

# Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 871 30 October 1987



Celebrate the Russian revolution.

See page three for notice of regional rallies.

# BP fiasco - Thatcherism crumbles

**THE GREAT BP sale has become a fiasco. If it is put off, it is a defeat for the government. If it goes ahead, how many mugs will buy when the share price collapse has pushed BP's open market value way below the £3.30 offer price?**

Writing before the crash, when share prices seemed set to rise for ever, Nigel Lawson, king of the fat cats claimed that "privatisation has swept the world."

One week of capitalist reality has shown that all this talk about the "Thatcher revolution transforming society" through wider share ownership is rubbish.

There is no popular support for the 'share owning democracy'. The Labour and trade union leaders must campaign against privatisation and offer a socialist alternative.

The Tories have been selling off national assets mainly to finance tax cuts after the huge rise in unemployment.

At the same time, they hoped that if some workers owned shares, they would see maintaining profits and dividends as more important than fighting for decent wages and conditions.

Privatisation has slightly increased the number of shareholders but even before the crash it had not altered the reality of class society. For a start, many privatisations like the National Bus Company

were straight sales to private firms.

The vast majority of small shareholders only own shares in newly privatised companies, and usually only in one of them.

In many cases these holdings have been sold off as soon as humanly possible to make a quick profit. Under one tenth of Amersham International's original shareholders remain. It no more gives these shareholders a capitalist mentality than a flutter on the Derby gives you the same lifestyle as the Queen Mother or Lester Piggott.

Since 1963 the proportion of the stock market owned by individuals has gone down from 54 per cent to 24 per cent. The big shareholders have even more control.

Labour should, now more than ever, commit itself to renationalise all firms sold off by the Tories. Only the smallest shareholders should receive

compensation, based on genuine individual need.

Let the fat cats be warned, if they are stupid enough to get involved in the theft of public assets, a new Labour government will take them back and they will get nothing.

Labour's right still claim that the idea of nationalisation is outdated. But when capitalism is obviously not working, what is antiquated about nationalisation not just of loss making firms but of the 200 monopolies which control the economy? But nationalisation must be in the hands of the working class not of capitalist wreckers.

If the boards of nationalised industries were made up one third from unions in the industry, one third from the TUC, representing all workers and one third from the government, workers could draw up a socialist plan to produce the goods and services needed by society.

The capitalist casino economy is outdated, inefficient and destructive. Labour has rarely had a better opportunity to put forward a socialist alternative.

By Roger Shrivess

**There is no popular support for the "share-owning democracy". The Labour and trade union leaders must campaign against privatisation and offer a socialist alternative.**

**Don't stand on the sidelines**

Become a *Militant* supporter. Urgent appeal on page three.

**Build your paper**

NOVEMBER 11th is the deadline to reach £70,000 for our funds! (See page 7). In the last minute rush, one long standing supporter has come up with a magnificent £1000. A low paid worker from London has given £900. A reader in Tower Hamlets may well double the £500 he has promised by the end of the week.

What can you do? Who do you know who can give even more than you have got?

Think hard now and take action. *Militant* needs every penny and every pound. There's no time to spare and there's money to be got!





# Militant

Editor: Peter Taaffe  
Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.  
Phone: (01) 533-3311

## Socialist economics

THE THATCHER mirage of the share-owning democracy has been blown apart by the storms on the stock exchange. Once those workers who had bought shares discovered that shares do indeed go down as well as up, the illusion that they had ever been converted to the merits of popular capitalism was shattered.

But as *Guardian* columnist, Ian Aitken, comments, the Tories did at least succeed in convincing "many Labour MPs, from Brian Gould downwards, that the share-owning society was sufficient of a reality to have a place in any refurbished version of socialism".

It is just four weeks since Party conference. Since the Labour leaders steered through the most right-wing economic policies, voting down renationalisation resolutions. Four weeks since they pushed through the total review of Party policy, preparing to cast socialism overboard.

Gould and Kinnock pride themselves that unlike 'those Marxists' they are not blinkered by dogmatic old-fashioned theories. They are thoroughly modern, so they think, preparing a Party fit for the 1990s.

As a consequence, when the reality of the inevitable crash destroys in one go their hopelessly inadequate economic nostrums, they have nothing left. Gould's share ownership approach is buried, and he seems to have gone into hiding.

Although unbelievably, TGWU right winger and Labour NEC member, Eddie Haigh, was still speaking last weekend about dropping old ideas of renationalisation, in favour of trade union share-holdings and profit related pay.

Just as capitalism reveals its inability to guarantee prosperity and affluence for anything longer than a moment, just as the economy is crying out for rational organisation and planning, so the Labour right dispenses with any commitment to real socialist change. Ian Aitken, a supporter of Labour's right accepts that: "The jolt to public confidence involved in the stock market crash has put collectivism and the issue of who owns what back on the agenda"—except on the Gould/Kinnock agenda that is.

But even many of the left were taken in by the very temporary, artificial Thatcher/Reagan boom. The briefing papers for the Socialist Conference talked of the possibilities for "expanding social control through nationalisation", being "diminished". Other ways were needed—decentralisation and diversification. There was no mention in any of them of the urgent need to nationalise the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control, as the only means to allow for socialist planning to replace the chaos of capitalism.

However, at the conference itself the most dramatic crash since 1929 forced itself to receive some recognition. Ken Livingstone repeated several of the ideas expressed in *Militant's* immediate analysis of the share crisis. He talked of the worst recession since the war.

Yet as recently as September his prescription for the economy's ills, was "a cabled-up society", flexible and mobile, rapidly moving about "information and ideas". Even his interviewer said it was reminiscent of Harold Wilson's 1964 slogan—"the white heat of the technological revolution".

More than ever the economic convulsions have revealed the indispensable advantage of Marxist foresight, over the shallow thinking of all other trends within the labour movement. For a number of years *Militant* has explained the fundamental and inescapable character of the crisis of capitalism, which could not be refuted by the temporary appearance of stability.

In July Ted Grant wrote an article on the coming recession, published in the current edition of the *Militant International Review*. "All the conditions that make for a devastating slump are piling up...The bankers and the stockbrokers are under the illusion that the increase in prices in stocks and shares will lead to an increase in production to match it. In fact they will have to come down with a bump as they came down in the past".

Unfortunately the leaders of the labour and trade union movement have been blinded by the same illusions, in 'affluent prosperous Britain', and in the level of real support for Thatcherism.

The struggle to keep Labour socialist is not a sentimental or moral one. It is about fitting out the labour movement for the 1990s. But that will be a period of economic crisis and intense class struggle unparalleled for fifty years, in which only the clarity of Marxism can show the way for the working class.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.  
Published by *Militant*.  
Printed by *Militant Publications*,  
3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

## Chesterfield socialist conference

# Left fails to build workers' campaign

**IN THE week when workers everywhere will be worrying about the effect of the stock market crash on their jobs and living standards, a socialist conference could not have been better timed. It should have been the opportunity to discuss how to build a real mass movement for socialism in opposition to the Tories and to the capitalist system, now so clearly moving into crisis.**

By a *Militant* reporter

Unfortunately those few uncommitted people who attended the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield, would have been disappointed. The comment from one speaker that the conference was the most significant since that held by the Labour Party in Leeds in 1917, is wishful thinking.

It failed even to tackle its relationship with the Labour Party and the wider working-class movement. The posters on the platform announced: "The Socialist Society—working for an independent left". That was exactly the problem.

Large sections of the conference were independent of any links with the labour movement, and many of them seemed independent of the realities of working-class life. Some were members of the Labour Party, but many were not. There were members of the Green Party, Plaid Cymru and several supposedly revolutionary groupings.

### Booed and jeered

A meeting like that, of 1800 organised around no solid programme of action, is guaranteed to result in chaos. Sure enough within half an hour of the opening, when a representative of the Russian bureaucracy was introduced, the conference split asunder. Supporters of the Stalinist regime clapped, others booed and jeered throughout the speech.

This set the tone for many of the sessions. Speaker after speaker from the floor, to increasing exasperation, made futile appeals to the audience to join their particular brand of sectarianism.

Apart from a handful of platform speakers such as Betty and Peter Heathfield, Arthur Scargill and Eric Heffer, many of the speakers seemed to be as mesmerised as the Labour right with the Thatcherite myth of permanent economic growth (even after the crash!) and the support for 'people's capitalism'. Ralph Milliband, Dawn Primarola MP, Hilary Wainwright and others really accepted that 'old-fashioned' nationalisation and full blooded socialism were unpopular and unnecessary.

What was needed from the conference was precisely a defence of fundamental socialist beliefs, and an explanation of why capitalism is unable to provide any answers.

Avoiding the real issues of how to tackle the ownership and control of

society, academics were offering the ideas of municipal bonds, joint municipal ventures, trusts and co-ops. Their supposedly 'new' ideas are no different to the utopian socialism of Robert Owen one hundred and fifty years ago. One of them was heckled, when putting forward these views, by Eric Heffer in a seminar.

Anyway a TUC survey has shown it is not full nationalisation that is unpopular, but the way nationalised industries are managed under capitalism. A crucial part of any campaign for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, has to be a clear programme for democratic workers' control and management of each industry and of the entire economy.

But it will be through their own experience of struggle against capitalist crisis that workers will themselves draw the conclusions that a complete socialist transformation of society is needed. And they will turn towards their own Party to achieve it. Peter Heathfield explained that the miners were still involved in "a struggle for the survival of the NUM, the mines and the mining communities".

It will be on the basis of struggle that the ideas of the Labour right and the sterile academic debates of some of these lefts will be pushed aside.

A real campaign for to defend socialism has to be fought amongst the union branches, in the factories and on the estates. The conference did not tackle this question at all.

More significant from the point of view of campaigning for socialism among the ranks of the working class was the London BLOC conference held over the same weekend. (See facing page).

Plans were laid for future socialist conferences, but if they are to be any more successful certain basic conditions need to be fulfilled. There has to be an acceptance of the need to implement Clause Four, Part Four of Labour's constitution for the nationalisation of the commanding heights.

There has to be commitment to fight for socialist ideas inside the labour movement, and there has to be a genuine debate between the different tendencies within the Labour Party. If not, the Socialist Conference will fade into insignificance.



40,000 marched through London on an Anti-Apartheid demonstration last Saturday.

# Tories cut child benefits

"CHILD BENEFIT will continue to be paid as now, and direct to the mother". That was what the Tories' manifesto said, but do not expect them to be bound by that.

Seven million mothers collect their child benefit each week. Spitefully, Social Services Secretary, John Moore, is planning to freeze child benefits, and

then to means-test them, probably restricting them to about a million mothers already in receipt of state benefits.

This was the immediate response of Liverpool mother of three, Sue Hogan:—

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to allow no further increase in Child Benefit can only be seen as yet

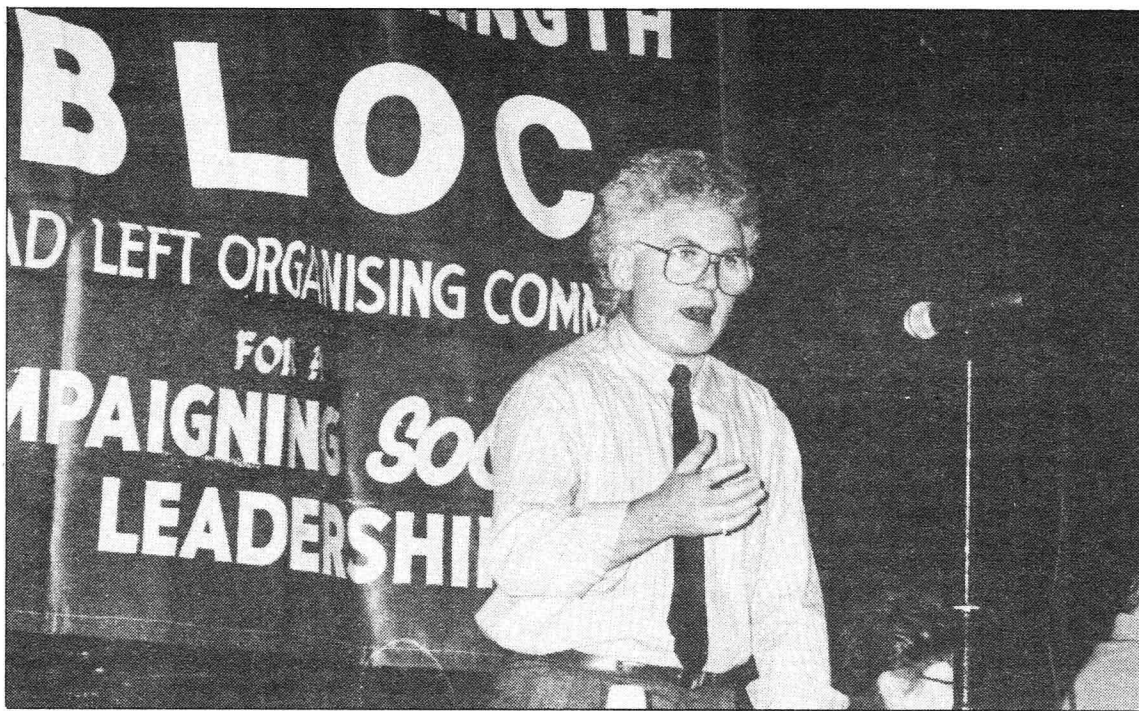
another attack on the working classes. Many families are dependent on this allowance and needed to see the government recognise the needs of families and increase Child Benefit.

The present amount of benefit payable for each child is £7-25 and, as any mother knows, this does not buy a child a pair of shoes, let alone a coat. Today, as

more and more families are faced with the prospect of living on Supplementary Benefit, Child Benefit in many cases is used to enable the family to live.

An increase in Child Benefit for these people would not be a luxury, but a necessity. Can Mrs Thatcher really maintain that her government cares, with a decision such as this?





John Macreadie speaking to the conference.

Photo: Alison Dixon.

## Conference plans to fight council cuts

"IF WE don't fight the Tories on local government cuts, they will shoot us like fish in a barrel," said Tony Mulhearn, one of the 47 disqualified and surcharged Liverpool councillors, at the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) London labour movement conference last Saturday.

By Roger Shives

Over 400 delegates and visitors, mainly from local government unions, but with large delegations of civil servants in the CPSA and telecom workers in the NCU, expressed their determination to organise that fight.

Tony O'Brien, chair of London Bridge, representing local authority shop stewards throughout the capital, said that Labour leaders who had failed to fight alongside Liverpool and Lambeth in 1985 were now savaging local jobs and services.

He reported that local authority workers in Camden and Haringey were now striking in protest, and London Bridge planned London-wide action for

early next year.

He contrasted this to the conference against privatisation planned by the TUC. Speakers invited included a writer from the *Sunday Telegraph*, a Liberal council leader and a bishop. Tickets cost £60!

### No rent rises

Ian Driver, a NUPE national executive member speaking in a personal capacity, outlined his union's policy on fighting privatisation and called for a vigorous campaign to implement it.

The conference agreed a statement of aims which reiterated the call for no cuts in jobs and services and no rent or rate rises to cover for Tory cuts.

The conference also had a lively session on building a fighting Broad Left. John Macreadie, deputy general secretary of the CPSA, showed how his union had gained membership by battling for its low-paid workers.

He said there had to be a united co-ordinated fight by local and central government workers and others against Tory attacks. BLs had to be built at workplace,

regional and national level, to knock down artificial barriers between unions.

Lynn Kelly from Southwark described how a handful of activists had helped to organise a Broad Left around trade unionists, tenants and sympathetic councillors.

A NUPE delegate explained how in many areas BL activists had been able to force the rejection of the recent disastrous pay deal which ate away at workers' conditions.

Wally Kennedy from Hillingdon TGWU reported that his delegation had been so impressed by the conference that they had decided to launch a Broad Left in their area.

The delegates rejected the pessimistic idea that Thatcher's election made opposition impossible, that we just had to grit our teeth and accept cuts. Workers will fight and organise. The conference agreed to set up a steering committee for BLOC in London to ensure the fight goes on.

See also report on Greenwich page 14

## Bradford inquiry a kangaroo court

THE LABOUR Party inquiry into the election campaign in Bradford North has started taking evidence.

Some members may have believed that there would be nothing to fear from this inquiry, that evidence would be taken and a fair conclusion drawn. Recent events, however, have proved it to be merely a smokescreen for attempted expulsions, suspensions and witch-hunts.

Even before the inquiry met to take evidence, one of its members, Yorkshire regional organiser, David Robertson, condemned the role of *Militant* supporters during the general election!

In the press 'Senior Yorkshire party sources' have warned of 'major obstacles' to Pat Wall being re-elected as Labour candidate. And 'regional party officials' have recom-

mended six expulsions from Bradford North Labour Party to the National Executive Committee—all before the inquiry took evidence.

Just who are these 'party sources' and 'regional officials' who have nothing better to do than attack Party members in the press? Rather than sowing confusion and disunity, their time could be better spent discovering how Bradford North beat a sitting Tory MP, when the Party fared so badly elsewhere.

Now the local press informs us that the National Constitutional Committee are probably to arrive in November, before all Party members will have had the chance to present evidence to the inquiry.

The whole affair smells of a conspiracy being hatched by the right wing behind closed doors, away

from the eyes of the labour movement.

Regional organiser Robertson claims that the work of *Militant* supporters in the constituency in the general election campaign was not welcomed by the majority of members. If that is the case, what have the right wing to fear from publishing their evidence?

Let the trade unions and working class of Bradford see the evidence and let us make up our own minds up. Even a law court has a public gallery.

By Bradford Militant supporters

AFTER A 30-month battle, Chris Peace, a former member of the Wales Labour Party executive is the latest to be expelled by the National Constitutional Committee, at its fourth hearing into his case on Tuesday.

## Don't stand on the sidelines

MILITANT

THE MILITANT editorial board is launching an appeal in November for thousands of new supporters and readers. It has issued the following statement.

THE SUCCESSES of *Militant* demonstrate that support for genuine socialism is growing. No force on earth can stop the movement fighting for a new society where unemployment, poverty and homelessness are abolished, and resources are used for people's need and not for millionaires' profits.

Thatcher's election victory, based on the illusion of permanent economic prosperity, has turned to ashes. The collapse on world stock exchanges is the stormy prelude to a world recession.

The capitalist crisis will further increase unemployment and poverty and lead to social explosions on an unprecedented scale.

We saw at Labour Party conference a further move to the right by the leadership. The general election disaster was due to right-wing policies and campaign, yet now the leaders want

Throughout this issue of *Militant*, some of our supporters will be saying why they got involved.



TERESA MCKAY, is the secretary of a TGWU Branch, on the executive of Ipswich Trades Council and a mother of four teenagers:

I see no future for the kids

to force the Party further right still.

*Militant* has played a key role in the campaign to keep Labour socialist. Where candidates stood on a fighting socialist programme such as *Militant* advocates, big swings to Labour were recorded.

Under *Militant* leadership, Liverpool council stood up like the miners to the Thatcher government. As a result they were pilloried by the press, the Tories and to their everlasting shame, by the Labour leaders too.

But under the impact of the deepening economic crisis, workers and youth will seek to transform and retransform the unions and particularly the Labour Party. Their aim will be to turn them into fighting organisations with socialist leadership. That is the aim of *Militant* too.

We appeal to you help us in this fight. Become a *Militant* supporter now. Do not stand on the sidelines. Help us to reverse the shift to the right and build the support for a thorough-going socialist programme to answer the needs of working people.

under capitalism. The two older ones have jobs at present, but there is no guarantee that the others will be so lucky.

We moved to Ipswich in 1972, when house prices were low enough for a mortgage. Now it would be impossible to buy even a two-bedroomed terraced house.

The Labour council is buying Portacabins for the homeless because of a chronic housing shortage. The only other alternative is grotty bed-sits at exorbitant rents. My daughter's boyfriend pays £35 a week.

Our youth deserve better than that, and if capitalism can't afford to give it, then we can't afford capitalism.

That is why I want socialism and why I'll continue to support *Militant*, so as to convince working people and the young that its programme is their only hope.

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 Saunois, Nimrod Sejake. Plus Ian Saville (the Marxist Magician), bands. Admission by ticket only—obtainable from local *Militant* sellers.

### 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.

### Sheffield

Friday 13 November, 7.30 Sheffield City Hall Memorial.

### Southampton

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

### Stevenage

Saturday 14 November, 11.00-5.00  
Stevenage College, Monkswood Way.

### Swindon

Saturday 7 November, 11-5.00 County Ground Hotel, County Road. Speaker—Jeremy Birch.

### Birmingham

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

### Cardiff

Friday 6 November 7.30, National Sports Centre, Sophia Gardens. Speaker: Ted Grant.

### Edinburgh

Tuesday 17 November, 7.30, Calton Studios, Calton Road. Speakers include Alan Woods, plus film.



# More support for Liverpool 47

**WORKERS IN Liverpool and elsewhere are rallying behind the 47 debarred Liverpool city councillors. They have not been deterred by the relentless barrage of smears and slanders, because they know that the 47 saved jobs and built homes. Workers are repaying their debt to these fighters for their class.**

The District Auditor and the Tory press have alleged that councillors squandered council funds, addressed 'mysterious' meetings, and claimed £8,000 in expenses over two years, when they were touring the country during their campaign for extra resources.

What the press, in their haste to scream about 'corruption', have not mentioned is the District Auditor's conclusion—that "In view of the paucity of advice to members and the lack of evidence of deliberate intent, it seems to me the court would not be likely to make an order of restitution in a case such as this".

The report exposes the myth of a 'neutral' District Auditor. It is an attempt to besmirch the reputation of the 47 by innuendo and rumour. There is talk of "the financial crisis wreaking havoc" and of council staff "being threatened".

By Martin Lee

Workers in Liverpool are not taken in by these allegations. In 1984, from an investment of £8,000 and plenty of voluntary hard work by the councillors and the labour movement to build support around the country, the councillors gained an additional £25 million for Liverpool, not to benefit themselves, but to provide jobs and build houses and nurseries.

That support is reflected in the money coming in to the 47 Defence Fund. The bedrock is GMB Branch Five, which is now contributing £2,000 a month, from 1,000 workers. Site meetings are taking place in all council depots. Binmen in the Moor Lane depot have made pledges worth £127 a month and other depots are expected to follow.

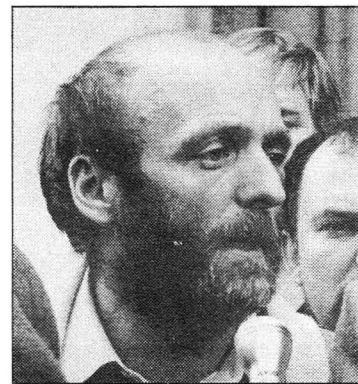
GMB and EETPU members at

the Long Lane direct labour depot have pledged £332 a month and low-paid members of GMB branch 80 in the Polytechnic have already promised £84 a month. They appreciate the council's role in saving the college from closure.

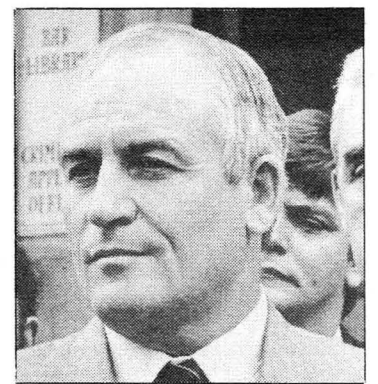
Nalگو have circulated their members with check-off forms and Nupe are expected to do so after hearing a speaker at their District Executive.

The most encouraging donation has come from the Labour Group on North East Derbyshire District Council, which covers the town of Clay Cross, famous for its fighting councillors. They have donated £300 and promised £100 a month.

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



Tony Byrne



Tony Mulhearn

## Blunkett defends Brighton speech

**TONY MULHEARN and Tony Byrne, two of the 47 surcharged and disqualified Liverpool city councillors wrote to David Blunkett MP to complain about his speech at Labour Party Conference opposing a resolution which recognised the achievements of Liverpool City Council and called for financial support for the 47. (The full letter was published in Militant 869).**

David Blunkett has replied as follows:

Dear Tony Mulhearn and Tony Byrne,

Thank you for your letter, which I note you have sent to the media.

I am attaching a transcript of that part of my speech to Labour Party Conference which you refer to. I am very sorry that you misheard it so badly, as to totally misinterpret what I said.

I hope that the written word helps you understand that I was actually supporting the disqualified councillors and backing their appeal for resources on the grounds that they were carrying out Labour Party policy in the delayed rate-making—a very different matter to the activities which you were involved in later on in the same year.

Not only do I believe you've done me an injustice, but I also believe that you have done your cause and your colleagues an injustice by suggesting that the Labour Party Conference, the National Executive and myself are not supporting fund-raising or the appeal by the disqualified councillors.

This can only damage the ap-

peal and the cause of yourselves and those who fall into the same category. In other words I think your action is extremely stupid.

As you must be aware from reading the text of my speech, I was commenting on a particular Clause in Composite 21 which suggested that the Labour Party should back any action by workers in struggle to defend their living standards, or tenants fighting rent increases, whatever the circumstances and whatever the particular decision of their trade union or organisation concerned.

A position which no-one could countenance in terms of action against the Labour Party and which you yourselves would never have countenanced when you were elected members of Liverpool City Council, nor would you in any organisation that you belonged to.

In other words, you and I share a particular view which may be in line with each other on the question of actions initiated by, for instance, the Socialist Workers Party or the Organisation of Conservative Trade Unionists, or for that matter, an anarchist group.

I hope my explanation helps to put your minds at rest, but I also hope it assists you to circulate a retraction and print the truth in whatever papers have carried your unjustified attack on me.

I will not of course be meeting you on any platform, public or otherwise to debate the issue.

Yours sincerely,  
David Blunkett, MP for Sheffield Brightside

Tony Mulhearn and Tony Byrne have sent the following reply:

Dear Mr Blunkett,

We have received your reply to our letter sent to you in connection with the decision of Party Conference re the Liverpool surcharged councillors. In it you make no attempt to address yourself to the principal points we made, which are:—

- (a) your recommended rejection on the grounds of something which might happen, and
- (b) you charged some councillors with arranging their affairs to avoid the consequence of bankruptcy. We repeat—no councillor will be immune from the consequences of bankruptcy should that horrendous action be taken against us.

We were aware that the NEC Report called for contributions to assist the surcharged councillors, and for that we are grateful. However, the leading story in the media was that the conference rejected the resolution calling for support for the 47, and Merseyside's leading radio station carried your statement ad nauseam in which you indicated some councillors should not be supported. The damage such statements make to our fund-raising cannot be emphasised too much.

The Tory Government, the media, in fact all the enemies of the working class in general, are waiting to seize on anything which will undermine our campaign by dividing and confusing our supporters.

To accuse us of taking action

## Two faces of Cantril Farm



Knowsley neglect



Liverpool success

In a letter to the *Liverpool Echo*, Mrs W Grist expressed her pleasure "that Liverpool Council had won an award for the new-look Cantril Farm estate" (below). But she pointed out that "it was won for only one part of our large estate, the other part being owned by the Stockbridge Village trust (above). Perhaps the people who are running the Trust could take a leaf out of Liverpool's book". The Trust was set up by Knowsley borough council with cash from private builders, with the support of the Tory government.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

## Second best campaign

BEFORE AND during the general election, the Labour Party leaders tried to counter criticisms of their policies with the argument that everything was subordinate to winning the election.

Now the Labour Party's advertising advisor has revealed that before the general election, the party leaders set their main aim as

coming second!

At the start of the campaign, he says, Labour had "no chance of winning the election, but there was a danger of being written off and overtaken by the Alliance. Hence the first objective was to push the Alliance into third place."

It is hardly surprising that La-

bour lost, when their own strategists were only aiming for second place. The magnificent results in Liverpool, Bradford and Coventry, where candidates confidently campaigned on Marxist policies, showed how the Party could have won nationally.

By Pat Craven



# Support YTURC lobby of Parliament



## Why we must fight

I WAS reminded the other day of the importance of the YTURC campaign.

A school friend of my young sister was in the house. The young guy was only 15. I knew he was all set to join the army and asked him why. His reply was: "Because I don't want to go on a YTS."

Our campaign is important because we must stop young people being forced to leave their homes, their families and friends. We must stop young people being forced onto YTS and fight the Tories every step of the way

The young guy is now going to help leaflet his school and wants to come to the next LPYS meeting. With the support of the youth, we can make the Tories back down again and again!

By Pauline Donald  
Govan LPYS, Glasgow.

## Don't stand on the sidelines

Militant



Cheryl Varley, expelled by the Labour Party NEC last year, explains why she became a Militant supporter:

In 1983, I was a student at Central College of Further Education in Liverpool. The Council was controlled by the Liberals then and they tried to make cuts.

I was forced to fight back, like many young people. The struggle against the cuts was led by Militant supporters and the way they fought back impressed me.

I too now wear the badge of Militant with pride, because a Militant is a person who fights longer and harder for their class than anyone else.

THE TORIES are planning the most vicious attacks on young people ever. The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) is organising a national lobby of Parliament to stop them. It will be on 19 November.

By the end of the year the Tories plan to have abolished all benefits for 16-18 year olds, so as to drive them onto their Youth Training Swindle (YTS).

This would be disastrous for thousands of school leavers and part time students. They would be forced onto the schemes to work a 40 hour week for a miserable allowance of £28.50 in the first year and £35 in the second.

Until now the allowance has had to be higher than benefit to get young people to join the scheme. But if the Tories make it compulsory they would

no longer need this incentive. So their next move would be to cut the allowance.

They want an army of cheap labour for their friends in big business.

The government launched their glossy TV advertising campaign with the slogan "the best advert for YTS is the people that have done it".

They don't mention the 17,000 trainees who have been injured, 1,600 of them major injuries, including amputations. And they keep mum about the 40 trainees who have died.

We have beaten the Tories twice before, when Norman Tebbit tried to pay trainees just £15 and again when compulsory YTS was first threatened.

So, don't sit on the sidelines; get organised! Join YTURC and join the fight for our rights!

## A proud record

YTURC WAS launched at a fringe meeting at the 1981 Labour Party conference at the initiative of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) National Committee.

It was formally set up at a delegate conference of 300 trainees, union and LPYS branch representatives in Liverpool the following month. The conference agreed to campaign for union rights and conditions on government training schemes.

This was the beginning of a campaigning record we are proud of:

1982; 3,000 lobby Parliament, backed by Labour's

National Executive, who donate £1,000. Tebbit drops plans for compulsion and cutting the allowance to £15.

1983; Lobby of Department of Employment along with parents of dead trainees. Government change the law to give trainees safety protection at work.

1985; 5,000 lobby Parliament against compulsory YTS. YTURC support School Students' Action Committee call for strike against YTS conscription. 250,000 participate. The Tories back down.

LPYS

Labour Party Young Socialists

YTURC

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign

Say no to  
YTS  
conscription

Lobby of Parliament  
Thursday 19 November  
Assemble: Kennington  
Park, London SE11  
(Nearest tube Oval)

Time: 12 noon

YTS



## What we want:

NOW THE Tories are trying to force young people on to YTS again. Members of the LPYS National Committee have relaunched YTURC and elected Janice Glennon as acting National Secretary.

Membership will be open to any young person who wants to fight YTS conscription. So a membership drive starts now, followed by a national conference in 1988.

YTURC is fighting for:

- ★ an end to slave labour
- ★ £55 a week at 16, £65 at 17

or union rates of pay  
★ a guaranteed job at the end of schemes

- ★ a £35 a week education grant for all 16 year olds in full time study, to allow a real choice of work, training or education
- ★ inspection of all schemes by union health and safety reps
- ★ full compensation for accidents

★ unionisation of all schemes with elected shop stewards and full negotiating rights.

## 11 year olds not conned

HOWEVER GOOD you are, there's no guarantee of a job after a YTS scheme. That's what one trainee found in a Gloucestershire engineering factory.

The factory used to take on hundreds of apprentices. Now it employs YTSers to file down pieces of metal, day in and day out. This trainee took a couple of seconds to do what took others a couple of days, so the management offered him another job. But it was still

on YTS.

"Will I get a job at the end?" he asked. When the manager told him probably not, the lad told him where to stick it.

This example was given at a debate at the Archway school in Stroud, where school students as young as 11 or 12 showed that they too were not fooled by the YTS con.

Speakers opposing the motion that YTS is youth exploitation complained

that it was unfair that first formers were making such good contributions.

I spoke as Stroud Labour Party's youth and student officer and Gaius Moore, seconding the motion, got a tremendous response from the students.

Our motion was passed by 32 to 5. It doesn't look like there will be many willing conscripts for YTS here!

By Manny Thain.

## Scots strike

IN THE East of Scotland, YTURC has had a tremendous response from working class youth in the schools, colleges and YTS schemes.

They hate the Tories and their slave labour schemes. They are looking for a lead to fight back.

In particular, the call for an education strike on 5 November has received everyone's support. 20 YTS trainees in the Edinburgh Environment Centre voted unanimously to strike on the day.

Pilton/Muirhouse is one of the most oppressed areas of the city, with massive youth unemployment and an epidemic of heroin addiction. At a youth club there, 14 names signed up to join

the campaign after a speech from an LPYS member.

On the streets, support has been terrific. Over £300 has been collected in the city centre. More money and names are being collected every day.

In Dundee, at the local FE college, over 30 names were collected of people wanting to join YTURC, including the college janitor.

£50 was raised on the streets over the last two Saturdays.

Dundee College of Technology Labour Club gave £15 and agreed to support YTURC as did Dundee University Labour Club.

By Bruce Arnot and Ian McConnachie

## Death on the schemes

STEPHEN BROWNE, a 17 year old trainee welder, died from oxycetylene poisoning at a Stoke-on-Trent engineering factory. His body lay undiscovered for nearly 24 hours, even though trainees are supposed to be supervised at all times.

16 year old Stuart Platt was electrocuted while operating a steam cleaning machine at a farm in Heywood, Rochdale. The Health and Safety Executive had already warned that the electrical installations should be checked on at least two occasions.

No families have received more than a wretched £78 in compensation. Some have received none at all!





# Your home for sale?

IF YOU want to peep into the future if the Thatcher 'revolution' carries on, then look at Westminster, said to be the richest borough in Britain. The Tory council under Lady Porter are taking Thatcher's policies to their logical conclusion.

By Steve Harris

(NUPE shop steward, Westminster cleansing department, personal capacity)

They have a council waiting list of 10,000 and 800 families are expected to be homeless by Christmas. That does not stop the council selling off 40 per cent of their housing stock (some 9400 homes) including some designated for the elderly and disabled.

Of course, if you can afford £60,000 for a two bedroom flat your 'freedom to choose' has been enhanced! Estate agents Ellis and Co. will be earning huge commissions on homes they sell.

Council staff are now uncertain how to rehouse tenants living in flats threatened by gas explosions or dangerous cracks. Families roughing it on friends' floors have no chance.

A Bayswater tenant confined to his top floor flat after a stroke has been told he has no chance of rehousing, despite two flats nearby becoming vacant. The flats are sealed up ready to be sold. The steel doors are rented from Sitex at £50 each; the council have made an initial payment of £300,000 to the firm.

250 empty homes have been sealed up and many of the homeless are to be 'deported' to bed and breakfast hotels outside the area. A housing officer said: "I spend my time boarding up houses. I have housed only one family but had to seal off 25 perfectly good homes."

The council are also privatising 13 services including meals on wheels, social service ambulances, housing estate management etc. That means worse services for users and wage cuts, job losses and worse conditions of employment for council workers.

Even if privatisation takes the form of 'in-house' agreements, low paid sweepers would lose protected overtime and sick pay and suffer cuts in holiday entitlement and autumn leaf money.

Council workers and tenants are fighting back together. The council are terrified of this unity and have resorted to dirty tricks and pre-planned arrests of key stewards and residents. On 22 September a one day Nalco strike was linked with a lobby of the council housing committee by tenants' groups.

Police from the Territorial Support Group broke into the gallery to make arrests and then arrested five Labour councillors who intervened. They now face

## Westminster Tories put profit before housing



Demonstrators protest at estate sales in East London.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

charges of obstruction and one of 'assaulting a police officer'.

Four of the arrested were Nupe stewards fighting privatisation. Unfortunately the local leadership seem to want to try to win an in-house tender by being model employees.

The Nupe leaders are not only failing to defend their stewards from victimisation but are even disciplining these same stewards for protest action.

All the council's threats could not defeat a united campaign by workers and tenants. They are already fighting together, developing joint action and joint organisations. But the fight against house sales must be linked with the fight against privatisation.

Well prepared and eventually all out strike action backed by tenants' rent strikes must be

### Westminster North LPYS Public Meeting

# HOMES BEFORE PROFITS

Monday 2 November  
7.45pm. Westminster North Labour Party rooms, 39 Chippenham Road, London W9. Speakers Neil Coleman (Westminster Labour group housing spokesman) Linda Douglas (LPYS rep on Labour's National Executive)

planned. These should be linked to anti-privatisation struggles in the rest of the public sector and other boroughs. This would very quickly make Lady Porter's Tory trailblazing fizzle out.

☆ A defence fund for the arrested stewards, councillors and residents has been set up. Donations to Westminster Defence fund, FREE-POST, Westminster North Labour Party, London W9 2BR.

## Racist attacks increase

RACIAL ATTACKS are becoming part of the everyday experience of blacks in Britain. Over 20,000 were reported last year.

Since 1979, at least 48 blacks and Asians have died as a result of racial violence. Last week 52 year old Thomas Lee was attacked by a gang of white youths while visiting a recently bereaved widow in Stoke Newington, London. He died of his injuries.

Fourteen year old Enterjeet Singh explained what happened to him recently in the Easton area of Bristol. "I was walking with a friend when we were suddenly attacked from behind by three skinheads.

"First they knocked off my turban. I thought they were pulling my hair, but they were cutting it with scissors. Then they thumped me in the stomach and ran away.

### Planned attack

"It must have been a pre-planned attack. Nobody goes around with a pair of scissors, cutting off people's hair unless they know it is important to them, a part of their culture."

Local Asian youth in particular were outraged. Some still think that not enough has been done. The local Labour Party Young Socialists are determined to fight racism, which aims to divide the working class.

The LPYS are to hold a meeting on how to combat racism, and other activities to get black and Asian youth involved in the Young Socialists.

By Beverley Woodburn

(Bristol East LPYS)

## Sell Militant

MILITANT SUPPORTERS in Crewe, using last week's back page article "Crewe—a town fights back" have massively increased their sales.

At least 125 were sold with money still pouring in. They sold 40 outside the Brel works in three days. The week before they sold 15 outside Brel, the bus station and council depot—before 9am.

Sellers in Crewe also recommend sales outside late night shopping centres averaging 25 an hour at their weekly sale outside Asda.

Two new sellers in Rugby were recently bet they couldn't sell 20 on an estate sale. They did and raised £10 fighting fund as well!

Militant sellers converged on one of the most run down estates in London, the White City estate in Hammersmith. One flat in three bought the paper. "Selling Militant is the best way to get fighting fund with £20 raised in the first week of our sales campaign," says a local seller.

The comrades have a professional approach to the campaign highlighting estate sales, tube sales and workplaces. "Our aim is to get at least one new seller on each of the 14 estates covered who will adopt the established paper sale as their own."

Sell Militant and get your friends and workmates to do the same.

Reagan administration, has shown what might loosely be called the thought patterns of some of the President's men.

Terrel Bell was labelled "Comrade" Bell by some of the loony right around Reagan for slightly 'liberal' ideas. His memoirs contain accounts of officials at the White House habitually referring to Martin Luther King as "Martin Lucifer Coon", calling Arabs "sand niggers" and labelling equal rights legislation for women the "lesbian bill of rights."

The most rabidly conservative faction included officials working for Edwin Meese, now Attorney General and responsible for civil

rights. Apart from its other misfortunes, economic and military, American capitalism is politically dependent on brainless bigots.

### Pathetic & Oversight

"WHY SAIL across the channel when you can cruise across?" ask the adverts for the cross channel ferries. "That inimitable touch of class will transform your channel crossing into a cruise."

The advert is for P&O ferries. Strangely enough it doesn't mention that the service is just putting a new flag on the old sailings which were under the less auspicious name of Townsend Thoresen.

## Left and Right

### Treble chancy

THE Daily Express chose a fine day to start their new sales gimmick. It was 19 October, the Stock Exchange's worst day since 1929 and the gimmick was a competition where the first prize was unit trust shares. The competition is like the football pools where 'matches' are played between different companies. If the two firms' shares both stay the same or go up or

down by the same amount, you have a draw.

The week before the stock market plummeted, the Express shouted out "be on a winner". After the shares started to freefall, their headline was "all the drama of the stock market with the fun of the football pools."

### Reagan's think tank

A 'MODERATE' Republican, a former Education secretary in the



LLANELLI, IN South Wales has a long and proud tradition of trade union struggle. It ought to be solid Labour.

Yet recently, seats on the local council have been lost. The local right-wing Labour leaders are finding that they cannot take workers' votes for granted.

A *Militant* reporter, a Labour activist who cannot reveal his identity for fear of reprisals from the right wing, looks at the problems of Llanelli and the Labour council's response to them.

# Llanelli

## Stop witch-hunting -start fighting

LLANELLI'S LOCAL industry is on the edge of a precipice. Despite some investment recently in British Steel's Trostre plant and Cynheidre pit, the future of the main local industries looks grim.

Investment is used by management as a stick to beat workers with, to push through new shift patterns, increase workloads, cut health and safety and eventually slash the workforce.

One of the big employers, the Ministry of Defence, is due to close the Royal navy depot in Llangenech, just outside the town, with the loss of 650 jobs. The local car factories' long-term future is far from certain, given the over-capacity in car manufacturing.

### Tourism

The response of the local Labour council to this impending crisis has been a push on tourism! Llanelli is not even on most tourist maps. The local beach is a joke and so is the council's push on tourism.

The Borough Council has been dominated by Labour for donkeys' years, a testimony to the class loyalty of working people. In this year's elections however, seats were lost to the Chamber of Trade (Tories in disguise). The blame for these results lies squarely with the right wing and is a consequence of their bankrupt policies.

Workers are asking themselves what benefits they have reaped from their loyalty to Labour in recent years.

The right-wing's council house building record could be written on a postage stamp. Local industry has been hammered. No effective campaign has been mounted for the defence of services and protection, let alone creation, of jobs.

The marvellous example

of Liverpool City Council's stand against the Tories, its house-building programme and the creation of thousands of jobs is a closed book to the individuals who see becoming a councillor as an end in itself or as a means of climbing further up the ladder.

The legacy of year-in, year-out Labour controlled councils, with a lack of accountability, is that people seeking a political career join the Labour Party as the only party that can guarantee them a councillor's position.

The attitude of these right-wingers to the demands of workers can best be summed up by one who said recently: "Working people expect too much. They must understand you have to cut your cloth according to your means".

The right wing are reluctant to fight the Tories, but they have made numerous attacks on *Militant* supporters. In South Wales it would be difficult to find a constituency which has not attempted to have a witch-hunt.

In Llanelli, long-standing Labour Party member Muriel Browning is already under investigation and two right-wing ward branches sent in letters asking for investigations to be set up against three other Party activists for the alleged crime of selling the *Militant* newspaper. This was thrown out as the wards did not follow the correct procedures.

It is a shame these right wingers don't allow themselves to read *Militant* any more. I think there is a definite link between when they stopped reading the paper and a decline in their political thinking. One



The miners' fighting tradition has kept S.Wales Labour.

right winger in Llanelli thought a creche was something you eat. And they accuse us of eating babies!

During the local elections, posters advertising a *Militant* meeting were the only posters asking people to vote Labour.

The meeting was the biggest political meeting in decades. 150 listened to *Militant's* editor, Peter Taaffe. The MP, Denzil Davies, attracted 50 only a day before the general election.

The workers and young people outside the Labour Party who have not yet joined are a thousand times more to the left than the right wing. A movement of the working class into the Party will guarantee the demise of the right-wing



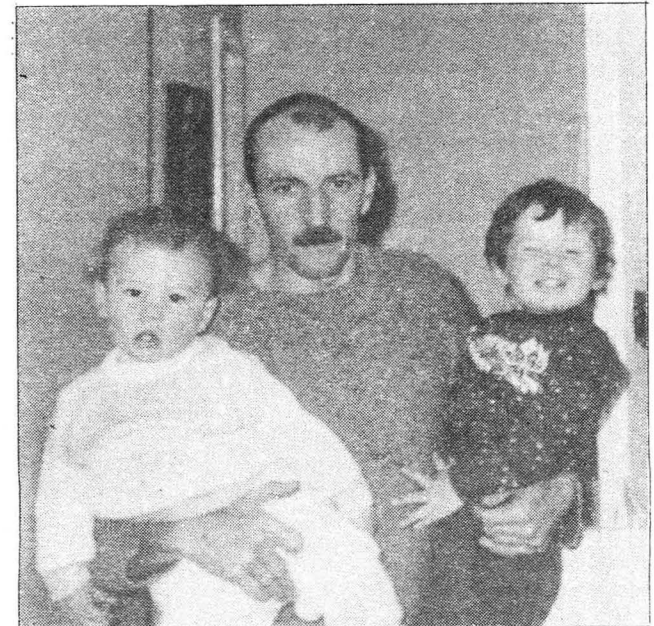
Muriel Browning "under investigation" after 42 years in the Labour Party.

neanderthals and the reinstatement of any socialists expelled.

They will look for a leadership that shows a way forward, that is prepared to lead the struggle.

Workers will transform the Labour Party, claim it back from the usurpers as a means of defending their living standards and futures through the socialist transformation of society.

## Electric shock



GERAINT HOPKINS, seen above with sons, Sean (three years old), William (one year) and his wife Jane, will have no electricity this winter.

They are on social security and cannot afford a new card meter they have been forced to have. It costs £6 per week before they get any electricity.

A recent TV programme showed many other families in the town will be in the same position.

A Welsh Office survey has revealed shocking levels of poverty in Llanelli. 47.5 per cent of the town's households have an income below £4,000 per year. In other words they're on the breadline.

## Labour council must guarantee proper jobs

"BORING", "REPETITIVE", "no training" are some of the comments of Llanelli Community Programme (CP) workers about their schemes.

Earlier in the year a number of sites downed tools and lobbied the Town Hall against a proposed cut in their hours, which would mean a drop in their pay of £6.

The schemes are run by the CP Agency on behalf of the Borough Council. Now the CP workers do not trust the management and have got their unions to look at

the books to see where the money is going. There has been a big increase in union membership.

The local trades council, under *Militant* supporters' leadership, has actively supported the workers. It is taking their case to the unions and council workers.

*Militant* supporters are calling on the Council to reject Tory cuts, not to reduce the direct labour force, to pay the workers a decent wage and to guarantee jobs at the end of schemes.

# Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	4215		9400
2 East Midlands	1390		3250
3 Wales	1886		4850
4 Eastern	1008		3050
5 South East	679		2250
6 Scotland East	795		2800
7 Southern	759		3100
8 Scotland West	789		3500
9 West Midlands	1110		4850
10 Yorkshire	1592		8450
11 Northern	805		4600
12 South West	331		1900
13 Manchester/Lancs	661		4050
14 Merseyside	1152		7500
15 National	3901		6950
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,075</b>		<b>70,000</b>

"It's paper anyway...it was paper when we started and it's paper afterwards." So said Sam Walton about the \$517 million he lost in the latest shares crash. He can afford to stay calm; he's still the USA's richest man.

*Militant* values every hard-earned pound donated to get rid of this stinking system. This week, Dundee student, Peter Reid, donated a magnificent £100! Can you match that sort of sacrifice?

The end of the quarter is just one week away! We appeal to every reader to rush us £20, £10 or a fiver.

While the capitalists scramble over sweating telephones seeking a safe

haven for their ill-gotten gains, our readers can be sure that their donations are a safe investment in a socialist future.

And the more you donate the quicker that future can be realised!

Have you appealed for funds from your workmates yet? A bumper £120 was donated by CPSA members at the DNS, Glasgow. Supporters in Liverpool collected £7.50 off Static Security workers. Can you do better in the next week?

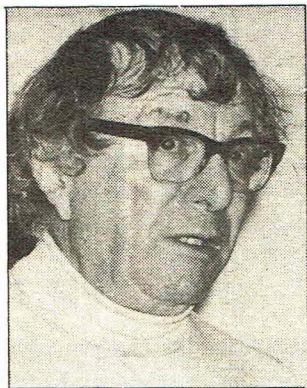
And what about raising extras from the sale of the paper and asking for the Solidarity Price? At the Anti-Apartheid demo in London, one demonstrator approached a *Militant* seller and said; "I can't

resist a copy" and gave a donation. How many other Labour and trade union activists in your area would be prepared to pay the Solidarity Price at least?

When you're out selling make sure you use your rattling tin. Emily Craven (aged 8) from Newham, East London raised £2.75 using one.

A special thanks to this week's contributors: Chris Hopkinson, Southampton £25. Andy Woods, Bourne-mouth £2.50. Martin Robbins, Hull AEU £5. Rahina Gahfoor, Manchester £5. Stuart Gregory, Notts. NUM £5. Dave Murphy, Wirral £6. Pat McEwan, Humberside, £29. Jim McCann, Cathcart CLP £4.





Ted Grant

LAST WEEK saw the biggest ever crash in share prices. The delusions of the investors and dealers on the Stock Exchange that their pieces of paper were real wealth were shattered.

The dizzying rise in share prices had lost any relationship with the wealth of the companies which they were supposed to represent.

A firm's wealth is its industrial production, yet in Japan the shares of one industrial company were selling at 140 times its annual revenue.

Now reality has dealt a painful blow, with some shares collapsing to a price below the

wealth they are supposed to represent.

Capitalist countries now seek to save themselves at the expense of their rivals. "Each man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost" is their maxim, which leads to attitudes and actions which make the situation even worse.

Now that the capitalist economies are all facing an epoch of crisis, a new period of bitter class struggle is beginning, between the capitalist parasites and the workers.

TED GRANT, *Militant's* Political Editor, who predicted this inevitable crisis, looks at the implications of the 1987 Stock Exchange crash.

# Worldwide capitalist crisis

**THE FALL** on the stock exchanges reveals a worldwide crisis of capitalism. Two million million dollars were lost off the price of shares in three days. Share values on the world's stock exchanges dropped by at least a quarter. Fifty thousand million pounds was lost in London in the first two days.

This is the first crisis to assume an immediate and simultaneous worldwide character, in Canada, Australia, Japan, United States Western Europe and Britain.

On the third day there was some rallying, but it did not make up for the massive drop, nor can it prevent a further drop in share values this year or next. The BP shares hit 285p, 45p below the government's new share offer. Lloyds Bank chief economist, Roger Bootle, said: "Privatisation will never be the same again".

Thatcher's 'popular capitalism' is a ploy to give small shareholders a temporary bonanza, while massive assets are handed to monopoly and big business concerns far below their value. This privatisation is now recoiling on Thatcher, as the illusion of 'easy money' evaporates.

In the fall on the stock exchanges worldwide, it will be the small shareholders above all who will be burnt. The middle-class, skilled and higher-paid workers will now suffer the consequences.

President Reagan, Chancellor Lawson, and the governor of the Bank of England are making soothing noises to try and cover the collapse of the economies of the entire capitalist world.

Apparently it is all a question of 'confidence'. The economy is basically 'sound'. This is a repetition of what Herbert Hoover, the American president, and the other international bankers and statesmen said in 1929 after that crash in share prices.

In reality there are fundamental reasons for such crises, and the fact that this is a simultaneous world crisis affecting every capitalist economy in the world makes the situation far worse.

In 1929, in the beginning, only the American economy was affected. Only later did it affect the economies of the entire world. In 1987, the fact that it is a simultaneous collapse on all stock exchanges indicates the serious-

ness of the situation, and will aggravate the long term crisis.

The pre-World War Two crisis of capitalism caused world war and the depression of 1929/33. It was caused because capitalism had reached its limits, the struggle for markets had reached its peak. There was an effort to re-divide the world at each other's expense. Capitalism works by extracting unpaid labour from the working class. Part of what the workers produce goes in wages, the surplus goes in profit to the capitalists.

But in this 'happy' scheme of things, capitalism faces a fundamental dilemma, that the working class is not only the producer, but also the main consumer of commodities.

When the economy is going forward, the capitalists plough back the profit, or unpaid labour, into new investment and then the system works. The new investment ultimately results in the production of, or the capacity to produce, more goods. But the working class cannot buy back these goods because they have a limited consumption capacity—they receive insufficient wages to buy back the goods.

## Profits

But if the wages of the workers (their share of the surplus) increase, it cuts the surplus (the capitalists' share, ie profits), and the capitalists will not invest.

Either way the capitalists come up against the fundamental barrier of capitalist production, which in the words of Marx, is 'capital itself'. Production is not for use but for profit. The capitalists do not produce the necessities of existence because they are needed, but in order to make surplus labour or profit. If there is no profit, goods will not be produced, no matter how necessary

they are.

But the fundamental dilemma of capitalism catches up with them. In the post-war period they have had an enormous run, because they partially overcame the crisis by developing world trade, but now the whole world economy is integrated as one, and therefore will be even more vulnerable and more affected once a slump begins.

In the fifties and sixties there was full employment and relative affluence. The development of world trade at 12.5 per cent per annum reacted on the national economies, resulting in more investment in science and industry.

This in its turn reacted on world trade and back again in an upward spiral. In most of the industrialised countries, the rate of growth reached six to eight per cent per annum. The economies of the west boomed.

The capitalists encouraged immigration in those decades from colonial and semi-colonial countries because of shortage of labour. Full employment and the welfare state were the hallmark of this period.

The capitalist economists and politicians came out enthusiastically with the idea that never again would there be unemployment or poverty or slump. This was echoed by the labour and trade union leaders internationally.

Keynesianism, the doctrine of state deficit spending, had solved the problems of the economy and had replaced Marxism, they claimed. This state intervention did have a beneficial effect, showing what could be done by complete state ownership.

But then in the mid-seventies came the first serious post-war shock. Deficit financing led to massive inflation. The attempt to cope with this by deflation or the cutting down of state and other expenditure resulted in the first post-war simultaneous slump.

From this slump, unemployment in all the industrialised countries reached more than 30 million. Even in following 'booms', mass unemployment remained, only slightly falling in some countries.

Then even more ominous warnings that capitalism had reached its limits were revealed, in that even in the booms it was not possible (as it had been in the post-war upswing) to use fully the capacity to produce goods.

Only 80 per cent of industrial capacity, the production of real wealth, was used even in the recent 'boom'. The increase of gross national product, even including the dependent service sector, has been 1.5 to 4 per cent only.

## The fundamental barrier of capitalist production in the words of Marxism is capital itself.

The fundamental Achilles' heel of world capitalism has been the failure to invest in industry, except to replace worn out machinery or to gain a competitive advantage on world markets or investments in new industries like micro electronics. But even in the new industries within 15 years there is large surplus capacity in Japan, the European Community (EC) and the United States.

Foreshadowing the coming economic crisis, even in the 'boom' since 1981, was the destruction of old industries. Shipbuilding, steel plants, textiles and chemical and other plants have been deliberately destroyed to restore profitability and reduce capacity which can no longer be utilised under capitalism.

The failure of Keynesianism led to the policy of monetarism by Reagan, Thatcher and other capitalist politicians. This resulted in the disaster of the slump in Britain of 1979-81 in which 20 per cent of British industry was destroyed.

In reality, monetarism was abandoned in Britain in the preparation for the 1983 general election, Thatcher pumped £8,000 million pounds into health

and education. This was not sufficient to deal with the needs of health and education but nevertheless gave a temporary impetus to the economy.

But what prevented the outbreak of a world slump two, three or four years ago was the abandonment of monetarism in the United States and its replacement with 'negative Keynesianism'—guns instead of butter.

The massive arms programme of hundreds of billions of dollars temporarily fuelled the American and world economy.

It resulted in a \$160 billion trade deficit projected for this year alone. Next year it is projected to be even higher. This deficit has created a massive international market.

At least one per cent of increased production in Japan, Western Europe and the other industrial countries was due to the expansion of the American market. The spin-offs must have been much higher, because each increase in the market in its turn had an effect on the economies of the different countries participating in it.

Another factor was the collapse of the price of food and raw materials, while the price of machinery engineering and other industrial products continued to rise. This disparity gave a present of \$750 billion per annum to the rich industrialised countries at the expense of the poor countries, and the starving peoples in the neo-colonial world.

But from being factors for 'boom' they have turned into their opposite. Cutting the amount received, and raising interest rates paid, by colonial countries, which are still 20 per cent of the market for the developed countries, is damaging.

The US trade and budget deficits have now turned into an ulcer, but the 'cure' threatens to be worse than the disease. The devaluation of the dollar by more than a third has not solved any problems. It will inevitably result in more inflation in the the US and then spread worldwide. Moreover, further falls in the dollar in relation to other currencies, in spite of all the attempts to prop it up, are inevitable.



# sis



If the dollar falls much further, the other big capitalist countries, and the smaller ones too, will be forced to devalue in order to compete with the United States.

The US and echoing her, Britain, have been demanding that Germany and Japan 'reflate', by engaging in deficit finance and expanding their budget beyond the limits of the taxation collected, in order to create a market for US goods and thus ease the problem of the US trade deficit.

The American re-armament deficit was not intended to help the world's capitalists, but, almost as an accidental by-product, it created a market in the United States, because the interest rate rises, which were intended to choke off inflation, resulted in the rise in the dollar in the international markets. This made American goods more expensive both at home and abroad.

## Trade wars

The expansion of the US market was not intended for the benefit of its rivals, so neither, in a time of general difficulties for all capitalist countries, are they prepared to risk a new rise in inflation in their now shaky economies to benefit the American capitalists.

The undeclared trade wars between the United States and Japan, the US and the EC, and the EC and Japan and ultimately between the main European countries themselves, are a reflection of the capitalists' blind alley.

They too are a symptom of the coming slump. Whatever policy they decide on can only at best delay the inevitable. All roads and all policies lead to slump and ruin.

Production of the economies of the West has been crawling ahead for the last five years, in what capitalist economists call a 'growth recession'. Unemployment in many countries in Western Europe, including Britain, is already at the level of the depression of 1929/33.

From a capitalist point of view at best this will be the worst

post-war slump, but it is possible that it will be worse than the slump of 1929/33. The capitalists have wasted enormous resources, built up in the years of economic upswing, to ease the catastrophic collapse. But this will not prevent slump nor deep growing crisis. The candy-floss economy of 'service' industries will collapse like a house of cards.

The delusions of Thatcher and Reagan in 'popular' capitalism, and of an unlimited perspective of growth and prosperity for those in work, will be replaced by the grim reality of capitalist crisis.

Even in the so called 'boom' in the United States, there has been a fall in workers' living standards of over 15 per cent in the past 10 years.

In Britain in the past two years there has been an increase in living standards for the workers in private industry. This Thatcher, Tebbit and her cabinet strenuously opposed. But the capitalists preferred to buy peace by giving back a little of the surplus from their bonanza, rather than face massive strikes.

Only on the basis of an intensification of labour and massive exploitation, with the same output being wrung out from fewer workers still using old machinery, were bigger profits made. This will change once Britain moves in the direction of slump. The real cause of the difficulties of capitalism is that production has outgrown the constraints of private ownership and the national state.

For society to move forward, it needs not the mad policies of Thatcher and Reagan, which will inevitably lead to disaster whichever turn they take, but the working class to take power in Britain and other countries, organise production at 100 per cent capacity, give the youth and unemployed jobs and create wealth for society.

Democratic control by the workers of industry and the state would mean immense increases in standards of living. It would end the insane system whereby mass poverty exists in the developed countries and infinite misery in the undeveloped world, at a time when the potential is there for

massive production of goods for the satisfaction of human wants.

Marx and Engels already spoke more than a hundred years ago of the crisis of poverty amidst potential plenty. This contradiction has been enormously exacerbated in the last 100 years, especially during the last 40.

The abolition of the insane arms race—the production in the main of scrap metal—would end the present wasteful expenditure of a million million pounds every two years, three months. This sum alone, used for productive purposes, could guarantee standards of living higher than those of American skilled workers for every inhabitant on the planet within ten years.

How foolish the leaders of the Labour Party look, especially Kinnock and Gould, in their support for Thatcherite-sponsored share-owning as the solution to the problems of the working class. Their hurried abandonment of socialist principles has been crushingly refuted.

## Socialism

The programme of re-nationalisation of de-nationalised industries and nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, is not utopian, but the only way in the next epoch to solve the problems of the working class permanently.

The worst effects of the crisis in the economy will be experienced by the poor, the sick and the weak. But the agony, suffering, dirt and disease of capitalism will now also affect the employed workers and the middle class. The illusions in capitalism which have been engendered in the last few decades will be shattered. With skillful propaganda they can be

won to the socialist transformation of society.

The 'boom' did not benefit the colonial peoples. As a consequence of starvation and semi-starvation, there has been a decade of turmoil, revolution and counter revolution in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Placing more burdens on them will provoke an even bigger epoch of social explosions.

The degeneration of the Communist Parties on nationalist and reformist lines throughout the world has helped the capitalist class in the last few decades. Any illusions in Gorbachev changing anything fundamental, will be shattered by the attitude of the Moscow bureaucracy to this crisis.

Their pretence that they are returning to Lenin's policies is contradicted by their attitude. Lenin and Trotsky explained that ultimately there is no escape for the capitalists from crisis. Yet now the Russian bureaucrats are as worried as the capitalists themselves. They want social peace in the western countries so they can trade with them.

Obediently, the *Morning Star*, organ of the 'hard line' Communist faction, which is a satellite of the Moscow bureaucracy, reported on 21 November that Genady Gerasimov (foreign policy spokesman for Gorbachev) "urged nations to take into account the international implications of their decisions, either political or economic."

He ignores class relations in these countries and the inevitable consequences of the crisis of the capitalist system, whereas Lenin never tired of stressing these inexorable consequences.

In other words, Gorbachev wants the capitalist classes to do the impossible and prevent a crisis which has been building up for decades. The Russian bureaucracy is terrified of social conflicts in the West because of the example this will provide for Russian workers. They have abandoned Marxism completely and are incapable of making a Marxist analysis of the situation.

But all those forces in the labour and trade union movement (and those on the fringes of the movement such as the Communist parties) which cannot grasp the full force of the crisis, will be wrecked in the storms and stress of the struggles of the working class which will inevitably open up within three, five or ten years.

The most stormy epoch in the history of world capitalism is now opening up, an epoch of bitter class struggle. It is an indication of the birth pangs of a new society. Capitalism will never collapse into another social system by itself. The 'subjective factor' is necessary—a Marxist leadership. The transformation of the labour and trade union movement back to its socialist roots is an indispensable part of this process.



Read *Militant International Review*, the Marxist theoretical journal which predicted last week's Stock Exchange crash.

In the current issue, written in July, Ted Grant wrote:

"All the contradictions that make for a devastating slump are piling up. The price of stocks and shares is not in proportion to the economy...they will have to come down with a bump."

"All the factors that made 1929 are there at the present time."

90p plus 20p post and packing from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB, or 90p from your local *Militant* seller.



# Polish 'reforms' mask new attack on workers

ON 29 November Polish workers will vote in a referendum on the government's package of economic "reforms". Real opposition will not be allowed. Yet even this cosmetic exercise, in contrast to the price rises imposed under the 1981 Emergency, is a sign of the new situation that has opened up in the deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe.

The regime's proposals include the dismissal of 4,000 bureaucrats, more responsibility to plant management (but more centralisation of key industries), more scope for private enterprise within the state-run economy, and a second, directly-elected chamber of parliament—naturally, without any genuine free vote.

The key 'reform', however, is the drastic cutting of state subsidies, which will push up consumer prices and reduce living standards by up to 8 per cent. Food prices will soar by an estimated 50 per cent.

In the past, food price rises have often been the trigger for new waves of struggle by the workers. An official survey has already shown that 64 per cent of people associate economic reform with "permanent price rises".

Economic crisis is forcing the Jaruzelski regime down the road of confrontation with the workers. By cutting public spending, it hopes to reduce inflation from its current level of over 20 per cent. At the same time, it desperately needs more foreign exchange to meet payments on its \$35.5 billion foreign debt.

The regime is trying to sweeten the pill by promising political liberalisation and "dialogue" with opposition groups. Intellectual 'advisers' of the banned Solidarity trade union movement, which spearheaded the revolutionary workers' struggles of 1980-81, have reportedly

been offered places on 'consultative' bodies in the hope of involving them in the attack on workers' living standards.

This will deepen the divisions between 'conciliators' (eager to compromise with the regime) and more radical elements in the remnants of the Solidarity leadership.

Jaruzelski's moves are linked to the wave of bureaucratic adjustments that has been taking place throughout Russia and Eastern Europe, epitomised by Gorbachev's so-called *glasnost* in the USSR.

These changes and splits at the top of Stalinist society are a response to the tremors of the approaching political revolution—the struggle by the working class to end bureaucratic dictatorship and establish democracy on the basis of the planned economy.

## Retreats

But despite their enforced retreats, there is no intention by the Stalinist bureaucracies to sacrifice any of their power or privilege. The aim is to save their own skins—to implement reforms from above in an effort to stave off revolution from below.

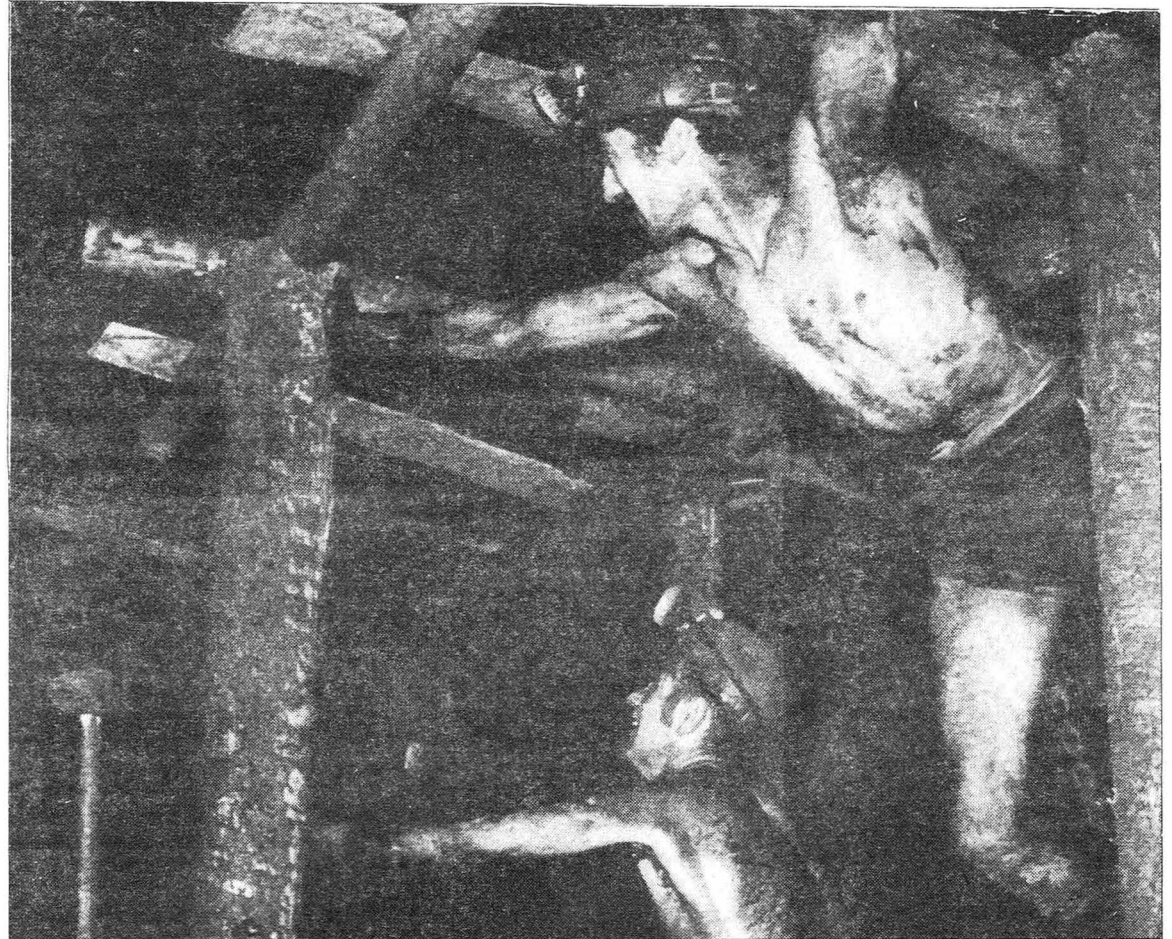
In Poland, the events of 1980-81 demonstrated that a Stalinist regime cannot live with democratic rights, and cannot tolerate the threat to its position which a free trade union movement would present.

Now the pressure of the workers has forced Solidarity's leaders to call for a boycott of the referendum—without, unfortunately, clearly exposing the 'reforms' or putting forward an alternative.

The article below shows the new mood boiling up. Undoubtedly the bureaucrats are suffering many a sleepless night at the uncharted territory they are entering.



Jaruzelski will not sacrifice the bureaucracy's power.



The workers are being made to pay for Stalinism's crisis.

## "There will be an explosion of struggle"

THE ECONOMIC situation is getting worse. The government flirts with reforms, but they are not fundamental. They use the excuse that the reforms will only be effective in a few years.

However, the important thing for the masses, at this stage, is that the changes now taking place are relatively big. They have created a stir in society which it will be very difficult for the bureaucracy to calm down.

Gorbachev looks to Poland as an indicator of how far you can allow liberalisation to go.

But in Poland the 'reforms' started in 1982, with work discipline and the smashing of the Solidarity union organisation in the factories. There are no big illusions left in them, so the bureaucracy try to give the reforms a new gloss by saying we are now entering the second stage.

There is some stimulus to the private sector of the economy. But for the workers the sting is in the tail. If the firm does not pay its way, it is the workers who are under threat.

Independence of firms is an illusion in a modern economy. If parts and materials are not delivered from other factories, you can still lose production through no fault of your own factory and

face all the consequences in terms of lost bonuses, or even closure.

There is a limited amount of foreign trade compared to other eastern bloc countries, because the government has been struggling to keep down the foreign debt.

In many factories workers' living standards are not keeping up with inflation. There has been no progress in living standards since the late 70s, when the workers' anger boiled over into a revolutionary movement. In some cases, workers' living standards have been forced down since those days.

It is hard to change your job and hard to change homes. Housing is one of the biggest problems. You can wait 15 to 20 years for a flat, and the rent is 50 per cent of your earnings.

The hospitals are crowded. It is difficult to get hold of medicines. If you have a serious disease you pay to have it seen privately, because queues are so long and doctors are so overworked and demoralised. What a condemnation of a society that is supposed to be socialist!

Yet a questionnaire in an official magazine recently showed that the majority of people want a society where there is some sort

of equality built into the system. They want the state to have responsibility for the well-being of people, and do not want a return to the primitive conditions of capitalism where the individual must take sole responsibility.

People who work in the private sector of the economy at the moment can get good living standards. But the workers are cynical about this. They know the state is fostering the private economy in a desperate attempt to get more foreign exchange into the country.

## Frustration of the youth

The beaches are so dirty around the ports that they are closed. The environment is totally polluted, even inland. The government lamely say that they will do something when they have the money.

You do not feel safe in this society any more. There has been an increase in street muggings, a sign of the demoralisation of sections of the population. Poland has the highest proportion of prisoners per head of population of all European countries. This is a consequence of long prison sen-

tences for economic crimes.

After the war the mass of the people worked very hard to build a new world. Now the young generation see their parents retiring on very low living standards and are frustrated that their hopes are not maturing.

When there is good music on the radio and they announce slight increases in pensions, everyone knows that in a few days' time there will be price increases!

There is a limited democratisation taking place. For example *Dr Zhivago* (Nobel prize-winning novel by Boris Pasternak, long banned in Russia) is now in the shops. Yet Lenin's *State and Revolution*, explaining how workers' democracy should function, is very difficult to get hold of and does not appear in his selected works!

This shows how frightened the bureaucracy are of genuinely revolutionary ideas, and the traditions of struggle that they hypocritically claim to represent. They understand very well that the threat is not in the superficial ideas of some sections of the opposition—inspired by the Church and 'intelligentsia'—that perhaps life is better in the West, but in a rebirth of the best traditions of struggle of the Polish

workers.

The workers laugh at the reforms, although if you asked them they would say it is better to try reforms than leave things as they are! But the workers are clear that a socialised economic system is preferable to private capitalism.

Polish society is not very flexible. This means that when problems come there is only one course for the workers—struggle.

Some workers are afraid to struggle after the experience of the defeat of Solidarity. But there comes a point when there is more to fear in not struggling than in starting a fight.

In 1981, the masses reluctantly and bitterly had to accept martial law because the leadership of Solidarity had no programme for breaking with bureaucratic rule.

Now the situation is so bad that there must be an explosion of new struggles sometime, maybe in only a matter of months, maybe in a year or more.

Such a movement would place the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy and the establishment of workers' democracy on the agenda.

By Maria Lasky



# SPAIN

## Socialist leaders split

### —workers demand change

THE DRAMATIC split between the leaders of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) and the Socialist-led trade union (UGT) signals a heightening of opposition in the labour movement to the PSOE government's policies.

By George Collins

The conflict broke into the open following the austerity budget for 1988 announced by Felipe Gonzalez's right-wing PSOE government. Despite soaring company profits, it wants to limit public sector pay and pension increases to four per cent (almost the same as the rate of inflation).

A compromise between the government and UGT leaders, aimed at avoiding a clash, broke down under pressure from Solchaga, the right-wing Finance Minister who acts as the direct mouthpiece of the bankers. This led to the resignation of UGT general secretary, Nicolas Redondo, and organising secretary, Anton Saracibar, as PSOE members of parliament—a sign of the pres-

sure they are under from the workers.

Now the UGT has called for joint protests with the Communist-led trade union, the Workers' Commissions (CCOO), of public-sector workers on 29 October and pensioners on 12 November.

A few days earlier Pablo Castellano, leader of the officially tolerated left-reformist faction in PSOE, resigned all his party functions. These splits at the top are symptomatic of widespread anger among workers at the steady shift to the right by the PSOE leadership, elected to power on a policy of "change".

#### Youth

Major movements have been sparked off during the past year among school youth and many sections of workers by the government's attacks on jobs and conditions.

The school students in particular, under Marxist leadership, scored a resounding victory. In the northern steel town of Reinosa, threatened with ruin by the government's plans to close down

plant, battles between workers and riot police were raging on the streets earlier this year.

Now disgust at Gonzalez's pro-capitalist policies is shown by last week's mass resignation of 60 UGT members from PSOE in the southern city of Murcia—a mistaken step, but one which reflects the mood of many party members.

Also the Madrid leadership of PSOE has criticised the government.

With determined leadership and a clear socialist alternative to the discredited policies of the PSOE leadership, all the underlying anger among millions of workers and youth could be galvanised into an enormous movement for social transformation. Unfortunately, there is no sign that such leadership will be forthcoming from the union leaders and Socialist 'lefts'.

No strike action has so far been called against the government's attacks. Even the protest demonstrations of workers and pensioners are being called on separate days, fragmenting the movement in the same manner as in the first half of the year, when

the energies of hundreds of thousands of workers were squandered in segregated actions.

Debate over the government's policies is raging in the run-up to next January's PSOE congress. A clear call to struggle on a programme of working-class demands would find a powerful echo. Unfortunately, Redondo seems to want a low profile in the inner-party struggle, and concentrates on building opposition in the UGT.

#### Congress

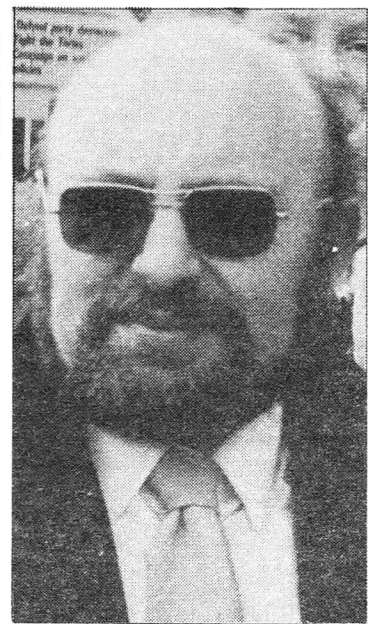
This unwillingness to take on the political struggle may enable Gonzalez to control the congress but it will not make the issues go away. Party members and supporters will increasingly search for a way forward in the struggles that are building up.

A decade ago, Gonzalez thought he had laid the ghost of Marxism when he ordered the expulsion of supporters of the Marxist paper, *Nuevo Claridad*. In the next period he will find those ideas returning with vastly increased support.



Mass demo of youth called by the Marxist-led school students' union earlier this year.

### Don't stand on the sidelines



Tony Aitman

I FIRST came across *Militant* in 1964. I lived in the docks area of East London in the days of the two-up-two-down terraces, before it became a yuppie paradise.

All my family were either members or supporters of the Communist Party. The battle of Cable Street (the road I lived in joined Commercial Road to Cable Street) was still fresh in many people's memories.

In 1956, even at the age of seven, the Hungarian revolution had a strong effect on me. Being brought up with the knowledge of my parents' CP sympathies and a hatred of the ruling class, I could not understand how the Communists could shoot workers on the streets.

I still remember the arguments my father had about it with the local CP organiser. This, combined with his contempt for the CP's ballot-rigging in his union—he was an EETPU steward—led him to leave the party.

I was left with a reluctance to join the CP but also with hatred of unemployment, low pay and the slum housing we had to put up with.

I met the supporters of *Militant* just after the 1964 election. The ideas of Marxism were a revelation to me: a perspective to fight capitalism, but also an analysis of the betrayals of the Labour leadership and Stalinism that had so puzzled me.

At that time *Militant's* support was tiny. Yet, when I became fully involved in 1965, I could see there was no alternative but to fight, and that only the ideas of *Militant* could seriously show us how.

It remains the only tendency in the labour movement that has stood the test of time and experience. It provides an understanding of the past, a fighting movement for today, and hope for the future.

By Tony Aitman  
Clerical Workers' Union  
Steward, English Electric during workers' takeover  
LPYS vice-chairman  
Six years LPYS NC  
Member of YS delegation to Fascist Spain that smuggled books and money for socialists.

## Pakistan

### Zia launches new clampdown

IN RECENT months Pakistan has been gripped by bloody communal violence and bomb explosions in every major city, leaving hundreds dead.

From a correspondent in Pakistan

According to the Interior minister there were 256 bomb blasts in the first half of the year, mainly in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and tribal areas bordering on Afghanistan. More than 600 workers and peasants have been killed this year alone.

What lies behind it?

There are over three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, now based all over the country. These so-called Mujahidins ("soldiers of God") get military and economic aid from Pakistan and US imperialism to fight the 'Communist' government in Afghanistan.

US aid for the Mujahidin has increased from \$28 million in 1979 to \$600 million this year. Russian intervention in Afghanistan has also led to massive US aid for Pakistan's military dictator Zia, helping him to curb opposition within Pakistan.

But, in reality, most of the weapons which the Mujahidin receive from the US, Pakistan and China are not used against the Kabul government; they have been resold in the growing black market for weapons in Pakistan.

Every town in the tribal area has a booming arms market. Kalashnikov rifles, anti-tank rocket launchers, mines, grenades and dynamite are displayed in small shops run by Pakistani and



Peshawar post office under armed guard, following bomb explosions.

Afghan Pashtoons.

It has been reported that at least 400 of the latest US Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, destined for the Afghans, have gone 'missing' in Pakistan.

Iranians and Sikh separatists from India are the main clients, apart from criminal gangs in Pakistan itself. Most of the 'missing' Stinger missiles have been used in the Gulf war by the Iranians against Iraqi aircraft.

The bombing campaign is most probably aided and funded by Afghanistan, in an effort to pressurise Zia to end his support for the Mujahidin and come to a negotiated settlement.

Instead, these acts of individual terrorism are actually strengthening Zia.

The masses correctly see that it is Zia's policy towards Afghanistan that has provoked the bombing campaign. Pressure is building up for the regime to end its support for the Afghan rebels, and hatred of the refugees is increasing.

After a bomb blast which killed 20 in Peshawar in July, anger against the refugees reached a point where their offices in the city were burnt down. The same month, bomb explosions throughout the country were followed by a one-day general strike.

Karachi, a city of eight million, was closed down for five days after the bomb wave.

The Mujahidins have brought not only bombs but also a heroin culture to Pakistan. Eighty per cent of the heroin smuggled to the West is now going through Pakistan. It is mainly carried by Afghan refugees, helped by the military and civilian bureaucracy.

But hatred against the refugees has increased most sharply with the present wave of bomb blasts, for which they are held responsible.

In reaction, the regime has introduced new laws to 'curb' terrorism. These laws have already been used against political activists struggling for the overthrow of Zia.

Supporters of the Marxist journal *The Struggle* in the labour movement and the mass-based Pakistan People's Party are explaining that acts of individual terrorism cannot overthrow the regime. They demand an end to all economic and military aid to the Afghan refugees for guerilla activities in Afghanistan.

They also demand the formation of workers' defence committees to combat individual terrorism. Only these committees will be able to keep an eye on those who try to plant bombs in busy streets.

All these demands must be seen as part of the struggle to overthrow the Zia regime and carry through the democratic and socialist transformation of society, to end the burdens which the workers and peasants of Pakistan are suffering at present.

Photo: Reflex



# Wall picked on

Dear Comrades,  
I was surprised to read in the *Militant* that Bradford North Labour Party is to be investigated because party members from outside the constituency had gone there during the election to secure a victory for Labour in a marginal seat!  
While working in Glasgow Hillhead, another marginal, I met a member of Bradford North CLP who had come up to work in

that constituency. When I asked him why he hadn't stayed in Bradford to work he stated openly that it was because he disagreed with Pat Wall's politics.

I think that this is the real reason behind the investigation because otherwise there would be an investigation into Hillhead CLP wouldn't there?

Douglas Blackstock,  
Glasgow Labour Club.

# All that glitters is not gold

Dear Comrades,  
An informant of mine in the Huddersfield Labour Party got a squint at the latest local party accounts, and discovered a fascinating sidelight on the popularity of our beloved Party leader, Neil Kinnock.

Evidently the enthusiasm among the hand-picked 'by invitation only' audience at his Huddersfield election

meeting was overwhelming. After costs were deducted, the net profit to the Huddersfield Party from the meeting came to a grand total of -£1.55. 'Brilliant' election campaign? 'nuff said.

Martin White, Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party, and suddenly retired LPYS member!

# The wonders of share owning

Dear Comrades,  
A friend of mine works for British Telecom and has a massive 40 shares. As you can imagine it's changed his whole life. He's thinking of moving to the South of France as a tax exile.

He recently got his yearly dividend of £2.14, unfortunately his bank took 50p off him, so with the remainder

he was able to buy a whole two pints.

Mind you, like Bryan Gould says, he now has a stake in his own company. I'm sure he'll attend his shareholders meeting to vote to reduce his pay and increase his working week, so that next year's dividend will be higher.

Ged Grebby, Blyth LPYS.

## 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.

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

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

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

### Militant meetings

○ **Yorkshire Militant Women's Weekend School**. 21-22 November. Residential school concentrating on trade union issues, particularly privatisation. Also world economics and women in the labour movement.

All meals included £7.50, deposits needed. Limited places, contact Iris Barrow, 44 Windyhouse Lane, Manor, Sheffield. Tel 640095.

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

○ **Woolwich Town Hall**. Wednesday 11 November 7.30pm. 'Crisis in local authorities'. Speakers: Cllr Eddie McParland and a surcharged Liverpool councillor.

# Brainwashed by media?

Dear Comrades,

I was selling *Militant* on my estate recently when I met a young black worker in one of the flats.

He bought a copy of the paper and put some fighting fund in my tin. Then he went inside and brought a copy of the *News of the World* out. He showed me this 'exclusive' article about alleged gun-running in

Handsworth and started criticising it.

There was a picture of a young black man, supposedly the ring leader. The report included such gems as two policemen had apparently caught this man walking down the street with a shotgun hidden up his arm. As the man on the door said, you'd have to be a champion weight-lifter

with a very long arm to hold a shotgun up your sleeve! "And they call this a 'newspaper', look at this!" he said and opened up the middle pages which were plastered with photos of semi-naked women.

The trendies and pessimists of the 'left' sometimes justify their move to the right by pointing to the sales of the tabloid press.

"Workers aren't interested in socialism, look how many people buy the *Sun*", they say.

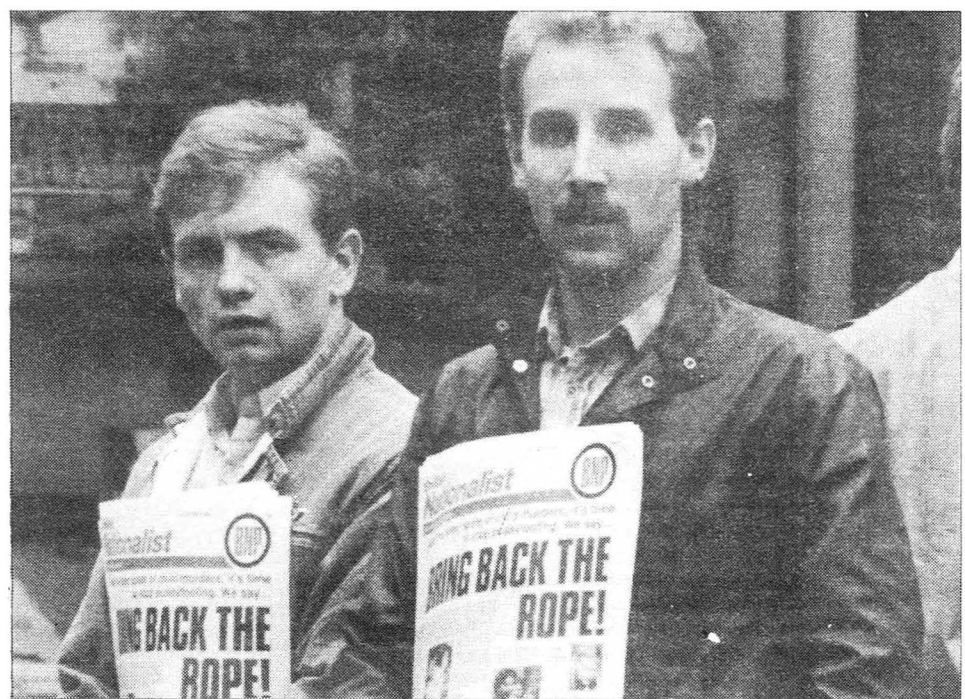
We can give an alternative to the millionaire Tory press, which reflects the everyday lives and experiences of working people. Forward to a twice weekly!

Paul Ellis, Birmingham Ladywood LPYS.

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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



Fascist paper sellers attempt to put on a 'respectable' face.

# Notable absence

Dear *Militant*,

This letter is prompted by the feature on AIDS (*Militant* 869), where you amazingly omitted any reference to gay men, who are the majority of victims in the advanced capitalist countries.

You gave no account of how AIDS has led to the increased persecution of gay men and oppression of lesbians.

This omission was underlined by two photographs. The heading for both photos was 'demonstration' and 'vigil', while not stating the obvious—that it was gay men in Washington protesting against Reagan's indifference to AIDS, and that it was a vigil held by the gay community.

I simply cannot understand how an article of this length could be written without even a reference to the effect that the spread of AIDS has had on the gay and lesbian members of the working class.

Unfortunately, I can only conclude that despite your correct political stand on every other political question, that there must be a deep strand of anti-gay and anti-lesbian thinking within *Militant*, that hinders its dealings with the question of lesbian and gay oppression.

Dale Miller, London.

# Confronting the fascist thugs

Dear Comrades,

I'd like to say 'well done' to Bootle Labour Party Young Socialists for holding an anti-fascist picket in the local shopping centre in response to the fascists stepping up activity in Bootle.

It must be made clear that there is no room for fascism, nor the scum that try to divide the working-class with racist propaganda.

Here in Leicester there is a small group of these thugs, and they have decreased drastically in number, over the last few years.

This trend will continue because of the work the Leicester LPYS is doing to combat any fascist activity. I hope it is the same story up and down the rest of the country.

Amrik Thandi, Leicester.

Dear Comrades,

Sellers in Portsmouth have had a considerable turnaround in their fortunes at the Saturday street sale.

Since the general election times have been tough on the pitch. Weeks have gone by without selling a single paper and we were lucky to raise 10p fighting fund!

Things came to a head last week when four comrades were attacked by a couple of Nazis and had their papers torn up in front of a crowd of 50 on-lookers.

Fed up with the situation our comrades came up trumps. Fourteen comrades came to the sale this week and while some sold papers others approached the skinheads to split the actual Nazi's away from the hangers-on.

In this they were more successful than even they imagined; the wife of the leading Nazi in Pompey asked him why he was arguing with the *Militant* as she agreed with what we said!

In the meantime the sellers had been doing their stuff—11 papers were sold and £3.60 raised for the Fighting Fund!

It will take more than a few Nazis to drive us off the streets of Portsmouth and selling our paper to the workers.

Eddie Truman, Portsmouth.

# Tory links exposed

Dear Comrades,

Much media hysteria has concentrated on the 'threat' of an individual terrorist attack on the Tory conference. However, unmentioned is the huge cost of defending 'free speech and democracy' which conveniently ignores the dictatorial nature of the whole conference charade.

A student living in the same accommodation as me was awaiting his delegation credentials for Tory conference. Having waited for over a week he finally rang central office to find they had been held up for security reasons: because I lived in the same residence!

Was this because I am Irish, or because I support *Militant*, or both? Whatever, the whole incident exposes the close link between the intelligence services and the Tory party. It also raises questions about their future response towards movements in the Labour and trade union field.

Niall Mulholland, Preston LPYS.

# Deserted in our hour of need!

Dear Comrades,

It just goes to show how wrong you can be. After years of selling *Militant* on the streets of Dewsbury under the ever-watchful attention of the local police we were shocked to find them conspicuous by their absence. Surely they hadn't deserted us?

Why, during the miners' struggle hadn't three of their biggest gone out of their way to chat with us? And didn't we later get reassuring letters telling us we wouldn't be prosecuted...this time.

So where were they now? The answer was soon clear (we thought). A group of psychotic eyed NFers gathered to persuade us not to sell our papers. So! We

thought, our trusted guardians had deserted us in our time of need.

You can imagine our shame when we realised our mistake. Our faithful watchdogs were not hiding at all. The reason was, it was their turn to entertain the German cocaine smuggling threat to the working class—Nikolaus Chrastny.

Unfortunately they must have been so worried about our safety that when they turned their collective backs for a second Chrastny escaped to terrorise the streets of Dewsbury. It just shows how wrong you can be!

T Fyles and Pete Vasey, Dewsbury.

**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 2pm

**Militant v Marxism Today**  
Can Gorbachev's reforms succeed?  
Whole weekend costs: £9 waged; £7 unwaged. Cheques to MWES 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9.



# Postal workers vote on action

## Lessons of 1971 strike

**POSTAL WORKERS, members of the Union of Communications Workers (UCW), are at present being balloted on industrial action in pursuit of their shorter working week claim. In the recent period attacks on conditions in the service have escalated. Management and the Tories have their eyes set on privatisation.**

By Richard Knights

A victory on hours would not only be a tremendous boost to postal workers, and the movement generally, but would represent a massive setback to the privatisation plans of the government. It is vital that the lessons of the last national strike are studied by all activists in the union.

The 1971 postal workers strike was the biggest movement since the General Strike of 1926. It lasted for 44 days, with over eight million days being lost.

The strike represented the first major confrontation with the Tory government, elected the year before with the right wing 'Selsdon policies' of cuts, privatisation and anti-union legislation. The first into battle against the Tories were the council workers and then the power workers.

The Union of Post Office Workers (UPW), as it was then known, had a tradition of 'civil service' moderation. Throughout the fifties it stood on the right of the trade union movement; its General Secretary, Geddes, was a confirmed anti-communist.

The first major post-war conflict came in 1964. Wages in the Post Office had fallen in comparison to private industry and the Tory government wage freeze further restricted any rise in pay. Unofficial strikes broke out all over the country.

Faced with this pressure, the General Secretary, Ron Smith, who generally had a cosy relationship with management, was forced to call a one day strike and then threaten an all-out strike. The Tories, who were only weeks away from a general election, caved in and conceded a larger increase. This was accepted with relief by the right wing leaders. Facing a rank and file revolt, they had been forced to place themselves at the head of the movement.

### Wage restraint

Wage restraint under the Labour government of 1964-70 once again reduced the level of postal workers pay. The election of Tom Jackson as General Secretary in 1966 had briefly raised hopes of a change in the old right wing policies. However, no challenge was made to the Labour government's wage restraint, and in 1969 Jackson wrote, in a letter to *The Times*, "It is the policy of the union so far as Posts are concerned to seek a gradual reduction in the number of staff employed on the basis that those left in the service will be better paid as a result".

After the Tory election victory a year later, with inflation running at ten per cent, some workers won concessions with the council workers getting 15 per cent rises and the miners 12 per cent. But it was clear from the defeat of the power workers that the Tories were setting their face against the trade unions.

In November 1970 Lord Hall, a Labour government appointee, was sacked as Chairman of the Post Office. This led to walkouts

and strikes by 20,000 workers and in London a march of 2,800. The workers were not so much concerned with the fate of the noble Lord, with his salary of £17,500 and his £70,000 golden handshake, but with the threat of wage cuts and privatisation.

William Ryland was appointed as acting Post Office Chairman and he offered seven per cent in response to the UPW claim of 15 per cent. Tom Jackson replied that "The Post Office must be joking if they expect our members to accept seven per cent".

It was clear to both sides that a conflict was impending. However, the UPW leaders made no preparation for the strike. They were hoping that it would be a repeat of the 1964 strike. In the words of Tom Jackson "We want to make the conflict short and sharp and inconvenience the public least".

When talks finally broke down the membership were only given three days' notice of the strike. Management used the time to clear the offices of mail and parcels. When the picketing began it was often outside empty buildings.

### It was clear that conflict was impending. But the UPW leaders made no preparation

The response of postmen, sorters and counter-clerks was absolutely solid and remained at 98-99 per cent throughout the strike. On the second day of the strike, 21 January, 20,000 postmen marched through London.

The Tories attempted to incite the public against the strikers. The *Daily Mail* even called for attacks against them and commented that "The weapon which the government will have to rely on, as it did in the power workers' dispute, is public opinion which will suffer immediately". However when the union printed in papers the pay scales of £18 and eight shillings for postmen and £14 and 14 shillings for cleaners, the press campaign fell away.

The union leaders attempted to limit the involvement of their own members and other trade unionists. They restricted pickets to only four per gate but this was ignored by the rank and file, particularly outside the telephone exchanges where only a third of the workers were union members. The Telecom Staff Association instructed its members to cross picket lines. The telephone exchanges were the only examples of serious strike breaking.

Other sections such as the ship-to-shore radio operators, who controlled all coastal shipping, although willing to strike were not called out. When trade unionists in London approached the UPW for collection sheets they were refused. A union spokesman commented that "We are going to fight this strike on our own two feet to show that postal workers can do it; if we win it will be our victory. If we lose, it is our own look out".

Big business used every device to circumvent the strike. Lloyds and Barclays used Securicor to transport mail. A sitting director of this company was Ray Gunter, an ex-Labour Minister. Goods traffic on British Railways dramatically increased as did road transport. The Gas and Electricity boards used meter readers to



Postal workers march against Tory government's Industrial Relations Bill during their strike in 1971.

deliver bills.

Several right wing organisations attempted to direct open scab outfits, the most notable being the Association of Private Postal Services set up by the Dowager Lady Birdwood, founder of the Racial Preservation Society.

The ruling class were determined to break the union and use a defeat as a deterrent to other unions. Four weeks into the strike, *The Times* wrote: "It is more important to the government not to lose this strike than to preserve the postal service from contraction".

The key to the postal workers victory lay with the TUC. On 21 February a massive rally of 250,000 marched through London against the Industrial Relations Bill, headed by the UPW. But General Secretary Tom Jackson was already signalling retreat when he said "If we are defeated it will not be for lack of resolve. It will not be for lack of guts and determination. It will be for lack of funds".

The TUC made one half-hearted appeal for funds, but organised no campaign to expose the Tory attack against the postmen as part of a general offensive against the working class. The national union leaders offered only interest-free loans.

Big business used the telecommunications system to beat the strike. The Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) membership were prepared to strike in support but the national leaders held back. It was only on 25 February that as a belated token gesture POEU General Secretary Lord Delacourt-Smith sanctioned a one day strike in the London area.

On 3 March, the union agreed to go before arbitration and a court of inquiry was established. The result was a nine per cent wage rise—below the inflation rate.

### Watershed

The UPW hurriedly abandoned the strike, mass meetings being held without the knowledge of some union activists. Only three branches voted not to return—South East London, Edinburgh, and Liverpool Amalgamated.

The strike represented a watershed in the development of the union. The dispute also encouraged the ruling class in their attacks on the unions for a time, although their hopes were dashed on the rocks with the miners' victory the following year. The UPW leaders moved to the right arguing for conciliation rather than strikes.

However, the postal workers were drawn into the trade union movement. The old 'civil service' mentality had been exploded in the noise of battle. The strike laid the basis for the tremendous support given by the postal workers to the Grunwick strikers in 1977.

New battles now face postal workers. The management have thrown down the gauntlet over the ballot for shorter hours. Ron Dearing, Post Office Chairman, has stated that "The union does not have a just case and the public will see that. The postmen will lose just as they did in the strike of 1971".

The lessons of the last strike are the need for one democratic communications union; the need to prepare the membership for battle; strong links to be forged with the railway workers and transport workers to stop work being transferred during a strike; the building of a strong Broad Left to change the leadership of the union.

The Union of Communications Workers was founded with the aim of socialism inscribed on its banner and embedded in its constitution. A new generation must take up the challenge thrown down by the management, the Tories and their diseased profit system.



## Industrial reports

# BREL, Hospitals— Crewe will fight

"I'LL HAVE to remember to be optimistic from now on," said Bob Jones, Rolls Royce shop steward, at the recently formed Crewe Town Action Committee. A wave of anger has swept the town as more and more workers realise the extent of the Tory attacks on the health service and British Rail Engineering (Brel) jobs.

By Bill Mullins.

As a result of initiatives taken by Broad Left and Militant supporters in the town, a joint union meeting that had originally been organised by Bob to campaign against hospital cuts also took on board the campaign to oppose the closure of Brel.

The Action Committee, representing workers from the hospitals, Rolls Royce, Telecom, the Post Office, the clothing industry, local authorities, the print industry, the building industry, rail workers and at this stage, Brel workers in a personal capacity, has called for a massive town-wide demonstration and rally to take place on Saturday 31 October.

30,000 leaflets have been produced and support has been canvassed amongst all the workplaces and small businesses in Crewe. Unfortunately at this stage, despite being present at the meeting which set up the Action Committee, Ken Wooley, engineering union official representing the Brel workers, has not called for the Brel trade unions to participate in the campaign.



Swindon Brel workers marching against closure—lessons must be learnt from past campaigns.

The Works Committee, who have not called a shop stewards meeting for nine months is actively campaigning against the Town Committee's plans, even threatening anybody who hands out leaflets that "They will make their lives hell." Nevertheless, a number of Brel workers are participating in the campaign. It is to be hoped that they will succeed in putting enough pressure on the Works Committee to play their rightful role in the fight to defend Crewe and its future.

### Action

In the words of one Brel steward: "The strategy the Works Committee is following is one that has already failed at Glasgow and Doncaster. Appealing to the government and British

Rail will get us nowhere. The only thing that they understand is action."

Many hospital workers realise that if their fight is to succeed in opposing cuts then they will need the support of the industrial workers. In Cheshire as a whole a number of battles in the hospitals against cuts have already taken place. The position of Crewe is unique in as much as the health cuts have coincided with the threatened closure of the town's main employer, Brel.

The action of many industrial union leaders is to make fine speeches over the hospital cuts whilst doing little or nothing over the attacks in their own members.

The role of Broad Left activists in this situation is to patiently explain to the rank and file workers that

unity is strength.

This can best brought about by showing that the attacks in each section of the working class emanate from the same direction—the Tory government.

As the campaign develops, the working people of Crewe will demand firm leadership. The Broad Left has started the ball rolling.

**HOSPITAL WORKERS, residents and local people will be marching through Crewe town centre on Saturday 31 October to protest at the NHS cuts and the closure of Brel.**

Despite a Community Health Council meeting where 300 people almost unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in the health authority, and a lobby by 250 hospital and other workers, the last health authority meeting decided to go ahead with its plans to close three wards at the General Hospital and one at the nearby Northwich Infirmary.

An open meeting last Wednesday called by AEU shop stewards from the Rolls Royce car factory launched a Town Action Committee to fight the NHS cuts. The meeting also called on Brel workers to link up with the hospital workers in a joint campaign. The Crewe Town Action Committee has helped to set up other action committees in Northwich, Winsford and Sandbach. It is calling for the following demands:

- \* No NHS cuts.
- \* No ward closures.
- \* No Brel redundancies.

The march assembles at 1.30 pm, Saturday 31 October, at King George VI playing fields, and rallies in the Square, Crewe. Invited speakers include Jimmy Knapp (NUR), Terry Fields MP, Jack Ashley MP and John Tocher (AEU).

By Dave Highland, Chair Joint Union Committee, Crewe Health Authority.

## Greenwich cuts are defeated

THE CUTS can be defeated. That is the message which comes over loud and clear from the London Borough of Greenwich.

The council, facing a financial shortfall this year, and a predicted budget gap of £39 million for next year has had to choose between making cuts and fighting the Tory government. The majority of the ruling Labour group are going down the road of cuts. Already there is a selective recruitment freeze despite vacancies being at record levels of over 700. A similar number of jobs will be threatened next year. One vacancy which is being filled is that of Chief Executive with a tidy salary of £32,000 a year.

### Victory

Council officers are recommending a £6.50 average rent rise from January.

An extremely significant victory has been won, however, over planned cuts in the Housing Maintenance budget. Council Leader Dave Picton was faced with a lobby of over 100 workers from the Directorate of Works when he tried to explain the cuts. They were less than impressed, demonstrating vocally their hostility. Two days later,

the council voted to put an additional £1.6 million into the budget.

This shows that where effective opposition can be mobilised, cuts can be defeated. However, the danger is that they will then be offloaded into areas where opposition is expected to be less. The building of broad lefts to unite and co-ordinate all sectors likely to be affected by cuts—local authority workers, tenants, community organisations and those councillors prepared to fight—is now imperative.

The inaugural meeting of the Greenwich Broad Left was attended by 50 council workers and 'refusenik' councillors. These councillors, opposed to any cuts, have now been invited to see the Labour Whip. They could be kicked out of the Labour group for their actions.

The Broad Left is now organising a borough conference, and a demonstration of tenants to oppose rent rises. As one worker said at the meeting, "If gusts of wind can force money out of the government, then a united movement of workers and tenants can certainly do it".

By Eddie MacParland, Greenwich councillor

## Barnsley pits fight back

continued from back page

They have lulled miners into a false sense of security by promising "an assured future well into the 21st century."

In reality the Coal Board have invested £200 million in both pits to bring some of the most up-to-date mining and washing equipment to the area. Productivity at Redbrook was described in the Coal Board's own newspaper in October as 'excellent'.

### Scandalous

The washer at Wooley pit cost nearly £105 million so that Barnsley coal could be 'blended' to suit all markets. The proposal to close these pits is a scandalous waste of public money and resources. The Coal Board have another hit-list of a further 70 pits to go, covering 70,000 men in the next five years. Behind these closures lies their intention to whittle down miners and their pits until it becomes an attractive option for privatisation. The threatened privatisation of electricity and even the railways makes this fight all the more important for all workers.

In 1984 there were up-

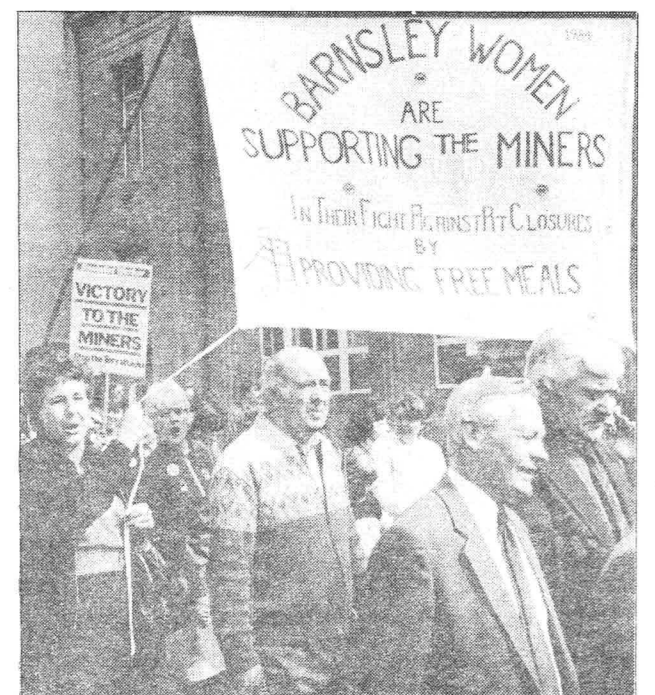
wards of 13,000 miners in Barnsley. There are now only 6,500. Since the end of the strike three pits have closed along with one of the workshops. Unemployment in Barnsley currently stands at 17.4 per cent. Our communities cannot take any more. We know there are millions of tons of undug coal that will be left in the ground if British Coal get their way.

The day after the announcement of closure two mass meetings agreed to reject the Coal Board's offer. Two well-attended public rallies have taken place.

Last Sunday a joint community action group was set up to take the campaign to the movement. In 1985 a similar group successfully fought off closure at Darfield Main colliery. Drawing on this experience the group elected miner's wife Marsha Marshall, as their secretary.

She told Militant: "This group has been set up in the interests of communities. If they close Redbrook and Wooley it will bring on a collapse of the coal industry in the Barnsley area. It's not just a miners' fight—it's everyone's fight."

A successful campaign could well be a turning



point for the miners in rolling back British Coal's offensive. The campaign group's plans to mobilise the entire community behind their banner will be an inspiration to the working class who traditionally look to the miners first.

Militant will be campaigning around a forceful programme of action:

1. Force British Coal to open the books. Let's see the real facts behind their so-called plan for coal.
2. For a public campaign of solidarity, leading to a 24 hour general strike and demonstration throughout

the Yorkshire coalfields. 3. For an urgent NUM sponsored conference on pit closures to draw up an immediate national strategy. 4. Prepare for industrial action to fight pit closures. 5. Widen the struggle embracing all workers involved in the public sector facing privatisation.

Please rush messages of support and donations to: Marsha Marshall, secretary Redbrook and Wooley Community Action Group, 17 Rimmington Rd, Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.



## Industrial reports

# Astms Tass merger—Left must demand One democratic rule-book

**THE MERGER of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (Astms) with Tass will be one of the biggest and most significant mergers ever from the viewpoint of the TUC and the Labour movement generally, creating a union of around 700,000 members.**

By an Astms member

A number of vital questions need to be addressed by activists in both unions. This weekend's Astms Broad Left meeting in Manchester will be doing just that.

The policies and structure of the new union will to a large degree depend on the activists within each constituent part. Recently, conferences of Astms and Tass saw 85 per cent and almost 100 per cent respectively voting in favour of merger, but

a campaign now has to be mounted to convince every member of the advantages of one union. Leaflets and speakers are vital, but joint meetings between members of both unions should also be organised.

One central task is that of campaigning for the most democratic and effective rule book possible. The Rules Revision Conference is scheduled for June next year. Those basic demands which must be fought for are for a branch based conference; for the election and accountability of all full-time officials; for one rule book for the union; and for a democratic youth structure. Every activist should be armed with the arguments for these policies.

That is why there is a need for left wingers in both unions to come together in order to prepare for this conference. In Astms, the election of conference delegates should be on a branch basis, but some divisions are

moving towards a dangerous position which would allow branches to nominate but would leave appointment to the divisional council. Where this is proposed, a campaign must be launched to ensure branches meet together and are allowed to elect their own delegate. Otherwise, democracy is being shifted away from the branches.

### Membership

Whilst the question of democracy is of the utmost importance, we must not forget the reason for merger—that is to build a strong union, that will benefit the membership in terms of wages, conditions and hours. It is not just a question of defending what we already have but fighting for better pay and conditions and a shorter working week. With a merged union we will potentially be in a better position to achieve these

things.

The industries covered by the new union have already been savaged by the policies of the Tory government and now after 'Black Monday' and the prospect of a new recession, will come under renewed attack.

For these reasons the Astms Broad Left has a crucial role to play. If we give a clear lead on issues of policy, strategy and democracy inside the new union, we will attract massive support.

There can be no doubt that there is a thirst for ideas amongst not just the activists but with ordinary members as well, who are looking for answers to the problems they face at work. We must provide the answers to ensure that the new union is not just one of the biggest in the TUC but is also one which is seen to be fighting for its members, whatever industry they work in.

Don't stand on the sidelines



Terry Harrison

**THE EXPLOITATION that I had to face as an apprentice boilermaker led me into the ranks of the trade union movement and subsequently in 1958 into the Labour Party.**

My early education in the Youth Section introduced me to the ideas of Marxism. This gave me all the answers to transforming society, with all the benefits this would have for working class people throughout the world.

I am immensely proud to have been associated with those men and women that came to the conclusion that these ideas would have to become the flesh and bone of the labour movement by publishing the *Militant* in 1964.

Today, the ideas, programme and supporters of *Militant* are a factor in British and international politics despite being assailed and vilified by enemies in the Tory and Liberal parties and by sections of the Labour and trade union movement.

Our support grows in the ranks of working class people. The attacks on us express our enemies fear that *Militant* had demonstrated its ability to lead the working class to the victory of socialism.

## Jacobs' women won't be bullied

# Telecom victimisations

**IN THE WAKE of the British Telecom (BT) strike earlier this year, the then right-wing leadership of the National Communications Union (NCU) negotiated a return to work agreement which left activists vulnerable to victimisation.**

In particular, the strategic importance of the City of London to big business meant that activists in London were singled out for particularly ruthless treatment, culminating in the sacking of two members of the union.

### Investigation

At a recent Industrial Tribunal on the first of those sackings, BT incredibly refused to present any evidence to support their sacking of John Deason, a member of London City Branch. They refused because it would have meant exposing a secret investigation into left-wing activists in the NCU. To defend their dismissal at the tribunal would have meant producing background material it had gathered from an 'unorthodox' source.

It is believed that BT have employed a former se-



nior Scotland Yard detective to investigate activists within the NCU. Michael Bett, one of BT's new directors was at the centre of the storm about 'political vetting' at the BBC. It would appear that the company has adopted some of those procedures.

The tribunal found BT

guilty of unfair dismissal. However they are not empowered to force an employer to reinstate an unfairly sacked worker, although they have awarded an unprecedented £41,500 compensation.

London City Branch is calling for their member's reinstatement. The NCU

must back that call and if necessary take action to get justice. If BT is allowed to sack activists for normal trade union activity then the whole of the union is threatened. This principle and the scandal of political vetting must be taken up by the national union.

## Hull ferries sit-in

"AS IS well known, the Chairman of P and O has put the responsibility for the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' tragedy on the officers and crew of that vessel. We believe that it would be totally 'irresponsible' to put to sea with potentially dangerous undermanning levels." With these words, Gary Holt, ship's convenor of the National Union of Seamen, explained the position of seafarers taking part in sit-ins aboard the P and O North Sea ferries 'Norland' and 'Norsea' in Hull docks. Over 200 are taking

part after being suspended for taking strike action. An initial dispute broke out concerning the suspension of three bar staff and then escalated because of worries about manning levels and staff reductions. It is believed that lower staffing levels will seriously threaten safety standards.

A spokesman aboard one of the ferries has stated that "We have plenty of food, and we will continue our action as long as it takes to win".

By Militant reporters

## Liverpool's health crisis

THE HEALTH service is reaching crisis point in Liverpool. On top of the £5.32 million cut in spending to be imposed over the next five years, this year's budget has been overspent by one million pounds.

The reality of these financial constraints means closure of wards and hospitals and loss of beds. Already workers are taking action against ward closures. An attempt to close a ward at weekends at St Pauls Eye Hospital has met opposition from the nursing staff and has been kept open for seven days so far. This ward is also under

threat of closure and there will be only emergency surgery for three weeks over Christmas.

Overpending on lenses for cataract operations means that from November there will be no money for these operations. In another hospital threatened with closure, Myrtle Street Childrens' Hospital, porters came out on strike when management wanted a security screen removed from the porters desk. The screen was only installed after an assault on a member of staff.

By Ann Bannister

## Bus—prix?

AFTER THE Birmingham 'Super-Prix', bus passengers in the West Midlands are getting their very own bus grand prix as bus drivers struggle to keep to the impossible time schedules set by the new deregulated West Midlands Travel Ltd.

Last week, in Walsall, two double-deck buses were stopped for speeding by police. One was alleged to be doing sixty mph!

Transport and General Workers Union bus-driver delegates to my local Labour Party told be about the pressure on drivers caused by impossibly tight schedules. The new 'Timesaver' express routes are the main problem, with only five minutes allowed to get from Birmingham centre to Perry Barr, a distance of about four miles, for instance—and the 'Timesaver' service from Lichfield to Birmingham is supposed to be quicker than the train!

At these kind of speeds there is one very nasty accident in the making unless the trade unions step in and cool things down.

By Nigel Wheatley

By Mark Silcock,  
Walton LPYS



# Militant

## Inside

Kangaroo court in Bradford North — Page 3

World capitalist crisis — Page 8-9

# South Yorks fights back

## Sheffield tenants' rally

ON 4 November residents on the Manor estate in Sheffield will lobby the city council calling for an immediate improvement of their living conditions.

By a Militant reporter

Manor estate has the highest youth unemployment rate in the country. In 1986 only 35 out of 225 school leavers from the local comprehensive school went into a proper job or Further Education. Health reports point out that the level of ill health for all age groups on the estate is amongst the highest in the city.

Built in the 20s and 30s the estate was one of the 'Homes fit for heroes'. 98 per cent of the houses are council stock. In 1979 a decision was taken to demolish and replace the majority of the properties because of wall tie failure and the use of black mortar in their construction. This process is nowhere near complete.

Most of the others have undergone modernisation but require constant repair because of damp. The rest of reasonable quality are to be modernised some time. The city council has designated the area a priority estate.

However since 1979 the Tories have reduced hous-



Manor estate tenants are forced to live alongside vermin-infested demolished houses.

ing allocations to Sheffield by nearly £300 million, introduced the forced sale of council houses, forced competitive tendering into work ordinarily done by the council and introduced rate capping as a means of limiting city council spending.

Homelessness has trebled in Sheffield. Of the 1500 houses built last year only 20 were council. There are no proposed council built properties for 1989/90.

Yet since the Labour council backtracked in the 1984/5 ratecapping battle they have organised no fight back against the Tory attacks. The tenants of the estate have other ideas.

Militant spoke to Alan and Iris Barrow: "We don't

want to spend another winter in these conditions. We have to put sleeping bags in the kids' beds because it's so cold and damp. The frost is as thick on the inside window as it is outside."

### Rats and mice

"Many of us marched with the council in the battle over ratecapping but we're also prepared to march against them if needs be." Betty Houlden, chair Upper Manor Tenants' Association.

Rita Pennington: "We've got rats, mice, all kinds of insects..." There is the true story of the Environmental Health Officer whose way of reducing rat infection

was to sell ferrets to tenants.

Rita also explained the link with the privatisation of council housing: "Manor will be the first estate going private. If people don't start a fightback now all Sheffield will go private."

Whilst there is an inbred hatred of the Tories many residents are now blaming the council for the situation and their ineffectiveness in giving a clear lead.

The activists in the Tenants' Associations and Labour Party are being left to pick up the pieces. They are showing that they are ready, willing and able to organise a fightback.



Yorkshire miners are on the march again.

# Barnsley pits take action

The shock announcement to close two major pits in the Barnsley coalfield resulting in the possible loss of nearly 1,300 jobs has spurred the NUM into action. Last Sunday a mass meeting of two threatened pits, Wooley and Redbrook heard union leaders and Labour MPs outline the case for a fightback.

"If they get away with this" Arthur Scargill declared, "they'll make Barnsley resemble a lunar landscape with the highest levels of unemployment in the Western world."

The men at both collieries have voted to fight the closures and the case will now go before the Coal Board's review panel.

British Coal have used every dirty trick in the book to pressurise the men into taking redundancy. They



By Marsha Marshall

opped the redundancy bribe by £5,000 but only until next March. They have produced bogus figures to 'prove' their case for closure, claiming both pits have lost nearly £100 million in the last five years. (cont P.14)

Become a **Militant** supporter



### Donate

I would like to donate £ . . . p each week/month to the fighting fund.

### Sell

I would like to sell papers per week (minimum 5) on a sale or return basis.

### Subscribe

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

### Subscription rates:

UK: 13 issues...£5.50	26 issues £11.00	52 issues £22.00
Europe:	26 issues £15.00	52 issues £30.00
Rest of World:	26 issues £18.00	52 issues £36.00

Return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Make cheques payable to *Militant*.

## 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.