

Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 969 16 October 1987



Celebrate the Russian revolution.

See page three for notice of regional rallies.

NHS

★ Health service underfunded by £935 million

★ Spending on private health care growing four times faster than NHS's.

★ Denmark and Finland spend 50 per cent more of their national wealth than UK on health.

★ West Germany and USA spend twice as much as UK.

Not safe in

Tory hands



A MILITANT exclusive by Wirral health worker, CHRIS STONEHOUSE.

PAY £70 or risk catching a serious disease. That's what Tory cuts mean to Merseyside health workers.

Health service management in the Wirral have told a number of staff that they run a high risk of contracting hepatitis B. They consider it is absolutely necessary that the staff are immunised, but say they "can't afford" to do it themselves.

So they are telling workers to go to their own GP. The GPs say this service will be done privately at a cost of about £70.

This is just one example of what Tory cuts and privatisation in the health service will cost working people.

Thatcher said the NHS was safe in her hands. Now those hands are strangling it. Health secretary, John Moore's remarks at Tory party conference show he wants to destroy the NHS.

The Tories will give their paymasters,

the bosses, rich pickings at the cost of poorer services. Plans have been drawn up for contracting out. Even whole hospitals will be handed over to private companies to run and profit from.

Since Thatcher came to power, there has been a 15 per cent reduction in available hospital beds. Over 300 hospitals have closed. But, in 1986, spending on private health care soared past the £1 billion mark.

Nurses' morale has slumped due to low pay and the constant struggle to manage in an underfunded NHS. At least 30,000 nurses are quitting the health service each year.

In the Wirral we have seen the local management enthusiastically carry out massive cuts in beds, services and jobs. More than 15 hospitals have closed in an area with some of the worst deprivation in housing and health in the country.

In the past year we have had the domestic service in our hospitals handed over to private companies to cream profits off. This has meant poorer services and job losses in the hundreds. Those few who found reemployment with the cleaning firms were taken on on lower pay and worse conditions.

There has been a massive turnover in staff willing to work for these companies.

A few victories have been won by the local labour movement. In particular the three month battle to save St. Catherine's hospital, in which *Militant* supporters were at the fore.

A new St. Catherine's hospital, with fewer beds, is now near completion. It will be officially opened in April by the richest man in Britain, the Duke of Westminster.

But NHS workers on the site fear that the building will be handed over to Bupa or another private concern to run. Moore's remarks make them even more worried.

Now management are drawing up plans to contract out the rest of the ancillary and maintenance work, which will mean more cuts in jobs, wages and services.

A national campaign to defend the NHS and local services has never been more urgently needed. A united campaign should pull together the unions involved. Labour Parties and workers in other industries, especially those on the privatisation hit list. This is the way to defeat the Tories' plans.

Fighting Fund
Two weeks to go

RUSH YOUR donations in now, send it today.

Militant supporters in London raised another £2018 and supporters in Scotland collected £670 last week.

Help us reach our £70,000 target. Ask workmates, friends and new readers for £50s, £20s, fivers and tenners.

Don't delay, GO FOR THE TARGET!

Liverpool must fight

THE CITY of Liverpool now faces a budget gap of £51 million for next year, thanks to rate-capping and Tory cuts. And that is not for any improvements to services, but just to stand still. But the Party activists are determined that the conquests of the previous Labour council, the brave 47 councillors now facing bankruptcy by the Tory courts, will be defended—the jobs, housing and urban regeneration programme.

As a result Harry Rimmer, elected leader of the new council in May, resigned after the overwhelming rejection of the 'redetermination' option by the Liverpool labour movement. This would have meant handing over the city's finances to the mercies of the Tory government, in an attempt to get extra resources. It amounted to going down on their knees to beg from Thatcher. It was opposed by all six constituency Labour parties.

The council has decided to consider over the next six weeks financial devices, like a lease-back scheme and even another possible approach to the government. But unless a fighting stance is adopted, similar to that of the previous council, at sometime hard decisions will have to be made.

By Dave Cotterill

made.

The new leader, Keva Coombes, says that he will not sign a single redundancy notice nor attack the urban regeneration strategy. If he has the determination to stick to this declaration he will receive the backing of every worker in the city. But does he have that determination, or the commitment to the campaigning strategy needed to carry it through?

Unfortunately when he was the leader of the Merseyside County Council a mass campaigning base was never developed, especially amongst the unions. And in April 1987 he was saying that if Labour retained control of the city council at the May elections it would not want another battle

with the government: "We would prefer a more skilful use of intellectual ability", he announced.

If by this he means financial dodges to try to outmanoeuvre the Tories, rather than a militant campaign to defend the city against them, he is profoundly mistaken. The Tories are intent on confrontation with Liverpool. They have closed up all the financial and creative accounting loopholes. No amount of clever manoeuvring will get past them. And if any Labour councillor believes by skilful deals they can outmanoeuvre the workforce and its insistent demands of no cuts, they have another thing coming.

Chameleon

Even the *Liverpool Echo* wrote: "Councillor Coombes is not usually a man who seeks battles on a point of principle. No-one is quite sure where he stands." He is a "chameleon", it went on.

His refusal, despite his radical speeches, to attend the council Broad Left will



Liverpool council campaigning against Tory cuts.

reinforce workers' doubts. Only the Broad Left has uncompromisingly defended the fighting policy of the suspended District Labour Party and the achievements of the 47.

The labour movement of Liverpool has fought like no other city in defence of its basic services over the last four years. It returned

some of the best results for the Labour Party in the country at the local and general elections this year. Workers voted in recognition of what has been gained in struggle so far, and to ensure nothing is taken away. Their indomitable will is still being felt in the council chamber and Labour Group, despite

surcharging by Tory cuts and witch-hunting by Labour national leaders. But continued pressure is required, to guarantee that the new councillors, and the new council leader, honour their election pledges and turn into action their words about protecting the city from Thatcher.

Defend the 47

TONY MULHEARN, one of the 47 Liverpool councillors who have been surcharged and banned from office by the District Auditor, has responded to an attack on the City Council by David Blunkett MP from the platform at the Labour Party conference:

Dear Mr Blunkett, It was with profound dismay and disbelief that I heard your speech at the Labour Party conference, in which you recommended rejection of the resolution moved by Wally Edwards, which recognised the achievements of the Liverpool City Council and called for financial support for them.

It appears you moved rejection on the grounds that it supported 'illegality'. This is particularly astonishing to us when we recall that it was you who actually proposed the 'no rate' strategy which eventually resulted in the attacks on the Liverpool councillors by the District Auditor.

Liverpool, along with Lambeth, was the only council to seriously embrace this strategy, while the rest—including you—would not or could not deliver.

To be left isolated and fighting alone is difficult—but sometimes in the battle to defend working people that happens and we do not complain. What is not acceptable is to listen to you, having left the struggle, adopting your present posi-



tion.

Moreover, it is quite appalling that you attack councillors who you allege have "set up consultancies" and arranged their affairs to avoid the consequences of bankruptcy. Apart from this being totally untrue and a straight lift from the *Daily Star* and other gutter journals, it ill-behoves you, on a comfortable Parliamentary salary, to criticise in the manner in which some victimised councillors are compelled to earn a living.

I and Tony Byrne (former council leader) would like to

invite you to a debate:—The subject: The merits of the Liverpool campaign, The venue: Sheffield or Liverpool (you can choose), The Chair: Your choice.

Such a debate in front of an audience of working people could dispel the lies and distortions which have poured down like a Niagara on the Liverpool city councillors who were surcharged and removed from office for carrying out their electoral promises.

Yours sincerely,
Tony Mulhearn,
Tony Byrne.

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.

No faith in church leaders

LIVERPOOL'S CHURCH leaders have now stepped in to the debate following Harry Rimmer's resignation, with an article in *The Independent*. The same Bishops, after initially giving support, joined in the campaign to try to undermine the battle of the Liverpool councillors in 1985. Not entirely by coincidence, they wrote a letter to *The Times* condemning the stand of the 47, the very morning of Neil Kinnock's infamous Labour conference speech attacking the council.

They argued that Thatcher's government was still open to reasoned discussion, and a moderate approach. Now they complain that Labour right winger Rimmer ("a man of courage and moderation") was "trapped because the government was apparently unwilling to see the need for creating the climate in which sensible policies for local government could be developed". So Tony Mulhearn, Derek Hatton and the other councillors were right after all—the Tories have declared war on local councils and the only strategy to defend jobs and service is to fight.

Eric Heffer, replying in *The Independent*, rightly challenges the churchmen. Why does their article fail to say one word of praise for the outstanding record of the old councillors, or one word of criticism of their disqualification and surcharge? Shamefully the church leaders blame the former council for the financial crisis.

They claim that Liverpool has been left 'in hock'. In fact Liverpool's debt burden, heavy though it is, is no worse than many other local authorities. Liverpool's debt between 1983 and 1986 increased 21 per cent. Sheffield's rose by 28 per cent and Birmingham's by 23 per cent, to a staggering £1,241 million.

When the surcharged councillors were removed by the court, Liverpool's debt stood at £678 million. £557m of this was inherited from the Liberals in 1983. Most of the increase since then is directly as a result of interest repayments on the original debt.

Thatcher has cut the grant to Liverpool by £500 million since 1979 and banks are bleeding the city dry. Why don't our worthy church leaders put the blame where it really lies?

Bank profits

In 1985/86, income from rents amounted to £51 million. Interest debts to the banks amounted to £46 million. In other words nearly every penny paid in rent went directly to the banks and finance houses to boost their profits.

Now the church leaders are saying that the council might have to take "unpopular decisions on increasing rent or decreasing the size of the council's workforce". Both these options are unacceptable to workers in Liverpool.

Despite the rent freeze since 1983, Liverpool's rents are still the highest in the country outside London. Unemployment in Liverpool stands at 22 per cent. It is not a Labour council's job to make people redundant. The church leaders should remember their own statements back in 1984, when as well as offering prayers for the city, they appreciated the then Labour council's "unwillingness to cause new redundancies." Liverpool workers of all religious persuasions and none, will be demanding the new council demonstrates the same 'unwillingness'.

By Mick Whale

Zeebrugge inquest verdict

Company to blame

SEVEN MONTHS after the capsizing of the Herald of Free Enterprise, with the loss of 188 lives, the jury at the inquest decided that all but one had been unlawfully killed.

They had had the unenviable job of listening to a horrific catalogue of the catastrophic events of 5 March. And as family after family attended the inquest, they saw the devastation imprinted on those faces.

Astonishingly the coroner, Richard Sturt, told the jury that the only people they could consider being grossly negligent, were the captain, the chief officer and assistant bosun. He was advised that the directors were too remote from what happened to be accused of gross negligence.

It is appalling that the crew members have again been singled out, but they must know by now

that the majority of relatives of those who died do not blame them and increasingly public opinion is behind them.

Unlawful killing

Given the finding of the Sheen report, which accused Townsend Thoresen of sloppiness from top to bottom, it is a travesty of justice that the legal system is protecting the real criminals. The jury were correct to bring a verdict of unlawful killing. This will be a stepping-stone to bringing Townsend Thoresen to justice.

Responding to the verdict, Sir Geoffrey Sterling, P&O chairman and specialist advisor to the Department of Trade and Industry, hypocritically said: "The responsibility of command is something which has been a fact for hundreds of years and I would

like to think there is no officer in the P&O group or rating who other than fully recognises the responsibility they specifically have for their passengers at sea."

He obviously does not extend this idea of responsibility to himself as chairman of P&O. He continues to sanction the sailing of these inherently unstable ferries.

Now that Sam McCluskie, general secretary of the National Union of Seamen (NUS), is considering action against Townsend Thoresen, in defence of their crew members, it is time for a concerted effort, not only by the relatives' group, but also by the whole labour and trade union movement, to ensure that justice is achieved and that passenger and crew safety is guaranteed.



By Sue Haney, whose brother Geoff died at Zeebrugge

Tories celebrate: poor will suffer

AT THE Tory conference, the rich relished the prospect of more record profits, tax cuts and six-figure salaries. The representatives of the businessmen, bankers and landlords who have reaped the harvest of Thatcherism lusted for further attacks on the workers, unemployed and poor, to transfer still more money into the pockets of those who need it least.

Yet Thatcher felt obliged to pose as the defender of ordinary people. She even hijacked Labour's 1974 election pledge "to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families".

What effrontery from a government committed to letting rents soar while cutting housing benefit, slashing supplementary benefit, forcing school-leavers on to slave-labour YTS schemes and selling off the health service! Millions now face destitution as the last remnants of welfare provision are whittled away.

But the future is no less bleak for thousands who have kept their jobs, achieved a decent wage,

bought their house and a few shares.

The weak 'boom' in the economy is drawing to its end. The meagre advances it has provided for a minority of workers will be washed away in the new recession which is inevitable under a capitalist system which can never sustain economic growth. Even some of those cheering in Blackpool will find their new-found prosperity an illusion.

That is why, behind the scenes, all is not so well in the Tory Party. The few more thoughtful Tory leaders understand the fragility of the boom and therefore of Thatcher's popularity.

Tebbit warned that "the humiliated Labour Party of 1959 came back to win in 1964 and 1966". He wants to distance himself from Thatcher so there will be an alternative when her policies have crashed to disaster and the 'Thatcher revolution' has been shown to be the counter-revolution it really is.

He does not want Lord Young as party Chairman, because he is too identified with and would tie the party too rigidly to his mistress's policies.



But while Tebbit worries about the devastating effect of their policies, the Labour leaders still imagine that these policies work and are popular. They want to abandon traditional socialist policies and try to appear more 'Thatcherite'.

On the contrary, socialist poli-

cies have never been more urgent. The call for a fundamental and irreversible shift in wealth and power must be reclaimed by Labour and made a reality.

By Pat Craven

Welsh Young Socialist expelled

LABOUR'S NATIONAL Constitutional Committee has expelled Tony Wedlake, a former member of the Labour Party Young Socialists National Committee and the Wales Labour Party Executive Committee.

In Cardiff on Sunday, an NCC hearing yet again resorted to the methods of a kangaroo court. New evidence was produced during the hearing and Tony Wedlake was only given enough time to present about a quarter of his case. Some members of the panel showed that they were more interested in catching the next train home.

When he was told that the case against him was proven, the chair of the panel proceeded to announce his expulsion, even though the NCC's procedures clearly allow for an appeal for mitigation. Significantly, the chair explained that in all cases regarding 'Militant members', 'the party' has informed the NCC that expulsion is the only option!

The hearing demonstrated that Labour's right wing have no intention of allowing fair hearings. They are only interested in show trials.

Socialist future

No account was taken on Tony Wedlake's commitment to defend the rights of working people, shown in his record as LPYS NC member during the miners' strike and the campaign against the Tories' YTS conscription plans,

At the end of the hearing, he said: "I'm going nowhere. I've got no cosy career to enter, like renegade Labour MP's. I joined the Labour Party to change society. My future and the future of my class is socialism. The people who voted for my expulsion represent the ideas of the past. The 18 million living below the poverty line need socialism, and I will continue to fight with them to overthrow this rotten capitalist system."

CASES AGAINST two other Welsh socialists, Ian Isaac and Chris Peace, have been adjourned by the NCC until later this week. Party members are sure to be appalled at the treatment of Tony Wedlake and will be deluging the NCC with letters and resolutions of protest at their contempt for Party members' rights.

RUSSIAN EVOLUTION 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.

Birmingham

Saturday 7 November 11-4.30. MASU Centre, Gaywood Croft, Gregoe Street, Lea Bank. Speaker—Ted Grant.

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, Monkwood Way.

Southampton

Saturday 14 November 11-5, Oaklands Theatre, Lordshill. Speakers—Jeremy Birch, and from SALEP and CSDC.

Sales triumph

MILITANT'S SALES campaign has been the most successful ever. Special congratulations to Stirling, Falkirk, Harlow, Halifax, Huddersfield, Chesterfield and Oxford, where sales have already gone over their targets.

In Harlow, they reached 220 per cent of their target for issue 867!

A seller in Sittingbourne sold three to people waiting with her outside a phone box. But the star seller is the appropriately named Nick Perfect from Erith, who sold 53 copies in a week.

Door-to-door sales have been the most successful. In East London, sales trebled during the campaign, mainly on the doorstep. If you are one of our new readers and like the paper, why not write to us for a regular copy to be delivered.

New door-to-door sales should now be planned and every new buyer visited again to ask them to take a regular copy. This has been done for weeks in Livingston, as part of the campaign against the attempt to expel members from the Labour Party. Over 500 copies have been sold and 182 have asked for a regular copy.

New sellers

Already six new sellers have come from this work and one is now selling ten every week in the local biscuit factory.

Last week's article underestimated sales by students. More than a thousand papers were sold at freshers' fairs, 320 in London, 50 at Leeds University, 62 at Liverpool Polytechnic and over 100 at the Polytechnic of North Lon-

don, where two people sold 65 between them.

At the Labour Party conference, a postman making a delivery to the conference bought three papers for £5 to take to his union branch in Redhill.

In London, workers at Westbourne Park, Shepherd's Bush and Bow bus garages have all agreed to take regular orders. Sales like these will help to build up support for the London Broad Left Organising Conference on 24 October.

Congratulations to all sellers, but make sure that this is only the beginning of the campaign!

We would appeal to all readers, old and new, to send us letters and articles. It is your paper, so write to tell us what you feel strongly about.



Revolt in Westminster

WESTMINSTER COUNCIL NALGO members went on strike last month against the City Council's "designated sales" policy. The Tory council wants to sell off 11,000 of its 23,000 properties at a rate of 500 a year.

The council already has a 10,000 waiting list with an estimated 800 homeless families in temporary accommodation. Houses sold in this "highly desirable" area will be far too expensive for most people.

The Tories are trying to bribe people out of their homes to buy non council property. One rumoured site is a 'portakabin' on Barking marshes. Some people have already been moved in to bed and breakfast and their flats boarded up.

Hundreds of people have attended protest meetings. Council workers' jobs and tenants' rights are at risk. During the day of action, street meetings for tenants were held and tenants' leaders spoke at a strikers' rally.

The media concentrated on the arrests at the council meeting in the evening when Tory leader Lady Porter came face to face with tenants and workers, but the moves towards building a campaign may be more significant in the long run as more industrial action is planned and the NALGO branch has set up a strike fund.

Haringey junta

HARINGEY COUNCIL'S right wing leaders have implemented Thatcher's policy of cutting jobs and services by £15 million this year and £26 million next.

The Labour Co-ordinating Committee councillors had tried to cut last July but the Tories abstained on the vote. This time they took no chances, the old left leadership was deposed and a new 'junta' led by 'Cutter' Harris and 'Chopper' Jones proposed rent increases of £4 from November and up to 2000 temporary jobs cut over the next two years.

The large banner proclaiming that Haringey council was "defending jobs and services" had been replaced with one saying it was "working against the nuclear threat."

Wandsworth opposition

IN THE Tory borough of Wandsworth head teachers have voted by 75 to 0 with two abstentions against the council's threat to "opt out" of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA).

The chair of the Wandsworth Headteachers' Association points out that the council's accusation that ILEA chronically overspent was preparing the ground for claims that the schools themselves were extravagant. "We have no reassurances from the council that they won't make savings on schools."

Birmingham cuts — but tenants say 'no deal'

THE RIGHT wing Labour council in Birmingham is secretly preparing enormous cuts for next year.

They would need a 41 per cent rate rise to keep spending at present levels next year. (This would go down to 32 per cent if the Council's balances were used up.)

The council leaders have seen, quite rightly, that this would be unacceptable to working class families. But they did not draw the conclusion that Liverpool did, that the council should campaign alongside the unions and tenants to fight the government. They have opted for cuts or "savings" as committee chairs have been told to call them.

Next year's 5 per cent rate rise will mean cuts of £59 million or £44 million if balances are used. Even the lower figure would be a 7 per cent cut in services.

The major cuts are expected to be in education, social services and housing where top officials have been told to carry out a "value for money" exercise. Committee chairs have been told to underspend this year as much as possible.

A job advert has already appeared for an accountant to carry out tendering under the new Local Government Bill and they



Birmingham parents supported the teachers' pay claim in 1985. With a campaign they will support the fight against cuts in education.

plan to privatise council estates even before this becomes law.

The right wing have moved to mute party criticism. Last month at the reconvened District Party, the right wing won by a narrow majority after a number of left branches were either suspended or had delegates overturned by right wing general committees.

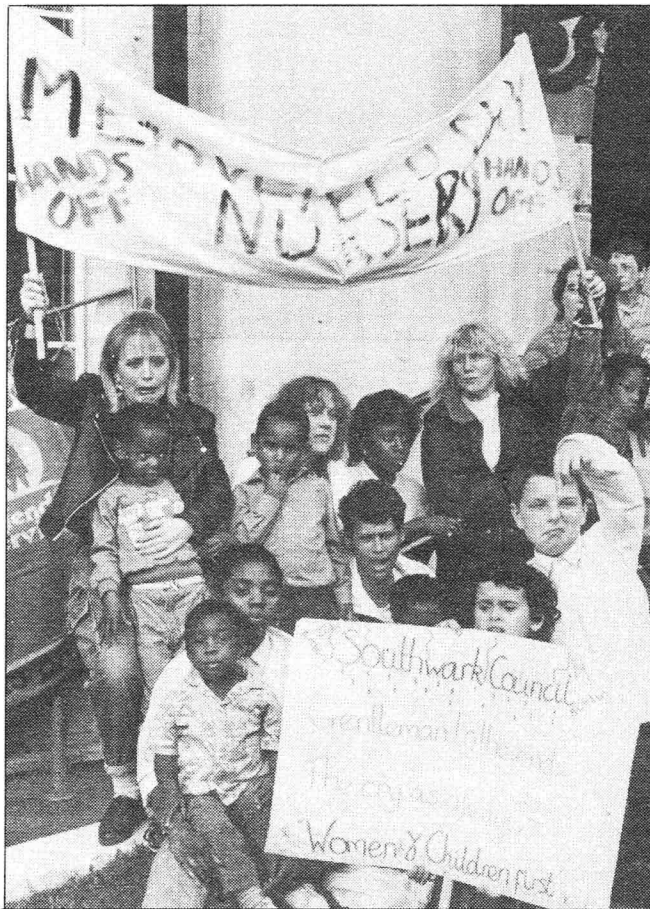
The rigged majority now aim to end the yearly policy conference

and policy groups, to stop any budget discussions at District Party, and to try to ditch left wing candidates for next May's elections.

But the fight will go on. Over 120 people representing tenants and local authority unions met recently in a meeting organised by the local group Campaign against the sale of estates (CASE). Speakers such as *Mili-*

tant supporter Richard Evans from the Birmingham Federation of Tenants pointed out the impact of these Tory proposals in mass evictions and a nomadic low income population unable to afford high private rents.

The people of Birmingham want to fight the Tories. As a speaker from the floor at that meeting said: "What Birmingham needs is a Derek Hatton."



Mothers, nursery workers and children protest.

'Get off your backsides and fight'

ANGRY MOTHERS and nursery workers invaded a Southwark council meeting last week in protest at the threatened closure of nurseries in Bermondsey. They told Labour councillors to fight the Tory attacks: "We'll support you if you get off your backsides and fight."

Southwark council expects to be overspent by £45 million next year. A leaked confidential report says the council is "on the verge of collapse." The shortfall is equivalent to an £11 rent rise or 3,000 redundancies in one of the poorest boroughs in the country.

The council leaders are not fighting the Tories, they are preparing to take it out on their tenants and workforce. Leader Anne Matthews' report is full of Tory style grumbles about workers' efficiency. She talks about cutting staffing levels, changing working practices and hitting wages such as freezing some employees' pay for seven years regardless of national agreements.

Southwark unions have suspended all negotiations with the council, accusing

them of a "Wapping mentality" with actions that "would do credit to the most rabid Thatcherite council." A new Broad Left of council workers is being formed.

Southwark lobby against rent rises

100 tenants, trade unionists and supporters of Southwark Broad Left lobbied Southwark council policy committee against a second proposed rent increase last Friday.

However, the committee voted 12 to 6 to recommend a £2 increase, and referred the decision to the full council.

The Broad Left intends to vigorously campaign against the increase, linking support from TAs in Southwark.

London crisis

HOME HELPS from Islington went to Labour Party conference in search of council leader Margaret Hodge.

"17 of us have been locked out since last week" a representative of the workers, in NUPE and NALGO, told *Militant*. They have refused to operate Islington council's plans to make them work from 24 smaller districts because it will mean worse services. Hours of service and cover for sick staff will be cut, and there are not enough phones in the new centres, making it difficult for the elderly and disabled to get in touch.

The council has stopped workers' pay and told three managers to run the services.

Support to NUPE/NALGO Home Care organisers, 23 Compton Terrace, London N1.

A HASTILY arranged mass meeting of 500-600 Greenwich NALGO members recently heard how the £35 million gap between income and expenditure threatened jobs and services.

Broad Left supporters proposed a programme of action to stop the cuts and fight the Tories. The branch executive decided to op-

pose it in favour of non filling of vacancies and 'negotiation' about what jobs would go.

Although the BL motion was lost by 152 to 120 with a mass of abstentions, the meeting showed the potential support. A Housing Department steward said: "I wore the 'Save GLC' badges and the GLC was sold down the Thames. We can't afford another paper campaign, we have to build a genuine campaign by forging links with tenants, clients, council workers, other trade unionists and others prepared to support us."

Councillors supporting the Broad Left distributed leaflets outside the meeting, called for an all union stewards meeting on 22 October. We anticipate a large

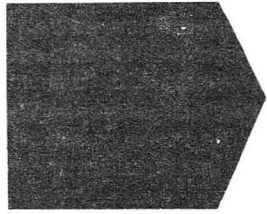
turn out to start the fight to save jobs and services.

By Dave Wallace,
NALGO Branch exec,
(personal capacity)

- ★ Oppose all cuts in jobs and services.
- ★ No rent and rate increases to cover up for Tory cutbacks.
- ★ Fight privatisation
- ★ Organise a fight back around the council unions, tenants' associations and community organisations.



Build the LPYS



AT THIS year's Labour Party conference the biggest attack since the 1960's was launched on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS).

The decision to stop membership for over 22 year olds and abolish the regional committees was obviously meant to remove the most experienced campaigners from the LPYS and so hinder its future work.

The right wing Party leaders claim these restrictions are because the YS is small and sectarian. Diana Jeuda, the chair of the Party's youth sub-committee, says the YS should be more like Youth

CND and Young Oxfam (whatever that is!).

But the LPYS is having great success building a movement of working class youth by campaigning on issues that affect them—YTS, low pay, unemployment, education cuts and drugs. You can't find a short cut to building a mass political youth movement.

The attacks won't stop the LPYS campaigning, particularly against compulsory YTS for school leavers. The right wing want some sort of youth club that has nothing but cultural events and football. These activities should be part of a youth movement's life,

but our central aim is to fight for a real future for youth. And that will only be achieved under socialism, so that will always be our main priority.

The Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) has called a demonstration and lobby of Parliament against compulsory YTS on 19th November. In 1985, when YTURC last mobilised against YTS conscription, the Tories backed down. Let's make them do it again! Now's the time to start building to make this event a huge success.

Under 22s—fight harder!

THE EVENING after they had won the vote to reduce the LPYS's age limit at Labour Party conference saw many of the Party leadership whooping it up at a union social with all drinks and food on the house.

Mr. Kinnock himself was having a very enjoyable time participating in cosy chit-chat and signing autographs.

However Neil's snug surroundings were roughly shattered when he bumped into us, two young Party members. We told him that we were saddened by the reduction of the LPYS upper age limit and felt this was a negative move.

His reply was that the reduction would mean that a new leadership for the YS would emerge comprised of teenagers. When we informed Neil that we were ourselves part of the leadership of the Young

Socialists in our own areas, and were aged 18 and 16 respectively, his response was a patronising smile.

But when we made it clear that we would not be in our respective positions in the movement were it not for the older, experienced YS members training and educating us, he changed his tack completely.

Hard left

Neil told us the real reason we have to implement these changes is to get rid of the "hard left, Leninist, vanguardist" grouping inside the LPYS. To free it from the stranglehold of *Militant*.

When we asked what was wrong with young people in the Party being left-wing and believing in radical socialist policies, he retorted that the *Militant* was anything but radical. He went on to cite the

example of his two children who joined the Party on the day they turned 15. "But they refused to join the LPYS, because they did not wish to be cynically used like blotting paper to soak up dull Marxist dogma."

At this point the right honourable leader was in a very agitated state. As he was ushered off to cool down by Glenys and a Party official, our last words were: "You may have got rid of the over 22s in the YS, but you've left the teenagers. And we don't fight for socialism as hard as the over 22s, we fight even harder!"

The reason that *Militant's* ideas are popular in the YS is not because we are a bunch of easily led morons, but because they have something to offer this generation of youth, unlike the Party leadership's champagne socialism.

By Two Young Socialists.

YOUTH CAMPAIGN Committees are supposed to be set up in the regions according to the decision of Labour Party conference. The officers of the LPYS are calling for this to be done as soon as possible.

But they feel that it is vital that the committees are both democratic and made up of youth. They say the YCCs should be made up of three elected delegates each from the LPYS, NOLS and Labour

Party regional executives and one delegate from each affiliated union, to be elected by union youth committees wherever possible. They should be Labour Party members and (apart from the regional executive members) under 23.

The LPYS officers say these proposals are essential to make sure the committees are democratic and campaigning bodies.

Glasgow YS members arrested



labour compulsion or not. All 12 of us were arrested and charged with Breach of the Peace and held for three hours. But after 100 amputations and 40 deaths on YTS schemes, it is Thatcher and her government who should be arrested and tried for murder.

By George McNeillage (Glasgow LPYS)

GLASGOW LPYS members and YTURC supporters staged a protest demonstration against Thatcher's plans to introduce YTS conscription in the next term of Parliament.

We took our protest to the Tory HQ. We asked for a guarantee that the Tories were not going to conscript youth onto slave labour YTS. The resident Tories didn't have a clue. They were all over the place when we asked difficult questions, like what they thought of YTS wages, what they thought about YTS conscription, and what were their names.

A TV crew tried to film us debating with the Tory organisers over YTS. The Tories panicked and point-blank refused. After 20 minutes they called the police and asked us to leave.

We said we wouldn't leave until Fowler or Young was contacted to tell us whether they were going to introduce slave

SCOTLAND—

Remember the 5 November

A YTURC rally in Edinburgh on 5 October was attended by over 100 people. We agreed to link up with West Scotland for an education shut down on 5 November. In the run up to it, we visited various colleges and schools and the response was terrific. In one college, 70 names were collected on petitions in 30 minutes and over £8 was collected for the campaign.

Teachers as well as students signed. Most working class people of all ages support the cause YTURC stands for.

No matter what the Labour and trade union leadership think, the working class can see the destruction of manufacturing industry, the lack of apprenticeships and the ridiculous pittance that youth receive on the schemes.

The leadership are making little attempt to organise the youth in the unions to fight back, but we are. I am certain the workers of this country will recognise this.

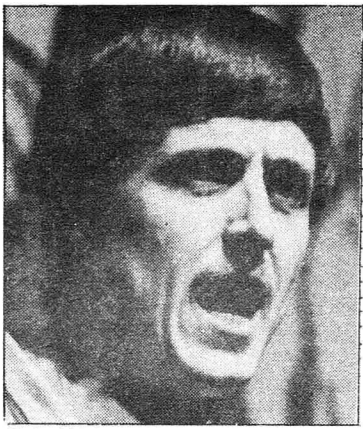
By Kenny Cairns
Edinburgh LPYS

Set up new youth committees NOW!



Build the





Bob Harker.

LAST WEEK, almost exactly ten years ago they were used against the national strike, troops and their 'green goddesses' were being used during the struggle of the West Glamorgan firefighters. In 1977, BOB HARKER, now a member of Gateshead East Labour Party, was in the Third Light Infantry. This is his soldier's view of the strike.

THE SOLDIERS of 2 platoon, A coy, 3rd Light Infantry, like the rest of the battalion on 2 November 1977 were sorting through their kit, checking equipment, cleaning weapons, returning to 'normal duties'. It was three days since the battalion had been airlifted home from Aldergrove airport having completed a four-month stint of duty in Belfast.

And now we were back home in Catterick. After four months of constant 24-hour standby cooped up in little forts in an area regarded by the army as 'very hostile', we were shattered, sad, grateful to be back and looking forward to the standard four-weeks leave which followed every tour of duty in 'N Ireland'.

Our platoon sergeant, however, soon put paid to our leave when he broke the news to us: "It seems now more than likely that the firemen are going on strike and our lot have been ordered to man the green goddesses in the North East".

Christmas Day

My first reaction, and just about everyone else's, was "what the hell are green goddesses?"

We were to get one week's leave and the promise of three weeks at Christmas. The army, like the Labour government, were confident that the strike would be smashed by then.

It wasn't, but our promise of Christmas leave was! On Christmas Eve I was scrubbing down a green goddess. On Christmas Day I was detailed to scrub the 'dixies' in the cookhouse and on Boxing day our section were out fighting a fire.

For the Belfast tour we had a mere two weeks 'urban training'; now we were to have one week 'fire fighting exercises'!

Yes we had a laugh at times, stumbling over hose pipes, putting ladders up at the wrong window—it was like a 'Carry On' movie. But you only have the one chance to save a life, and the experts at this sort of thing were going on strike. Why? I still didn't know; I'd never heard the news for weeks and so like others I was bitter.

1977 firefighters strike

A soldier's tale



Troops with their 'green goddesses' in Chelsea barracks in 1977.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

In the coming weeks I was to feel even more bitterness, this time towards the government, for it seemed that we pawns were being used, not so much to protect life as to smash a strike.

Out on the streets it was a joke. We didn't know where the fire hydrants were, often taking valuable minutes to locate one. Our engines didn't have radios, so we had to follow a police car, many times losing it in traffic or when our goddess suddenly broke down.

These old Bedfords, 'prehistorics' as we called them, were proved time and time again to be a danger to life and limb, especially when turning corners. The gallons of water carried in the tanks would suddenly move to one side and the danger of toppling over was always there, especially on the ice. We had four hospitalised in one such incident. A number of soldiers in Manchester were not so lucky. They lost their lives.

If we soldiers were organised and had a trade union behind us, not only could we have refused to be strike-breakers, but we could have refused to handle such dangerous equipment.

Living conditions during the months of the strike were worse than in Belfast—and that's saying something! We slept in sleeping

bags in the hall of the local TA unit, living out of our kit bags and suitcases. Eventually we were supplied with camp beds, but we were cramped and forever on call.

The press were having a field day attacking the strike. The firemen, they screamed, were striking for more money and yet they already earn more than the soldiers doing their job.

Friendly relations

This propaganda could have had great effect on the soldiers of 3LI. After all the firemen, we were told, were responsible for our loss of leave and now we were hit with this revelation. But if anything relations between us and the local firemen actually improved, because the firemen approached us in such a friendly manner from day one.

They used to say: "We've nothing against you lads; you're ordered to do this". And many times they actually handed us cigars and cigarettes. Over Christmas, we received a barrel of beer from them, which stunned the local rags, who were forced for once to come up with a good word for them.

But the most important thing was that the firemen invited us into their club. The bar would be

full of off-duty soldiers and firemen, drinking, playing pool, but most important of all, talking. We discussed the reasons for the strike, trade union rights for the armed forces, the media and many other topics. I'm not saying that every squaddie and every fireman got on well together, though I witnessed no hostility, but it did make some of us listen and learn. Indeed both Belfast and the firemen's dispute were experiences which motivated me into becoming an active socialist and a Marxist.

As the strike wore on, the firemen would often turn up at a big fire and give us advice. When a brewery went up it took us all night to get it under control. A big ladder from Newcastle Fire Station was brought out by the fire chiefs. To this day that ladder is blacked.

There were many happenings, some dangerous, others, because of our inexperience, hilarious. Once at a paper mill which was well away by the time our crew got there to back up three other goddesses, one of the hosepipes broke lose from two soldiers who were handling it and like a furious snake it whipped around and lashed about in the air.

Instead of turning the water off, one 'bright' young officer tried to make a dash for it,

running down a hill shouting "get hold of it!" Within seconds he was charging back up the hill being chased by this hosepipe.

But like all good officers he wasn't beaten yet, so once again he made an assault down the hill to capture this 'monster'. This time however, the hose, full of gallons of water, swung round, hit him full on and sent him flying over a hedge.

Union rights

Four of us who witnessed this merry event were literally rolling down the hill in fits of laughter.

The ordinary soldier has no real say or organisation to voice his opinions. Our spokespersons are unelected officers who command us. They don't ask opinions; they tell us what is and what is not to be. Their 'defence of democracy' is defence of their system.

Militant's call for trade union rights for the armed forces is not utopian. It would be a step forward, for not only would the soldiers' conditions be improved, but the gap between workers and servicemen would begin to be bridged. "Our class is your class; our struggle is your struggle; our democracy is your democracy".

◀ Left and Right ▶

Millions and millions

BANKER CHRISTOPHER Heath is revealed to have been paid £2,500,000 a year. But even he may not be 'earning' as much as Burton's Sir Ralph Halpern. For while Halpern's basic salary has increased seven-fold in five years, to

£1,004,000, (during which time Burton's profits have only doubled) he has also made £1.6 million from a share option scheme.

Angry racist voice

AS WELL as resorting to pornography to boost its sales, the new-look *Daily Star* has been spewing

out racist filth of which Goebbels would be proud.

Under the headline 'Breeding trouble', deputy editor Ray Mills, 'the angry voice', writes: "The natives of Fiji are revolting because immigrant Indians now outnumber them. Given that Britain's Asians are multiplying disturbingly faster than the national average—and that's a fact—how much longer before it happens here?"

Mills has already been reprimanded and fined £500 by his union, the NUJ, for similar articles.

If he does not pay, and he says he will not, he will be expelled.

Parking for profit

THE LATEST speculative investment in London is not gold, silver, shares or works of art, but... parking spaces. One in a Hampstead underground car park has just been sold for £30,000. "A very good investment" said the estate agents: "When you are paying more than £800,000 for a house, what's an extra £30,000?"

Northern Ireland

Fight the Tories and the bigots

"ON THE front of the Belfast City Hall the banner reads 'Belfast says no'. Inside we have a council which is fond of saying yes—Yes to the cuts, Yes to sectarianism, Yes to all the councillors' perks and expenses". This is taken from the election address of the Labour and Trade Union Group candidates, standing in two council by-elections in West Belfast. Their unashamed class approach marks out the campaign being waged by socialists in Northern Ireland.

On 22 October workers in Upper Falls and Lower Falls will have an opportunity to vote Labour and elect

candidates, Mickey Duffy and Davy Officer, who are fighting on a socialist programme.

The LTUG is the largest and most active labour grouping in the North. It was formed by the socialist wing of the now defunct Northern Ireland Labour Party, when that party's leadership adopted a sectarian position. It has a proud record of struggle on behalf of workers—organising protests on unemployment, the cuts, against the fascist National Front and against youth conscription onto YTP schemes.

Workers throughout Northern Ireland face the

same problems—poverty, unemployment, repression and sectarianism. But the real majority in Northern Ireland is the working class, and only their organisations, the labour and trade union movement can tackle any of these issues.

The LTUG sees the campaign to get Labour councillors elected in these by-elections, as part of the fight to commit the trade unions to provide a political, socialist and non-sectarian alternative for all workers in the North.

We reprint below extracts from the election address.

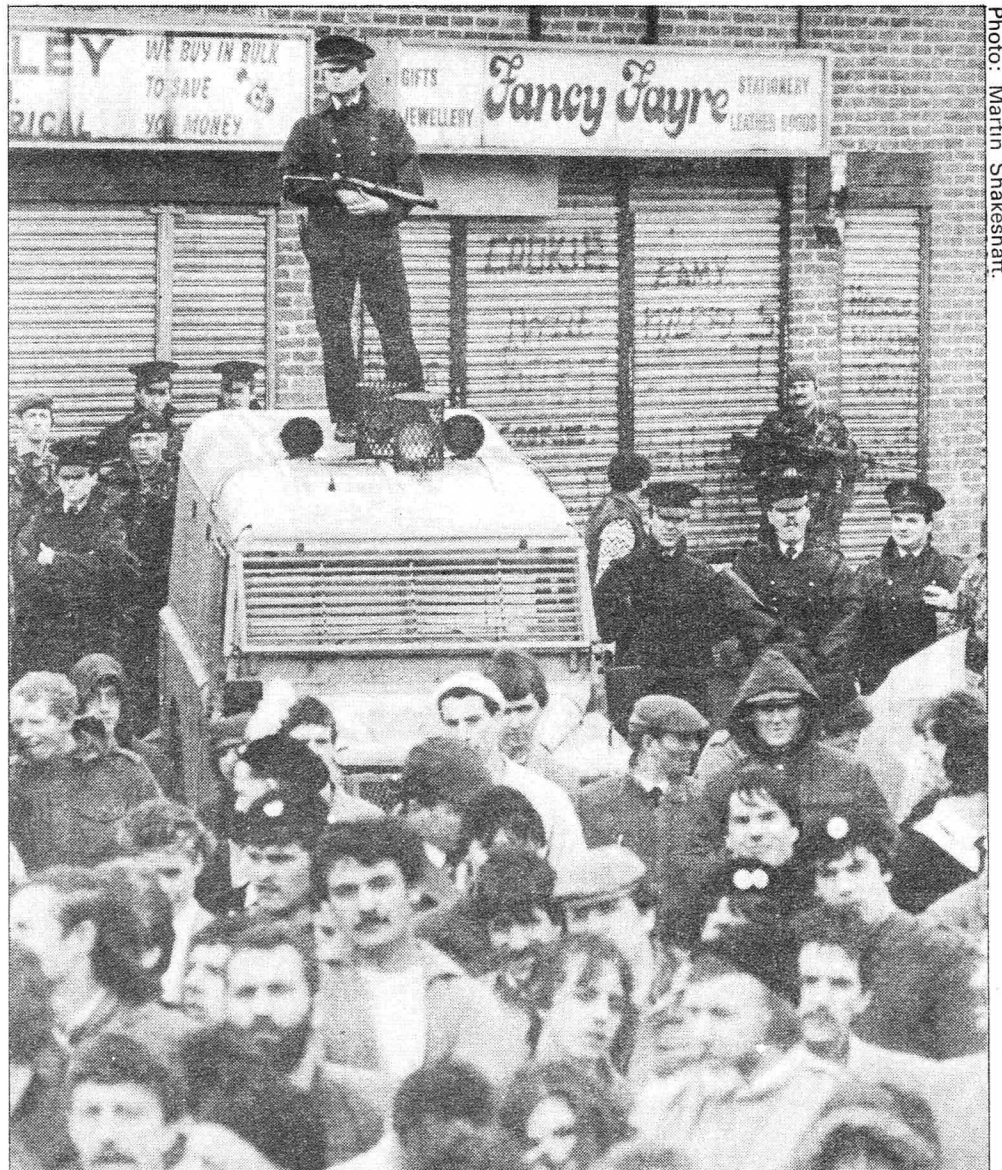
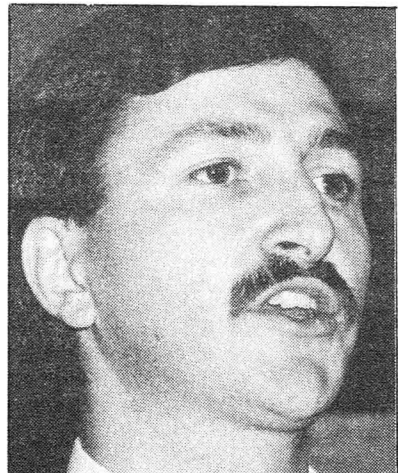


Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

Armed troops and police at hunger strike commemoration march in West Belfast last year.



MICKEY DUFFY, one of the Labour and Trade union Group candidates, addressing a fringe meeting held at the Labour Party conference, to win support from British workers.

"We don't stand as Labour Unionists or as Republican Labour," he told the meeting. "We stand as socialists in the traditions of Connolly and Larkin".

"Larkin explained that without a political voice, labour was fighting with one arm tied behind its back. We are struggling to untie that arm".

Vote for Labour candidates

ALL THE major parties in Northern Ireland are full of career politicians who promise the earth at election times. We want a council which will say No. No to career politicians, no to sectarianism, no to cuts, low wages and unemployment.

We want a Labour council prepared to confront the Tories and the bigots in the same way that the last Liverpool Labour Council was prepared to stand up to Thatcher.

This election can be the first step to that end and would lead to the creation of a mass socialist Labour Party which could fight for a majority on the council in the elections in two years' time.

Jobs

There are 11,969 unemployed in West Belfast. While other groups condemn it, we offer a solution.

- ★ An end to religious discrimination in employment.
- ★ A guaranteed job for all.
- ★ A 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ A £120 minimum wage.
- ★ Nationalisation of all firms threatening lay offs.

Joy Riding

- ★ Community action to end joy riding.
- ★ Extra council resources to

provide alternative outlets for young people.

- ★ No to the RUC shoot to kill 'solution'.

Repression

Repression can only be halted by the united struggle of the working class mobilised behind the labour and trade union movement.

- ★ Immediate repeal of all repressive legislation.
- ★ Scrap the Diplock Courts.
- ★ End strip searching.
- ★ Ban plastic bullets.
- ★ Disband the RUC and UDR.
- ★ For the setting up of non-

sectarian, unarmed community police forces under trade union and community control. These forces to be vetted to keep out all those with paramilitary or sectarian association and to deal solely with crime, having no political or industrial function.

Sectarianism

It is the working class who suffers the effects of the sectarian violence.

- ★ Reject the bosses' game of 'divide and rule'.
- ★ Reject the sectarian-based political parties.
- ★ Reject the campaign of all the paramilitary organisations. These divide workers, give the excuse for repression and set back the cause for socialism.
- ★ Full support for local community action to defend areas from attack.
- ★ For united action by the working class to stop the sectarian attacks. This to be coordinated by the trade unions

and community organisations as the only bodies capable of jointly organising Catholic and Protestant workers in their own defence.

Socialist Solution

The Anglo-Irish Agreement has been a miserable failure. Instead of reforms it has brought more repression. Instead of peace, violence has intensified. Neither this nor any other capitalist measure can be a solution to the national problem.

- ★ Reject the Anglo-Irish Agreement.
- ★ For united action by the labour and trade union movement North and South to bring about a socialist solution.
- ★ For a socialist Ireland and a socialist federation of Britain and Ireland.

FOR INFORMATION on the campaign or to send financial support, contact: Labour and Trade Union Group, 4 Waring Street, Belfast.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 East Midlands	1222		3250
2 London	3193		9400
3 Wales	1282		4850
4 Eastern	729		3050
5 Scotland East	529		2800
6 South East	407		2250
7 Southern	514		3100
8 Northern	661		4600
9 Scotland West	502		3500
10 Yorkshire	1193		8450
11 West Midlands	613		4850
12 South West	225		1900
13 Merseyside	708		7500
14 Manchester/Lancs	308		4050
15 National	3537		6950
Total	15,625		70,000

Flood us with money

A MARVELLOUS £500 donation from a reader in Kent, given at the Labour Party conference shows how serious Militant supporters are in fighting for socialism and in building their paper. £100 from Steve and Deidre Johnson, NUPE members in Edinburgh has also boosted our Fighting Fund this week. Now we need a flood of similar donations from all our readers to ensure we raise the full £70,000 target by the deadline only two weeks away.

At their conference the Tories announced further plans to attack the poorest section of society, the 10.4 million people who live on or below supple-

mentary benefit level. At the same time a recent article in the Observer revealed how the super rich and city whizzkids live. They have the opportunity to purchase themselves a remote Scottish Island complete with lighthouse for just £40,000 for that quiet weekend break, or hire Concorde for a mere £110,000.

Only Militant has the confidence that workers can successfully beat the Tories. Show your confidence in the ideas of Militant by sending an extra special donation this week. It will be a necessary investment in the struggle for socialism. Every reader new or old

can help us to reach our target by not only making a personal sacrifice but also raising cash, using appeal sheets and selling stickers on all paper sales. Over £61 was raised in Grimsby in extras on sales last week.

Thanks this week to D.Taylor from Reading who sent £25, Kim Leach from Fulham who sent £15 and D.Roman a student who donated £15 from his grant.

Finally don't forget to organise an end of quarter social, or use your initiative like supporters in Birmingham who raised £45 on a trip to Blackpool and over £170 with a jumble sale.

AIDS

a socialist viewpoint

ALTHOUGH THE government are supposed to have conducted a campaign of public education, the press continue to whip up hysteria about AIDS, screeching about the

dangers of infection from everything from 'gay' stewards on the QE2 to contaminated beer mats. All the stories have been wrong or sensationalised.

MIKE WADDINGTON cuts through the myths and examines the facts about this horrific disease and the scandal of government underfunding of research into it.

A trade union issue

THE PRESS campaign is not one of explanation, but a deliberate smokescreen to justify the view that AIDS is some kind of punishment for particular kinds of behaviour. It has understandably led many trade unionists to express concern and turn to their unions to confront the issue.

At the 1987 CPSA conference there were 19 resolutions and a debate on AIDS. Only S Africa attracted more resolutions.

At least 25 unions and the TUC have now produced material on AIDS for their members and issued advice for the protection of AIDS victims who are union members. NALGO produced 220,000 leaflets, COHSE a 52-page document, of which over 10,000 have been sold.

Trade unions like the NUM, TGWU and US-DAW have been able to fight the press hysteria by circulating material to their members, explaining the issues and responsibly warning of the dangers.

For instance, telephone engineers once refused to repair the broken equipment of a Gayhelp phone line, believing the press reports that it was possible to contract AIDS casually. The union's health and safety officer spoke to the workers and convinced them they could handle the equipment at no danger to themselves.

What is AIDS?

AIDS IS caused by the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

(HIV) which attacks the immune system of the body. AIDS is the condition suffered as a result of the ensuing opportunist infection. Clinically discovered in 1981 in the USA, the virus splices with the human genetic material and is therefore currently impossible to treat.

Anyone can catch AIDS, but it can only be caught through blood contamination or sexual contact. For this reason it has particularly affected haemophiliacs, intravenous drug users, foetuses of pregnant AIDS carriers and those in sexual contact with an infected person, male or female.

AIDS is therefore not easy to catch and is not the 'plague' the press have described it as. Exposure to the virus results in a 50 per cent chance of becoming infected.

The reason for the rapid spread of the disease is less a medical problem than a social and economic one, as was shown in a report by the House of Commons Social Services Committee called 'Problems associated with AIDS'. It discusses why AIDS has spread so rapidly through Africa:

"Intravenous drug abuse in sub-Saharan Africa is minimal, but limited resources force medical staff to re-use equipment. In some rural areas, there may be only one syringe for an entire clinic and the pressure on its use may prevent it being sterilised between patients.

"Re-use of needles has also been the practice in immunisation programmes. Furthermore, in countries where the per capita health budget may be less than ten or even five dollars, it is almost impossible to screen blood for transfusion when the average cost of a single test is four dollars.

"...The problem is fundamentally a financial and resource problem... What we must do is to provide the resources, the material and the technology."

Millions will die in Africa

THE LABOUR movement is right to be concerned about the disease. The Commons committee report described AIDS as having "social effects... unparalleled in human history". It is "the evolving epidemic..."

529 people have so far died of AIDS in Britain. A further 935 have the disease. 4471 are known to have the virus.

The DHSS estimate that 30-40,000 may already be exposed to the virus. It is suggested that the number of sufferers doubles every 10 months, which would mean 3.2 million infected by 1992. Fowler has said that by the end of 1989, 4,000 are likely to have died from AIDS.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have identified 36,229 cases of AIDS in 99 countries—76 per cent of them in the USA. They believe that between five and nineteen million have been infected and this is likely to reach 100 million by 1990.

AIDS is the biggest killer of women aged 25-34 in New York and the biggest killer of young single men in New York and San Francisco.

It is in Africa, however, that the full horror of the disease is seen, piled on top of the already horrendous burdens of the ex-colonial peoples.

A million Africans will die of the disease in the next ten years. 23 African countries are affected, particularly in Central Africa. The WHO believe that 50,000 may already have died of the disease.

Out of the population of 500 in the Uganda village of Kasenser, 100 have died from AIDS in the last five years.



Candlelight vigil for AIDS victims in London.

But it was only when the virus was discovered in the USA that real publicity was given to the disease.

Drugs, needles, prisons

YOUNG PEOPLE are particularly at risk. The conditions youth are increasingly facing are driving them into situations where they can expose themselves to possible infection other than through sexual experimentation.

The Commons committee was forced to concede: "...We have to accept that so far the anti-drugs campaign has failed conspicuously in many quarters of society... There is a clear link to social problems such as unemployment, or a general lack of hope for the future..."

There are known to be 60,000-100,000 drug abusers in Britain (one third are women). This is almost certainly an underestimate.

In Edinburgh, where there are considerable pro-

blems with AIDS, the Commons committee says:

"...From late 1982, with the closure of the only legal supply of sterile equipment, needles have become scarce. Sharing was inevitable" (Note that the decision was taken after the discovery of the virus.) Further, "... 70 per cent of drug users shared because of the shortage of supplies".

55 per cent of prostitutes in Leith (many of whom resort to prostitution to buy drugs) are HIV infected.

The position is further complicated by prisons. Referring to Saughton prison (in Edinburgh), the committee says: "...There were more drugs in prison than outside, but a maximum of three sets of needles and syringes in that prison". In the Eastern USA, AIDS is the biggest killer in prisons.

The deteriorating position of the youth, especially in the inner cities with mass unemployment, slum housing and increasing despair, can make them prey to drugs and the AIDS virus.

The lack of houses exacerbates the problems of the victims of the disease: "...Caught between being too healthy to be in hospital, but too ill to earn enough money to pay the rent, patients are forced to take what accommodation they can find, which is rarely conducive to their physical or psychological well-being."

Papering over the cracks

THATCHER APPEARS to have acquitted herself well in the fight against the disease. A special Cabinet committee under Whitelaw approved the material that was distributed to 23 mil-



Demonstration in Washington

lion homes. The truth is somewhat different. The leaflet itself was only printed in English; in New York information is available in 14 different languages. Thatcher and the Tories are incapable of providing jobs, let alone marshalling resources to fight AIDS.

Thatcher and capitalism as a whole stands indicted over the fight for resources for health. More have already died of AIDS than in the Falklands War, yet there has been no 'general mobilisation' to defeat this attack.

The Commons committee report is moved to say: "...Even in these early days of the disease, we received evidence of under-resourcing which disturbed us..."

They also say: "Aids is not a problem which will be solved by throwing money at it and hoping it will do some good... This is backed up by Baker's evidence, a very smug 'Well, all I can say is all the money I have been asked for for AIDS I have provided.'"

The published record of the Commons committee actually tells a different story.

Professor Adler: "Seven clinical academic staff in my departments... shore up the NHS department. They paper over the cracks, so that the cracks we are beginning to see would have appeared much earlier if it had not been for the injection of academic hands on the pumps."

"That is very unsatisfactory because it pulls my staff away from research, which is very important in this area, but it also gives the false impression that the NHS can cope..."

David Miller (Middlesex Hospital): "We have a very large number of highly experienced people who have been pushed to the limit for far too long and they cannot sustain that level of input for too long.. We are seeing significant amounts of psychological, domestic and professional distress in a group who unfortunately

Civil rights under attack

THE GOVERNMENT in Britain used the initial panic caused by the appearance of the disease to push through the draconian Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1985.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, in its submission to Commons committee, said:

"...The regulations give magistrates a power of virtually arbitrary detention without any of the safeguards applying in the civil law. (They) have added to the serious misconceptions surrounding AIDS.

Discrimination

"They should be withdrawn... Unless these facts (ie of getting the virus) are stressed, the risk of unjustifiable discrimination and even violent attacks against sections of the population is very real..."

NALGO have called for the repeal of the regulations.

Cranks, racists, and the church

THE HORRIFYING statistics have roused the moralists, religious cranks and racists. In evidence submitted to the Commons committee, the respectable sounding Royal Society of Medicine said:

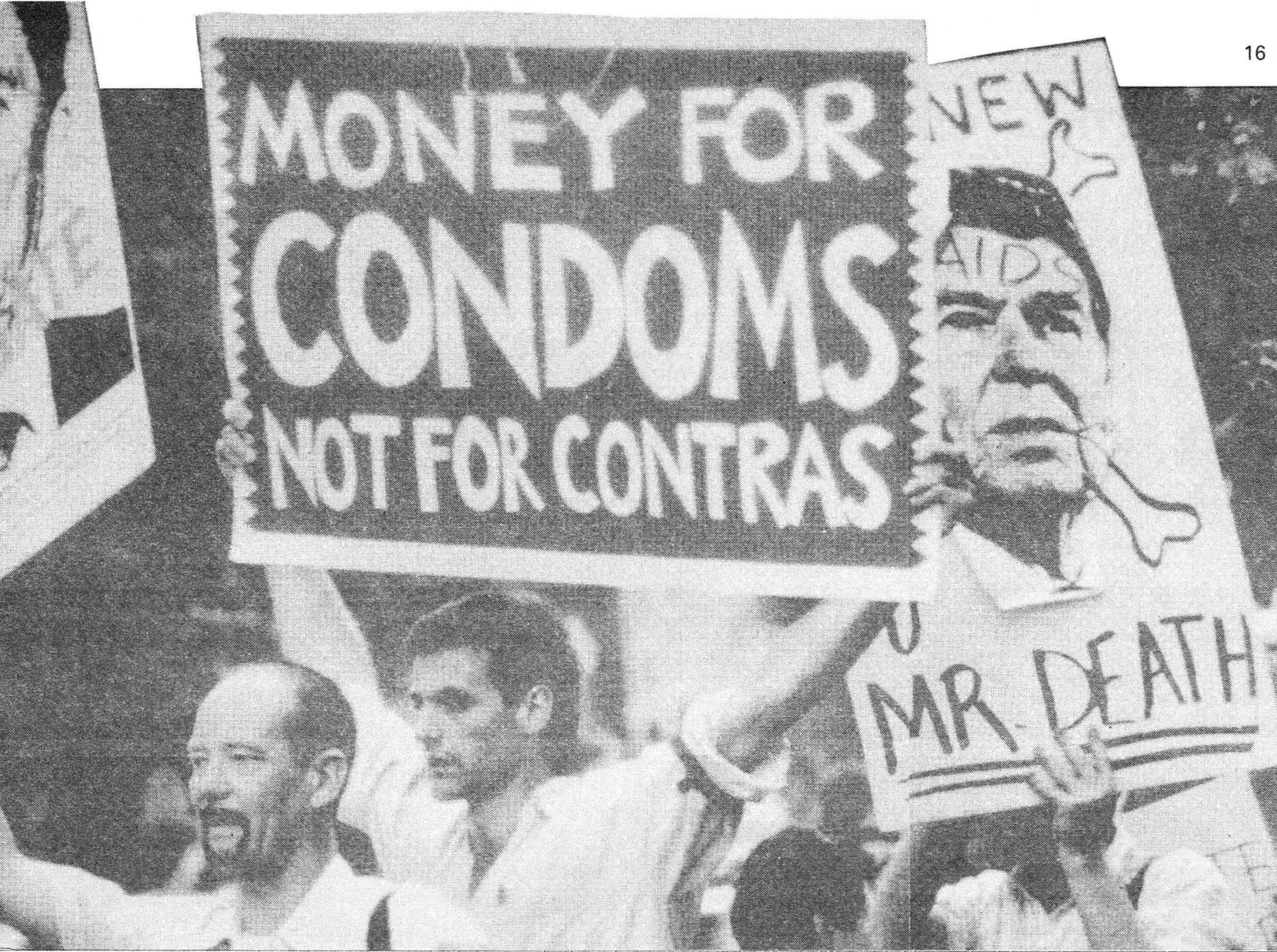
"The virus has the properties of a skilled, devious, hidden and implacable invader with the capacity and willingness to kill every man, woman and child in our country. It may now be spreading amongst us precisely because it has this capacity... Dissemination of the virus is being encouraged by some who wish to destroy our society... Such disinformation weakens the political will to implement the tough control measures required to halt the spread of the virus... Protection of the life of its citizens is one of the major obligations of the state."

Immigration

As might be expected, the Church also made a submission:

"...Unchastity is contrary to the natural law and it is not therefore surprising that human bodies are often ill-adapted to it"— Hence AIDS and cervical cancer!

Racists are already demanding measures to protect citizens from the disease brought here by 'foreigners'. Japan and Saudi Arabia are the first two countries to change their immigration laws to include an AIDS test for visitors.



Against Reagan's indifference to the AIDS crisis.

have the greatest amount of expertise and who are, therefore, all the more precious to us.

"I very much fear for the physical health of my colleagues who have been pushed too far for too long... You cannot flog a donkey for too long without expecting it to drop..."

Dr Pinching: "If clinical academics were withdrawn now this country would not be able to cope with the AIDS problem. It is as simple as that..."

On staffing levels in the NHS, "Dr Pinching and Dr Harris told us that Manpower Committees live in another world... Dr Pinching thought it absolutely incredible that the Chief Medical Officer had told the committee that he was unaware of any plans to consider changes in the medical manpower situation..."

There is also widespread reliance on voluntary agencies to deal with problems of counselling and drug abuse. As counselling costs 40 per individual this is a heap course of action by the government.

The Terence Higgins Trust is widely respected for the help that it provides. Indeed the government recommends it. In February 1985, the THT received 400 phone calls a minute, such was public concern about the virus. Yet it has only two full-time workers, financed by a grant of £100,000 from the DHSS.

AIDS and profit

THE COSTS of care are astronomical. In the USA, one day in the San Francisco General Hospital can cost \$800. The average 30-day stay costs \$25-30,000. In the UK the average 50-day stay costs £6,800, one of the reasons the Tories favour 'com-

munity care', without the necessary back-up facilities.

The only available treatment is AZT, which retards the disease. This costs around £5,000 per patient per year.

Research is therefore the key area, but the story of neglect due to the pursuit of profit is astonishing.

The Medical research Council told the Commons committee: "(They) were quite the reverse of confident about the state of civil science in the UK as a result of its erosion by the government's policy of funding civil science..."

"How can someone who works flat-out for 12 hours each day, caring for patients then be expected to devise research protocols, which must meet the highest standards, in his or her spare time?..."

The committee lamely recommends "that every effort should be made in the future to ensure that basic scientific research continues to be properly resourced..."

"The Medical research Council believed that industry would not play a major role in the research into a vaccine because of commercial considerations. They are far more interested in a product which was safe, profitable, with a ready market and no danger of serious litigation problems... When research could produce candidates for vaccines... which showed promise... these would be picked up by commercial companies..."

The real concern of the health industry was demonstrated at a conference held in New York in 1985, attended by over 100 investors, called 'Profit and AIDS'.

Condom manufacturers "stand to make a great deal of money". Problems with sub-standard imported condoms have already been reported. The cynical exploitation by the 'health industry' puts profits first. The nationalisation of all the drug companies and others (like condom manu-



Alarmed by false scares, New York parents and children demonstrate against AIDS sufferers being allowed to attend school.

facturers) is a vital part of the solution.

The Commons committee demands "...a concerted, collaborative effort by the whole scientific community to fight the disease." This takes us to the very heart of the function of research under capitalism. The demand for 'collaboration' is utopian when by definition most companies are engaged in competition. Collaboration will only follow if there is money to be made.

The committee says: "We recognise that the potential for the exploitation of Africa for unethical experimentation is great..." This is especially so as it is still not clear whether scientific experimentation is actually responsible for the virus in the first place.

Socialist planning

IF THE energies of the research community were put into battle, not only would a cure be found for AIDS, but also many other dis-

"The problem is fundamentally a financial and resource problem...What we must do is to provide the resources, the material and the technology."

cases. 10,000 scientists and 110,000 other personnel were assigned to the Manhattan Project to build the Atom Bomb. \$2 billion was spent in 37 installations in 19 states and Canada.

Not surprisingly it achieved its mission a mere six years after the theoretical possibility was first raised. Who is to say where a similar effort now would lead?

The nationalisation of the defence industry would turn their superior research facilities over for the benefit of all by pursuing the solutions to the problems of humanity, instead of producing weapons of mass destruction.

Professor Adler has said: "...We have an appalling record in preventing diseases", but he added: "...It seems to me that we have a golden opportunity to get preventative medicine right for once in the UK..."

That is only technologically speaking. There is currently an impenetrable barrier between existing research facilities and cure - profits.

None of the 94 recommendations of the Commons committee has the answer beyond moralising and wishful thinking.

The labour movement has the task of fighting for the means not only to tackle the problem of AIDS, but for all the problems of the working class. Research facilities should be taken out of the hands of the profiteers, through public ownership. Such resources employed for need and not profit hold the key to the solution.

A socialist plan of production and the rational distribution of resources is now the only way to prevent the disease assuming its full horrific proportions.

Russia and Eastern Europe

Oppressed minorities in revolt

RUSSIA AND eastern Europe have recently been shaken by outbreaks of unrest among national minorities.

By Pat Craven

In the USSR there have been anti-Russian demonstrations by Crimean Tartars, and in the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Last year there were riots in Kazakhstan and disturbances in Kirghizia and Moldavia. There has also been a rise in the emigration of both Jewish and German-speaking Soviet citizens.

Hungary and Romania are locked in a dispute over Hungarian speakers in Transylvania. Bulgaria is trying to forcibly assimilate its Turkish minority. And Yugoslavia is wracked by national conflicts which could threaten the unity of the state.

As in capitalist countries, such problems arise at times of economic and social crisis. Throughout eastern Europe, despite the advantage of a planned economy, the incompetence and corruption of the ruling bureaucracy has led to slow economic growth, shortages and festering social problems.

This has led to profound discontent, which these totalitarian regimes provide no outlet for. So in areas where there is a national minority, in the absence of any working-class leadership fighting for workers' democracy and an end to bureaucratic privilege, opposition to the regime can take a nationalist form.

Before the Russian Revolution, Lenin stressed the need for a centralised but democratic, unitary, workers' state to start the construction of socialism. He also made clear that this cannot be completed within the confines of a single state.

On the basis of the world market created by capitalism, international revolution is necessary to carry through the transition to socialism.

But recognising the great national diversity of the Tsarist empire and the repression of national minorities perpetrated by the old regime, he also committed the Bolshevik Party to defend the right of any nationality to independence, or whatever degree of autonomy the majority of that nation demanded.

"Moslems of Russia, Tartars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tartars of Trans-Caucasia, Chechens and mountain Cossacks" proclaimed the soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky: "All you whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the tsars and oppressors of Russia.

"Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your right, like that of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the revolution".

This had the effect of undermining the appeal of nationalism. The workers and peasants overwhelmingly supported the

1917 revolution, confident that their national identity would not be suppressed.

Under the bureaucratic counter-revolution led by Stalin, however, the situation began to change. Stalin presided over the ruthless persecution of national minorities as part of the bureaucracy's suppression of all potential opposition.

Today's bureaucracy are reaping some of the consequences. The Kazakhstan riots followed the sacking of a corrupt local bureaucrat and his replacement by a Russian. The local bureaucracy were able to exploit anti-Russian feelings amongst a section of the peasantry to oppose Moscow's appointment.

The present discontent among the Crimean Tartars stems from the forcible removal of 400,000 of them from the Crimea to central Asia in 1944. Former Russian leader Khrushchev admitted in 1956 that 100,000 Tartars had died in the process.

The 1.9 million Germans are descendants of immigrants in the time of Catherine the Great, who settled around the Volga. After the revolution there was an Autonomous Volga Republic of German speakers. It was abolished by Stalin and its inhabitants were moved.

Now there is a demand by some for exit visas. So far this year 3,700 have been issued.

In the Baltic republics, the recent demonstrations were to commemorate their forcible incorporation into the USSR in 1939, after the non-aggression pact between Hitler and Stalin.

The establishment of the three small states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia after the first world war was part of a strategy by the leaders of the major capitalist powers. They hoped that the creation of weak capitalist states, corresponding to the various nationalities in eastern Europe, would provide a buffer between revolutionary Russia and western Europe.

This was another example of 'Balkanisation', the creation of a patchwork of unstable, reactionary statelets. Some of today's conflicts stem from decisions such as putting multi-lingual Transylvania into Romania, a Turkish minority into Bulgaria and an Albanian community into Serbia.

Transylvania has for centuries been home for a variety of nationalities, including Romanians, Jews, Germans, Hungarians and Armenians, with a tradition of tolerance. Now one of the most repressive Stalinist regimes of eastern Europe, Ceausescu's Romania, is ruthlessly suppressing the Hungarian minority, and 'encouraging' Germans and Jews to emigrate in return for hard currency from the west.

Even more brutal has been the Bulgarian bureaucracy's attempt to suppress the Turkish minority of 781,000—just under ten per cent of the population.

The bureaucracy does not even admit the existence of a Turkish population. They have banned the Turkish language and traditional dress and forced at gunpoint those with Turkish names to apply for new identity cards with Bulgarianised names.



Crimean Tartars demonstrate on Moscow's Red Square.



Shopping queue in Bucharest, Romania.

It is in Yugoslavia, however, that the national question has erupted with the greatest force. The creation of Yugoslavia at the end of the first world war was a step away from 'Balkanisation'. It united several small states with parts of the former Austrian empire under an autocratic monarchy.

In the second world war, Hitler and Mussolini dismembered the country and imposed a reign of terror. The victory of Tito's Communist partisans led to the creation of a bureaucratically deformed workers' state. It was modelled on that of Stalin, but because it was Tito's forces and not the Red Army which won the victory, it was not a client state of Moscow.

To attempt to overcome the national rivalries, the bureaucracy created a federation of six autonomous republics, and two 'autonomous regions' within the Serbian republic. Instead of one centralised bureaucracy, as in other Stalinist states, there are six corrupt and incompetent bureaucracies, creaming off the wealth created by the workers and vying with each other for a greater share of the country's resources.

Against the background of 120

per cent inflation, and a new austerity programme just announced, inequalities between different regions have widened. Kosovo is the poorest of all. There 80 per cent are Albanians, the only non-Slav Yugoslavians.

Serbs have tended to be better educated, and hold a disproportionate number of the better-paid jobs. But now the two million Albanians—more people than in Albania itself—have started to fight to escape from their poverty. In 1981, Albanian students rioted, demanding full autonomy for the province.

In turn, the minority Serbs claim that they are the oppressed nationality, being forced out of their homes by Albanians. Some 20,000 Serbs have left Kosovo in the last five years.

The regime has cracked down, with 35,000 Albanians in court since 1981 charged with 'counter-revolutionary activities', and student enrolment has been drastically cut. But this has not satisfied Serbs, who have staged demonstrations in both Kosovo and Belgrade, demanding more drastic action against the 'intimidation' of Serbs by Albanians.

Now the Serbian Communist Party top has split, with Belgrade

Party chief Pavlovic being ousted by hardliners for questioning the oppression of the Albanians.

The continuing failure of all the Stalinist regimes to resolve this basic question of national rights is symptomatic of their failure to overcome the fundamental contradictions of their societies. The socialist planned economy, which represents an historic advance over capitalism, cannot be developed to its full potential when it is run by an unelected, privileged and corrupt layer of officialdom.

Workers lack the most basic democratic rights, have no control over the economy or the state and are constantly paying the price for the bureaucracy's mismanagement in the form of shortages and cuts in living standards. Without the conscious involvement of the workers in the running of industry and society there can be no solution.

But there is no way forward for nationalist movements in these states. Even if it were possible, secession would be a backward step. In fact, the bureaucracy would mobilise all the resources of the state to crush any such move.

Only the working class, uniting all nationalities and using its position as the creator of the wealth on which the elite feeds, has the power to overthrow its oppressor and reestablish the kind of democracy created in Russia after 1917.

In such a society, every nationality would be guaranteed the right to self-determination. But the removal of bureaucratic dictatorship and economic advances would reduce and, with the spread of the revolution internationally, eliminate the demand for this. Workers would reap the benefits of a system whose resources were democratically planned and used to benefit the whole of society. Instead of national fragmentation, the basis will be laid for a socialist federation of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, and a socialist world federation.

India moves against the Tamil Tigers

THE SUDDEN outbreak of mass killings in the eastern province of Sri Lanka has provoked the Indian army to move into action against the Tamil Tigers (LTTE), the largest Tamil guerilla group.

By James Long

This crisis blew up when the Sri Lankan government decided to transfer from Jaffna to Colombo 17 LTTE members captured in a boat, allegedly carrying weapons, travelling from India to Sri Lanka. Rather than face imprisonment in Colombo, 12 committed suicide and five attempted suicide.

In revenge the LTTE killed eight government soldiers they were holding prisoner, and last Tuesday announced they were opposing the 29 July Indo-Sri Lankan accord. At the same time a wave of racist massacres was launched on Sinhalese civilians living in the Eastern province, as well as attacks on some Sri Lankan soldiers and policemen.

The attacks on Sinhalese civilians have been indiscriminate. They seem designed to drive Sinhalese out of the Eastern province and provoke a Sinhalese backlash, in the hope that this would force the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) into clashes with the Sri Lankan forces. While the LTTE office in Madras, India, has denied responsibility, there is little doubt that the LTTE did carry out these murders.

But far from bringing the IPKF

into conflict with the Colombo government these attacks have resulted in the IPKF moving against the LTTE itself. The Sri Lankan government is keeping its forces in their barracks and is relying on the IPKF to crush the opposition to the accord among the Tamils.

Having committed themselves so far to trying to bring the guerilla war to an end, the Indian government cannot afford to retreat. It will therefore move to crush any resistance by the LTTE. The LTTE's racist massacres and the desire of the majority of the Tamil population for peace will allow the IPKF to isolate and stamp out opposition by the guerillas.

Opposition

But while the IPKF will most probably be able to defeat the current resistance, opposition will later mount when the Tamil and Sinhalese masses begin to understand that the accord has done nothing to solve the social problems which lie at the root of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The workers' movement in Sri Lanka today has to explain that the accord is designed to help prop up the capitalist governments in India and Sri Lanka. It is necessary to campaign to unite the Sinhalese and Tamil workers and peasants in a struggle in defence of democratic rights, for better living conditions and a socialist future.



Modern state farm in place of feudal agriculture.

Tibet—what lies behind the riots?

VIOLENT CLASHES in Lhasa, capital of Tibet, have revealed sharp tensions in China's biggest Autonomous Region, and suggest a new period of instability.

By Lynn Walsh

The clashes arose from a nationalistic demonstration led by Buddhist priests (lamas) on 1 October, China's National Day. They reportedly chanted: "This is Tibet, a free and independent nation." One tourist, however, said the ensuing riot was "extremely racist," with ordinary Chinese being beaten up and stoned.

Fighting erupted when the police arrested several lamas. Thousands gathered and joined the attack on the police station. Prisoners were freed and the building burned down. The police, at a certain point, opened fire on the crowd. The conflict left between 6 and 20 dead, with scores injured.

Reports from tourists, varying on many of the details, were later confirmed on key points by the official Chinese media.

The Lhasa demonstration coincided with the private visit to Washington of the Dalai Lama, the exiled leader of Tibetan Buddhism. While Reagan repudiates any support for his 'government-in-exile', there are plenty of senators ready to promote the Lama as a champion of freedom.

But what connection is there between the grievances of people in Tibet and the exiled Dalai Lama? Struggles by national minorities are inevitable in a Stalinist state like China. But who can really believe that the adherents of an exiled 'god-king' can offer a way forward?

The key to this puzzle lies in the country's peculiar history. Mountainous and sparsely peopled, it forms a remote but strategically important buffer between China and India.

Soon after Mao's regime came to power in China in 1949, the Red Army moved into Tibet. The social changes carried out by the revolution, primarily the abolition of landlordism, were extended into Tibet.

The domination of the Chinese state over Tibet was restored,



'Red Guards' during the Cultural Revolution.

through a combination of military action and negotiations. A bridge was opened between this archaic land and the highway of modern development. But it also ended a misty era of virtual independence for a land with its own distinct language, culture, and national identity.

The region came under the control of the Chinese emperors in the eighteenth century. But central control was loosened by the breakdown of Chinese society, and vanished during the 1911-49 republic, which was convulsed by multiple revolutions and wars. Insulated from these events, Tibet's independence was consolidated under the theocratic rule of the Dalai Lama.

Exploitation

The spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism rested on the materialistic feet of local landlords. Their entrenched feudal system was marked by even more barbarous exploitation and cultural backwardness than China itself.

How could such a reactionary, and his present-day successor, become the figurehead for popular revolt? Only because the progressive social changes in Tibet have always been directed from above by a ruling bureaucracy pursuing its own national interests. While obliged to grant varying degrees of formal autonomy, the bureaucracy ultimately re-

gards national minorities as subject peoples.

Had a genuine Marxist policy on national and religious rights been followed, combined with workers' and peasants' democracy, the revolution would have won the overwhelming support of Tibetans.

Bureaucratic methods however, enforced by the Chinese army, led to a national rebellion in 1959. Together with the Dalai Lama, thousands fled in the aftermath of its suppression. Since then, new roads, improved agriculture, education, and increased regional autonomy, have undoubtedly gained the regime a basis of support. Under the Deng Xiaoping leadership reforms in the region have recently been speeded up.

But deep feelings of national oppression and religious persecution remain. During the misnamed Cultural Revolution in 1966-67, for instance, many Buddhist temples—shrines to the devout, but in any case monuments of great historic value—were wantonly smashed.

Buddhism

Historically, Tibet's national culture is inseparable from Buddhism. National aspirations have long been cloaked in saffron robes. The regime's inability to resolve popular grievances has, in the absence of a conscious leadership, once again brought mystical fanatics to the fore.

A widespread revolt seems unlikely at the moment. But Tibet's instability poses a dilemma for the Chinese leaders: Clamp down on the opposition, which has evidently been encouraged by recent reforms? Or speed up the reforms, to preempt worse upheavals?

Differences on this issue will probably sharpen the struggle over policy and positions between rival factions at the forthcoming 13th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Whatever they decide, the Chinese bureaucrats are doomed, like their cohorts in Russia and Eastern Europe, to follow the zig-zag path of reform and reaction—until the advent of the workers' democracy.



Tigers' leader Prabhakaran (left). A price of 1 million rupees (£20,000) has been put on his head.

Militant Marxist Weekend School

London 27-29 November, University of London Union, Malet Street London WC1
Featuring debate celebrating 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, on Sunday at 2.00pm

Militant v Marxism Today Can Gorbachev's reforms succeed?

Whole weekend costs: £9 waged; £7 unwaged.
Cheques to: MWES 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9

WATCH BBC's *Omnibus* series on Glasnost and the Arts for an insight into state coercion of culture under Stalinism and the effects of Gorbachev's reforms. (BBC1 Friday 16, 10.20pm is on artists, and the following Friday on writers.)

Last Friday Russian film directors talked candidly about censorship and the cinema, and raised some interesting questions—will glasnost lead to a new period of original and unfettered film-making? It also illustrated the workings of the bureaucracy and the methods used for controlling the dissemination of ideas.

Protest grows in France

TENS OF thousands of workers are expected to take part in a 24-hour public sector strike in France on 15 October.

Originally called by the minority Force Ouvriere union in response to rank and file pressure, the strike has now won backing from the biggest trade union feder-

ation, the CGT. This is the latest in a series of protests by workers against the right-wing Chirac government. On 1 October, 100,000 workers joined a day of protest called by the CGT. A week earlier, printworkers staged a national one-day strike in protest against fines imposed on the CGT,

which the union is still refusing to pay.

The Chirac government, still licking its wounds after its defeat by the students last December, remains bitterly divided as the protests gather momentum in the run-up to next year's presidential election.

Publicity dept

Dear Comrades,
One Friday I went to Hatfield pit for my usual pit sale, one of the branch officials called me across and bought a copy of the paper. He complained about the Labour Party conference and said the Party had been taken over by a bunch of middle class 'yuppies' who were trying to get rid of socialism.

into the union box, ten minutes later he came out, stood with me and started telling all the lads they should buy the *Militant*—several did.

The more the right wing try to drag the Party to the right, the more the working class will fight to retain socialism within the Party.

AJ Peterson, Doncaster

He then took the paper

Supporting Wall

The following letter was published in the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*: "Sir, I find your remarks about our candidate for Bradford North quite insulting to the intelligence of the people of the said constituency. Apparently they read his brochure demanding higher pensions for the old, more

houses to be built, decent wages and jobs, estates repaired.

If we like that sort of thing we will vote for it. Pat Wall has been cleared by the people that matter.

W Brook

PS. I am not a member of the Labour Party or Militant."

Vital luxury

Dear Comrades,

The other day I read that a man had won the *Mirror* Bingo, a sum of around £15-£20,000. He was asked what he would do with the money, have an expensive holiday? a flash car? or any of the other luxuries workers can only afford if they win such

amounts, no.

He said he was pleased he had won so he could afford a cataract operation, as he couldn't get one on the NHS, and before he won the bingo he couldn't afford to go private.

David Mitchell, Cleethorpes.

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.

Wanted NUM branch/strike badges in exchange for Kent badges, or to buy. Contact Peter Jaconelli, 13 Dryden Rd, Dover, Kent.

Islington Fightback conference. Saturday 17 October 10am to 5pm. Islington Town Hall. Conference to build a local campaign against government cuts.

West London flat available. 1 or 2 comrades wanted to buy into a shared 2 bed flat in Hounslow, near tube. Contact Ian O'Hara, h) 568 8639 w) 577 0555 x128

Coventry South East Labour Party Rally for South Africa. Sunday 18 October, Hillfields Community Centre, Yardley St, 7pm. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP and Campaign for a Socialist South Africa.

SALEP publications

Sifuna Konke Marxist study guide (3 sections)..... £1+p&p
Isolate the South African Bosses SALEP broadsheet..... 20p+p&p
SALEP's socialist education work—why does the Labour Party want to ban it?..... 40p+p&p
ASINAMALI pamphlet exposing the bosses' arguments for paying poverty wages..... 30p+p&p

Videos

All videos for hire £10 LPYS and Women's sections. £20 LP's and trade unions. The launch of COSATU! 1985 launch of the Congress Of South African Trade Unions.
South African Workers Struggle! Film of chemical workers' struggle against the relocation of their factory to a cheap labour bantustan by a major multinational; NUM education caucus and the 1987 NUM Congress.
Women fight apartheid and capitalism! Footage of women in struggle in the 1950's and of strike action in 1986.
Mayfair Working class whites in a suburb of Johannesburg struggle against government plans to relocate them under the Group Areas Act.
Goldfields Super-exploitation of SA mineworkers by a major British multinational.
We Live Like Dogs The life and conditions of a black South African mineworker. Please return videos immediately after use.
Post and Packing rates: 50p and under..... 20p
£1..... 40p
Each subsequent £1..... 20p
Over £10..... Free.
All cheques payable to SALEP, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB. Tel 01 241 0434.

The fading Star

Dear Comrades,

Were you as surprised as I was when Tesco announced they were dropping advertising from the 'new look' *Daily Star*? One look at the wage slips of women workers in their chain of supermarkets would question their sudden commitment to women's emancipation. But the Tesco public relations men have assured us they were shunning the *Star* because it was now 'offensive to women'.

I think the Tesco ad men had more to do with it. Now the *Daily Star*—joining up with the *Sunday Sport*, has floated along the gutter, and gone completely down the drain to the sewer, so the market the *Star* is aimed at has changed dramatically.

No longer a 'family tabloid' the sleazed up *Star* is now aimed exclusively at 'young men under 24' (*Guardian* Media page, 5 October). Needless to say, not many women are going to be interested in a rag that has page to page tits and bums, topless 15 year old school girls and sickening rape stories trivialised to the level of a cheap thrill for some moron to read in his tea break.

The Tesco ad men are not going to throw hundreds of thousands of



Tesco and the *Daily Star* — both offensive to women.

Photo: Militant

pounds buying ad space in a newspaper (?) totally unread by their advertising target group — housewives. They withdraw their contracts and the Tesco public relations team score some PR Brownie points with their pious denunciations about the 'degradation of women' etc.

Equally nauseating is that the *Daily Star* and *Sunday Sport's* sister paper—the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*—are still churning out their right

wing lectures about 'morality, lowering standards, young people today, blah blah blah' from their pompous editorial columns. A deafening silence greets the filth pouring off their own presses in the shape of the *Daily Star*. Soft porn is OK when you can make millions in profit out of it.

As Sir John Junor, editor of the *Sunday Express* would say "Pass the sick bag Alice".
Bob Wade, Sec. NUI Broad Left.



Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

No to policy purge

Dear Comrades,
It is no accident that the recent attempts to 'modernise' the Labour Party and redefine socialism appears in the September/October *Economist*, the journal of big business.
In an article 'To the aid of the Party' big business gives this advice to our par-

ty leader: "Mr Kinnock must master his left-wing and modernise the Party's structure. He made a promising start on the left at the Party's Bournemouth conference two years ago, launching into the noisiest left-wing group, the Militant Tendency". But this hasn't gone far enough for

the capitalist class, they also suggest "for years under Clement Attlee Labour maintained a strict discipline over Party membership and removed the party whip from those MPs who stepped out of line. Mr Kinnock should consider reviving the practice."
Neil Williams, Cardiff

Dear Comrades,
My organisation was one of those that took part in the youth consultation this summer. I wrote to Joyce Gould in support of the proposals put forward by the LPYS, and received a reply saying that our 'views will be considered'.
After watching the youth debate at Party conference on TV, it's obvious that the consultation was nothing but a sham. The right-wing didn't give a damn for our views despite the massive 85 per cent response in support of the YS. This contemptible attitude is aimed at all left wing activists and will not stop at the youth.

Finding a decent job

Dear Comrades,
Recently I dropped in on an old workmate who I hadn't seen for a while. Joe, an ex-Longbridge shop steward, was telling me how difficult it was trying to get a job. He said: "Take street cleaning, that used to be an old man's job, yet the other day I got chatting to a young lad who was sweeping up near my street. I asked him how he felt about his job, he replied 'well, a job's a job and at least I've got a few bob in my pocket, but there is one thing that bothers me. My girlfriend thinks I've got a decent job and while I'm out on the streets I dread the thought of being spotted with my cart'".
So much for the yuppie epidemic, dockers earning £400 a week and so called 'Booming Britain'.
Les Kuriata, Birmingham



Felicity Dowling going into conference to appeal against her expulsion from the Party.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,
During the five minute adjournment in the closed session at Labour Party conference to allow delegations time to decide how they should vote on Felicity Dowling's expulsion, a fierce argument was clearly overheard amongst the US-DAW delegates.
It appeared that the General Secretary, Garfield Davies, didn't think it necessary to even bother consulting the rest of the delegation on how the 352,000 USDAW votes should be cast, as far as he

was concerned Felicity Dowling was guilty.
Some left-wing delegates thought that at the very least a vote on the matter was in order, but this was refused. Eventually Davies agreed to take a vote which resulted in 17-7 in favour.
So the votes went in favour of the expulsion, but this example clearly demonstrates the uncase that existed in the hall to yet another expulsion taking place.
By conference delegates

We now have this so-called 'policy review' in which the fundamentals of socialism are going to be put in the melting pot. Neil Kinnock protests that there's going to be 'no bonfire' with party policy, but judging by the vicious attack on the YS, it certainly smells like November fifth has come early!
George Knell, Secretary Newsome Labour Party

Department of Health and Social Security in crisis.

Tory right plan privatised benefits system

ALARMING PLANS to privatise areas of work in the DHSS have been revealed. John Moore, the Social Services Secretary and the man who wanted to privatise the sewers in 1983 is looking into 'establishing the enterprise culture within the DHSS'.

By Simon Dennison
(CPSA DHSS Exec member, personal capacity)

This is presumably the same enterprise culture that has been responsible for poverty, unemployment and low wages, forcing millions to claim social security benefit in the first place. It will mean lower wages, poorer conditions and job losses for civil servants who administer the benefit system, if implemented.

The Tories clearly aim to launch a massive attack on trade unionism in the DHSS. Plans to contract out benefit payments, the collection of National Insurance contributions that are unpaid or in arrears, computer work, internal audit and 'office support' services will be a disaster for claimants and staff alike. Office support services include 'a range of messenger, portering, security handyman, receptionist and routine clerical tasks'.

The plans to privatise National Insurance would virtually close contribution sections in local offices. The government wants to give this work, currently done by members of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) to debt collecting agencies.

The privatisation of 'routine clerical tasks' is not fully explained but would certainly mean the contracting out or the use of agency staff to do most, if not the majority, of the clerical work which will be simplified due to changes in the social security system and the introduction of new technology.



Intolerable pressures exist on both sides of the barriers.

The study by the Department states that they welcome the 'freedom to use bureau or contractor staff and 'more flexibility over the mix of office service grades (and job descriptions attached to them)'. Quite clearly the Tories will use privatisation to try and end trade unionism in the DHSS by the use of non-union labour. They see the union organisation in the DHSS as a major obstacle to their plans to cut benefits, services and jobs.

Because of the poor conditions DHSS workers have to work under, with intolerable pressures and low pay, CPSA members have elected a Broad Left leadership in the section consistently over the last few years. Many strikes have taken place on a range of issues. The Department is a powderkeg that could erupt at any time. The government will seek to undermine union action to improve conditions by bringing in non-union labour.

Consultants

Whilst the document avoids any direct mention of this, their intentions are clear. 85 staff working on new technology simulation at Lytham St Annes were removed from their work virtually overnight and private consultants Arthur Anderson were brought in to do their work. The Tories will privatise

all computer programming for future projects. It was no accident that all the staff removed were active in the Civil Service pay campaign whilst the scabs remained in post. The Tories wanted these SCPS members out of the sensitive area of new technology.

Contract cleaning, already introduced to most Civil Service establishments has led to low standards. The cleaners are low paid and often have inadequate time or numbers to do a decent job as companies keep their profits high but costs low in order to win the contract. The threat to privatise portering, messengers and security, grades organised by the Civil Service Union, would have a similar effect.

The document argues that 'many local offices no longer need their full time security guards' except in certain inner city offices. CPSA members even in so-called quieter areas face aggravation from an understandably frustrated public and security guards are required for the smooth running of offices.

Tensions

Changes in social security regulations will increase tension in all areas of the country. These proposals will decimate jobs in the predominantly lower paid areas of the DHSS, organised by the CPSA and CSU.

The financial benefits to the Department are doubtful. The service to the public, which in reality the DHSS only pays lip service to, would get worse. However, the advantages of side-stepping the unions and an organised workforce, the use of flexibility of numbers, flexibility of job description, the ability to hire, fire and relocate at random are what the government wants.

The Civil Service unions must fight to ensure that jobs and services are not privatised and the study being run never sees the light of day. The Tories' attempt to bring the 'enterprise culture' into the DHSS must be stopped.

'I have never felt so helpless'

IN THE DHSS office where I work, the training for the Income Support System, has caused chaos.

Our six Supplementary Benefit sections are manned by inexperienced staff, because those with experience are all being placed onto the conversion teams. The problems are double-sided in that the Supplementary Benefit staff are finding it very difficult to cope with the growing workload and the backlogs.

One young man decided he had had enough and left the office at two o'clock last Friday afternoon and went home. There were six claimants waiting to see him. He felt he could not cope and just left without telling anyone!

Then there is the marked increase in threats to the staff. In the last two weeks three women

staff members have had to be escorted to their cars or to the station due to threats from claimants to meet them outside.

By a London DHSS worker

On the other hand, who can blame people for losing their tempers when they are treated like cattle. One woman with three children under five sat in our reception for over five hours before she received a payment, despite making repeated requests to have her claim dealt with urgently.

One man who came into the office at 9.30am had to leave at 3.15 in the afternoon, before receiving his payment, so that he could collect his children from school. Yesterday I had to try and

explain to an 81 year old, chronically sick woman why she couldn't have a grant for a fridge. The only way I could help this woman was to contact social services to try and arrange a home help for her, so that her shopping could be done daily. I was carpeted for this. Apparently it's not my job!

I have argued in circles over the case of a woman with two small children whose only source of heating is her coal fire. To use this she needs to have the chimney swept. She has only been in the property six weeks, so it wasn't her responsibility before. As it is, the chimney is unsafe, but my supervisor wouldn't let me use my discretion and allow a grant for its sweeping. Neither will we allow a grant for a gas fire. Why? Because she has a coalfire! So the woman

and her children are left without any source of heat unless she risks their lives by lighting a fire.

I have never felt so helpless as in these last few weeks. If I didn't believe in the ideas of Marxism, I would have given up by now.

Spending halved

IT HAS just been revealed that single payment awards to those on Supplementary Benefit have been slashed by more than half. These grants, for essential items such as furniture, cookers and beds amounted to £31 million last August, but by June of this year this figure had fallen to only £14 million. The new criteria brought in by the Tories which have resulted in this cut are creating even more misery and hardship for the poor

rest sections of society.

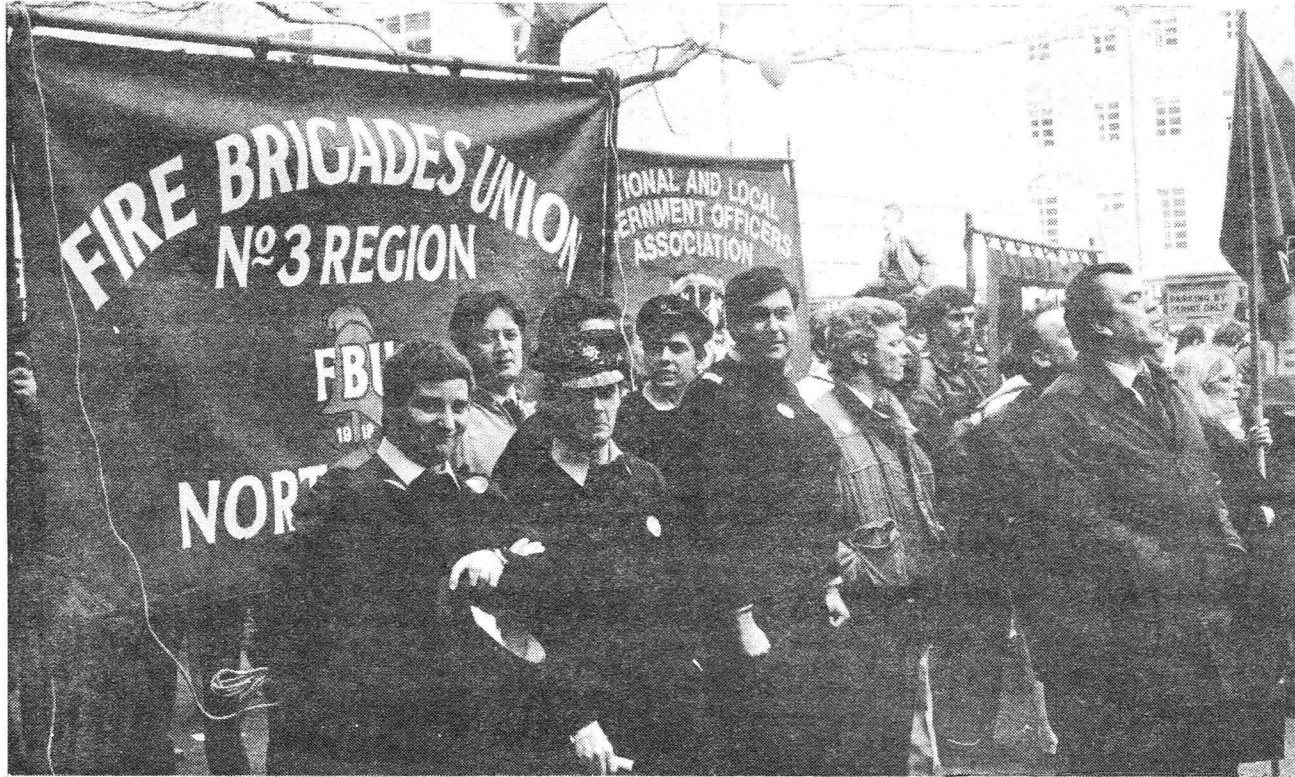
Worse is planned by the Government, however in the form of the Income Support System, a fancy name for another benefit cut, which is scheduled for next April. This will mean an end to single payments, to be replaced by 'social fund loans' which will have to be repayed out of the claimant's benefit.

Every Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) office will be given an annual budget which it won't be allowed to exceed. The Family Income Supplement is to be replaced.

These plans, not yet law, are already causing problems for DHSS staff, who are under intolerable pressure as it is. To make matters worse, the Tories now have plans for widespread privatisation in the Department.

West Glamorgan withdraw sackings, but not cuts.

Firefighters force council backdown



The fight is on to save the fire service.

IN A DEAL reached at the arbitration service, ACAS, West Glamorgan County Council have agreed to re-instate the 360 firefighters sacked after taking protest industrial action over cuts.

By Matt Wrack and Rab Chalmers

(FBU personal capacity)

The entire labour movement will welcome this decision. Following the sackings, firefighters in many brigades throughout the country took "emergency calls only" action in sympathy with the sacked FBU members.

It was disgraceful that a Labour authority like West Glamorgan should adopt tactics worse than those of Rupert Murdoch. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) must now demand that the West Glamorgan members receive full pay for the time when they were locked out.

The agreement reached means that the FBU has called off all industrial action over a proposal by the County Council to cut fire cover with the loss of 48 whole-time jobs. The proposed cuts will now go to the Home Office.

However, all changes in establishment schemes (the number of firefighters, stations and engines) already have to be agreed by the Home Office. As the Council have said, they have

withdrawn nothing. In other words, the Council's proposed cuts still threaten the Fire Service in West Glamorgan.

The FBU membership voted by over 80 per cent to take industrial action against these cuts and this issue has not gone away.

The FBU has exposed the role of the Home Office on many occasions. FBU Conference has adopted a policy of non co-operation with Home Office Inspectors because their role was to try to find new ways of making cuts.

Over the next period all Fire Authorities will be required to complete the same review of fire cover as was carried out in West Glamorgan.

'Review'

Under these reviews each Fire Brigade will assess the risk categories in its area. Each street is categorised according to building density, construction, type of occupancy etc and then graded A, B, C or D risk. The amount of each risk category determines how many Fire Stations, engines and firefighters are needed.

The government will obviously use these reviews as a way of making cuts. Other brigades will face the same attacks as West Glamorgan and larger brigades could lose an even higher number of jobs.

The FBU in West Gla-

morgan should be applauded for its stand against the cuts. The magnificent vote for industrial action shows that it is possible to build a fight against job losses even where no redundancies are involved.

The FBU has also led similar struggles in other areas. The Union nationally has to campaign to ensure that any such fight receives full support.

Unfortunately, West Glamorgan Council have given the green light to other Authorities who want to take on the FBU. If the Union campaigns using partial industrial action (emergency calls only or partial stoppages) the employers will think they simply have to threaten or enforce a lockout to force the Union to back down.

The threat of a lockout or the sacking of any of our members should lead immediately to a recall Conference to launch a campaign for national strike action.

★ Demand full back pay for the West Glamorgan firefighters.

★ Fight all job losses and all cuts.

★ Condemn the action of West Glamorgan County Council—the FBU has to demand that Labour Fire Authorities resist government cuts.

★ Full support to any brigade taking action against the cuts.

Swansea resolute

ARMY 0 FIREMEN 4 read the score sheet in the window of Morrision fire station in Swansea, before the dispute was settled.

The members of the "Blue watch" were scathing about the level of fire cover being provided by the Army. The 30 year old green goddesses were a joke and as for the specialised RAF Cutting Crew, "they haven't even got a tin opener," one fireman commented.

Several of the antique goddesses have arrived at fires to find the real professionals in the fire service already tackling it. The firefighters were determined to carry out their public duties until they were forcibly ejected from the station if it had been necessary.

The labour movement must equal the FBU members' determination in ensuring that West Glamorgan's Labour council does not do the government's dirty work in reducing the level of fire cover.

By Carol Hopkinson and Bill Williams

(Swansea Trades Council and NALGO, personal capacity)

Stop BREL butchery No more ghost towns

THE BRITISH Rail Engineering (Brel) works at Crewe is to close within the next two years, according to information we have been given.

Brel management deny this and claim they have no closure plans. Their denials will cut no ice with the 2,800 workers currently employed here who remember management's claim only a few months ago that there would be no more redundancies at Crewe—1,020 were announced on 22 September.

One young worker who has just completed his four year apprenticeship described the whole affair as: "Devastating news, not just for the Brel works but for the whole of Crewe".

The first time he actually heard anything about the redundancies was on his way to the night shift when he was stopped by a BBC Radio 4 interviewer and asked how he felt about the job losses!

The irony is that this year is the 150th anniversary of British Rail at Crewe. The local council has organised a big heritage festival officially opened by the Queen and British Rail themselves organised an open day at the works which had 36,000 visitors. Now they appear to be closing the place!

The unions at Brel have set up a campaign committee and a public meeting has been organised for 30 October at the Oakley Centre.

A campaign of opposi-

tion to Brel management plans would get massive support from workers in Crewe—the whole town has been built up around the works. Its closure would have a knock-on effect similar to that which has devastated so many mining communities.

There has never been a better time to start a fight back in this town. Health service workers are moving into opposition to the latest cut-backs being carried out locally.

The unions have organised a march from the centre of Crewe to the regional health authority headquarters this Friday, 16 October in protest at cuts totalling £400,000 over the next six months and £1.5 million over the next three years.

The last meeting of the health authority decided on the closure of three wards at the general hospital and a geriatric ward in an outlying hospital. The area has already got some of the worst hospital waiting lists in the country.

Local trade unionists want to link these two fights into a general struggle to save the town. A massive campaign of meetings, leafletting and canvassing would get mass support.

Trade unionists in Crewe will be calling for a day of action, a one day strike in the town as the first step in the campaign to stop the decimation of a formerly world famous industrial area.

Derby threatened

KEVIN CHURCHILL spoke to a worker at the threatened BREL works at Litchurch, Derby:

"Morale is rock bottom. The majority would come out if there was a strike, it's the young people who are saying enough is enough. The unions should fight, not just the NUR, but all the unions. The Labour members should be pushing as well, before they close down Litchurch Lane and loco works.

"If they send all work out to trade it would crucify all aspects of rail work in Derby, and it

would affect the rest of the economy in Derby, same as when Royce's was hit in the '70s.

Weeding

"Management said they will get voluntary redundancies, but that's not true. What they do is push people out. They put people onto 'pool gangs' and send them out weeding and cleaning out sheds and try to demoralise them, then they push them out. I personally think they will try and do the same as the Coal Board, and push out the activists."

Liverpool right victimise bin workers

THE STRIKE of Liverpool binmen at Smithdown yard is continuing into its second week. Management are out to provoke a dispute.

They first sacked two lads for allegedly demanding money to take rubbish away. This was on the evidence of one woman.

In the last week they have sacked a further five men to-

gether with a driver, for allegedly putting rubble in the back of a lorry. The driver alone has 39 years' service. At the moment the binmen, members of GMB branch 200 are just keeping Smithdown yard out while organising a lobby for the rest of the depots.

Militant spoke to members of GMB branch 200 about the dis-

pute and what lies behind it: "We think management are trying to provoke a dispute to try and soften us up for future privatisation."

"By sacking people they are probably trying to keep staffing levels down, thus cutting costs, so that an in-house tender will be more competitive. They are trying to save their own skins at our

expense.

"The current annual spending budget is £13 million a year. Apparently some private firms are talking about £8m to do the job. Our management will be trying to cut £5m off the costs. They can only do that by sacking around 625 workers and taking on the union.

"We will not accept privatisa-

tion. A lot of the lads are wishing we had a council like the old one. One lad said to me: 'I wish we had Hatton back.'

"Another lad wanted to know why we could not go to the council and sort problems out like we used to. This council has got to decide whose side it's on, the workers' or the Tories."

Industrial reports

Miners: Step up action against bosses' code

THE NATIONAL Union of Miners' overtime ban in opposition to British Coal's new disciplinary code is having some effect in the Western Area, particularly on Littleton colliery.

By Littleton NUM members

Coal production is reportedly only 4 per cent down nationally but there has been a 15 per cent drop in the Western Area and it is 27 per cent down in Littleton.

More coal is usually cut at weekends at this pit so the ban is hitting harder than elsewhere. Moreover there are only two faces here (rather than the usual three, one for standby) so management have no alternative to fall back on.

The NUM Committee and the Power Group meet regularly at Littleton to coordinate the ban. Activists have produced helmet stickers with the time of snap breaks on them. "Support your union—stop for snap." This makes sure that production stops during the 20 minute breaks.

Rumours

But management are doing their worst to try to break our action. One of the faces here is in poor condition so the union has given management flexibility on work which needs to be done on safety grounds.

The other face is in perfect condition and we have given nothing on this. But management are pressurising

miners to come in early so we can strip on face for the full 7 and a quarter hours. They also want us to strip over on Sunday nights.

Their main tactic is rumour. They say the pit is in danger, even though normally its production costs are well below the British Coal target of £1.50 per gigajoule. Other pits, they say, are coming in early and not stopping for snap. Other areas, they say, are losing nothing and even breaking production records.

We need coordinated national leadership.

Nationally we should tighten up on the ban to make it clear that going in early is a move towards flexible working hours, which is just what the



Photo: Jacob Sutton

Three years after the miners' strike the message is the same.

management want.

At the same time we need to stop the management rule by rumour by reporting what is happening in every area, even if this is only a sheet of paper

for every member.

If we don't take action we can lose the propaganda battle which management take very seriously. Management even have a video at our pit putting their case.

Our national officials must go round the coal fields putting our case over to the members and building confidence to step up the action and beat the bosses' plans.

East End health reprieve

WHILE SOCIAL Services minister John Moore was telling the Tory faithful of his commitment to the NHS and privatisation in the same speech, hundreds of local people marched through the east end of London to protest against a proposed cuts package for the London Hospital.

The march got great support from local people. Moore's claim that there wasn't enough money to care for people who can't afford private medicine is sick when you look at the spivs' paradise in the City of London a mile down the road.

Stringent

The proposals include losing 108 beds, closure of a children's ward at Mile End and two theatres at Whitechapel and fewer bone marrow transplants. Tower Hamlets health authority met to discuss them that evening (8 October) to cover £1.5 million "overspending."

The DHA rejected the package, probably bearing in mind the demonstration. But the general manager who thought up the package said that this would only mean more stringent measures later.

The London BLOC conference on 24 October will be the first opportunity to meet other workers, tenants and Labour Party members to organise a concerted fightback against cuts and privatisation. (See details back page.)

By Matt Howarth

(Bow and Poplar LPYS)

"If it's militant to fight"

AT A MEETING of over 1000 workers to discuss the future of the Royal Ordnance Factory, Enfield, an AEU member was given a tremendous response when he called for a fight against closure.

This was in stark contrast to the position argued by TGWU national officer Jack Dromey who kept saying that although he would 'prefer' a campaign opposing closure he would understand if members voted against. He was seen as offering little more than messages of condolence and trying to convince workers that there was no

hope.

The AEU steward called for a campaign, pointing out that a month before closure was announced, union officials had advised acceptance of 2-3 year pay deals to keep all the factories together and stop them being picked off one by one. But that was precisely what was happening now.

He called for a credible campaign, not one which begged for support from Tory MPs, to safeguard jobs and future conditions, building on national unity of ROF workers and local support. Jack Dromey

replied by attacking him with greater ferocity than he attacked the bosses calling it "typical ultra left" and saying "I dare say we'll be hearing this in the pages of *Militant*."

"If it's militant to fight for your job and factory, I'm militant," the steward replied. Not surprisingly given the absence of a lead from national and local officials, the call for a fight was defeated. But many people now see the need for officials who are in touch with their membership's struggles.

By a Militant reporter

Free Trade Wharf Strike

AFTER YEARS of nose-diving living standards, the building boom in London docklands has allowed building workers to get better conditions through strong site organisation particularly on Laing's.

By Danny Walsh

(UG296 branch London region UCATT and Joe Stewart, (UG042 branch, personal capacities)

Long running battles like Hays Wharf paved the way for the current dispute at Free Trade Wharf, Wapping. Because management plan to wheedle out the best union activists, 30 bricklayers and hod carriers have been told they are down the road, even though Laing's have got miles of work on sites in this area.



Trade unionists fighting for union strength in docklands.

When they heard of the redundancies, all 50 blokes downed tools and appealed to other Laing's workers. By Friday 2 October, over

150 were on strike. Whatever happens in this dispute, it could bring to a head all the bitterness built up over the last few years.

News in brief

Beeline Buses

DRIVERS OF the private 'Beeline Buses' in Manchester recently took unofficial strike action after one of them had been suspended. Jackie Chesney and Lynne Worthington spoke to some of them about their conditions.

Suspensions and sackings have taken place for the smallest things. Drivers have to work through their dinner

hours, often eating dinner whilst driving the bus. Some routes have been nicknamed the 'Suicide runs' because of attacks which have taken place.

Hours have increased whilst pay has stayed the same. There are hopes of a rise after Christmas but this is not definite. During the recent dispute, some of the drivers from 'Little Gems' mini-buses, a rival company, expressed their support. This raises the future prospect of workers in different firms coming together to fight for better pay and conditions.

Borden plastics

WORKERS AT Borden UK factory at Chandlers Ford near Southampton have been on strike for three weeks after the UCATT branch secretary at this plastics firm was sacked.

He had complained about inadequate extraction methods for dangerous fumes which can cause dermatitis, sore

throats, eye and respiratory problems. Management gave the dismissed worker fifteen minutes to leave, after this the workforce all walked out.

After a secret ballot voted overwhelmingly for action, the strike has been solid. Don't let the employers trample over health and safety. Messages of support or donations to Borden strike fund, c/o UCATT, 54 Henstead Road, Southampton.

By Barry Needham and Steve Hatherley

Jehovah witnesses a sit in

A SMALL but remarkable example of the combativity of working people was shown in a recent industrial dispute in Portsmouth.

The double glazing trade is not known as an arena of industrial conflict and strife. So it was a surprise to hear of two days of industrial action at Lynhams Windows. These self employed workers, telephone and street canvassers, who have little job security held a sit-in strike for 48

hours over a delay in payment of a bonus worth on average £25, and over dire working conditions.

The owners, three fervent Jehovah's Witnesses could not bring about a settlement even with God on their side and the firm had to pay up!

This militancy in what is usually seen as a backward trade should give warning to any boss who thinks the working class is finished that when the big guns of our class move, even God won't be able to help capitalism.

By John Holt
TGWU Telephone canvasser

Militant

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Defend Pat Wall

Record of a socialist MP

THANK YOU, thank you, thank you starts one of the latest letters to Pat Wall from one of his constituents who whilst on remand had been locked up in isolation in Armley jail as a trouble-maker. The crime was to organise a letter-writing campaign protesting against prison conditions and in his own case, racial harassment.

The Tory MP, Geoff Lawler had been dealing with this case since April and achieved nothing. Yet through research in parliament Pat Wall was able to challenge the use of rule 43 in that solitary confinement was designed for protection and not as an arbitrary punishment. This gained immediate results.

SHAUKAT AHMED, Bangladeshi Youth Organisation voluntary development officer, recently selected as local council candidate for Undercliffe ward: "Pat is our MP. He was invited by the BYO to the post-election meeting to voice our unhappiness at

such questions as poll tax and immigration problems. The meeting was attended by over 70 adults and youngsters and was a great success. Compared to other MPs Pat Wall is much more down to earth and deals quickly with immigration cases rather than sitting on them as Geoff Lawler used to do. He tries to get directly involved in the community."

IN AN important breakthrough Pat Wall has brought about new guidelines from the DHSS for women receiving supplementary benefit.

Women should register for work while claiming supplementary benefit otherwise they are deemed as being behind in their tax contributions and would lose hundreds of pounds in benefits.

After Pat took up the case of his constituent she received a giro for £531 personally for maternity benefit with a change in the guidelines benefiting women across the country.

PAT WALL says: "I am opposed to an inquiry because both I and the Bradford North Labour Party have a long record of being opposed to witch hunts and expulsions. We are proud of our magnificent election campaign and I am personally grateful to all those that helped out whatever their sort of socialism.

"We won because of the hard work put in by local Party members, the Young Socialists and help from others. It is because we had a united campaign that we were able to take socialism onto the streets and defeat the Tories."

Pat responded to reports in the Times: "With such a victory over the Tories what right do the trade union barons have to attack Bradford North and talk of deselection me as the MP? Their members will have something to say about this as Bradford workers don't like to be dictated to from above. I have been elected for five years to represent the people of Bradford North. It took over five years to achieve this position. But as a newly elected MP I have every right to ask for more than five minutes before people start attacking me in the party.

"I am very confident of the future. I have always put my faith in the working class and they have given me a warm reception. If you stand by socialist principles you will be proven correct."

THE 21,009 Bradford North people who voted Labour, will be astonished at the attacks that have started inside the Labour Party, aimed at newly elected MP Pat Wall and *Militant* supporters in the constituency.

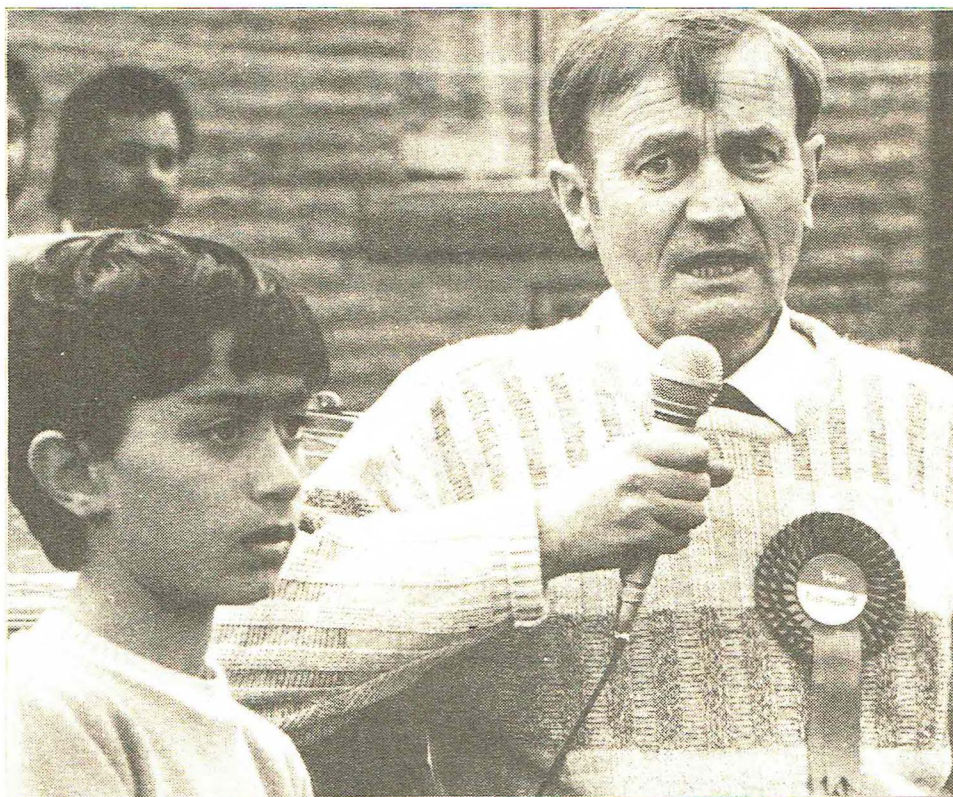
By Militant reporters

Before Pat had finished his maiden speech Ronnie Fieldhouse (ex-chair of the party) and Malcolm Waltan (ex-agent) had started disassociating themselves from the MP's clear stand as a marxist socialist.

These ex-lefts were quite prepared to allow hundreds of Young Socialists to work night and day to take Bradford North back from the Tories.

Yet now when working people have rallied to a clear socialist call in the election, they are undermining the base of a democratically elected MP. Pat Wall stood on a programme of fighting low pay, poverty and unemployment, for an increase in pensions and a struggle against racism.

Voters of Bradford North have every right to



Pat Wall speaking at a street meeting during his election campaign.

expect unity of the Labour Party to allow the ideas of socialism to be tested in practice. Yet this new right wing are not prepared to accept a massive vote of confidence that was given to the socialist campaign on election day. Nor are they prepared to accept the

democracy of the local labour movement.

Having lost the argument they resigned their positions so that they were free to appeal to the national right wing leaders of the party to expel good socialists, supporters of the *Militant* and undermine Pat's

position.

Workers of Bradford North are angry at the witchhunt. The Labour Party does not belong to individuals, but to the tens of thousands of Labour voters who turned out to vote for Pat Wall.

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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.