croxteth said: "I welcome the scheme. It is long overdue. The people of Croxteth have been waiting years for this."



Croxteth 1982

Croxteth 1987



- New landscape.
- New boundary walls/fences/gates.
- Demolished.

- ▲ Conversions from three storey to bungalows.
- ▼ Conversions from three storey to two storey houses.

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 11195 at the Co-operative Bank, Liverpool Branch. Phone Alex Doswell on 051 709 4398 or 051 427 3071.

Killer dust campaigners vindicated

AFTER A tireless four-week campaign by tenants to ensure the safe removal of killer asbestos from central heating units on two estates in Winsford, Cheshire, environmental health officers have admitted that some of the material removed was the deadly amosite, or brown, asbestos, even more lethal than the white. Just one minute fibre inhaled into the lung can be lethal!

By a Militant reporter

This has caused an uproar among Winsford council house tenants, led by Winsford Labour Party members and *Militant* supporters, Ken and Hilda Unwin, whose ceaseless pressure for the Tory-controlled Vale Royal District council officials to make analytical tests led to the startling revelation last Friday.

This shocking disclosure is just one example of council negligence (caused by the Tories' ruthless cost-cutting exercises) exposed by Ken and Hilda, who discovered that tenants' lives were under threat because the council had not been following its own policy on the safe removal of asbestos.

Only four days previously the tenants forced the council into systematically hoovering central heating cupboards in the 70-odd



Ken and Hilda Unwin.

houses where work has already been done to ensure that no asbestos fibres remained.

This will offer no comfort to those people who had no idea that asbestos was being removed in the first place. A survey of 46 houses, in the form of a ten-point questionnaire, conducted by the tenants' own asbestos monitoring group the previous week, shows the scale of council neglect. Only one of those interviewed had been informed by the council that they had asbestos in their home:

"It was heartbreaking what we found on the survey" said Ken

Unwin, "One woman was just reading the questionnaire when she just stopped dead in her tracks. 'This stuff is a killer' she said, 'my babies were there when they were doing the work'. The poor woman just cracked up. She couldn't believe that no-one had told her.

"There was another incident where children had actually been playing with the masks the workmen had been wearing to protect themselves".

Ken described another incident at a house in Wharton Gardens: "The woman there wanted to show me how bad the workman-

WHEN THE Winsford War Memorial was recently moved to a new site, a time capsule was sealed into its base. Inside the capsule is a copy of the Winsford Guardian on which the front-page article, headed 'Militant storm', is about the asbestos campaign led by Militant supporters. So our struggles will be remembered in a future socialist society when the memorial is dug up.

ship had been. The cupboard's replacement board was hanging off and the screws were sticking out. While I was there I looked in the cupboard and it was a disgrace. On a ledge there was dust and rubbish including a hacksaw blade left there by the workmen.

"I then put my hand inside and pulled out what turned out to be a piece of asbestos cement jointing that had been left in the cupboard. If the council had been sticking to their own asbestos removal guidelines, it should be like a new pin in these cupboards to ensure no killer fibres can be breathed in by the tenants."

The environmental health officer was called to the house, where he immediately hoovered the cupboard himself and took dust samples for analysis.

Councillors and officials are trying to blame everyone but themselves. The environmental health officer and worse still a Labour councillor, John O'Brien, are trying to pin responsibility on

the British Gas workmen contracted to do the work.

An article in the local paper states that "Worried Winsford councillor John O'Brien is now demanding an investigation into the scandal, asking, are the workmen responsible still employed on the estate?" But did they know that they were working with brown asbestos? How much warning and training were they given about the dangers of asbestos?

The same O'Brien refused to allow Ken Unwin's emergency resolution on asbestos to be discussed at the Winsford Labour Party meeting he was chairing on 15 September. And O'Brien has alleged that Ken Unwin is using the asbestos campaign as a front for the *Militant* tendency!

So far the Labour councillors have failed to criticise the council for breaking its own safety guidelines. It is only initiatives taken by *Militant* supporters that have forced the council belatedly to do the work properly.

1834

Film Review

Convicted of felony

THE FILM *Comrades* looks at the birth of the British labour movement in a refreshingly new way.

By Dermot McSweeney and Helen Pyne

The Tolpuddle martyrs are the heroes transported to Australia for the 'crime' of defending their livelihoods against the 19th century ruling class.

The atmospheric shots and epic panoramas help to give the feel of the absolute rule of the rural 'squirearchy' backed up by the church and the law courts. It is a film for booing the villains and cheering the heroes but it is done with great integrity and credibility.

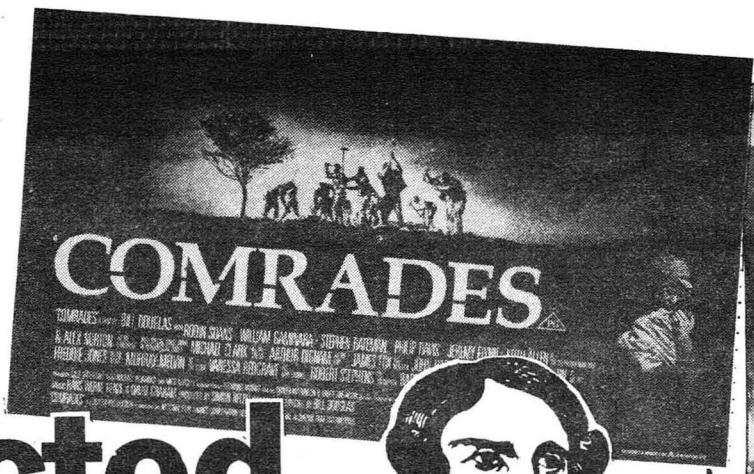
The writer and director Bill Douglas, famed for his autobiographical trilogy, "My Ain Folk" based on a childhood in a Scottish mining village, uses his experiences for good effect in the village scenes.

He uses the medium of a wandering village entertainer who shows his skills for food and shelter. As a source of news and information, he also becomes a confidant of the labourers' union. He eventually becomes their champion, helping to secure their pardon from Australian hard labour through the London and Dorchester Committee.

Unfortunately, by lingering a bit too long on the subsequent fate of the six men, it starts to draw the viewer's attention away from the main point of their sentence for illegal union and oath taking.

Nonetheless it is a very good film. Like *Business as Usual*, it is rare to see trade unions and political radicalism so sympathetically portrayed.

The premiere in the West End of London was a bit of a contrast.



James Brine



Thomas Stanfield



John Stanfield



James Loveless



George Loveless

TUC officials and top union leaders sat politely through the film, only seemingly getting animated when the interval gave them a chance to show themselves to the rest of the audience.

Norman Willis, TUC general secretary made a speech which made scanty reference to the relevance of the film to international struggles today. What the comrades in attendance from the South African union COSATU made of his speech can only be guessed.

Neil Kinnock was not there, but he did, according to reliable reports, go in incognito to the film clutching an additive free ice cream, a week later. He didn't mention the film in his Brighton speech. He probably thought it a bit old fashioned.

As with "Business as Usual", it is rare to see the struggle of working people so sympathetically portrayed.

Obviously workers are better paid now than 150 years ago, and have won a number of reforms. But that has been achieved by using the united strength of the working class just as happened in Tolpuddle.

The film is very relevant to the problems facing trade unionists and workers today, from GCHQ to the miners and Wapping and to future battles too.

The movie moguls don't often give you two chances in a few weeks to see the struggle of working people in a friendly and optimistic light, with a sincerity miles away from the money grabbers or the film for film's sake brigade. See it!



The Kinnocks outside the Ramada. Reflecting on class reality?

The real world 1987

THE RIGHT wing at Labour Party conference kept saying that their sanitised non-class approach would win workers in services and in the south to the labour movement.

But the workers in the plush hotel, the Ramada Renaissance, where the NEC stayed, were not impressed by their conduct.

One worker told us "They're supposed to be for the workers, but they pick the most expensive place in Brighton, £700 per night it can cost. I earn £105 a week before tax, the last hotel I worked for paid only £80 a week."

Split shifts

No wonder he was indignant; each NEC member's room cost £100 per night. That was more than his take home pay of £85 for a week's work. Page boys and YTSers working at the Ramada only manage to make a living on the tips. They have to work anti social split shifts; a porter's hours are 7am to 3pm and 3pm to 11pm.

Neil Kinnock got a 'bargain' when the hotel let him off paying for his £700 presidential suite, so keen were they to get the NEC booking.

But these sumptuous rooms are a thousand miles removed from anything the hotel workers can afford. The right wing can ask like John Edmonds of the General and Municipal (GMB): "What does solidarity mean to a girl on a cash register?" But solidarity is just what these workers need.

Militant has got hold of the Ramada's code of conduct for employees. It sets out rigorous conditions of employment giving sweeping powers to management and interfering with employees' individual rights.

Management has a right to search workers' lockers, baggage, clothes and even vehicles. "You will normally be present during the search and normally be accompanied by a security officer and witness," it says.

Petty rules govern workers' appearance such as forbidding "badly worn shoes". It stipulates the colour of workers' tights and socks and orders: "Beards are not encouraged and may not be worn in guest contact areas." No-one is allowed 'growing time' to cultivate a moustache while at work! All this for poverty wages!

Management have been forced to concede union rights to avoid a scandal over the Labour leadership staying in an openly anti union hotel. But new realism is no use to workers in this multinational concern. They need strong union organisation, a national minimum wage and a socialist Labour government.

THE RAMADA'S sister hotel the Ramada Inn in London will be hosts next April to the London Arms Fair. Guns for Iraq, guns for Iran, guns for everybody probably. With the huge profit margins on armaments, £700 plus a night will be nothing.

Left and Right

Open secrets

THE ECONOMIC League is one of the nastiest organisations in Britain. It runs what it calls an "employment checking service", in reality a 'blacklist' of union and political activists.

But now the new Director General Michael Noar seems worried by recent publicity about the 250,000 people on their secret files. Another agency modelled on the Economic League boasted of having information on 40-50,000 people in the Hull area, one sixth of the population!

The Economic League are inviting people who are worried to ring up either (01) 684 6978 or (01) 353 7672 and ask if they are honoured with mention. Noar calls it their equivalent of 'glasnost', an odd analogy for a virulent anti-communist.

Militant suspects a plot. After all, if you're not on their list and you ring up, you are openly ad-

mitting you are a union or political activist. The League's snoop troops will be on your trail straight away.

Will the real Michael Meacher...

LABOUR PARTY Conference passed a resolution calling for a 35 hour week and an inflation linked minimum wage of £120 or two thirds of the average wage. It was passed despite the opposition of the national executive.

Michael Meacher for the NEC said: "While we strongly endorse the principle of an economic wage, it is too far from the next election to put a precise figure on what that should be." Of course you can't say exactly what figure you'll fight for at the next election, that is why the resolution stipulated an inflation linked wage.

This week's *Tribune* lead article has no truck with putting off the

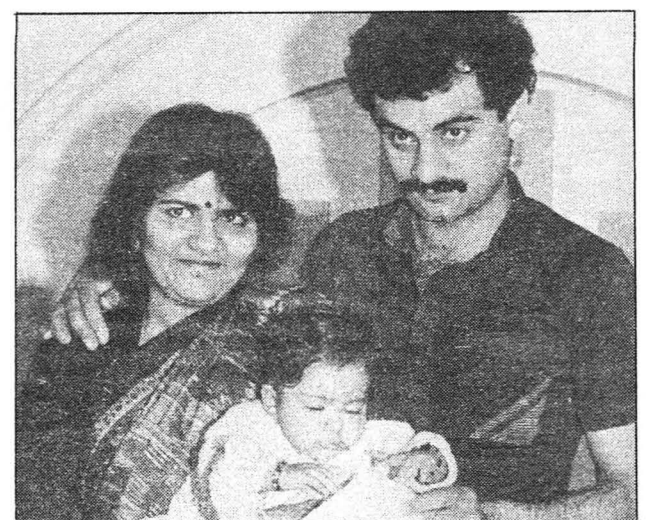
minimum wage decision until nearer the election. "A national minimum wage would offer new hope to millions of workers and their families and we simply cannot afford to wait another four years to strike that message home." The author is Michael Meacher.

Horse feathers

CAPTAIN MARK Phillips' escape with a mere fine when found guilty of 103 mph speeding while other miscreant commoners lost their licences, has provoked even the *Sun* to an attack on royal privilege. Phillips claimed that his car was essential for business.

One of the magistrates who accepted this story said they had been lenient because of "the great work he was doing for Britain in the equestrian field." Since when has a lost car licence stopped you riding a horse?

Victory over immigration laws



RENUKABEN LAKHANI, the young Asian woman who took refuge in the Hindu temple in Leicester has won the right to remain in Britain after an eight week campaign which gained enormous support locally.

The campaign forced the Tory Immigration minister to allow Mrs Lakhani entry on "an entirely exceptional basis," cancelling removal orders which would have separated her from her 16 week old daughter Riya and her husband Vipin who is a British citizen. Photo: Mark Salmon

No to YTS slave labour



Photo: Dave Sinclair.



Members of Labour's youth section, the LPYS, protesting about plans to reduce the age limit for membership.

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign is lobbying Parliament on 19 November to protest against slave labour on YTS schemes.

These schemes are just a device to save the bosses the expense of providing real jobs. As the reports below show, school leavers are paid a pittance for boring and even dangerous work and given negligible training.

Now the Tories want to force every young worker to go on these schemes or lose their right to benefit. But a massive campaign by young workers, students and the trade unions, can force them to back down.

So start now to mobilise support in your area for the biggest invasion of the Palace of Westminster for years. The future of a generation is at stake!

'Pay us the going rate'

JOHN GILMAN and CLIVE JONES spoke to a YTS worker in the Austin-Rover car plant in Cowley, Oxford.

"In the section I work in we do the same boring work every day. It's the same work as the normal production worker, but they get £120 a week whereas we get £28.50. We haven't learned a lot. We were told to get on that spot welder and put three spot welds here and six welds there.

"All day today I've been stood doing spot welds, just pressing a button from nine to four until we go home. There was no training—we just watched the foreman do a few welds, then we were on our own.

"There was a fire today in the factory caused by a spark from a spot weld machine. They fly everywhere. A box of gloves caught fire. There are a lot of hazards around.

"We do the same job as a usual line worker, but we don't

get any production or quality bonus. It says on top of my wage slip 'hourly paid'—that works out at 73p an hour! I found that we were taking the place of workers who are away from work.

"Austin-Rover are getting away with it—they aren't allowed to employ normal production workers under 18, even if they paid them the going rate.

"The trade unions are still strong. If they fought for it, we

might be able to get an increase. If they could get a law passed to say young people had to be paid at least £90 a week, it would be great.

"Management have told us that even though we're in a union, we're not allowed to strike. If we do it's instant dismissal. The other workers pay our union dues because they realise we are so badly paid."

Treated like a skivvy

MY YTS scheme is slave labour. I work 37 hours a week for £28.50 and I have a lot of responsibility and worry for the money I'm paid. I'm doing the work of a secretary and a receptionist and I'm treated like a real skivvy.

I have to deal with irate customers on the phone; often these people don't realise I'm only a receptionist and they swear at me for bad materials or overpayment.

I really work hard because I feel I may get a job at the end; if

I don't it'll be a real kick in the teeth. There was one particular incident at work where money went missing and it was implied that it was my fault. I felt really bad with the worry and I stopped eating for a week. Eventually I had to go to the doctor about my nerves—he said the stress was work-related.

I don't like to take days off sick because I don't have a cover at work and it would reflect badly on me. I would have peace of mind if the job was secure, but I've a strong feeling I won't be taken on. Why should they employ me on full wages when they can take on another YTS skivvy?

It's a vicious circle which ever way you look at it. You always feel conned on YTS. All I want is a proper job. Is that too much to ask for?

By a member of Ashington LPYS

Hand crushed

ON THATCHER'S flying tour of the West Midlands, she paused at a wood processing factory in the Black Country to compliment the bosses on the high productivity.

What a nerve! The firm was responsible for the maiming of a YTS trainee on his second day when he was left unsupervised working a sandwich machine. His hand is useless for life.

'Well done' said Thatcher in so many words, 'You've got the secret of British profitability, a cheap labour economy.'

Thatcher's confidence of a warm response was measured in the secrecy surrounding the tour. At Handsworth Tech, despite only finding out about Thatcher's visit the afternoon before, the lecturers struck, the students walked out, and local people and school students held an angry demo.

Protestors were enraged that the four-figure sum spent on the visit could have kept the nursery open at dinner time for a year and a half. Instead Handsworth Tech got five minutes of Thatcher—they were robbed!

The MSC had invited her to look at one very small room which was all smartened up. The rest of the college is in desperate need of money, not to mention the extension required which was planned seven years ago and yet never got built due to the Labour council carrying out the Tories' cuts.

By Sue Wilkie

Fighting Fund

Go for the big money

Area Received % of target achieved Target

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 East Midlands	974		3250
2 Wales	1206		4850
3 London	2023		9450
4 Eastern	600		3050
5 South East	407		2250
6 Northern	641		4600
7 Scotland East	323		2800
8 Southern	358		3100
9 West Midlands	559		4850
10 Yorkshire	1023		8450
11 Scotland West	329		3500
12 South West	168		1900
13 Manchester/Lancs	306		4050
14 Merseyside	427		7500
15 National	3458		6950

Total 12,810 70,000

SO KEITH Best is not go to jail after all. A City whizz-kid and former Tory MP convicted of fraud has ended up with a judicial wrist-slapping, while many miners are still paying off heavy fines and jobless for fighting to defend their jobs and communities.

We do not engage in 'insider dealing' to finance *Militant*. We depend entirely on the pennies and pounds of our readers to keep us going and expand the paper's frequency.

We have the ambitious target of raising £70,000 in three months, but the summer has caught us napping and we have only three weeks to raise just under £50,000!

It can be done, but only if we go for the big money—

dare to ask for the £100s, even the £1,000s, as well as the fivers, tenners, £20s and £50s.

An ideal opportunity is the current sales drive. Make sure that every buyer of the paper is asked to donate to the Fighting Fund and even those who refuse can give the £1 solidarity price. Collecting tins and appeal sheets should be on every sale and the cash will flow in!

How about taking an appeal sheet round with *Militant* at your workplace? Supporters in Staffordshire regularly raise Fighting fund money from Littleton miners.

Last week, supporters in central London and Oxford sent us £71 and £69 res-

pectively. An impromptu meeting in a Leeds pub on 'What *Militant* Stands For' raised £13 on the spot. A jumble sale in Blackburn netted us £26 and young supporters in the east of Scotland donated £15. How many other groups of young militants can give us a similar donation?

Organise a social in your area. Invite everyone you know and ask them to bring a bumper donation to help the *Militant* to flourish. Try anything and everything to raise your area's target figure and show our enemies in the City that we can achieve what we set out to do.

By Clare Doyle

Labour conference '87

Right's victory will be short lived

THIS YEAR'S Labour Party conference saw the leadership and right-wing attack socialist principles with a ferocity not seen since the 1950s. But if they imagine their dominance of the Party is permanent, they are gravely mistaken.

By Tony Cross

The right succeeded in winning support for a policy review, whose thinly-disguised purpose is to ditch those policies of which the Tory press disapprove. They managed to partially reverse the democratic gain of reselection of MPs.

Despite a tremendous battle by the Party's youth, the leadership got away with lowering the Labour Party Young Socialists' age limit and disbanding its regional structures. *Militant* supporter, Felicity Dowling, failed to win an appeal against expulsion. She will be the last victim of witch-hunts to be allowed to appeal to conference. The right to appeal has now been abolished.

The political degeneration of sections of the leadership is horrible to see. It is clear some of them would welcome abandonment of Clause 4, Part 4, the socialist commitment in Labour's constitution.

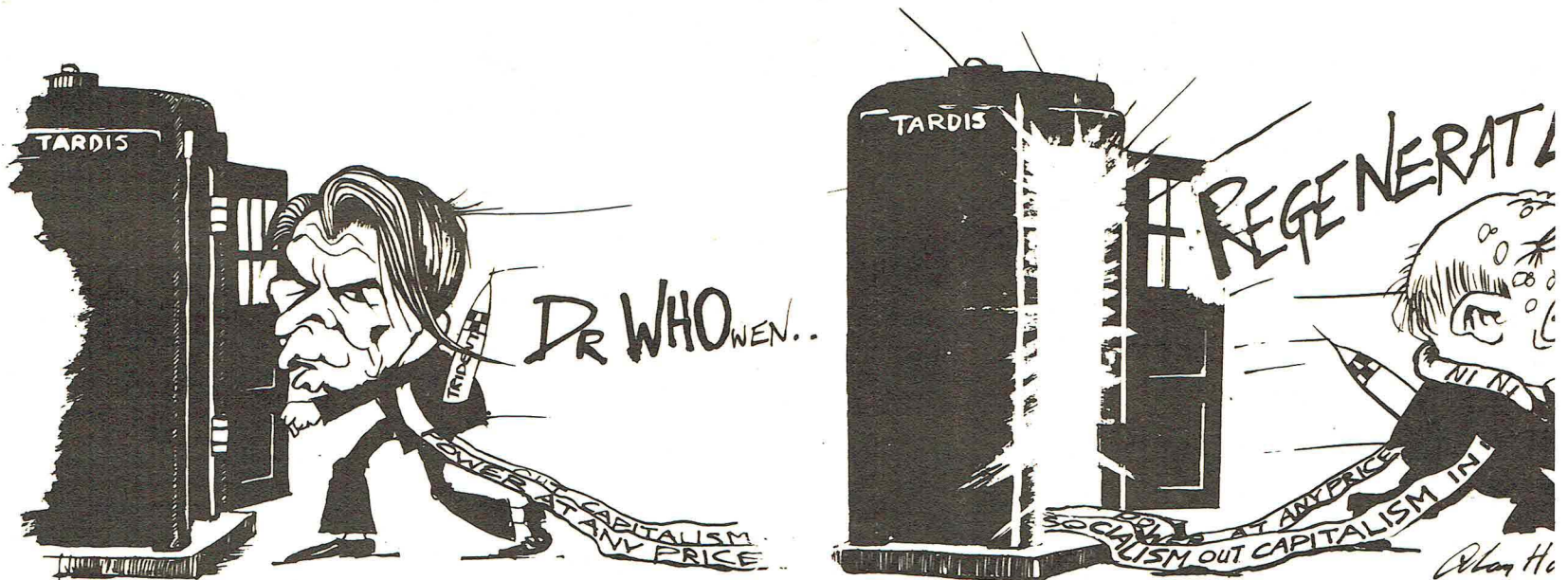
The Party's election campaign manager, Bryan Gould, has taken this degeneration to its extremes. He behaved like a delegate from the Stock Exchange, the institution which actually paid for a room in which he held a fringe meeting. There he expounded his utopian schemes for tackling the power of the monopolies by giving their employees shares in them.

Right NEC

In the elections to the NEC, the right-wing strengthened their position. Left-wingers Audrey Wise, Joan Maynard and Margaret Beckett lost their places and the new members are all on the right or travelling in that direction. Only four consistent left-wingers remain. The newly elected Gould and Joan Lester, as well as David Blunkett who topped the constituency section, were on the slates of both the soft left LCC, and the old right wing Forward Labour group. Even Ken Livingstone, another newly elected NEC member, was on the LCC and the hard left Campaign Group slates.

The right-wing appear completely triumphant. But to conclude that this reflected real conditions outside the conference hall, or a general mood among the working class, would be absolutely wrong.

Neil Kinnock in his speech to conference referred to the



'affluent society' of the 1950s, when Party leader Gaitskell launched his attack on Clause four, as if the exceptionally long capitalist boom of that time had returned.

Those days are gone forever for British capitalism. Millions in Britain today live on the breadline. 43 per cent of the population are at, or only 20 per cent above, the supplementary benefit level. And even those workers whose living standards may have temporarily improved, face tougher and tougher conditions at work, speed-up, excessive overtime and an uncertain future.

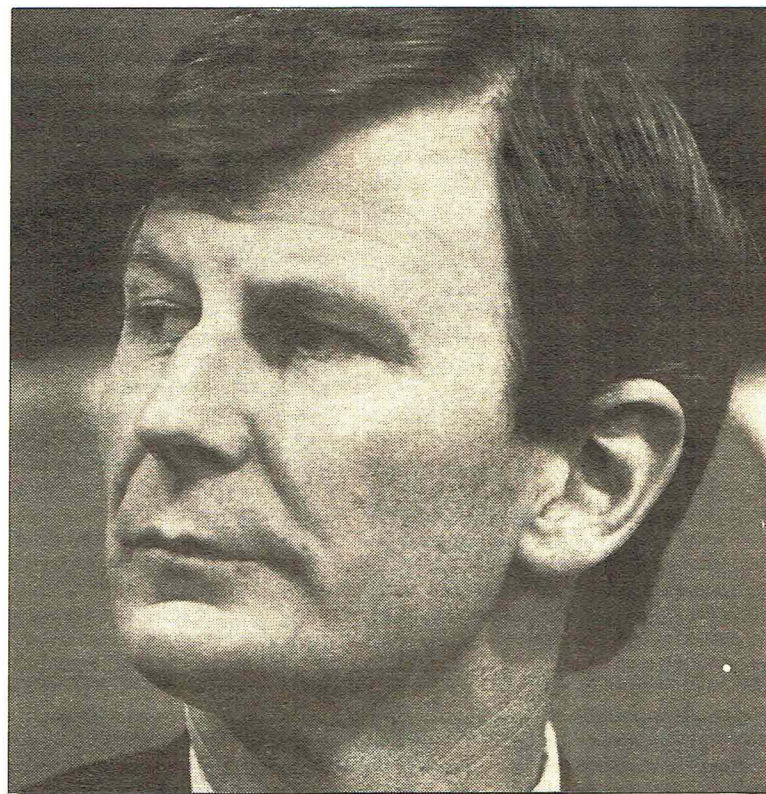
Labour's election programme failed to convince the slightly better-off in work, who so dominate the leaders' thinking, but it failed to inspire the most downtrodden. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed, especially young unemployed, abstained or even did not bother to register. Gould hardly even mentions them. Just 37 per cent of the electorate believed Labour "would reduce unemployment by one million in two years".

The Labour leadership should be explaining the urgent relevance of full socialism to all workers, all of whom will face the wrath of capitalism in crisis.

How then was the right able to win the vote on so many issues at the conference?

Firstly, Party conference gives only a very distorted reflection of the processes going on in the working class. Many delegates are sincere socialists, some of them enraged at the leadership's rightward shift, but others at present naively believing the leadership's assurances that they are only trying to 'modernise' socialism and that it is only a review. Some were just plain shell-shocked in the wake of the 11 June defeat.

But there is also a fair sprinkling of parliamentary place-seekers and petty and big-time bureaucrats in the unions or the



Bryan Gould (left) has taken the right's degeneration to extremes. He behaved like a delegate from the Stock Exchange, which paid for the room in which he held a fringe meeting. There he expounded his utopian views.

Party. Many of these have a vested interest in toeing the leadership's line. The leaders of the major trade unions (TGWU, GMB, NUPE) can see no alternative to Kinnock, despite the dreadful general election result the Party obtained under his leadership. They still wield considerable power in the Party and at the moment they are able to deliver the block vote into his hands on most occasions.

But the right's victories would have been impossible if it were not for the collapse of the so-called soft-left into their camp. They are mainly middle-class and often entered the Party as vociferous lefts. They won leading positions in the labour movement and

on local councils.

But they never saw socialism as a programme that is necessary and realisable here and now. And they lacked any confidence in the working class's ability to struggle. So, when faced with Thatcher's attacks, they would not face up to them in the way the Liverpool councillors or the miners did.

Now they have gone over completely to the right, uncritically backing Neil Kinnock, who travelled the same path slightly earlier than most of them. They have become the new right majority in the Shadow Cabinet and on the NEC.

Austin Mitchell MP, an old right extremist, wrote recently: "Some of the left advocate strate-

gies which wouldn't shame the Liberals, and as they move right they cross with new fundamentalists like Roy Hattersley moving the other way. We're all soft left now". He means they are all right wing now.

Out of this stable come Bryan Gould, Tom Sawyer and David Blunkett, who all played disgraceful roles at the conference. They are convinced by Thatcher's propaganda that the middle class and many workers are 'yuppies', whose living standards are improving and will continue to do so indefinitely. They are set on savaging Labour's programme and class basis to attract this mythical constituency. On £25,000 perhaps it is some of the

Crisis, I see no crisis

THE LABOUR leaders have been taken in by the Tory propaganda about 'prosperous', 'affluent Britain'. Brian Gould has even stated: "I believe no major crisis is in prospect". But can capitalist Britain really sustain uninterrupted expansion over the next few years?

While there has been some growth for the major industrial nations, including Britain, the rate of growth has been the slowest of all post-war upturns. Britain in the 1960s averaged 3 per cent a year, but only 1.3 per cent in the 1970s. The average since 1979 has been the same, despite this year's 3.5 per cent. Europe and Japan averaged 4.5 and 9 per cent respectively, in the 1960s, but only 1.7 and 3.8 per cent in the present 'boom'.

Even more significantly this weak 'boom' is based entirely on an increase in consumer goods, not investment. It is founded on

But this has led to a US budget deficit of \$120 billion and a trade deficit of \$160 billion. These deficits can only continue as long as Japan and West Germany are willing to lend back the dollars earned from exporting to the US.

But the dollar has declined in value 40 per cent in two years. So it is worth much less to these suppliers as payment for their goods.

Simultaneously, US manufacturing industry has ground to a halt because it cannot compete with foreign imports, and because interest rates for borrowing for investment have been driven too high, in order to attract foreign lenders. So despite arms spending the US economy is slowing fast, making it more difficult for Japan and Europe to expand.

Another world slump cannot be avoided within the next one, two or three years. The delay will make the final fall steeper. As soon as the US cuts back on spending, and either devalues the dollar further or introduces measures to block imports, all the advanced capitalist countries will face a slump in trade and production.

As for Britain, its relative decline over 40 years, has not been reversed by Thatcher. The situation is worse.

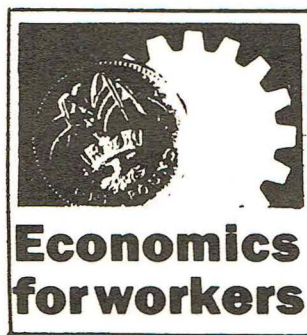
The Government has looked to the City and finance capital to revive British fortunes. But this sector is a parasite on the productive economy, and its revenues are insufficient to compensate for the loss in manufacturing production.

It has taken almost a decade for UK manufacturing to reach the levels of before the 1979 slump. Manufacturing investment, still below its 1979 peak, is so low that machinery worn out is not being replaced. Britain invests less of its national product than any of the top 23 capitalist nations, bar Portugal.

Britain has already moved into a net deficit on its trade payments with other countries, over £1 billion for 1986. In August 1987 alone, the deficit was £1 billion. The surplus from oil and revenue from the City are no longer enough to compensate for the huge imports of consumer goods that have been sucked in by the easy credit being showered on those in work. Britain's irreversibly weakened manufacturing sector cannot compete with foreign rivals.

Once the inevitable downturn arrives, the competition in British and world markets will intensify, and British industry will be shoved aside. That can only mean a new bout of redundancies, wage and spending cuts. Any illusion of 'prosperity and affluence' will be shattered.

By Bob McKee



massive consumer credit and particularly on enormous US arms spending, which raised the worldwide demand for goods and services, extending the 'boom' beyond its natural life.

But that extension can be only temporary. Arms production adds nothing to real values. While it can temporarily boost demand for other goods, it must further cut down resources available for investment in real production, thereby reducing overall profit.

Profitability is the key to the health of capitalism. Despite factory closures and redundancies throughout the capitalist world, average rates of profit remain 50 per cent below the levels of the 1950s and 1960s.

The real sickness of world capitalism is revealed by its excess capacity. While millions starve, capitalism leaves idle 25-30 per cent of its productive resources, because they are not profitable. And this grows with each successive cycle of boom and slump, in this epoch of economic downswing.

US capitalism has expanded by borrowing billions of dollars from Japan and Europe, at very high interest rates, to pay for arms production. As a result, it created a huge market for Japanese and West German, and even some British, exports.

Workers for Socialism campaign

THE WORKERS for Socialism campaign is stepping up its activity to defend the Labour Party's socialist traditions.

200 hundred attended the campaign's Labour conference fringe meeting, to hear MPs Eric Heffer, Dave Nellist and Ron Brown, as well as John Macreadie from the CPSA and Linda Douglas from Labour's national executive.

Successful rallies have been held so far in Manchester, Maesteg, Cardiff and Harlow.

The next big rally: Bradford, on 26 October. Speakers include Arthur Scargill, Eric Heffer, Frances Curran (Labour NEC member 1984-6) and Pat Wall.

Get your Labour Party/union branch to sponsor the campaign, and invite a speaker to address one of its meetings. Contact the Organising Secretary: Dave Campbell, 256A Hally Road, London E12.



Photos by Dave Sinclair

A masked Young Socialist addresses the Militant Readers' Meeting at conference. The right's reign of terror means that appearing on Militant platforms is likely to mean expulsion.

Labour MPs themselves who are the real members of this yuppie target group. But they are mistaking their own prejudices and what the press and media tell them are workers' attitudes, for the real feelings of the majority of ordinary voters.

An example of the sort of campaigning Party they wish to see was the suggestion of some NEC members that the youth section should confine itself to organising the occasional rally and distributing T-shirts and teddy bears!

The new right are also deeply committed to witch-hunts. They are the main architects of the attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists. Blunkett used the conference platform to spitefully attack the leading Liverpool councillors who exposed his own political weakness in action. Old-style right wing NEC trade union representative, Jack Rogers, despicably attacked Liverpool's outstanding house building record too. And he is from UCATT, the building workers' union!

With the desertion of the soft left, there was only a relatively small number prepared to speak out against the fundamental attacks on socialism within the Party.

Eric Heffer stood out among MPs with his defence of the Liverpool councillors and his explanation of how their record had won Labour support in that City.

Among the unions, the miners and the NCU voted with the left consistently and Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield spoke out in defence of socialist policies.

But it was the supporters of Militant who, despite the right-wing's prolonged efforts to exorcise Marxism from the Party, provided the only coherent and consistent opposition in virtually every debate.

And the right were competely

unable to answer the Marxist arguments. In the key debate on the election they ignored the crushing evidence of the results in Coventry, Liverpool and Bradford, that socialist policies are the best way for Labour to win those as yet uncommitted to it, and merely continued with their obsession that changes to the working class made socialism a liability.

But even in the course of the conference itself, the delegates' mood changed. The debate on Party organisation exposed the right-wing's mismanagement of the Party's finances. Felicity Dowling's appeal struck a defiant note against their purges. It won the sympathy of the majority of delegates and gave many the confidence to resist the rightward drift.

Gould booted

The right had started the conference confident that they could get away with almost anything. But Bryan Gould's reception in the economy debate showed members' revulsion at the new right's champagne socialism. It must have come as a shock to Gould to find that many conference delegates did not share the press's enthusiasm for his ideas!

This shift to the right at the top of the socialist movement is not isolated to Britain, however, it is an international phenomenon. Although Kinnoek and Gould seem prepared to move further to the right before election to office, than their Socialist counterparts in Europe.

But Mitterand in France, Gonzalez in Spain and Papandreou in Greece, in face of the very economic problems that Gould denies, and of the impossibility of lasting reforms, carried through austerity, cuts and even anti-union laws. Gonzalez reaped a whirlwind in

the shape of the mass protests of the school students, and following behind them many sections of the working class.

Now a 'hot autumn' in Spain of industrial action is predicted. It has already begun to have a political spin off with the leaders of the Socialist unions beginning to come into conflict with the Socialist government, which in turn will lead to a new push to the left in the Party.

With their present outlook, Kinnoek and Gould in government, inheriting the full force of British economic decline, would be compelled into similar measures. After a period of time they too would end up in confrontation with organised workers and even with the union bosses who back them now.

A mood of radicalisation would sweep the unions and then blow through into the Labour Party too. But much can change even before any new general election. The mighty struggles of workers under Thatcher will also push the movement to the left.

Kinnoekism at local Labour council level is already moving into conflict with NUPÉ, TGWU and GMB workers trying to protect their jobs and conditions. They can start moving into the Labour Party along with tenants, to continue their campaign on a second front.

The temporary dominance of the right and ex-left in the Labour Party is merely the prelude to a new and much deeper swing back to the left. A drive to the left that will be far more working-class based than the leftward movement in the late seventies and early eighties. This will carry on the transformation of the Labour Party into an organisation capable of meeting the needs of an embattled workers' movement and realising its historic aim of the socialist transformation of society.

South Korea Revolution pauses

SINCE THE government's promise of democratic reform in July, the young Korean working class has made a dramatic entrance onto the stage of revolution.

By Simon Cole

3,200 companies in almost every sector have been affected. Occupations, sit-down strikes, kidnapping of management and clashes with the police have been daily occurrences. In one incident a manager, held hostage, was forced to apologise at the shipyard gate for the conditions faced by workers.

In some cases wage increases of 50 per cent have been conceded, with rises of over 15 per cent common. The regime's system of labour control lies in ruins. New unions have been formed at the giant Daewoo and Hyundai corporations, with fresh young leaders elected, and held to account by the rank and file.

At Daewoo a 33-year-old strike leader was beaten up by workers the day after leading an occupation because they were convinced he had become pro-management. They elected a new leader, and almost purged him when he agreed to a compromise with management that didn't increase wages.

At Hyundai the union leadership faced a challenge only a week after the formation of the union. Even in the government-controlled Federation of Korean Trade Unions an opposition has developed, supported by over 50 unions, demanding the election of officials.

"What happens now? That depends on two things: whether management can gain the trust of the workers, and whether union leaders can control the rank and file. It doesn't look good on either account", commented the *Wall Street Journal*.

At the time of writing the strike wave has subsided. A government clampdown has led to the arrest of many radical activists in the stu-

dent and labour movements.

The regime is powerless at this stage to claw back the workers' recent gains. It is trying to keep the movement 'apolitical' and intimidate the activists.

But for the mass of workers, democracy in their organisations and in society as a whole, is a bread and butter question — a weapon in their fight for reduced working hours, higher wages and better conditions.

At this stage most workers are looking towards the opposition Reunification Democratic Party to carry through democratic reform. In particular, illusions exist in the more 'radical' leader, Kim Dae Jung. A recent rally of his in Kwangju, the scene of the 1980 uprising, was attended by 300,000.

Elections

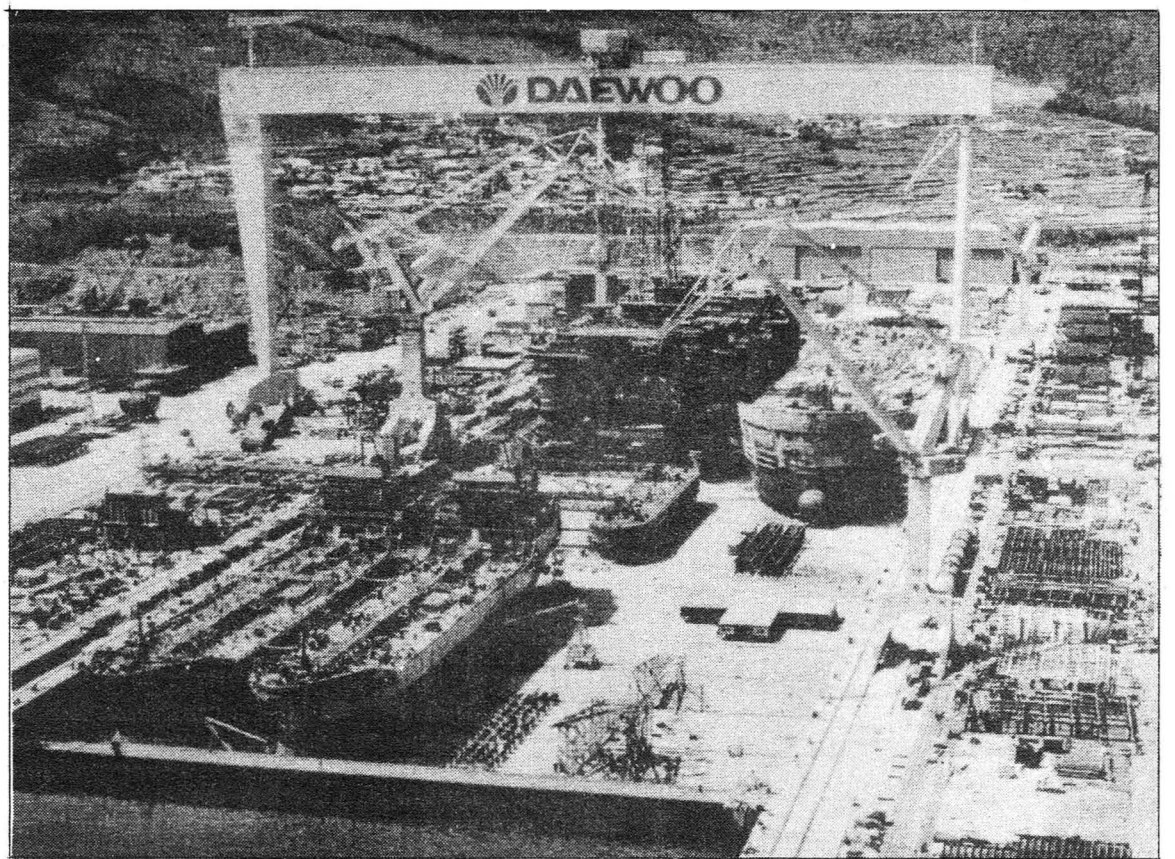
The generals are scared of an opposition victory in December's presidential election, and the expectations that it would arouse. Chief of Staff Park Hee Do has warned that "something unfortunate could happen" if Kim Dae Jung was to win.

A right-wing coup is ruled out at present, but the military regime is still intact.

The opposition's policy has been to appease the military. Kim Dae Jung has talked about 'forgiving dictators'. He has claimed that strikes will provoke the military, and refused to call for the release of imprisoned strikers.

He will probably stand down in favour of the more conservative Kim Young Sam in the presidential election, in the hope of appeasing the reactionary generals.

This policy is fraught with danger. Twice before, brief periods of 'democratic reform' have been followed by military coups. Only the working class has both the power and the interest to dismantle the military clique-ridden state machine and carry through democratic and socialist transformation of society.



Giant Daewoo shipyards. New unions have been set up in these big corporations.

Economic miracle —the end is in sight

SOUTH KOREA has managed average growth of 9 per cent a year over the past two decades. Gross National Product has shot up fourteen times over in the last 30 years.

By Mick Brooks

Similar "economic miracles" have taken place in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore.

Can capitalism deliver the goods after all?

In the industrialised countries, the capitalist class carried through the so-called "bourgeois-democratic revolution"—national unification and land reform, establishing parliamentary democracy, raising agricultural productivity and sending a steady stream of ex-peasants to work as wage labourers in the towns.

These are basic preconditions for the development of capitalism. But in the third-world countries dominated by imperialism, they have been carried out only very partially, and in a distorted manner. Korea is a classic example.

At the turn of the century Korea was one of the most backward countries in the world. Conquest by Japan led to a typically colonial development of mining and agriculture. The big farms and mines were Japanese-owned. All the newly-created wealth was sucked back to Japan.

After the Second World War US forces, occupying the South, were confronted with a revolutionary mood.

In the north, capitalism and landlordism were overthrown and a Stalinist regime took power. War between the north, supported by the USSR and China, and the US and its 'United Nations' allies in the south, ended in the partition of the country in 1954.

The war left Korea devastated. The economy in the South had nowhere to go but up. Since Korea remained in the 'front line' of imperialism's "global struggle against communism", the US puppet regime in the South became one of the largest recipients of US aid.

Land reform was carried out in the 1950s under massive pressure from below. But capitalist rule could only be maintained through the creation of a repressive anti-Communist state machine. Super-exploitation of the workforce has remained the bedrock of capitalism in South Korea.

With the country remaining on a permanent war footing, the regime took unprecedented powers over the economy. Growth was seen as essential for the maintenance of capitalism.

Lenin used the expression "state capitalism" to describe the military regime that planned the German capitalist economy in the interests of conquest during the First World War. South Korea is a classic example of state capitalism.

The government established a monopoly over the grain trade. By imposing low prices on the farmers, they were able to bring about a drift of the population from the countryside to factory jobs in the towns. Two-thirds of the people now live in the big cities.

Until recently the banks were state-owned. They still direct cheap credit to the big corporations according to targets fixed by the state.

The 'economic miracle' has brought no prosperity to the working people. On the contrary, it has only been won on the backs of a super-exploited working class.

A powerful industry ministry decrees five-year plans and undertakes the investment in infrastructure required by a modern economy. The state is responsible for two-thirds of all investment, and has effective control over foreign trade.

Industry is dominated by giant corporations, called "chaebol", such as Hyundai, Daewoo and Samsung, which imitate the Japanese conglomerates. Hyundai's interests, for example, are spread from shipbuilding, steel and electronics to car production.

But even this large-scale industrialisation has remained dependent on imperialism for markets, technology and finance. South Korea is head over heels in debt to the world's big banks. Standing at \$50 billion, its foreign debt is higher per person than Brazil's.

To pay debt charges and finance growth, the economy is crucially dependent on exports, in particular to the USA. Exports have regularly been more than 30 per cent of GNP. The number of cars exported has moved from nothing to 450,000 in three years.

But Korea remains a country poor in modern design and know-how. All the major car makers have deals with Western auto makers to build their models under license.

The Japanese companies evidently look with resignation to the imminent closure of their Stateside markets through protectionism, and salvage what they can by selling capital goods and technology to the Koreans.

Thus South Korea has not been able to kick foreign domination. As fast as trade surpluses with the US pile up, the deficits with Japan get bigger. As fast as they export cars to the US, they import car plants from Japan.

Any hiccup in the growth of world trade can have catastrophic effects on Korea. Industrialisation has only tightened the chains that bind its people to the capitalist world economy.

The 'economic miracle' has brought no prosperity to the working people. On the contrary, it has only been won on the backs of a super-exploited working class.

Koreans work an average of 54 hours a week—the longest in the world. Last year there were 120,000 industrial injuries and 1,700 deaths.

Official wage figures are a tissue of lies, but labour activists reckon half the workers in industry are living below the poverty line on £77-£115 a month. The minimum cost of living for a single person is £155, and £403 for a family of four.

Hence the enormous movement of labour and the growth of organisation since the liberalisation of recent months. The developing recession in the USA, and the disaster this spells for the Korean economy, will speed up the processes and push even greater sections of workers into struggle.

The conquest of free trade unionism for a sustained period would mean the banks and multinationals packing their bags. Then Korea's 'economic miracle' will finally be laid to rest, and with it, any hope of restabilising the capitalist system.



Workers confront police.

Bureaucracy lives on in Gorbachev's Russia

WHAT DO Gorbachev's reforms mean in practice? Strenuous attempts are being made by the Russian leadership to sell the idea that all the problems of Stalinist bureaucracy, corruption and repression are being solved.

Gorbachev has written a book, *Perestroika: Our hopes for our country and the world*, due to be published simultaneously in Eastern Europe, the USA and Britain in November.

'Labour' press millionaire Robert Maxwell is negotiating publication of an English daily edition of *Pravda*, mouthpiece of the Russian leadership.

Below, a young trade unionist who recently

visited Russia on an official delegation gives his observations—a picture of heavyhanded bureaucratic control, combined with hopes of real change awakened by Gorbachev's promises; a general understanding that capitalism has no alternative to offer, and signs of the anger against bureaucratic rule that will explode if Gorbachev fails to deliver.

For an explanation of what is happening in Gorbachev's Russia and the direction events are moving, readers should study Ted Grant's analysis, *Russia: Reform or political revolution?* (See box).

"If you come back next year Trotsky definitely will be in the picture"

"THE FIRST time that the delegation could ask questions was at a meeting in a trade union college in Moscow, on our first day in Russia. Then the Russian officials really got a grilling.

One delegate asked about the impact of new technology in the Soviet Union. An official replied that people would have to change their jobs. This didn't go down too well. When he was pressed further about the possibility of reducing the working week he avoided the question.

They were very good at doing this. Whenever there was an awkward question, they would skirt round it or put it down to problems with the interpreter.

But they made some real blunders. One of the officials at this meeting said that women ought to "go back into the home". There was uproar, and the women delegates wanted to walk out. But they were persuaded to stay and argue it out. Even one or two British delegates with Communist Party affiliations were upset.

"Now they have started making these changes, no-one would take them back"

The Communist Party's support for gay rights also took a knock. A Russian official was asked whether homosexuality was illegal in the Soviet Union. "Yes it is", he replied, "and it will remain so. Personal relationships are too complicated without other deviations."

But many of the Russians were keen to talk. They were proud of their past. Political education, taught in all schools, is dealt with as part of history. It isn't seen as a compulsory waste of time like religious education in British schools.

There is genuine interest in Russia's history and the revolution. They say of Britain: "You are the next people who must do it". They just cannot conceive of a situation with four million unemployed, riots and so on. When we said the cost of somewhere to live was anything from £30 upwards, they thought we meant per month, not per week. Many Russians had criticisms

TED GRANT sums up the basic problem created by the Stalinist regime in the USSR, and explains why Gorbachev's measures can't solve this problem:

"The bureaucratic caste of millions is clogging the state machinery and the economy. Every section of the state machine ... and the 'Communist' Party is moulded for the purpose of defending the interests of the ruling elite. It is true the bureaucracy defends state ownership and the plan, but it does so not in the interests of society as a whole, but because this is the source of privilege for itself...

"Gorbachev is a consummate representative of the ruling caste, and has all the limitations of the bureaucrat. He wants to transform Russian society without altering the basic structure of bureaucratic control...

"Gorbachev lives like a millionaire or an American ruling politician. But, alarmed by the economic stagnation and its threat to Russian society, fearful of the workers' inevitable reaction, he is trying, on the basis of bureaucratic rule, to change the

situation...

"However, in a sense a political revolution has begun. It will be a protracted process with many sharp turns and sudden changes. Gorbachev wanted to eliminate the worst excesses of the bureaucracy. For a temporary period he may succeed in doing this. The lifting of the long-suppressed lid of criticism will have an effect in all areas of Soviet society. Half a reform will get results economically, as it already appears to have done, for one or two years perhaps...

"Science, art, philosophy will receive a spurt for a temporary period... But the fundamental privileged role of the bureaucracy is the main fetter on the development of Soviet society, and this remains intact. Not evolution but political revolution, preparing the way for the rule of the working class, is inevitable."

Read Ted Grant, *Russia: Reform or political revolution?* Available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price 30p plus 10p postage.

of their own country—mostly about the difficulties in getting consumer goods. There was widespread support for Gorbachev's reforms. Most of the people we met were very loyal. "We've come this far", they say, "from being a very backward country to a powerful nation. Look at Britain: unemployment, bad housing, riots; and you criticise us".

One official, who specialised in Britain, said he'd heard about the *Militant* rally in the Albert Hall. He commented: "They are the only ones who know how to fight".

Stalin

Memories of Stalin have been locked away. We went with our interpreter into a shop where they sold posters. "Where are the posters of Stalin?" I asked. "You won't find any", he replied. "Stalin and Trotsky were just as bad as each other. They both did more damage to communism than anyone".

If you try to talk about Trotsky they clam up. At the same time they seem ashamed about Stalin. I mentioned the Stalin-Hitler

Pact, and they went quiet.

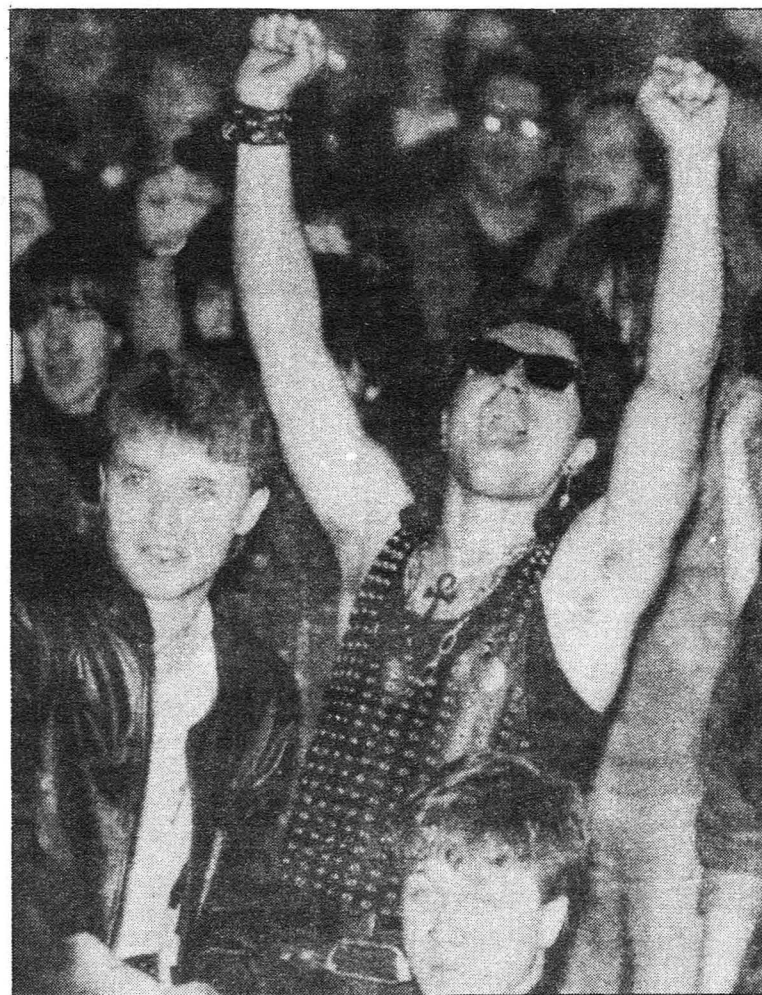
In the shop we pointed to a poster with the famous photograph of the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty in 1917 at which Trotsky was present. "Where's Trotsky", we asked. "There he is", replied our guide. "But that's not him", we protested. "Well, if you come back next year, Trotsky will definitely be in the photograph somewhere", the guide said.

There are massive illusions in Gorbachev. He is seen as the man who will sort it out.

I met a student in the street and got talking. He saw Russia as better than the West. But his main gripe was about consumer goods.

Generally people had a good awareness of world affairs. But they would still prefer to talk about how much you want for your jeans. They would give virtually anything you asked for a Sony Walkman. People seemed to have enough money, but not much to spend it on, especially since alcohol has been banned from the shops—one of the less popular reforms.

The student seemed nervous, and kept looking over his



Youth at rock concert.



Gorbachev.

shoulder. I think he was dealing on the black market. He invited us back to his flat and his girlfriend was upset when we went in. He started opening drawers all round the room full of various items ready to exchange for almost everything we had on.

A worker from a Moscow factory explained to me how they had just elected a new foreman. He was elected from the shop floor and was much better than the previous one "who didn't know what he was doing".

He thought now that they had started making these changes no-one would take them back.

That makes you consider the reaction from ordinary Russians if there was an attempt to reverse the reforms, and the illusions in Gorbachev are broken."

IN A forthcoming issue *Militant* will deal with the renewed debate in the Soviet Union about the role of Trotsky—next to Lenin the greatest leader of the Russian Revolution—and the latest attempt by the bureaucracy, after decades of official silence, to once again 'disprove' his ideas.

CIA plot

WOULD A democratic western government resort to assassinating its political opponents? Officially, no. But as a new book reveals, it has security forces who might be prepared to do just that—unofficially.

Veil: The secret wars of the CIA by Watergate investigator Bob Woodward gives the example of an elaborate plot by the late CIA chief, Bill Casey, and Saudi Arabian agents to murder Sheikh Fadlallah, leader of the Islamic fundamentalists in Lebanon.

Incredibly, a car bomb was chosen for the attempt. The Sheikh escaped unhurt, but 80 passers-by were blown to pieces, and another 200 wounded.

Such revelations must be seen as a warning by the labour movement of just how far the 'loony right' could go in the venomous hate campaigns which will increasingly be unleashed against left leaders.

Romania

PUBLIC SPLITS are surfacing in the previously monolithic leadership of the Romanian 'Communist' Party. In a Politburo meeting, two ministers were blamed for Romania's energy crisis and dismissed by Party boss Ceaucescu.

But, amazingly, they talked back, and their disagreements were reported on the official radio.

Such glasnost is without precedent in Romania. Most likely it reflects serious divisions within the creaking regime, dominated by the Ceaucescu family, which is presiding over the worst economic crisis in Eastern Europe.

A major split at the top could open up the floodgates of workers' revolution from below, sweeping aside the ruling bureaucracy and sparking off similar movements throughout the Stalinist countries.

A cheap alternative?

Dear Comrades,

I could hardly believe my ears when I heard James Anderton (Chief constable, Greater Manchester) calling for castration for persistent rapists and other sex offenders.

Removal of the testicles will not actually render the male incapable of carrying out the crime it is meant to prevent, since rape is a crime of violence and does not come about merely as a result of someone being 'oversexed' which is the idea put about by the media.

Sentencing in the courts attaches more importance to crimes against property than against the individual. Attacks on women are often seen as the lesser of two evils as far as the judges are concerned.

It is working class women who are the most vulnerable to attack. The areas where we live are almost always dimly lit and council estates are notorious for bad street lighting and dimly lit subways. The call for castration has not come about because Anderton feels sorry for those women that are raped, but because it is seen as a cheap alternative to psychiatric treatment or prison sentences. Prison will at least keep the rapist where he cannot rape; something castration simply could not achieve.

Only by overthrowing capitalism in favour of a socialist society will we be able to remove the root causes of the tensions and frustrations that erupt in violent crime.

Yours fraternally
Mara Dale
Southampton

Party priorities

Dear Comrades,

This week's Labour Party conference in Brighton illustrates the direction in which the party leadership are moving, with exhibition space being allotted to such friends of the working class as British Nuclear Fuels, Nat West Bank, British Telecom, representatives from the chemical industry and incredibly a group called Sort Out Sunday, which campaigns among other things for an end to double-time for working on Sundays.

Meanwhile the conference will

be lobbied by LPYS members and Labour Party headquarters workers protesting at redundancies and the closure of *Socialist Youth* and *Labour Weekly*. These measures were justified by the leadership because of the financial crisis within the party, which however did have enough money to spend £100,000 on internal enquiries last year, £175,000 on MORI polls and £76,000 for an ad in the *Daily Telegraph*!

Yours fraternally
Duncan Harris
Bolsover Labour Party



Labour Party employees lobby the Party leadership against redundancies and closure of publications. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Fascist thugs exposed

Dear Comrades,

The recent rise in fascist activity in Bootle has been confronted by the local Labour Party Young Socialists. The fascists had been fly-posting in the area and appearing in the local shopping centre waving a large Union Jack and selling *British Nationalist*.

The local LPYS responded immediately, holding a well attended meeting and an anti-fascist picket in the shopping centre where seven *Socialist Youth* and 18 Militants were sold. About 30 people attended, mainly

youth, but luckily for the fascists they decided not to show up.

A public meeting involving the trade unions and local party is being organised. Continued work of this nature will ensure that far from the fascists gaining any support they will be exposed for what they are, racist thugs whose intention is to smash the organised working class.

Yours fraternally
Tony McNulty
Bootle LPYS

Sales on target

Dear Comrades,

At the polytechnic in one of the most 'yuppified' areas, Oxford, the ideas of Marxism are spreading. In one and a half hours today we sold 21 Militants and got seven names for the LPYS.

We also sold 20 Militants on an estate sale. At this rate we'll beat our target of 200 papers with ease. Let this be a lesson to the right wing. The more they attack us the better we do.

Yours fraternally, Andy Wales, Oxford

Telling the truth

Dear Comrades,

Having read an article in *Militant* (25/9/87) on 'GMB victory' against the Liverpool City Council I have to congratulate the paper for publishing the truth, not like the *Tory Liverpool Echo* who were hell bent on misleading the public about the dispute. They said the grave diggers were on strike, which was a lie, and to my disgust they tore into our union convenor which was very uncalled for.

They are supposed to be a democratic paper, but they only printed their distorted views. So well done *Militant* on such a good article.

Yours fraternally, C White, Grave digger,
Allerton cemetery

Classified ads

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

West Leeds YS leaving social. Friday 9 October. Cardigan Arms, Kirkstall Rd, Leeds. £1 before 10.30pm, £1.50 after. All proceeds to FF.

Wanted. Old and broken gold and silver jewellery. All proceeds to fighting fund. c/o MA Gibson, 346 Croft Rd, Stockingford, Nuneaton CV10 7DY, Warwickshire.

Wanted co-op and green shield stamps. Loose, part or full books. All proceeds to the fighting fund. Send c/o Militant circulation, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

Fighting privatisation one day conference. Organised by Hull city council joint shop stewards committee. Saturday 10 October 9am-5pm at YPI, George Street, Hull. Speakers include Pat Wall and John Prescott MPs. For details contact Conference Organiser Alan Shadforth, 1LB Avenue, Clyde Street, Hull. Tel 572692.

"Militant for Labour and Youth" enamel stud badges now available £1 each. Red plastic fighting fund collecting tins £1 each. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg, 50p each. Stickers available in rolls of 250; 'Kick out the Tories', 'No slave labour on YTS', £2.50 per roll. All available from fighting fund dept, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% p&p.

Walthamstow. "Pakistan - why every city is becoming Beirut". Saturday 10 October 6pm. Ross Wyld Hall. Speakers Farooq Tariq Qayyum Butt (Ex-MP Pakistan Peoples Party) Linda Douglas (member Labour Party NEC) and Asian songs and music. Organised by *The Struggle* and the Labour Party Young Socialists. For info ring: 01 729-2690 or 01 551 2324.

Militant meetings

Yorkshire Militant Womens Weekend School. 21-22 November. Residential school concentrating on trade union issues, particularly privatisation. Also world economics and women in the labour movement. All meals included £7.50, deposits needed. Limited places, contact Iris Barrow, 44 Windyhouse Lane, Manor, Sheffield. Tel 640095.

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

Hitting jobless hardest

Dear Comrades,

This is an example of how to bridge the skills gap. A single woman, living in the east end of Glasgow, with no prospects of employment, decided to go on a Job Training Scheme.

She was sent to a fish factory and she started 'training' by learning how

to assemble boxes. As she was only receiving £27 per week she was a little annoyed, and complained to the job centre.

She was quickly promoted to the post of packing fish into the boxes she had assembled. Each Friday the workers left with their full wage packets, but she was only 'training' (al-

though doing exactly the same job) so she took home £27.

The employer concerned didn't pay a penny for her labour. She left the JTS and now faces problems with the DHSS.

Yours fraternally
P Barry
Strathclyde NALGO

Dear Comrades,

I've been unemployed two and a half years after working for 40 years. No-one's giving me any benefits for nothing, I've more than paid for them.

I've made 2,000 job applications and had 80 interviews. Now they are trying to force me onto a Community Programme, visiting kids and teaching them English, maths and social science, and all other sorts of social work for £60 per week!

I'm not prepared to be used to put properly trained social workers out of a job by working for less than the rates of pay they should be getting.

I asked the interviewer if he recommended the scheme, he said 'Yes', so I said "In that case I'll have your job and you can do this." He didn't take up the offer.

Yours fraternally
Terry Barratt
Bow, London



New schemes and changes in benefits for the unemployed try to put the blame for unemployment on the individual. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,

Last week the government's social services minister, Moore, launched an attack on the welfare state.

The welfare and social services need more money, not less. What makes it worse, is that nearly 1.5 to 2 billion pounds a year, for the last eight years, have been cut from the welfare state.

Most of this money has gone directly to pay for the 6 to 7 billion pounds a year in tax cuts to the idle rich. Now they want to cut even more!

Moore didn't point out that if it wasn't for people like him, we wouldn't be in this mess in the first place. They caused the unemployment, homelessness and poverty, and are now trying to say it's our fault!

Moore will be happy to see thousands freeze to death this winter, it's cheaper than keeping them alive.

Yours fraternally
Andrew Shepherd
Cleveland

Militant Irish Monthly out now.

Articles on Socialist candidates standing in Belfast city council by-elections. A preview of this month's Southern Irish Labour Party Conference. The latest situation in the North and South and lots more.

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Safety first when profitable

Dear Comrades,

I overheard my wife's friend discussing a trip home to see her family in Orkney. She often travelled with her two kids on the plane but this time she was told that due to new procedures and/or 'safety' reasons, two kids must now be accompanied by two

adults.

She explained that this was impossible since her husband had to work but had the idea of offering to pay for two adult fares and one child fare instead. She said she was amazed at how quickly they accepted her booking.

It just goes to show how 'procedures' and safety can be sacrificed for the sake of a quick profit.

Yours fraternally
Billy Walker
Edinburgh

What future for the building industry?

Fast lane to Europe grinds to a halt

Profits before safety

WORK ON the Channel Tunnel was recently halted when construction workers in Britain and France took industrial action.

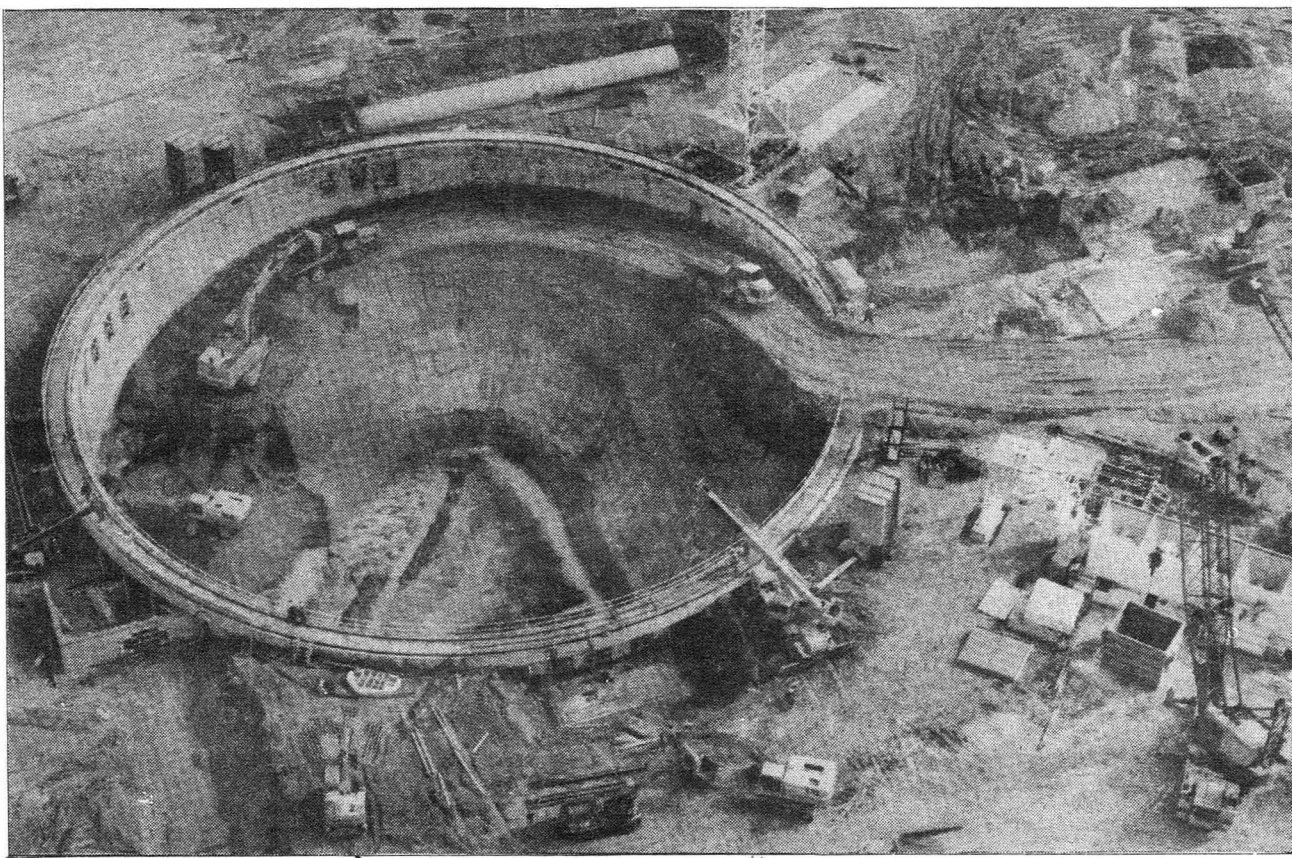
By Joe Stewart,
UGO42 branch,
London Region Ucat.

On 20 August building workers at the Sangatte site in northern France walked off the job demanding more money, paid holidays, reimbursement of transport costs and full union rights. Transmanche Construction (TMC), the French half of the consortium building the tunnel, caved in after two days.

All 151 workers on the site came out. All are members of the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT). Robert Brun, the CGT union secretary was quoted as saying, "Pay will be back on the agenda in the near future. The increases conceded by Transmanche will still leave many Channel Tunnel workers on a basic wage near to the French legal minimum."

"If negotiations on health and safety, permanent contracts of employment and job regrading are not concluded satisfactorily our members will consider further action."

Meanwhile, an unofficial strike by Ucat and TGWU



The massive Channel Tunnel construction site at Sangatte, France.

members brought construction of the four tunnel lining factories at the Isle of Grain casting yard to a halt on 26 August.

Over 100 men downed tools in a dispute over bonus payments. The basic rate on the job is only £2.26 per hour with a bonus rate of £1.40.

After being out for a week a return to work was

negotiated on the basis of an independent assessor, General Site Services of Manchester, to examine the bonus scheme and report back at the end of September.

Consortium

Alistair Morton, British joint chairman of Eurotunnel was quoted as saying,

"The consortium would share with the contractors savings achieved by finishing ahead of schedule. Contractors could gain more than £100 million under the arrangement". (*Financial Times*, 22 July).

Any builder knows that to finish a job ahead of time means cutting corners on the health and safety, pay and conditions of the

workers involved. The attitude of Transmanche to the building workers can be shown when earlier this year Frank Byrne, a construction industry organiser for the TGWU was refused access to the Isle of Grain site, and it was only after pressure from the TGWU head office that Byrne received facilities to sign up members.

Nationalisation vital

THE RECESSION of the early 1980's cut output in the construction industry by over 15 per cent, putting 400,000 skilled building workers on the dole. In the same period the number of apprentices was cut from 14,000 in 1980 to just over 7,000 in 1986, mainly in direct labour organisations.

A corresponding fall has taken place in union membership, with Ucat losing over a fifth of its membership in the last two years alone. These factors have had a marked effect on industrial relations on the major projects and the industry as a whole.

Shortage

Ivor Williams, an industrial advisor to the National Economic Development Office (NEDO) has played a key role in the engineering construction industry as far as the bosses are concerned.

By developing central control, national agreements and encouraging clients, unions and contractors to 'get together', to quote Williams himself, "These developments have brought negotiations and the control of industrial

relations back to responsible national (union) officials.....Through removing from sites the every day preoccupations of negotiation and bargaining, project and site management are able to concentrate on those matters which contribute to the completion of the job".

The irony for the bosses is that the government is saying that what the building industry needs is less centralisation, more 'local bargaining' (regional pay) and 'flexible labour responsive to the market' (self employment).

The point is however, that what has kept the big sites 'quiet' for the last six years or so is the opposite, centralised pay.

With the present level of activity in construction there is already a sizeable shortage of skilled building workers in the South East and London in particular. Self employment and labour-only subcontractors, endemic in these areas, are a double-sided coin for the bosses. When times are hard, labour can be shed at an hour's notice.

It also means in the present climate the labour force becomes volatile, with workers switching jobs

frequently and leaving employers wondering how they can complete jobs on time.

This situation has led to wage rises of over 30 per cent in the last few months for skilled building workers compared to the four and a half per cent negotiated for building and civil engineering nationally.

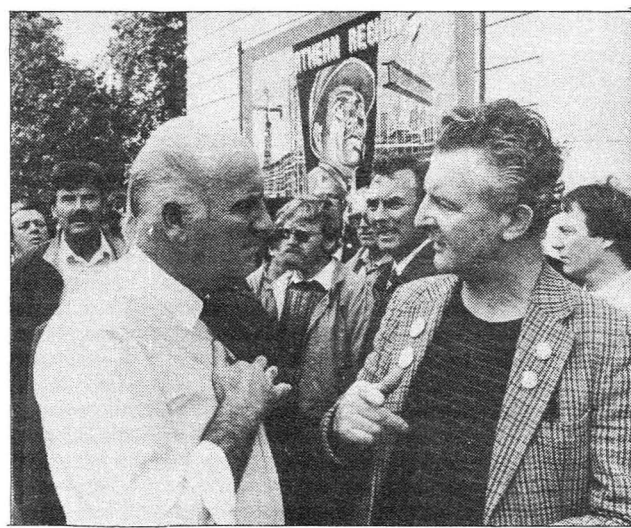
When the building firms talk of a skill shortage, what they mean is relatively high wages.

A direct result of this is the insistence by Transmanche on full direct employment for all workers engaged on the tunnel. Some sections of the movement have recently argued that if we can get the big firms like Laings, Wimpeys, and so on to agree to 100 per cent direct employment that by itself will lead to decent pay and conditions.

Docklands

Only Militant unionism could ensure full advantage was taken. But the demand for nationalisation will be increasingly taken up by building workers, both self employed and directly employed.

By the early 1990's along



Recent construction workers pay lobby.

with the Channel Tunnel, jobs like Canary Wharf, Hinckley C, Sizewell B, Stansted, the Severn Barrier, the Royal Docks project, the Thames Crossing, will all be reaching a peak of activity. The Building Employers Confederation (London Region) are already talking of 'tens of thousands of new jobs' in the Docklands area alone.

In one of the more sober construction industry journals it recently mentioned that a major contractor put in a tender of £55 million for a job it estimated at £50 million (the firm had a full order book and didn't really want the work). It turned out to have the lowest tender and got the job making a profit

of £5 million plus on one site.

This one example is to illustrate what the next few years will mean for the building companies—massive profits.

Getting good union organisation on the big sites will come to be seen as the only way of ensuring decent pay, conditions, and health and safety. It will also be central to making the leadership accountable and democratising the structure of the building unions, Ucat, TGWU, AEU (construction) and indeed the EPTU.

As far as the building bosses are concerned, the last six years have been the calm before the storm...

ACCIDENT FIGURES for 1986, published by the Health and Safety Commission, once again demonstrated the building industry's appalling record. There were 107 deaths, only one less than the total killed in the whole of British manufacturing industry in 1985. The number of serious injuries was 2,244 (1985 figures), double the figure for any other industry.

These figures represent the relentless increase of the past few years—an increase which continued even in the year of the building industry's 'Site Safe' safety campaign.

While the construction industry has always been recognised as highly dangerous with machinery poorly supervised and not used properly, there are more fundamental reasons for the growing toll.

Construction has always been a cut-throat business. However, new trends in the industry are serving to make matters far worse. The use of both subcontracting and management contracting and the extensive use of lump labour.

Management contracting absolves the major contractors, such as Mowlem, Laing and Bovis, of any responsibility as most of the actual work is divided and often divided again into smaller subcontracts, many of which are taken by cowboy operators who don't give any regard to even basic safety precautions.

On top of this, there is pressure to get work finished quickly to maximise the contractor's profits. This leads to dangerous short cuts. The bigger and allegedly better organised sites are not much different as the profiteers pressurise the engineers and construction workers in the same way.

A worker on huge Rose-hugh Stanhope Broadgate development in London told me of a young lad of 23 who was working as a steelfixer. He fell from unguarded steelwork, leaving a wife and child.

In the London Docklands I have seen men working in unshored deep trenches in sandy soil, and others working over dangerous water currents on only one scaffold board. While health and safety officers do swoop onto sites and issue prohibition notices, because there are so few of them abuse of health and safety procedure is still rife.

The construction unions must mount a serious and concerted campaign to unionise the unorganised sites and exert pressure to step up observance of safety measures.

However, in the long run only the elimination of private enterprise, putting the industry into the hands of the working class can effectively ensure that it is run safely and in the interests of all.

By Tim White

Defend jobs and services

Hull council workers reject offer

VOTING IS nearing completion on the local government manual pay deal. So keen are management to have this deal accepted that they gave GMBATU shop stewards representing Hull City Council parks workers the time and facilities to enable them to address the entire membership. This is no mean feat as our members are spread all over the city.

Unfortunately for management, they did not realise that we were giving a strong recommendation that the deal be rejected. Local management are hoping the deal is accepted nationally as they see it as the tool to hammer terms and conditions under threat of privatisation.

Our 'radical socialist council' will no doubt be carrying out 'radical socialist cuts' as they have just been rate-capped and have an £11 million deficit. Guildhall bureaucrats will look eagerly to the new pay deal to give them the opportunity to downgrade large groups of workers and save substantial amounts of money.

Workers' jaws dropped open as we explained that this deal meant the national agreement was not worth the paper it was written on. Local negotiations would lead to flexible hours, flat-rate overtime, fixed holidays and no effective right of appeal.

At one fell swoop, terms and conditions fought for over decades could be destroyed. Disbelief turned to anger.

"How could the national trade union leaderships recommend such a blatant sell-out?" they asked. At this point we explained about 'new realism', which most ordinary members did not know about. Now they know.

We also explained about the importance of membership involvement and making the trade union leadership accountable. A mood of anger is building up and we are likely to have the

By Alan Shadforth
GMB steward and treasurer Hull City Council JSSC, personal capacity.

largest branch meeting for years.

I am not a betting man but, given the campaign of explanation, leaflets and bulletins by shop stewards, I think my branch will decisively reject the offer and treat it with the contempt it deserves.

Several other local authority branches covering Hull City Council workers have already booted it out. Let's hope that if the offer is turned down nationally, when it comes to negotiating a new deal the national trade union officers put as much time, effort and resources into campaigning for a 35 hour week and a decent living wage as they have in trying to persuade us to accept the current atrocity!

Fighting leadership is being provided locally by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC). We have organised a conference—'Fighting Privatisation' for Saturday 10 October. Speakers include John Prescott MP, Pat Wall MP, Phil Beeley, and CPSA and LPYS speakers.

The meeting starts at 9am at the Young Peoples' Institute, George Street, Hull. As well as approaching all public sector trade unions we have also contacted tenants organisations and community groups to join us in the fight.

Wage offer—'no way'

AT A meeting of the Nupe Central London branch (ex-GLC) on 19 September, our full-time official recommended acceptance of our national wage claim. As the mood was overwhelmingly against he would not allow a vote, arguing that there weren't enough at the meeting to justify one.

We organised another meeting on 28 September—with over 200 members in

attendance. The official who had promised to come, didn't. I explained what the wage claim meant, using material from the Nupe Broad Left pamphlet and *Militant Council Worker*.

The meeting unanimously threw out the proposal with not even an abstention against. This shows that once workers know what the claim is they want no part of it. My members also

voted for more industrial action.

P.S. At the first meeting the full-time official bought a copy of *Militant Council Worker*—maybe that's why he didn't come back!

By Terry Penton
District shop steward,
Nupe Central London

Oppose Lambeth cuts

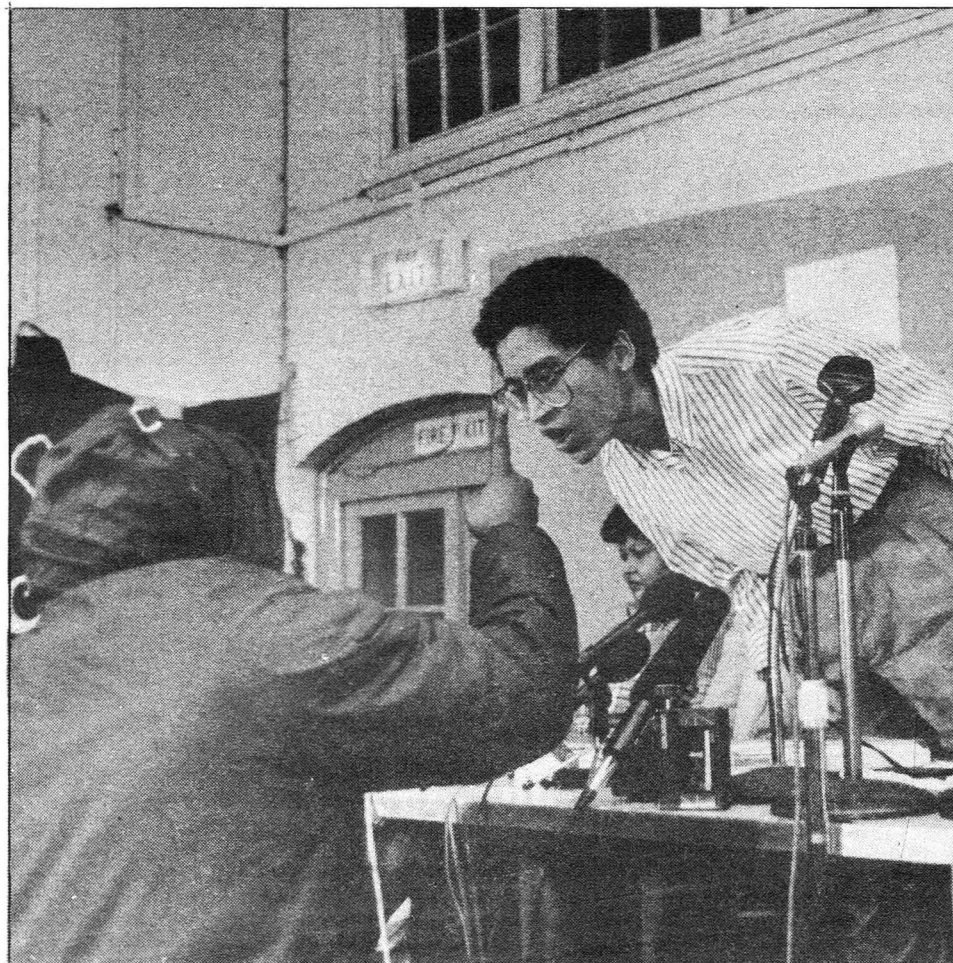
IN 1986 the Lambeth Labour group was elected on a manifesto of no cuts in jobs and services. One year later and the same councillors seem intent on attacking the living standards of the borough's working class.

Despite the borough conference and Local Government Committee deciding against cuts in jobs and services, the right wing on the Labour group are voting openly for cuts. Their cuts agenda includes 1,000 jobs to go by vacancy freezing and rents to increase by £2.50 per week.

Callous

The callousness of the right wing is also shown by their attack on the most underprivileged section of youth in Lambeth. Children in care have had both their birthday allowance of £1.50 and their clothing allowance stopped. While the right wing have been lecturing Labour Party members on democratic socialism, at the recent Policy and Resources Committee they were neither democratic nor socialist.

A lobby by over 100 local trade unionists was ignored and as the meeting was disrupted they convened to another room to vote through cuts—they ensured that no opportunity was given to left councillors to put their case.



The finger is now pointed at Lambeth council leader Linda Bellos for cuts.

In the local party the right wing's arguments for cuts have ranged from "Their is no alternative" to "My mortgage repayments have gone up so why shouldn't council rents go up?"

Linda Bellos, the leader of the council and now an ex-left is leading the attack and can no longer claim to represent the interests of black or white workers. Worse still, Bellos and her allies are openly ignoring

the feelings of the local trade unions and the majority of local party members.

By Steve Nally

Manchester warning

SINCE THE decision on 29 July in Manchester to freeze all recruitment, to shed 4,000 jobs by non-filling of vacancies and to look for £40 million worth of cuts over the next two and a half years on top of a £3 per week rent rise in September, the results have been disastrous, politically, electorally and in terms of their effect on the working class of the city.

In *Militant* (issue 863) Martin Lee explained how Liverpool's Labour leaders were using the retreat by Labour left wingers in Manchester to justify their planned support for rent increases, and redetermination.

Liverpool's Labour leaders should be warned about the consequences of taking such a path. On 20 August Labour lost two by-elections in Manchester, one to the Tories, and one to the Liberals in the Labour stronghold of Gorton South.

Labour now has only one councillor left in each of these two seats having had three prior to May. The loss of these two seats has led to the 'left' losing their majority in the council chamber over the right wing Labour, Liberal and Tory. There is a strong possibility that if the party continues on their present course the right wing Labour councillors will be back in charge next May.

Deselected right wing Labour councillors have been allowed back on the panel of candidates for next May's local elections whilst scandalously, two *Militant* supporters were kept off the panel for refusing

to go along with the cuts.

Many Labour wards now in Manchester are extreme marginals. Even council leader Graham Stringer has only a 500 majority to defend next May. All the gains made over the last three years are now being handed back to the right wing.

Stringer's boast that the cuts would defend frontline services and jobs and defend those most vulnerable and disadvantaged is hollow. Hundreds of meals on wheels rounds are being cancelled without notice. Disabled people have been left all over the August bank holiday weekend without home helps and the council ban on overtime and staff shortages have led to chaos.

Stringer has attempted to blame senior management for these decisions but it is he who must face up to the cold facts. It will only be a matter of time as we approach winter before council cuts will contribute to fatalities amongst the elderly.

Time is running out for the Labour leadership in Manchester, unless it abandons its runaway programme of cuts, redundancies and rent rises. Workers and party activists will not forgive or forget lightly if the right wing are handed back power.

The battle to give Labour in Manchester a fighting programme and leadership is now a matter of life or death.

By Mike Lee

Broad Left in Southwark

ORGANISED OPPOSITION to cuts in public services was launched in Southwark with a highly successful inaugural meeting of the Southwark Broad Left on Wednesday 30 September.

Fifty trade unionists from eight unions attended—council and Telecoms workers, teachers, tenants association representatives and mothers from the campaign against nursery school closures. They plan to join in a march and lobby against the closure of a mentally handicapped centre on 27 October, organised by the Broad Left.

The meeting, addressed by Southwark councillors Brian Kelly, who recently resigned as chair of Southwark's public services committee in protest at the council's programme of cuts, and Piers Corbyn, agreed a statement pledging to fight all cuts in council services and to protect jobs.

Photo: Nigel Clapp

Militant London Council Worker. Issue number one out now. Available price 20p plus 15 p post and package from *Militant* 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.



Industrial Reports

Postal workers fight for a shorter week

POSTAL WORKERS will soon be faced with a crucial decision—whether to take industrial action over the demand for a three hour reduction in their working week.

The Post Office have refused to budge on hours. They claim they can only afford a one hour reduction, paid for by higher productivity. This is unacceptable to our members. They are wondering why it is that the Post Office has 'saved' millions of pounds through unpopular productivity deals, and has recorded record profits once again, yet refuses to reduce the working week.

Dearing, the outgoing Post Office Chairman, has already laid down the gauntlet to the union when he said: "The union does not have a just case and the public will see that. The postmen will lose just as they did in the strike of 1971".

The justification of the demand is clear. We have not had a reduction since 1965, yet we have seen a worsening of conditions throughout that period. It is now up to the NEC to pick up that gauntlet—ballot papers will be sent out soon, and the result is likely to be known by 17 November.

So far, the Executive has not launched a real campaign. They have also not made it clear to the members what form the action would take. An overtime ban would undoubtedly have a big effect, particularly during the Christmas period. But with management prepared to 'dig in', ultimately it will be necessary to

Chris Whale,
North London District C
and CS branch,
personal capacity.

widen the action into a co-ordinated national strike in order to guarantee victory.

Even without a proper campaign to date, management are clearly worried. Whilst the Post Office have threatened job losses and increased prices, the government have made it clear they would consider tendering mails out to private agencies. Thatcher has got the privatisation of the Post Office in her sights, already stating that Britain's 21,000 post offices and the Girobank will be sold by the next election.

The fight against privatisation cannot be separated from the coming battle for a shorter working week. Our executive should be stepping up the campaign now, with material to members and speakers tours.

Anger already exists amongst members on a variety of issues as numerous local disputes have shown. An ideal opportunity now exists to link these issues together. This must be taken up by all activists in the branches. With such a campaign most members will vote 'yes' in the ballot, in turn giving them renewed confidence for future battles.



Postal workers' last reduction in working week was in 1965.

Aeu right block election

THE SO-CALLED "champions of democracy" in the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) leadership are refusing to call an election for the Executive Committee number 2 Division, covering Merseyside, Lancashire and North Wales.

Since the death in June of the past EC member Gerry Russell, no date for an election has been announced. In fact, at a meeting of district committee members held recently in Liverpool, right winger Ken Cure said he would cover the Division.

On 14 September the EC of the AEU met, but despite receiving resolutions from branches and district committees refused to discuss the issue.

Therefore, the 150,000 members of EC Division 2 are without a voice on the Executive.

Some members believe that the right wing are preparing to recall the Rules Revision Conference and gerrymander the number of EC divisions down to six. Many also believe they are having difficulty finding a credible candidate.

The Liverpool District Committee have recently passed a resolution demanding the election be held.

Predictably, the capitalist press have been conspicuous by their silence on the undemocratic cancellation of this election. Just imagine the outrage if this had happened in the CPSA or TGWU.

All AEU members should move resolutions through their branches in protest at this manoeuvre.

By Richard Knights.

Liverpool bins

BIN-MEN from GMB branch 200 at the Smithdown depot, Liverpool, have taken strike action in defence of two colleagues sacked for allegedly demanding money for clearing rubbish. This is on the say-so of one woman's uncorroborated evidence.

One of the men who has been sacked has 20 years service with an unblemished record including a commendation for preventing a robbery. The Smithdown men have 100 per cent support from the other depots and a lobby has been organised. The dispute is now one of principle—the whole approach of management. "They are acting like mini-Hitlers," said one branch 200 member.

Broad Left Organising Committee

London Labour Movement Conference

Saturday 24 October
York Hall, Old Ford
Road, Bethnal Green, E2
10.30am to 5.30pm
Speakers include John
Macreadie and Tony
Mulhearn

Fee: £3 per delegate;
£1.50 per visitor

Return to BLOC, c/o 106
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Defend Scargill

RUMOURS ARE rife in the coalfields that moves are afoot to discredit National Union of Mineworkers President, Arthur Scargill, and have him removed from office.

Certain elements within the union hierarchy are said to be attempting to undermine his standing in the eyes of the membership. If these rumours are true, it is an absolute disgrace that such attacks should be made at a time when maximum unity is required to defeat British Coal over the disciplinary code.

Certainly, the South Wales leadership have been highly critical of Scargill's stance over the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation and the pension fund. Apparently, the NEC voted in favour of taking up the five CISWO directorships allocated to the union in accordance with the new arrangements brought in as a result of government legislation.

However, Scargill has refused to act as a director on the principled basis that he will not sit down with representatives of the UDM.

The 'new realists' argue that Scargill is the servant of the NEC and must abide by its decisions. Since it is

traditional for the President to take up such a post, they argue Scargill is placing himself above the union.

Undoubtedly, there is something of a case for the union to participate in these meetings rather than leave our interests in the hands of the UDM or management. On the other hand, the government have given British Coal a built-in majority of 13-7 assuming the British Association of Colliery Managers (BACM) and the UDM side with them. The old system gave the National Coal Board six reps (including one BACM) and the NUM six (including one Nacods).

The new set-up will have:
10 directors from British Coal,
1 from BACM,
5 from NUM,
1 from Nacods,
1 from Apex,
2 from UDM.

On this basis, it is quite clear management will be in a dominant, controlling position. Nevertheless, there is still an argument for maintaining a full presence on the body.

Whatever our view on the matter



Miners' leader Arthur Scargill.

of representation, the fact is that no union member can be forced to accept a nomination for a post they do not wish to take up. If Scargill declines a nomination on a point of principle, he has every right to do so.

The trouble is that the whispering campaign will probably only be the first step. The 'new realists' may go to extraordinary lengths to undermine the National President. Any such attacks must be opposed. Of all the NEC, Scargill is the one most in tune with the membership. He must be defended.

John Cunningham,
Northumberland Area
EC, personal capacity.

Beat the disciplinary code

IN ORDER to defeat the disciplinary code the Broad Left are calling on all miners to take up the following demands within their branches:

- ★ Motions for escalation of the action to be put through the branches and Areas.
- ★ A campaign to be demanded from the NEC on the issue of 'flexible working' and the need for strike action.

Bring forward the ballot agreed by annual conference!

★ A national delegate conference with representation from every branch, pit or workplace be demanded to oversee the campaign and to propose wider action as the need arises.

★ A commitment to all-out industrial action from the union if more sackings are carried out under the code.

Seafield

EVENTS AT Seafield Colliery, Scotland, demonstrate the hard-faced attitude of management and the determination of miners to resist.

On 8 September 600 walked out and stayed out for a week because of dangerously high cement dust levels. They returned only when additional extractors were brought in.

On the weekend of 26/27 September, there was not an adequate number of mechanical fitters to carry out repairs and maintenance on the coal-face. Management told the unions that if any appliance broke down, only those repairing it would be employed—the rest would be sent home. We requested that in this situation the men would be employed elsewhere in the pit. Our request was denied.

When the motor on a shearing machine broke down, we received a letter from management telling us only men working on the shearer would be required. In protest at management forcing a lock-out we refused to work on the shearer at the weekend.

We're demanding that everyone who comes in is employed. The pit is short-manned, yet men are being forced to work six or seven days—or else be blackmailed by management for sending the rest home because jobs aren't complete.

By John Shaw,
Delegate, Seafield Scabta,
personal capacity.

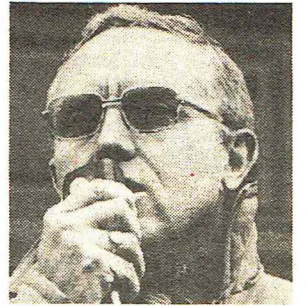
Militant

Fire Brigades Broad Left annual meeting. Liverpool, 17/18 October.

Speakers include Terry Fields MP, and a firefighter from West Glamorgan. For details phone 01-515-6266, or write to FBBL, 15 Carpenter House, Burgess Street, London E14.

As West Glamorgan council brings in the army...

Support the firefighters



Terry Fields appeal

WE PRINT below an extract of a letter sent by Terry Fields, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen to Labour leader, Neil Kinnock.

Dear Neil,

I am very disturbed about the attitude of the West Glamorgan County Council to the firemen of South Wales, to whose union I belong.

I understand that the FBU in South Wales had been 'working to rule' after the threat of 48 job losses and had not even embarked on the plan of one hour stoppages that had been agreed by an 80 per cent majority ballot.

I am sure that you share my disgust that a Labour Council, in its rush to implement the latest Tory attack on the fire service, should then use the classic Tory tactics of threats, lock outs, redundancies and, in a most disgraceful way, the use of troops as strike breakers.

I am therefore asking you to join me in publicly condemning the action of this council and to give your full and active support to this group of workers in their campaign against these vicious Tory anti-trade union laws.

Yours fraternally,
Terry Fields.

IN AN outrageous display of anti-union behaviour which even the most rabid Thatcherite would be proud of, West Glamorgan County Council has issued dismissal notices to its 360 firefighters and brought in 200 troops of the 1st Battalion Royal Hampshire Regiment with aged 'Green Goddesses'.

The most disgraceful feature of the situation is that the council is Labour controlled. As a result of 48 job losses being announced, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) organised a work-to-rule and planned a series of one hour stoppages. Before they took any strike action they heard they were sacked.

According to Peter Lloyd, Executive member: "The Green Goddesses and troops moved in at 11am in Swansea and other areas. Therefore they have preempted the decision of the County Council. The County Council issued by first class post today (5 October) a letter to all firefighters in the FBU in West Glamorgan, that it was their opinion that we were in breach of contract of employment and have therefore terminated our employment."

"The mood of the men is angry and determined, which has been further enhanced by the role played by the County Council."

By a Militant reporter

Within hours, firefighters across Britain were on demo (emergency cover only). We should now prepare the membership for the possibility of escalating the action to all-out strike. What is happening today in West Glamorgan could be happening elsewhere tomorrow.

A similar sized cut in jobs in London for example, would mean 1200 job cuts. A recall conference must be organised immediately and preparations made for a national all-out strike if West Glamorgan do not re-instate their firefighters and scrap their redundancy plans.

★ National emergency calls only in solidarity with West Glamorgan.

★ Recall conference to recommend all-out strike action, if necessary.



Green Goddesses used by army in 1977 firefighters strike.

Councillor attacks Militant

WEST GLAMORGAN County Council is one of those 'moderate' councils which is supposed to avoid disruption by complying with Tory central government dictates.

Yet by announcing 48 job cuts, refusing to negotiate with the FBU, and then sacking the firefighters before they had even taken strike action, the council is creating the kind of 'grotesque chaos' Labour leader Neil Kinnock spoke of when attacking Liverpool Council for organising a fight-back against the Tories two years ago.

The difference is that the job losses in West Glamorgan are real. Two comments from Frank Evans, Chairman of the coun-

cil's Public Protection Committee are particularly illustrating. Speaking of the sackings, he said: "If our firemen go out for one hour, then they are out for good. It will cost us £5,000 a day to have the Army here and we cannot pay for two fire services."

This Labour councillor, speaking at Welsh Labour Party Conference in 1982 demanded: "It's time we expelled the Militants and got them out of the Party." (*Evening Post*, 24 May 1982).

It is said that actions speak louder than words—Frank Evans is condemned on both counts.

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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.

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