

# Militant

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The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

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LPYS

## Black Youth Rally

Lambeth Town Hall  
Brixton, London SW2  
Saturday 5 December 1pm

# EMERGENCY

# Tories let sick die

Britain under the Tories spends 5.9 per cent of its gross national product on health.

France spends 8.6 per cent.

West Germany 9.2 per cent.

USA 10.5 per cent.

NOT EVEN hole-in-the-heart babies being turned away from hospital have moved the heartless Tory government from their war against the National Health Service.

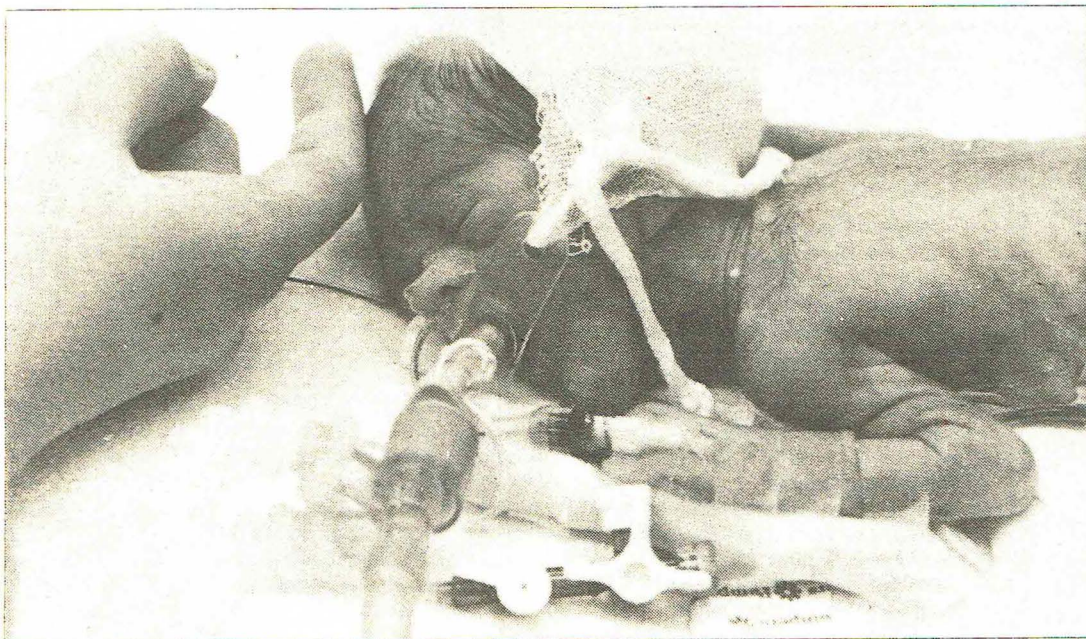
By Diane Simcox, Cohse member, Dudley Health Authority

In the last two months 34 children have been called to the Birmingham Children's Hospital for operations only to be turned away at the last minute. "It was like hitting a brick wall at 80 mph" said a parent: "when you were suddenly told your child would have to wait."

"Babies will inevitably die" said one of the surgeons, Jo de Giovanni. That was proved tragically right last week, when a newborn baby with a heart defect died after being turned away from the hospital.

Britain's hospitals are being systematically starved of the resources they need. Poverty pay levels cannot attract and keep nurses.

Already hospitals resort to bazaars to raise funds. Now the Tories want to turn them into bazaars, by opening up their premises and leasing equipment to shops, offices and private



Babies in intensive care are at risk because of Tory cuts. Photo: Jacob Sutton (Reflex)

health companies. And the extra cash will still be docked from their grant from the government.

They are changing the NHS from a free service for all in need to a business, where not the number of patients cured but profitability is what counts. The latest step is the ending of free eye tests and dental check-ups. A government who preach preventative medicine have undermined two of the most effective early means of detecting problems.

Even a former Tory minister, Barney Hayhoe, has exposed the bogus statistics which are Thatcher's standard reply to every criticism of her record. The real rise in spending on hospitals does not cover the rising number of old people and scientific advances.

### Underfunding

The West Midlands Regional Health Authority had £17 million cut from last year's budget, on top of at least £40 million under-

funding over the last four years. Now the Tories propose to cut a further £11 million off next year's budget.

Coventry Health Authority is selling Whitley Hospital; Hilltop Hospital in Bromsgrove and wards at the Alexander in Redditch are to be closed.

"Whitley is the only specialist geriatric hospital in Coventry" a Nupe shop steward told *Militant*: "The bed shortages now are so bad that even emergency admissions are left in the

corridors as doctors discharge the 'fittest' patients, while waiting lists of three years or longer exist for routine operations."

"The morale of the workers is low, but also angry" said Lorraine Mole, a Cohse rep at Hilltop: "especially when they see the managers on big bonuses for staying within budgets. What is needed is a campaign to unite all the hospital unions against the cuts".

Coventry workers, in their magnificent demon-

stration last week, showed what is possible. Workers from industry will increasingly join in the struggle. The mood is building up for industrial action, even the possibility of an area general strike.

*Militant* supporters are organising a conference of labour in Coventry to plan the next steps in the fight-back against the destruction of the NHS and the other services that make for a civilised society.

**Murder in the health service, see page 3.**

## Inside

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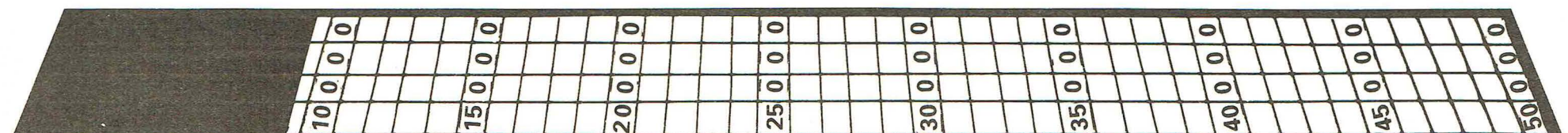
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### Defend LPYS

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### CPSA Pay conference

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**5 January deadline**

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# Militant

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## Labour purge

YET AGAIN, in an entirely predictable response to setbacks for the left in Liverpool District Labour Party and Broadgreen Labour Party, the press is declaring that *Militant* is finished.

On Labour's National Executive (NEC), the right are confidently launching even more drastic purges than before, egged on by the capitalist media and encouraged by their 21-4 majority.

They intend to destroy the Labour Party Young Socialists, purely because of its socialist policies. And they are planning a witch-hunt against Bermondsey Labour Party which will be even more sweeping than previous purges.

Does this reflect a shift to the right among the working class, as Neil Kinnock and his sidekicks believe? On the contrary, only the union officialdom and the middle class ex-lefts in the Party are moving right.

Their temporary gains in Liverpool could only be achieved after expulsions and bureaucratic manoeuvres. They take place against the background of right-winger Harry Rimmer's resignation as leader of Liverpool Council after he failed to convince the Labour Group to "throw themselves on the mercy" of the government.

Rimmer's road to retreat was blocked by the legacy of the 47 councillors who had been banned and surcharged for standing up to the Tories. The right wing cannot manoeuvre their way round the effect the 47's achievements have had on the consciousness of Liverpool workers.

The right justify their witch-hunts by the findings of polls the NEC commissioned from sympathetic professionals. These purport to show that 'extremism' is unpopular. Considerable research no doubt went in to formulating the questions that would elicit the answer the right wanted.

Neil Kinnock should follow his own advice and study the results of the general election, "the only poll that counts" as he said during the campaign.

Then Liverpool recorded an overwhelming swing to Labour and 'extremist' MPs like Terry Fields and Eric Heffer got massively increased majorities. Opinion polls in Liverpool show that only two per cent felt 'extremism'/*Militant* was an issue.

But the attacks on *Militant* and the labour movement's socialist aims would have been impossible without the collaboration of the Sawyers and the Blunketts, who have capitulated to Kinnock and the right. The Liverpool coups have depended on their local equivalents.

Union officials should take note that the Party's pollsters include Labour's links with the unions in their definition of extremism. Having started with *Militant*'s supporters, the right will go on to attack the position of the unions in the Party.

The attacks are organically linked to the leadership's 'dented shield' policy for local councils. They have fallen for the ruling class's strategy of making Labour councils put through cuts and thus take the odium for them.

The unions are at the sharp end of the cuts and the witch-hunt is designed to insulate council Labour groups from the rank and file's opposition to such actions. Union members will pay dearly in jobs and living standards if their local and national leaders assist the purges.

Kinnock's obsession with pleasing media-manufactured 'public opinion' has meant that he acts like a tinpot dictator in the Party. He has threatened Ken Livingstone with disciplinary action for his views on Ireland (which *Militant* does not share but which he has the right to express).

And he has even condemned John Prescott for daring to consider standing for the deputy leadership. Apparently 'moderation' means Stalinist-style elections with only one candidate! The further the leadership moves towards Thatcherism, the more they crush the democratic rights of all Party members.

But all these moves at the top take place at the same time as workers are beginning to recover from the election defeat. Industrial militancy is reviving especially in the car industry and the Post Office. Miners face a presidential election knowing that it is a preparation for further battles.

They will not oblige the 'new realists' by remaining passive in response to employers' attacks. And a wave of industrial militancy will sooner or later sweep into the Labour Party.

The right wing are composing a formula for convulsions in the Party at a later stage. They will result in the working class reclaiming the Labour Party, setting it on a socialist course and looking to the guidance proffered by Marxists.

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# Weekend of education and debate

AT THE end of a tremendous weekend of study and discussion at the *Militant* Marxist Weekend School, there was a debate between Lynn Walsh, *Militant* editorial board, and Monty Johnstone, executive committee of the British Communist Party, on 'Can Gorbachev's reforms succeed?'

Monty Johnstone commented on the repression by the Russian Stalinist regime in the past and the reforms currently in progress, which he interpreted as an attempt at de-Stalinisation. But he ignored the nil effect of *Glasnost* upon the day-to-day problems of the workers.

Lynn Walsh asked "in whose interests were the 'reforms' made? Would they mean the end of the privileged and all-powerful state bureaucracy?"

## Strikes

Speakers from the floor spoke of the bitter conflict between the bureaucracy and the workers it claimed to represent, of the corruption of party officials and strikes of workers to improve their conditions.

Summing up, Johnstone was unable to clarify exactly what reforms were in store for the mass



Audience during the debate.

of Russian workers, but only that an exercise in cautious optimism would see *Glasnost* build a system of democracy in the Soviet Union in place of Stalinism.

However it was obvious to everyone else that the only road to permanent democracy was by a revolution of the working



Lynn Walsh.



Monty Johnstone

class to take society back into its own hands.

Concluding, Lynn Walsh described how a seething movement of youth and workers will restore the ideas of Trotsky and on these firm foundations build a socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and world-wide.

Photos: Dave Sinclair.

Altogether 400 people attended the school and, after listening to Ted Grant answer questions on a Marxist view of society, raised £1,100 for the Fighting Fund.

By Christine Elliott

# Poland says 'no' to bureaucracy

LAST WEEKEND'S referendum in Poland was a humiliating blow for the ruling bureaucracy.

By Phil Hutchinson

Despite a massive media campaign to persuade people to vote and the systematic repression over the last six years, one third of voters did not vote at all.

Only 44 per cent of those eligible voted for an economic package which meant savage cuts in their own living standards and only 46 per cent voted for the promises of 'profound democratisation of political life'.

The workers could not stomach such an offer from General Jaruzelski, who used the army to crush the workers in 1981 and stifled all democratic rights.

This sham referendum, he hoped, would legitimise his intended price increases. Since 1970, every price increase imposed by the bureaucracy to make the workers pay for Poland's economic crisis has triggered strikes and protests. The fear of a repetition in 1988 haunts every step the bureau-

cracy takes.

The referendum result will boost the confidence of the advanced workers, who are looking for a chink in the bureaucracy's armour. It reflects the real balance of forces in Poland. The bureaucracy, despite martial law, have been unable to crush the workers' opposition.

## Foreign debt

If Jaruzelski now moves to increase prices it could set the country on fire with protest. But the regime is in a hopeless dilemma. With a £25 billion foreign debt, it agrees with western bankers that Polish workers' living standards must be cut.

Despite the referendum result Propaganda Minister Urbans has said that the bureaucracy will go ahead with their cuts programme anyway, albeit at a slower pace. So much for 'pro-

found democratisation'!

Unfortunately, the Solidarity leadership have offered no alternative programme. Solidarity 'adviser' Kuron even said of the result: "it does not mean society is opposed to swift economic and political reform, only that it is opposed to those carrying them out".

However, a strike wave sparked off by new price increases in the next period could easily reach a much higher level than even 1980-81.

The whole of Eastern Europe is seething with dissatisfaction, discussions amongst the workers, strikes and protests. In the USSR itself there have been strikes and protests against the sacking of the 'reformer' Yeltsin.

In country after country, workers will seek the path of political revolution and open up a new era based on workers' democracy.

# Haiti terror

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS in Haiti on 29 November were cancelled as gangs rampaged through the capital with machine guns and machetes. At least 22 people were killed. The military junta then dissolved the independent electoral committee.

This would have been the first free election in 30 years following the Duvalier dynasty dictatorship.

The Tontons Macoutes, the murdering squads which maintained the Duvaliers in power, are responsible for the violence and openly backed by the army. Two presidential candidates have also been

murdered and there have been frequent arson attacks.

## Vigilantes

Earlier this year attempts by the junta to dissolve the election committee were met with strikes which paralysed the country. Workers and youth have already shown the way by organising vigilante groups to defend themselves against attacks.

The unions must now call for a general strike and for an armed workers' militia throughout Haiti to lead a mass resistance for democracy and socialism.

By Soraya Lawrence

# Tony McNeilage

GLASGOW POLLOK Labour Party Young Socialists and *Militant* supporters would like to pay their respects to Anthony McNeilage, a young socialist who tragically died at the age of 19 on Sunday 22 November.

Tony had been under intensive care in hospital for three months after a freak accident in which he broke his neck.

We send our condolences to Tony's family, who will miss him dearly, as will the hundreds of people who knew him. About 400 mostly young people, attended his funeral.

Tony was just one of the thousands of youth in Glasgow who were no more than an embarrassing unemployment statistic to Thatcher and her crew.

We will be even more determined now to redouble our efforts to fight for a social system that offers more to working class youth than a street corner existence with nothing to do and no money to do it with.

We are proud that Tony was one of ours and pledge to continue our fight for a real future of socialism.

By Tommy Sheridan

# 'Murder' in the health service

Crisis in the National Health Service is turning into catastrophe, highlighted by the desperate plight of six-week-old David Barber. Before he finally had his hole-in-the-heart operation, he had been turned away five times because of 'staff shortages' at the Birmingham Children's Hospital.

"If babies die because heart operations are cancelled, the Tories will be guilty of murder" said Dave Nellist, MP for Coventry South East. He told Parliament that in Coventry there had been frequent cancellations of heart operations on babies, who face needless death because the Tories are withholding the cash which could save their lives.

30,000 nurses left the service last year because of the poverty pay. The money needed to cover the last pay award to hospital staff is £170 million more than the health authorities have available. So that money has to be found by closing down more wards and delaying more treatment.

And according to the Audit Commission, 11,000 more operations could be performed in a year in just five districts, if a quarter of all those scheduled were not cancelled because of staff shortages.

Yet presiding over all this is John Moore, recuperating in a £195-a-day private hospital, with its 163 individual rooms all with their own bathroom, shower, colour TV and video, bedside telephone and a private nurse call system.



What could better illustrate the double-standards of the Tories! Now they announce:

★ Free eyesight checks to be scrapped.

★ Free dental check-ups to be abolished.

★ Doctors encouraged to take on more patients, when they cannot give proper attention to those they have now.

★ Health authorities urged to run profitable businesses on their premises, like shops in hospitals, leasing out equipment and selling beds to the private sector.

And the extra money raised, as now, will be deducted from what the government provides. All they worry about is safeguarding the tax cuts promised to their friends in big business.

Their strategy is to wreck the NHS and force everyone into a private health 'industry' where you are cured if you can pay and left to rot if you can't.

There must now be a massive response from the labour movement, like that already begun in the Midlands. No issue is more certain to win the support of millions of workers and their families. They value to health service above all the other reforms they have won through struggle.



Above and bottom left: Hospital workers in Crewe march against NHS cuts.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

## Strike action needed

IT IS becoming increasingly clear to NHS workers that strike action is necessary to defend the service. The last five years of cuts have left Birmingham alone underfunded by £24 million.

In the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 140 beds lie empty; operating theatres are closed once a week; patients, in a process known as 'hot-bedding', are moved into the day-rooms to allow day-cases to use their beds; the

cardiology ward is closed, with patients scattered around wards on different floors, being monitored electronically by nurses in one place!

In the maternity hospital, technicians have been told that if they want new microscopes to replace the obsolete models they are using to screen cervical cancer smears, they must pay for them out of their own pocket—at nearly £2,000!

In the children's hospital, heart operations have been cut from five a week to less than two a fortnight.

These cuts are mirrored throughout Birmingham and the rest of the country. Due to staff and bed shortages, operating theatres are used to only half their capacity. In September 1986, 29,000 urgent cases had been waiting more than a month.

Junior doctors are working up to 100 hours or more a week, with hours over 40 a week paid at a third of the normal rate! And they often work 72 hours at a time with only three or four hours sleep. This has undoubtedly led to mistakes and at least one death.

Ancillary services have also been hit. Privatised catering has led to a huge decline in standards and an equally large rise in prices. In-house tenders—advocated by 'new realist' union leaders—have led to wage reductions and job losses.

To fight all these attacks, it is vital that union links are forged and an NHS joint union committee formed. The Birmingham NHS Defence Campaign, convened by Astms, Nupe and Nalga, has so far talked about petitions and lobbies. But the lesson of the struggle in Coventry is that these methods, and targeting 'vulnerable' Tory MPs and councillors, are not the answer.

Instead there must be a campaign aimed at the labour movement, with speakers at all TU and Labour Party branches and public meetings held, with the ultimate aim of united city-wide action.

By a Birmingham medical student

Massive support can be mobilised around the following programme:

★ Health authorities must reverse cuts, demand the necessary cash from government and, failing that, members unwilling to fight should resign.

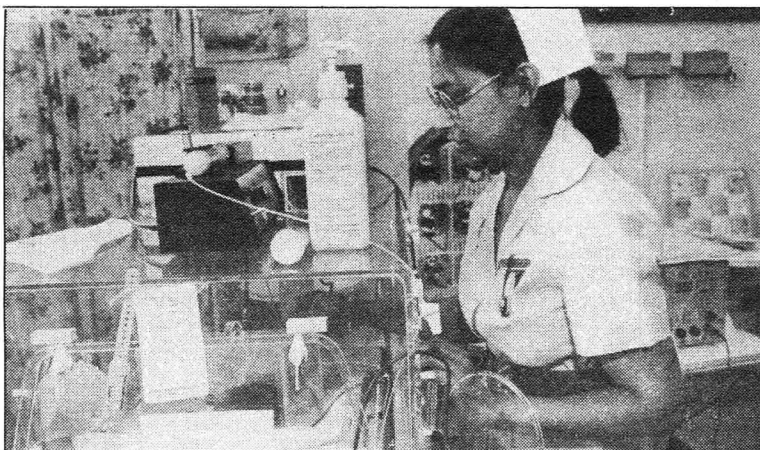
★ Minimum wage of £125 a week for the lowest-paid health worker, linked to a 35-hour week.

★ Proper overtime pay for doctors.

★ Reversal of cuts in social services and housing which have led to an increase in pressure on the NHS.

★ Health authorities to be elected bodies.

★ A campaign by the trade unions and Labour Party to draw all sections of the working class into the struggle to defend the health service.



Baby in intensive care

## How many more will have to die?

"ALL OF Walsgrave Hospital is now under emergency cover. This means that wards are constantly understaffed. The majority of staff on the wards are nurses and pupil nurses.

By a learner nurse and shop steward, Coventry

Early shift is the busiest time. Where there should be eight nurses covering a ward of up to 26 patients, it can be as low as four. On late shift, where five are needed it is often three (it has even been down to two) and on nights it is rarely over three instead of the five needed.

Is this due to a shortage of nurses? The answer is no. In fact of the last group to qualify here none were employed and it looks likely to happen to the next group. This is not because the jobs are not available, but because the money is not there to pay trained staff wages.

If a trained nurse leaves, Coventry Health Authority has a policy of not replacing them (at least not immediately) to see if the ward can manage with one less!

For nurses like myself who are here to learn, under the supervision of trained staff and clinical teachers, no proper training takes place on the wards as there is insufficient staff to provide adequate supervision, let alone

teach.

For learners it is a case of 'sink or swim', where often we have only a few weeks on the wards behind us to look after half a ward alone. This puts learners under great pressure and no wonder so many drop out during training.

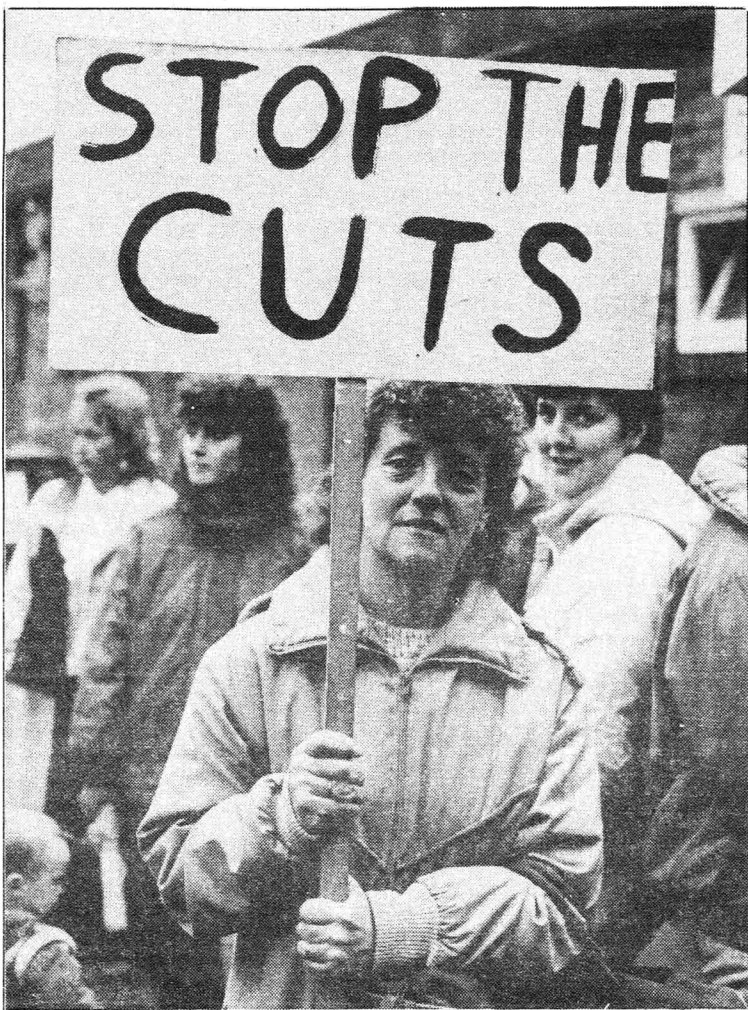
When it comes to studying, the third-year learner group, with only weeks leading up to exams, can't attend revision sessions due to poor staffing. Students should not be there just to prop up staffing levels. They should be there to learn.

### Corners cut

For patients this means that for most of their time, nurses are unable to do their job properly. The effects are there to be seen. Care time on patients is minimal.

Corners are being cut constantly just to get the bare minimum done. Learner nurses are often forced to do things they are not trained for. So at best patients are not getting the care they need. Lives are now at risk due to the low staffing levels, in turn due to the staffing levels.

We have already seen one death in Birmingham as the direct consequence of poor staffing levels. *How many more will die in Thatcher's Britain because the health service is starved of cash and resources?*



# NUS conference

## FE Labour students under attack

LABOUR'S NATIONAL executive (NEC) has attacked both the Labour Party Young Socialists, and the Further Education Labour Students (Fels).

Fels was set up by members of the National Organisation of Labour Students (Nols) and the LPYS to fight for socialist policies in the FE sector. A Fels member, Colette Williams, was elected to the NUS executive at the last NUS conference.

Now the NEC are to 'investigate' Fels and Colette's candidature and said they would send a letter to Nols clubs saying Fels and the small left-group, Socialist Students in Nols, are 'unacceptable' to the NEC.

### Fighting lead

Fels has won support because Nols refuses to organise part-time students and because it gives a fighting lead to FE students. That is why

Colette Williams was elected. There is no reason to investigate her. She didn't even stand against a Nols member!

Nols now depend on the Labour Party officialdom to maintain their position in the student movement. They will continue to lose support unless they put forward some fighting proposals to stop Tory attacks. The NEC should investigate how to build a mass campaigning Nols.



Students demonstrating earlier this year against Tory cuts in education. Photo: Militant

## Baker's education: support for industry

EIGHT YEARS of Tory government have shown that no public service is safe from privatisation. The most recent offering to their big business friends is the education system.

The gift will come wrapped in the form of Kenneth Baker's Education Reform Bill. It will change the face of education in this country. It represents a fundamental attack on the welfare system. Taken to its logical conclusion it will result in education becoming a free support system for industry.

The Tories' attitude to education is revealed in a recent White Paper in which they stated "meeting the needs of the economy must be vigorously pursued". The University Grants Committee and National Advisory Body will be replaced by smaller bodies appointed exclusively by the Secretary of State for Education.

In the past these bodies have been critical of government attacks on education. Their replacements will act only to transmit central government education policy.

The FE colleges will have a majority of places set aside for the MSC and local big business. The same attitude will be applied in running higher education. The next period will see FE colleges turned into cheap labour camps for YTS trainees.

### Major attack

The Bill also represents a major attack on local councils and demonstrates the Tories' wish to destroy any potential centres of opposition. All polytechnics will be taken out of local authority control and run as individual institutions which have to be profitable.

This will lead to further course

and college closures and to vicious attacks on the pay and conditions of campus workers. National pay bargaining agreements will be abolished and campus workers will have to negotiate with individual college authorities.

Never before have the Tories attempted to enact legislation which so directly attacks both students and campus workers. It is this that forms the basis of a fightback. If the Labour leadership of the NUS put forward a strategy linking with the campus/college trade unions with the demand for a 24-hour strike as a first step, this would gain enormous response.

Such a movement could be linked with the struggle of local authority workers to defend jobs and services. Only the mobilisation of the labour movement will succeed in defeating the Tories.

## Pat Wall speaks against racism

AT A recent debate in Parliament Pat Wall MP Bradford North, spoke against the proposed Bill on immigration.

He recalled the debate in October 1986 over the introduction of visas for people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria. "This announcement had led to an increase in the number of Asians and Africans arriving at the major airports, fearful that a visa system would prevent them from visiting friends and family.

Pat Wall encounters the problems of racism every day in his constituency. He will be speaking at the Black Youth Rally at Brixton Town Hall, Saturday 5 December.



### Tension

The gutter press had deliberately made out that there was a massive wave of permanent immigrants to inflame racial tension. These mainly short-term visitors were victims of long delays, appalling overcrowding, rudeness and open racism."

Pat Wall wanted to know why a Bill on this question was being proposed when the number of immigrants to this country is falling. He

explained that half a million more have emigrated than have entered.

He affirmed that the Bangladeshi community would particularly come under attack. "Yet they suffer some of the worst conditions in this country. They have been made homeless in Tower Hamlets and been subject to terrible racial attacks in the Brick lane area."

He also took up the question of people seeking refugee status from Pakistan

and pointed out that the Home Office was putting a great deal of pressure on such people, despite the fact Pakistan is a dictatorship.

"I oppose the Bill...because it is yet another move to divide the people...I stand for the unity of all working people against unemployment, poverty, bad housing and bad schools. In that struggle for unity, we can have no truck with any form of racialism".

## Tory press joins attack on LPYS

MURDOCH'S *SUNDAY Times* has come to the aid of the Labour Party leadership in their assault on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS).

Under the headline "Young Socialists purged by Kinnock" it has printed allegations of violence at the LPYS conference. Allegations which are so unfounded that they were not even raised by the LPYS' political opponents at the next NEC meeting.

Larry Whitty, at the NEC Youth Committee admitted that irrespective of the details the real reason for taking action against LPYS conference was due to the fact that *Militant* has too much influence.

### Conference

Subsequently, at the full NEC meeting on 25 November, no mention of violence was made by Diana Jueda in moving the closure of LPYS conference.

The 'medical evidence', a grossly exaggerated report, claiming to prove there was



a 'vicious bottle attack' comes from a young doctor who attended the LPYS conference along with a group of a dozen right-wing students and youth. They spent the entire conference attempting to provoke an incident which could be exploited to justify action against the LPYS.

It is clear that a minor scuffle has been blown out of all proportion in order to deliberately sling mud at the untarnished reputation of the LPYS, in the hope that some will stick.

If the alleged violence was the reason for the closure of LPYS conference, why hasn't action been taken in cases where violence was actually proved?

Former Labour MP Kilroy-Silk, in his book, takes pride in explaining how at one party conference, he threw another party member through a plate-glass window.

Similarly, Neil Kinnock has bragged about beating someone up in a toilet at a previous party conference—yet no one has suggested closing the party conference.

The NEC's decision to close LPYS conference clearly has nothing to do with the false allegations made in the *Sunday Times* article and everything to do with stepping-up attacks against the socialist aims of the LPYS which the leadership want to bury.

**LPYS  
say**

# Hands off our conference!

## Now build the branches

**THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists (LPYS) National Committee reacted to the NEC's attacks by launching a campaign to build the LPYS's membership.**

The National Committee decided to double the membership by Labour Party conference in October next year. This would mean every branch building a membership of 50.

While the NEC attack us again and again, we are ready to build the ranks of the Party. Already, branches in Brighton, Swansea and Southampton have recruited 50 or more young people.

And branches in Glasgow Pollok LPYS and Edinburgh East are aiming to reach over 100 before the end of the year. This will entitle them to a delegate to Labour Party conference.

At Labour Party conference, the Party's Youth Committee chair, Diana Jeuda, claimed that LPYS branches are "miserably small". LPYS branches now have the opportunity to rise to the challenge and to prove the right wing cynics wrong.

**THE RIGHT-WING National Executive (NEC) of the Labour Party has made its most savage attack yet on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS).**

By 21 votes to 4 it decided to cancel the 1988 LPYS conference. Diane Jeuda, the

new chair of the NEC's youth sub-committee, moved the proposal without even having the decency to give any concrete reasons for this outrage.

The decision to make this proposal had apparently been made at a meeting attended by Jeuda herself, Party general secretary, Larry Whitty, and Joyce Gould; the director of organisation. No one was there to represent the LPYS, not even the full time national secretary, Andy Bevan!

Jeuda claimed that the LPYS was a small organisation but was forced to admit it had a large conference. Now that the age limit has been lowered, at the NEC's orders, a conference like in the past was "no longer appropriate".

"We need to develop regional based work," she said. But only just over a month ago the Party conference voted to abolish the LPYS's regional structures, at the recommendation of the NEC!

LPYS representative, Linda Douglas, told the NEC that no matter what organisa-



**Labour Party Young Socialists**

tional manoeuvres they tried, the Party's youth would still support Marxist ideas.

Dennis Skinner MP said that he was a conference delegate the last time the Young Socialists was shut down. But it didn't make any difference to how the youth thought and they had still re-established the YS eventually.

But the attack was railroaded through. Voting against the proposal were Linda Douglas, Dennis Skinner and Ken Livingstone (Tony Benn was abroad).

The NEC also voted to hamper the LPYS's international links. The right-wing obviously do not want a youth section they cannot control. Other sections of the Party should ask themselves, who next?



Photo: Mick Carroll

Cancelled: LPYS conference

## Two-faced right wingers

**BY TAKING the appalling decision to axe the LPYS conference, the NEC have turned their backs on youth inside and outside the Party. They have abolished the forum which brings together the Party's youth, a forum which gives a real feeling of strength to the 2,000 young people who attend.**

Before the election, Neil Kinnock talked about Labour being unlike Thatcher and the Tories, because it saw young people as "part of the solution, not the problem". What hypocrisy in the light of the blows the NEC have rained down on the LPYS since those words were spoken!

The conference is the second largest annual gathering of Party members. Only the national Party conference is

bigger. Yet some who voted to abolish it talk about building a bigger membership!

The decision is the first and most dangerous step down the undemocratic road of closing all conferences of Party organisations so as

to eliminate dissenting voices within the Party.

This is a cynical manoeuvre. It is designed to stifle the Party's youth and the voice of socialism in the Party.

**PARTY MEMBERS and Young Socialists will be outraged at these attacks.**

**They should rush letters and resolutions of protest to Larry Whitty at 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT, and send copies to the LPYS at the same address.**

## Why I joined up

JOANNE CHESHIRE is at Sunderland and Wearmouth FE college. She is typical of the hundreds of working class youth who have joined the LPYS during the campaign against YTS conscription. Militant spoke to her at the LPYS/Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign Lobby of Parliament on 19 November:

"I'm here because of my younger brothers and sisters, compulsory YTS won't affect me. The Tories say you may get five to six months to get a job, but that's nothing! No one wants a 16 year old.

"I became a socialist because my mum is doing a day-time job of 48 hours for £60 per week. She gets home at 5.0 pm, then she's out again at 6.0 pm to go to work waitressing till 11.0 pm.

"She has to keep the kids fed, and it's nearly killed her. That's why when I heard a YTURC speaker, what he said grabbed me. It doesn't seem fair, her working as hard as she is for so little. It seems to me somebody's got to say you can only push people so far."

Is it for recruiting youth like this to the labour movement that the Labour Party are attacking the LPYS?



YTURC's banner on 19 November Lobby of Parliament

Photo: Dave Sinclair

## Yuppie paper in place of youth paper?

**THE NEC didn't just put the boot in to LPYS conference. It also shut down the official Party youth paper, Socialist Youth, for good. Only Linda Douglas, Ken Livingstone and Dennis Skinner voted against.**

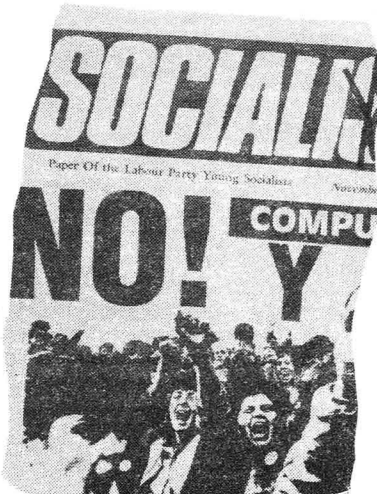
The Party leadership don't want a paper that reflects what working class youth think or do. According to them,

yuppie lifestyles and aspirations are the norm among today's youth.

Then, out of the blue, Jeuda announced that Socialist Youth is to be replaced by a publication by Red Wedge. This would be more relevant to ordinary young people, she

claimed.

Whatever the Party leadership decide to produce, it will be no use to them if it is not read and sold by the young members of the Party. If they bring out a paper which the LPYS are not allowed any say in, it will be doomed to failure.



## United fight in Donny

YOUNG SOCIALISTS in South Yorkshire have played a big role in saving a hospital threatened with closure.

Doncaster Health Authority had planned to close Fullerton Hospital for the Elderly and sell the building. But when 300 hospital workers, Denaby LPYS members and other local people lobbied their meeting they voted against the plan unanimously.

### Sectarian?

The LPYS branch had campaigned hard against the closure in the community. "I think this really answers the lies about the LPYS being sectarian and narrow-minded," says Gary Gabbitas, a member of Denaby LPYS. "The LPYS has united with the local Labour and trade union movement, regardless of the attempts of the bureaucrats to stifle it."

# Benn and the wilderness

TONY BENN'S diaries, *Out of the Wilderness*, differ from most politicians' memoirs in that he has published exactly what he recorded at the time, without revising the entries with the benefit of hindsight to protect his reputation.

This volume covers the period from 1963 to 1967, before Benn had become identified with the left within the Labour Party. Yet he has not flinched from revealing some of the views he had then.

The diaries reveal how his experience in Harold Wilson's 1964-70 government destroyed his illusions that Labour could run the capitalist system more efficiently than the Tories and the capitalists themselves.

Through his battle to renounce his inherited peerage and get back to Parliament, Benn had already seen the reactionary role played by the monarchy and the House of Lords.

## Civil service

Now, as Postmaster General, he began to realise the obstacles before a reforming Labour government in the Civil Service. Their loyalty "is to each other rather than to the government" and he notes "techniques they use for evaluating the standing of ministers and their power to undermine them and influence events."

After he had been replaced at the Post Office by Ted Short, he remarks: "Obviously the office reorganised itself the very day I left... I'm not a bit surprised. This is the price you pay for ministerial changes. Power returns almost immediately to the civil servants and they see to it that projects they don't want advanced don't get advanced."

He also discovered the complicity of some trade union leaders, like Ron Smith of the Union of Post Office Workers, in the preservation of the status quo. At the Post Office, he found that "the Director General has been in the habit of telling Ron Smith confidentially what it is they can have and allowing him to play it his own way."

"That is to say Ron would be told that the maximum would be X per cent and we would then by agreement start at about half that figure and he would press and we would yield, and finally it would

be settled at X per cent which he had known about all along."

When he became Minister of Technology, Benn championed British industry against the conservatism of the civil service establishment. He implemented the government's policy of handing out huge sums to the big monopolies as 'incentives' to invest.

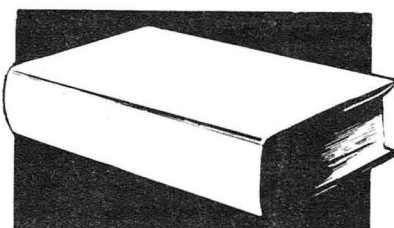
When he defended the sale of Rootes Motors to the US multinational, Chrysler, he admits: "It was very sternly criticised on the Labour side, the Tories not actually attacking it and I was left appearing to be putting forward a Tory scheme."

Just how cynically the government's policy was being exploited by the monopolies is revealed in this entry:

"Because of unemployment in the North East, we were anxious that Swan Hunter should tender for two container ships which were on order, and I had had authority to offer a subsidy for this purpose to Sir John Hunter who hadn't bid for it on the grounds that it wouldn't be profitable. "I called in the directors of Swan Hunter and quick as a flash they realised that we had to give them the money for employment reasons, so they simply stuck out for more. I think originally we offered them half a million... But in the end they went away with a million quid. Absolute bribery."

On economic policy Benn followed every step backwards by the Wilson government. He backed the 1966 public expenditure cuts, writing that "nothing could be worse than to pretend that we could get out of this difficulty without real effort and sacrifice for ordinary people at work."

On foreign policy, he had reservations about Wilson's support for the American intervention in the Vietnam war, but these were never made public, and he went



## BOOK REVIEW



Benn showing Russian prime minister Kosygin around Elliot Automation in 1967.

along with the government's pro-Nato policies, as revealed in the this astonishing entry about a cabinet meeting on Malta:

"Great anxiety was expressed that Dom Mintoff, leader of the Malta Labour Party, might become Prime Minister. Although we were sympathetic to Mintoff politically, because after all he was a member of the Socialist International, the official view was that if he became Prime Minister, it would weaken Malta as a NATO and a British base; and therefore we were told that the cabinet would try to help the government of Borg Olivier to see that Mintoff didn't win."

## Not radical

As the diaries progress, however, glimpses appear of doubts, which foreshadow his later move to the left. In 1965



Benn with Harold Wilson in 1964.

after hearing of student opposition to the government's Vietnam policy, he wrote: "It may well be that when the time comes the Labour Government will have been held to fail not because it was too radical but because it was not radical enough."

A year later his doubts were stronger. "I realise" he wrote, "that I am getting precious close to saying that parliamentary democracy, which is our proudest boast, is not working in the country, but on reflection I find it hard to escape this conclusion."

"The answer, of course, is a really dynamic political party that is elected knowing the difficulties it will face and determined to get control of the Whitehall machine and really use it to carry out fundamental changes."

"I just don't believe that this impetus exists within the Labour Party or within the Labour Cabi-

net, and it may well be that I am in a minority and that it does not exist anywhere, that we are going on floating, governed by civil servants with ministers from the two parties coming in and out by a curious quirk known as the electoral cycle."

Up to 1964, Benn believed that society could be changed from above by a reforming Labour government. By 1967, he has largely lost faith in this, but had no alternative solution. The later diaries, covering the author's attempt to find that alternative, will be of even greater interest than these.

*Out of the Wilderness, Diaries 1963-67.* Hutchinson £14.95 hardback. Obtainable from World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB

## Left and Right

### Party builder

THE LABOUR Party's national executive have appointed Michael Watts, a former personnel manager with Taylor Woodrow, the anti-union, Tory-supporting building company, as the Party's director of personnel, resources and training.

Supporting his application was a reference from TUC general secretary Norman Willis.

But this was too much even for Jack Rogers, right-wing leader of the building workers' union Ucat, who exclaimed: "It sounds to me like jobs for the boys".

### Imperial delusions

"MRS THATCHER ended in full flood with a long statement of her belief in restoring Victorian values" concludes a recent interview with her in the *Financial Times*. But why the reluctance to quote

her actual words? Next day *The Independent* revealed some of the Thatcherite gems they had omitted:

"Listen! The British Empire would never have been built up if we had had a telephone system. Of course it would not. They would get on the telephone and say: 'What do we do?' Of course they could not."

So now we know. Privatisation of British Telecom was just a ruse to make it so inefficient that we will go out and rebuild the British Empire.

### Gunners next?

AFTER OXFORD, Derby and Watford, watch out Arsenal! Millionaire Maxwell has revealed that he dreams of owning them too: "I fell in love with Arsenal when I was a boy in Bratislava. I crept into the ground one afternoon in 1938 and I was overwhelmed. They were a team of gods. They won 5-0."

## Shift those papers

THE MINERS' union's presidential election campaign has created new interest in *Militant*. Sales have increased dramatically in the coalfields. From Littleton colliery in Staffordshire where 25 were sold last week, to a miners' day release course in Sheffield where 15 were sold in five minutes, the story is the same—rank-and-file miners are demanding information and analysis on their industry which only *Militant* can provide.

The best sale in the pits last week was in South Wales—a tremendous total of 40 copies at Blaenau col-

liery. This undoubtedly means that *Militant* will be read by hundreds of miners at that pit. We will continue the high level of information on the mining industry throughout the period of the election campaign. Don't forget to order extra supplies for mining areas.

The unique coverage of the King's Cross disaster has been commented on by many readers. The sales throughout the London Underground improved as a direct result. The strength of the material was that it was written by workers from the emergency services

and the underground themselves.

Last week's back page featured the one-day CPSA strike against the use of YTS in undermining real jobs for youth. Sales took place at picket lines throughout Britain. In Edinburgh sellers tell us they sold 30 copies at the picket line.

Each new reader is also a potential new seller, and by building up a strong sales network we will be cementing strong support for the genuine socialist ideas that *Militant* represents.

By Gerry Lerner

# Why I'm fighting Alton's Bill

DAVID ALTON'S Private Members' Bill goes to Parliament for its second reading on 22 January 1988. Alton aims to reduce the time limit on carrying out abortions from 28 to 18 weeks. The account below of a Militant supporters' experiences shows how it is delays in the system that force many women, at the mercy of hospital consultants, into late abortions.

For me Alton's Bill has re-opened old wounds of bitterness that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

In my case the choice was between bringing another child into the world or maintaining my own sanity. My marriage at that time was on the rocks, I already had a baby boy of 13 months and lived in a large housing estate in Glasgow, where the feelings of hopelessness and despair surrounded me.

After months of gynaecological problems I was referred to the consultant who had handled my antenatal care during my first pregnancy.

On my first visit I discovered I was five to six weeks pregnant. This left me in a state of total shock. The brand of pill I had been using had caused side-effects which I had informed my GP about; headaches, sickness and dizziness. At the time he told me there was nothing to worry about as my hormones would settle down after a period of time—how right he was!

## Nightmare

Once I had recovered from the initial shock and returned to my home and the reality of my life I knew I had no choice other than to have an abortion. The nightmare had begun.

I went to my own GP and told her what had taken place at the hospital with the consultant. I asked her to begin the process for me to have an abortion. She said she would consider my case with another doctor and that I shouldn't worry.

At that moment I was very upset but she was very reassuring and told me to come back in two days when she would let me know her decision.

On my return they told me that in their opinion an abortion was not the right decision for me to make and they would not refer

## From a Glasgow Militant supporter

me back to the hospital, where the abortion would have been considered further by the consultant gynaecologist.

I went back once more to my GP who this time tried to enforce her own morals on me. With reluctance she made an appointment for me with the consultant, but made it clear that this would be a futile exercise. By the time I arrived for my appointment I was eight to nine weeks gone. During all this time my marital problems escalated.

I met the hospital consultant and explained my financial and marital problems and also the mental pressure that I was feeling at the time. He took no notice and said that there was no reason for me to have an abortion, in fact I already had one healthy child, and this one would also be healthy, he even said that having another child might help my marriage.

The consultant referred me to the hospital social worker who was no help whatsoever. I returned home feeling totally suicidal. These doctors and social workers telling me how best to run my life. It all left me in despair.

I resorted to attempts of self abortion which were unsuccessful. Once again I returned to my GP and insisted that she refer me to a different hospital, she said she was unable to. I then phoned the hospital social worker and insisted that I be given another appointment with the consultant.

I returned for my second appointment hoping that this time he would change his mind and approve my abortion. He would not and also refused to refer me to any other hospital.

I phoned several numbers to enquire about a private abortion. I was told this would cost approx. £400 and that I would have

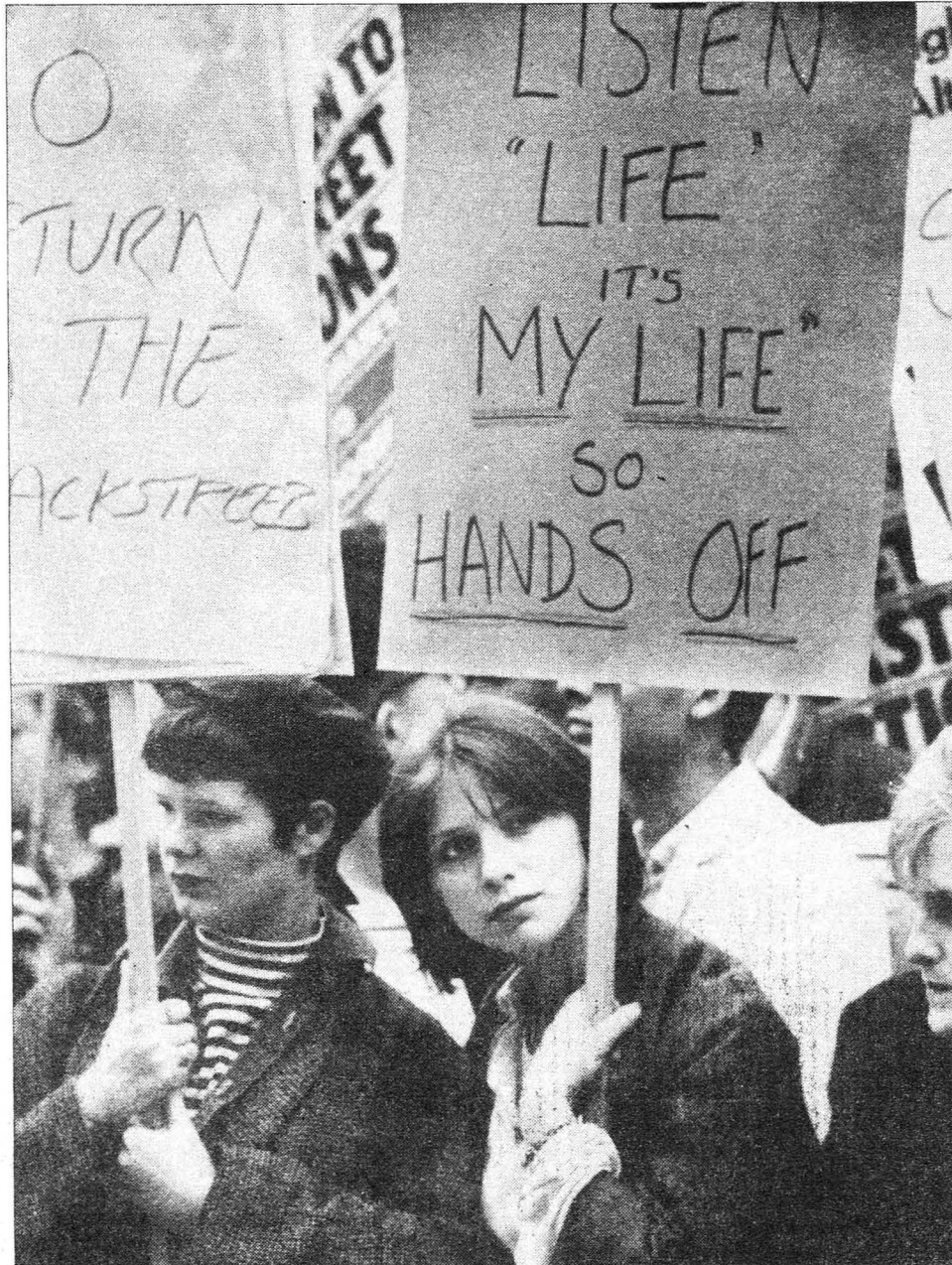


Photo: Dave Sinclair

## Demonstrate Against Alton's Bill

LIVERPOOL Saturday 16 January 11am. Assemble Wavertree Park (junction of Botanic Rd/Pickton Rd). Marching through Alton's constituency of Mossley Hill to St George's Plateau. Rally in Transport House, Islington. Called by Liverpool Labour Women's Council and supported by Liverpool Trades Council, Mossley Hill Constituency Labour Party and others.

LONDON Thursday evening 21 January. Demonstration outside Parliament.



Militant Abortion Rights leaflet available from 3-13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB. £1.50 per 100, cash with order.

Abortion stirs up the emotional and moral opinions of many who grant themselves the right to condemn women for exercising their right to choose not to continue with a pregnancy.

to travel to Liverpool staying overnight. But being a working class woman this solution was out of my reach. I was prepared to sell my furniture but realised that this would not raise the £400 needed.

## Attitude

I returned for the fourth time to my GP, this time insisting on the name of someone who would help. She told me to try the Family Planning as they might refer me to another hospital. I contacted them and was given an appointment two days later.

The difference in attitude was amazing. I was examined and given a hospital

appointment for two days later, but the Family Planning warned me that I might already be too late. This appointment had taken place on the Friday and by the following Thursday I had been admitted to hospital for my abortion.

Unfortunately by this time my pregnancy was too far on for me to be given a simple D&C ('scrape'). I was 12 weeks pregnant and had to be given an induced abortion. I was told that it would be a very painful and long process; but at least my efforts had not been in vain.

In the afternoon I was taken to the theatre. Soon devastating pain racked my body. A nurse examined

me around midnight, it shouldn't be long now. I was given an injection for the pain and I drifted to sleep.

When I awoke the pain was gone. I knew it couldn't be over. As I looked under the canvas at the tube that was carrying the liquid into my womb I realised the tube had become dislodged. I was back where I had started.

## Extreme pain

I went back to the theatre. I was suffering extreme pain and had not been allowed anything to eat or drink for over 24 hours. I was bundled onto the theatre once again and the pro-

cess began again.

Back in the small room the girl in the opposite bed had visitors. I felt as though my insides were going to burst. Even in labour the pain was never like this. I looked at the flowers on the other girl's cabinet, her visitors were crying—she'd just lost her baby! She'd had a miscarriage.

I cried and cried, not for what I had done but because I felt so alone, I had been forced into this solution. The pains worsened throughout the day and night, I was so tired and desperately thirsty. I still hadn't been allowed any water. At about 4am it was over.

# Militant needs cash

THOSE ATTENDING the Militant's Marxist Weekend School recognised the need for sacrifice to build the ideas of Marxism by donating a magnificent £1,135 to the Raise the Roof appeal.

A recent feature in Militant, on the conditions on council estates in Peckham, was followed by a highly successful readers' meeting which raised £624 in cash and pledges.

In the short space of time since the launch of the roof appeal our supporters have rallied behind us. A reader from Kent sent us £25 along with the following message of support;

"As I made several donations to the fund launched to buy the new premises

for the Militant, I had to donate to the repair fund. After all, we can't let a few light breezes disrupt the work of our paper!"

A student from Oxford donated a magnificent £300. Another student, D Blackstock from the west of Scotland sent in £70 from a tax rebate.

Support has also come from trade unionists. Supporters at the recent UCW conference donated £313 before expenses. Ann Munro, a member of BIFU from Edinburgh, gave us £100. Paul Sexton, NCU from Plumstead, sent in £50. J Vasey, EETPU member £25.

Send an appeal sheet round your trade union branch, shop stewards' meeting or college and sell the Raise the Roof raffle

tickets.

We ask every reader to donate as much as they can, as quickly as they can. Round off the year with a Christmas party, like supporters in Southampton who raised £33 in the process.

Special thanks to all our contributors who include; David Sullivan, NUS, £25. M Picklesy, South-East London, £25. Stephen Hoare, Bolsover CLP, £20. Sasha Bowman, Birmingham, £20. J Edwards, CPSA expenses, £17. Lorraine Edwards, Basildon £15. J Gelyny, UCATT, £13.80. Alex Shanks, SCEBTA, £10. Joe Owens, NUM, £10. S Courtnay, IRSF, £10. Penfriend!, £8, and Paul Rowthorn, Leicester FE student £2.

**special appeal**  
**Raise the roof**

**This week**  
**£2,926**

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Southern	797		2260
2 Eastern	517		2020
3 London	1573		3510
4 South East	340		3510
5 West Mids	727		6670
6 Scot West	461		2520
7 Wales	608		5950
8 Scot East	299		1570
9 South West	175		1270
10 Yorks	835		2500
11 Northern	327		2150
12 East Mids	204		3270
13 Man/Lancs	240		5360
14 Merseyside	288		2890
15 National	1020		3790
<b>Total</b>	<b>8413</b>		<b>50000</b>

**50,000 BY THE 5TH JANUARY**



Although the Nicaraguan masses are tiring after eight years of war and economic crisis, they will defend the gains of the revolution.

Photo: Carlos Guarita (Photon).



The work of El Salvador's death squads, who have brutally murdered over 30,000 opponents of the regime.

# Nica

## A turn t

The recent signing of the Arias peace plan in Central America has been heralded as a turning point for the area, particularly for the Nicaraguan revolution.

By Alejandro Rojas

Instigated by President Arias of Costa Rica, it calls for a ceasefire throughout the region and for certain reforms in each country, such as the release of political prisoners and limited democratic concessions. It has been signed by a number of Central American states, in a desperate bid to stabilise the region.

Arias was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the initiative, placing him in the company of such 'successful' peacemakers as Menachim Begin of Israel, Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Henry Kissinger of the USA!

The fate of the peace place has been foreshadowed in El Salvador, where a mere five days after its signing the government forces launched a massive aerial bombardment against FMLN guerrillas. After an eight year civil war and 64,000 deaths (over 30,000 at the hands of right-wing death squads) any attempt at reconciling the two sides will eventually break down.

The same can be said for all the states of Central America. Nevertheless, the Arias plan, together with recent developments in Nicaragua, poses some fundamental questions as to the perspectives for the Sandinista regime and the revolution throughout Central America.

There can be no doubt that recent events have signalled a new turn in the Nicaraguan revolution and the outlook of the Sandinista leaders. If the present course is continued, clear dangers lie ahead which will threaten the main conquests of the revolution.

The overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979 marked a tremendous victory for the workers and peasants of Nicaragua. It resulted in significant gains, and inspired the movement throughout Central and Southern America.

In its early stages the Sandinista regime carried through important reforms. Infant mortality has been cut from 33 per cent to 8 per cent, and over one million people have been vaccinated against polio.

Consumption of corn has risen by 33 per cent, beans by 40 per cent and rice by 30 per cent. In the final years of the Somoza dictatorship a total of 1,000 doctors were visited 200,000 times. Since the revolution 500 doctors have qualified every year and have visited patients 6 million times per year.

Prior to the revolution over 50 per cent were illiterate, and an estimated 75 per cent had never read a book. Illiteracy has now been reduced to under 14 per cent, and 1,200 schools have been constructed.

For all these reasons, the Sandinistas have enjoyed overwhelming support among the population.

These processes have terrified US imperialism, which foresaw the prospect of revolution spreading throughout Central America and the possibility of losing the entire area. With the civil war in El Salvador and movements in Guatemala, Panama and other countries, such fears were not without foundation.

However, this does not mean that the socialist revolution has been carried through in Nicaragua...It has not.

Nicaragua has not seen a repetition of the Russian revolution of 1917 where, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks rooted amongst the industrial workers, the proletariat became the decisive agency for the revolution, drawing behind it the poor peasants and other exploited layers.

The dominant wing of the Sandinistas, however, did not base themselves amongst the working class, but limited themselves to a heroic war by a small guerrilla force.

But more than heroism is required to carry through the socialist revolution.

As Russia demonstrated, the working class is the decisive force

even where it forms a tiny minority of the population. In Nicaragua by the time of the revolution 60 per cent of the population were living in the towns. If a Marxist leadership had developed in the preceding period, the working class could have been prepared to play the classical role that it did in the Russian revolution.

A Marxist tendency, rooting itself in the towns, would have established a base in the countryside. It would have waged war against the landlords and Somoza's National Guard, but as an auxiliary to the movement in the cities.

This was not the path taken by the Sandinista leaders. In July 1979 a spontaneous insurrection broke out in the capital, Managua. Somoza was overthrown and the capitalist state apparatus, in the form of the National Guard, was smashed. In the absence of any alternative, the FSLN (the Sandinistas) found themselves at the head of this movement.

The Sandinistas became the state apparatus. But, unlike the Bolsheviks, they failed to involve the mass of workers in consciously running society.

The Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) were established with mass participation, reflecting the widespread enthusiasm and support for the revolution. But they never took on the form or role of the soviets in revolutionary Russia.

The soviets ('councils') had





# Nicaragua

## to the right?



been made up of elected delegates of workers, peasants and soldiers, all subject to immediate recall by those who elected them. These soviets had within their hands the running, management and overall planning of society.

In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the CDS's became a transmission belt for the implementation of decisions taken by the National Directorate. They had no effective power.

Power was concentrated in the hands of a small group at the top of the FSLN. In 1981 (two years after the revolution) the FSLN still only had 500 members. This was later increased to 5,000 and then 12,000. But membership was and is restricted to the select few, who are then given specialised training for government appointments.

In the economic arena the FSLN have left the capitalist class in control. Even after eight and a half years, 60 per cent of industry is still in private hands, and 70 per cent of agriculture. Half of total production is in private hands. Even in the constitution the rights of private property are "preserved".

This apparently strange contradiction has continued for eight years between a capitalist-controlled economy and a state apparatus along the lines of the deformed workers' state of Cuba.

In Cuba, capitalism was overthrown and a centralised planned economy was introduced, but without workers' democracy (rule by elected organs of the working people). Real power was in the hands of Castro's guerrilla leadership, which rapidly took on the trappings of a one party bureaucratic regime.

In Nicaragua, whilst in outline such a state apparatus was established, capitalism has not been overthrown.

This has left the Sandinistas with the worst of all possible worlds. They are faced with the threat of counter-revolutionary US intervention and the civil war with the right-wing Contra terrorists, as well as economic sabotage by the Nicaraguan capitalists.

Immediately after the overthrow of Somoza, the Sandinistas began chasing the rainbow for a non-existent 'progressive' wing of capitalism. As for the capitalists, they launched into a campaign of economic sabotage on the one side and collaboration with the Contras on the other.

Why have the Sandinistas not carried through the revolution—even in a distorted form, as in Cuba?

In 1984, caught between the pressures of the economic crisis and the masses, Sandinista leader Ortega went to Moscow with the idea of following the same course as Castro. The Russian bureaucracy, however, trampled on any such idea. They had no desire to back any revolutionary movement, especially not on the doorstep of US imperialism.

As Gorbachev recently exp-

lained in his book, *Perestroika*: "We are not going to exploit anti-US attitudes, let alone fuel them, nor do we intend to erode the traditional links between Latin America and the United States."

This is the classical response of the Moscow bureaucracy, which fears and opposes revolution internationally even in a distorted form. In part this is due to the cost of maintaining pro-Soviet regimes such as Cuba; but mainly it is due to the bureaucracy's hopes of maintaining a cosy relationship with imperialism, to prevent instability which could detonate revolutionary explosions internationally, and threaten the regime's grip over the Russian masses.

### The Sandinista leaders have adopted the maxim that the revolution is "a national affair".

Also, Gorbachev is relying on closer economic collaboration with imperialism to stimulate the Soviet economy.

With the deepening of the crisis in the colonial world, despite the opposition of the Moscow bureaucracy, social revolution can and will explode in some countries, taking on a bureaucratically distorted form in the absence of Marxist leadership. As was the case with Cuba, once confronted with such a situation, the Moscow bureaucracy would have to accept it.

What has been the reaction of the Sandinista leaders to the crisis threatening to tear society apart?

The civil war against the US backed Contras has been an enormous drain on resources, but has not seriously threatened their rule. Made up of ex-National Guardsmen and entirely dependent on support from US imperialism, the Contras have become increasingly demoralised and split.

In 1987 one wing of the Contras, the FDN, will see an estimated 4,000 men abandon the war—this out of a total force of some 16,000. Overall three Contras are killed for every Sandinista loss. The fact that they have been incapable of taking and holding even one town is a measure of their ineffectiveness, despite massive US arms supplies.

As the *Financial Times* pointed out, what lies behind the acceptance of the Arias Peace accord and recent policy changes by the Sandinistas "is a cold calculation

which has identified outright economic collapse as the greatest danger facing the eight year old revolution, outweighing the military threat from the contras."

One Sandinista commentator has estimated the economy "wouldn't last another two years".

The total foreign debt now amounts to US\$7.5bn. Exports are running at US\$226m compared with imports of US\$760m per annum. Inflation is running at 2,000 per cent per year.

Since 1979 there has been a threefold drop in export earnings. According to one estimate, even with a peace agreement secured and an end to the war, the economy would require foreign loans of £600m per year just to take it back to 1979 levels.

A pair of shoes costs twice the average monthly salary. There are shortages of everything from coffee to oil. Living standards have fallen dramatically. Ten years ago a Nicaraguan teacher had a real take home pay of £200 per month. Today it is worth an estimated £20.

The Sandinista leadership argue that with 47 per cent of the budget being spent on defence, this situation has arisen because of the war. This is an important factor without any doubt, and one which would have confronted even a government based on a genuine workers' democracy. However, it has been aggravated by the capitalists' sabotage of the economy and the absence of centralised economic planning.

Against this background, the whole programme of the Sandinistas and the future of the revolution is put into question.

To alleviate the situation a democratic plan of production, on the basis of the nationalisation of the key sectors of the economy, is necessary. But even this is only part of the solution.

Economically, no country can isolate itself from the world market, least of all a country as small as Nicaragua. Once in power, with capitalism overthrown, the Nicaraguan working class would moreover find itself confronted with the prospect of direct military intervention by the US.

The only way these problems could be overcome would be through the spread of the workers' revolution, firstly to the rest of Central America, and then through a conscious appeal to the workers of the whole of South America.

On such an internationalist programme the Nicaraguan revolution could become the bridge to the socialist revolution throughout the Americas and internationally.

Unfortunately the Sandinista leaders have adopted their mentor Sandino's maxim that the revolution is "a national affair." Consequently they have made no serious appeal to the workers and peasants of the rest of Latin America to develop the revolution.

US imperialism has currently drawn back from the idea of direct intervention, though without any doubt serious plans for invasion have been made and could be revived in the future.

This change in American thinking has come about for two main reasons.

Initially they held back for fear of the massive movement it would provoke everywhere south of the Rio Grande. But the failure of the Sandinistas to complete the revolution, indeed their willingness to contain it, prompted the serious strategists of US imperialism to question the need for invasion, with all the consequences it would have.

### Peace

The dominant faction of the FSLN has in fact taken a marked step to the right. They have demonstrated a willingness to try and end the war at all costs and come to an agreement. This is what lies behind the recent enthusiasm of the Sandinista leaders for the Arias peace agreement.

Ortega declared that he "would accept dialogue with the US at any level." Arising from this, overtures have been made to the Contras with the offer of an amnesty. The National Commission for Reconciliation, established as a result of the Arias peace plan, is headed by a known reactionary, Bishop Miquel Obando y Bravo.

These moves, together with the re-opening of the daily *La Prensa* and lifting of restrictions on Radio Católica, are all aimed at winning acceptance from at least the more liberal wing of US imperialism, as was Ortega's recent visit to Washington.

In 'unofficial' talks with US Congress Speaker, Jim Wright, he promised that the Sandinistas have no intention of developing the revolution further.

Given all this, and their fear of the political consequences of military invasion, US imperialism could live with such an outcome—especially if the Democrats win next year's Presidential election.

But such an unfolding of events would not end 'neatly' at this point. Revolution is not a static affair. At a certain stage it must either go forward or backward.

The compromise the Sandinistas are trying to reach could, in fact, set in motion the first steps towards a counter-revolution. It might lead to bringing ex-leaders of the Contras and other opposition groupings, such as the Social Christian Party, into government. With the ending of the war, the capitalist state apparatus could be rebuilt around the increasingly powerful professional army.

A similar process was seen in

Portugal after 1975, where the revolution had gone even further than in Nicaragua. But, because the revolution was not completed, the capitalist class, backed by the enormous resources of world imperialism, was able to regain its dominant position.

But all attempts at counter-revolution will be extremely difficult and could falter on a number of important points. The Contras have to be persuaded to accept it, although they have partially split over the deal and are participating in negotiations.

It would probably also result in a split amongst the Sandinistas. Indeed the outlines of such a split are already present. Ortega, who is favouring an agreement with the US, has the upper hand at present. Ramirez, the Vice President, has even agreed to an amnesty to ex-National Guardsmen currently in prison as well as to Contras in the field.

Opponents of these retreats within the regime are grouped around Borge, the only surviving founding member of the Sandinista Front. The real obstacle, however, will be the enthusiasm for the revolution amongst the masses. Although they are tiring after eight years of war and the terrible economic situation, they do not want to endanger their gains.

A counter-revolutionary process would not be straightforward, and could itself provoke new explosions. Even if carried through, however, it would not be the end of the Nicaraguan revolution. It would only give the capitalist class a temporary respite.

For Nicaragua cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the revolution developing throughout Central America and, in particular, South America, with its powerful and militant working class.

The onset of a new slump in the world economy over the next twelve to eighteen months will have devastating effects throughout the colonial world, especially in debt-ridden Latin America. This could give a new impetus to the revolution in Nicaragua, forcing the Sandinistas in a more radical direction, possibly to the point of completing the revolution, albeit from above, in a distorted form.

In any event, the downfall of the US puppet regimes in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama is inevitable in the coming period. This, too, will have big repercussions in Nicaragua.

The lesson which needs to be drawn from the experience of the Nicaraguan revolution is the clear need for the working class to overthrow capitalism and landlordism, with the support of the poor peasants, and fight for a Socialist Federation of Latin American states.

Only such a programme can free Central and South America from the domination of imperialism and capitalism.



## The Yeltsin affair in the USSR

# The limits of glasnost

**UNDER STALIN.** Boris Yeltsin would have been shot in a cellar or left to die in a labour camp. Today, deposed party bosses are merely demoted to obscure positions.

When Yeltsin was sacked, one of his supporters commented bitterly: "He may become a swimming-pool attendant in Sverdlovsk".

Since then he has actually been shifted to the construction ministry. His eventual fate may well be like that of Alexander Dubcek, the ill-fated leader of the reformist wing of the Czech bureaucracy.

Ousted by Russian tanks in 1968, Dubcek survived as a minor forestry official. Ironically, he recently sent a message to Moscow welcoming 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', only a few days before Yeltsin's fall.

The 'Yeltsin affair' reveals the contradictions of Gorbachev's position, in a number of ways:



The manner in which Yeltsin, appointed by Gorbachev in 1985 to head the Moscow party and city administration, was removed shows the limits of 'glasnost', or 'openness', Gorbachev's cosmetic substitute for workers' democracy.

Muscovites learned of the sacking of their city boss from foreign radio stations. Because of the wave of protest, *Pravda* then felt compelled to devote over two pages to justifying his removal.

From its report, however, it is clear that there was little of the 'glasnost' spirit at the Moscow party meeting (11 November) which stripped Yeltsin of his positions. Rather, it revived the language and methods of Stalin's purges.

Gorbachev himself led the attack. Denouncing Yeltsin's "pseudo-revolutionary phrases", Gorbachev accused him of "putting personal ambition before the party." This is not Marxist criticism, but the Stalinist method of blaming personalities.

Others, bureaucrats whose privileges had been threatened by Yeltsin, were even more vicious. Once it was clear that Gorbachev had abandoned him, they rounded on him mercilessly. They accused him of treachery, adventurism, bonapartism, demagoguery, moral bribery, anti-semitism.

The people who destroyed Yeltsin are the jealous guardians of the bureaucratic caste which has usurped the political control of the working class. Their action shows the ruthless tenacity with which they will defend their power and privilege.

Echoing the degrading procedure of the show-trials, Yeltsin himself made a grovelling confession: "One of my most characteristic personal traits, ambition, has manifested itself of late... I am guilty ..."



The way in which Gorbachev abandoned his protégé to his opponents underlines the strict limits of 'perestroika', or 'restructuring'.

Reading between the lines, the real reason for Yeltsin's removal emerges. Facing difficulties, Yeltsin offered Gorbachev his res-

By Lynn Walsh

## Echoing the degrading Moscow trials, Yeltsin made a grovelling confession

ignation during the summer, but the general secretary would not accept it then. However, at the 21 October meeting of the Central Committee, the key forum of the bureaucracy, Yeltsin went too far for Gorbachev.

Proclaiming that the leadership "lacked revolutionary courage", Yeltsin claimed that 'perestroika' had so far "failed to do anything for the people." Accusing some leaders of sabotaging reforms, he pointed the finger at Igor Ligachev, number two in the leadership and spokesman of the hard-line opponents of Gorbachev's policies.

The most vehement criticisms thrown back at Yeltsin, though put in discretely coded terms, related to his attacks on the normal, every-day privileges taken for granted by the top bureaucrats.

The new Moscow boss, fresh from Sverdlovsk, had attacked not just corruption but things like access to special shops, the personal use of chauffeur-driven cars, entry to elite schools for bureaucrats' children, and automatic promotion rights.

But what Gorbachev calls his "revolution without shots" is an attempt to renovate the bureaucracy through reform from above. In a drive to modernise it and make it more efficient, Gorbachev is trying to eliminate corruption, thieving and fraud—the 'excesses' of the bureaucracy. As a conscious representative of the bureaucracy, he has no intention of attacking its roots.

By touching the institutionalised privileges of the ruling caste, Yeltsin began to threaten the very basis of the bureaucracy. By coming out openly against Ligachev and the conservative wing, he posed the danger of a split in the ruling party.

Gorbachev is struggling to change the balance within the leadership, but the party is still for him the instrument through which the bureaucracy maintains its control.



Yeltsin (behind Gorbachev) has been pushed into a back seat under pressure from the right wing of the bureaucracy.

## Some clubs have been reading the works of Leon Trotsky



The obstacles that Yeltsin ran into demonstrate the limited ability of even the most zealous reformer to implement changes from above using bureaucratic methods.

Recently, despite Yeltsin's measures, worse shortages have been reported in Moscow. His supporters blamed this on 'Ligachev's contras'. But some of Yeltsin's own measures, tackling the symptoms of corruption and mismanagement rather than the bureaucratic system, may have contributed to the problems.

"Launching a campaign against corruption in the food trade," reports the *Observer*, "he pushed it so far that too few people are willing to take low-paid sales jobs, and many shops are closing. So, far from the better supplies promised, the queues have grown longer, prices have risen, and conditions are worse."

The corruption is rooted in the shortages, which arise from the mismanagement and waste inherent in the bureaucratic system. The problems are pathological. Suppressing symp-

toms in one direction soon leads to malignant developments elsewhere.



The demonstrations of support for Yeltsin's moves against these bureaucratic privileges, which give just a glimpse of the potentially explosive pressure from below, reveal the danger to the bureaucracy of allowing the reforms to go too far.

When Yeltsin offered to resign in protest at the slow pace of reform, a small group organised a demonstration of support for him in the centre of Moscow. They claimed to have collected 40 signatures for their petition in 20 minutes before the protest was suppressed. There was also protest action by students in Moscow.

The most significant development, however, is the appearance of the so-called 'niformalny'. These are unofficial political groups, which are reported to have mushroomed recently. They support 'perestroika', but clearly reflect a mood from below to move faster and go much further than Gorbachev.

On the Sunday after Yeltsin's dismissal, according to the *Times*, "A group of 40 members of the newly formed niformalny, or informal political groups which have sprung up in support of the reform drive, held a meeting in the hall of a Moscow factory which, according to the Soviet sources present, was broken up by the militia after it had been in progress

for more than an hour...the meeting, at which all but one speaker had voiced support for Mr Yeltsin, consisted of members of three new groups, the Club for Public Initiatives, the Perestroika Club, and the Community Club."

These clubs recall the Petofi Circle, which prepared the way for the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Organised by intellectuals, technical specialists, and students in Budapest, the Circle was named after Sandor Petofi, the poet of Hungary's 1848 revolution. Similar circles sprang up in all the main cities.

The Petofi leaders undoubtedly had the illusion that a radical change in the system could be achieved through replacing corrupt bureaucrats with enlightened, liberal leaders. Some of those supporting Yeltsin no doubt have similar ideas.

But the Petofi Circles provided a platform for criticism of the bureaucracy. Their meetings and rallies crystallised the suppressed mood of opposition among the workers and youth.

When this radicalised and ever-growing movement came into collision with the regime, the Petofi leaders tried to put the brakes on. But those merely calling for an orderly reform of the system had been met with brutal repression. This convinced the working-class youth that only the overthrow of the ruling bureaucracy could provide a way out.

The role of the Petofi Circle was that of a trigger.

## General Strike in Italy

ON 25 November more than 13 million Italian workers, out of a workforce of 18 million, answered the call for a four-hour general strike. 85 per cent of industrial workers participated and 70 per cent in the public sector.

This was the first united general strike in four years, called by the CGIL-CISL-UIL union confederations under pressure from rank-and-file committees.

The massive response to the strike shows that Italian workers are preparing to regain their position in the vanguard of the international working class.

The capitalist media in Britain are virtually ignoring the events. A report from our Italian correspondent will appear in next week's *Militant*.

Out of the protest movement it set in motion, the political revolution took shape. This culminated in the heroic uprising of November 1956, in which the Hungarian workers fought to smash the bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy.

The revolution was crushed by the armed forces sent in by Khrushchev, whose own reforms were heralded as the beginning of a gradual democratisation of the system. And the Russian invasion was directed by none other than Andropov, later Gorbachev's mentor, who set the present phase of reform under way.

The Hungarian revolution remains a nightmare for the bureaucracy, who are far from being unaware of the significance of the unofficial clubs.

Earlier this year, the Komsomol (official youth section of the Communist Party) produced a report on the growing number of clubs. Some, it said, served a valuable purpose and should be brought "within the framework of the Komsomol". But according to the *New York Times*, the report "complained that others read the works of such politically unacceptable thinkers as Leon Trotsky, and that some seemed to be setting themselves up in competition with state organisations."

What clearer evidence could there be of sections of the youth searching for conscious expression of their desire to overthrow the bureaucracy and re-establish workers' democracy?

No doubt Gorbachev, despite the Yeltsin setback, still has some distance to travel. He has sacrificed an over-zealous lieutenant to save his policy, for the time being. But the Yeltsin affair shows the way in which the conditions are being prepared for the political revolution.

# Has Liverpool's right given Union members under attack

THE RIGHT within Liverpool's Labour group are preparing for attacks on the unions.

Ian Scott, the chair of the Further Education committee recently sent a letter telling lecturers and students to scab on a national day of action.

"It is our intention" the letter read "that the Poly should be open as usual. All members of staff should report for duty in the normal way and students should assume lectures and classes will be held..."

The Labour group also intend to remove the guaranteed job for all apprentices, a major gain for the young unemployed under the '47', in a city with 90 per cent youth unemployment in some areas.

Now Alan Dean, chair of industrial relations, wants to end union nomination rights. He's obviously taken lessons from Ford management. Despite assuring the Labour group that they would consult the unions to take up grievances and help ensure more jobs were open to blacks and women, Dean wants talks after decisions have been made.

## No consultation

Dean also proposes withdrawing internal recruitment and promotion. This could be justified, but it would have to be done in co-operation with the unions.

GMB branch 5 asked for a meeting before the Industrial Relations Committee. This branch greatly increased the number of women and black employees through their nomination rights. Shop stewards and victimised union activists such as the sacked Cammell Laird workers were able to get work in this way, which helps the unions stop management 'black-lists'.

Angry GMB members picketed the industrial relations meeting but a Labour group caucus was held in Dean's office. Left councillors were not informed. The full committee also moved to another building. When the left councillors arrived, they were not allowed to put an amendment to defer a decision until after discussions with the unions.

An amendment by Keva Coombes agreed in principle to remove nomination rights but called for discussion before the end of January. The left councillors abstained as they had not been at the caucus.

Talks are now being organised, but what results will they yield if the Labour group insist on decisions first and consultation afterwards?

By Militant reporters

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL faces privatisation laws, cuts in finance leading to a £51 million deficit, a new Housing Bill, and other Tory attacks.

But under new right-wing control, the council is not campaigning against them, relying instead on consensus politics and moderate words, which have failed to stop the Tories.

School meals proposals threaten 7000 children with the loss of free meals; 2000 children stand to lose cash help with

clothing. Yet one council official had the temerity to suggest serving smaller portions. Our school children would be like Oliver Twist, begging for more.

Councillor Jackie Smith told the officers: "This is a disgraceful suggestion. We are fighting to put clothes on the backs and food inside these children."

Unfortunately other sections of the Labour group are in the middle of reorganising committee structures to give

more responsibility to such top officers "rather than politicians in day to day running of services."

In the absence of any campaign, the attention of the councillors is turning to attacks on the unions. The only alternative is to stand by the policies of the 47 and take up a real campaign spear-headed by the labour and trade union movement.

## Union leaders ignore democracy

TRADE UNION members are pleased that Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP) has been reconstituted after two years' suspension by the right wing.

By TGWU and GMBATU members

But the right in both the Party and the unions are trying to manipulate the big union votes to stop the DLP returning to its previous fighting tradition.

Four delegates from the General and Municipal union, GMBATU, have been blocked from membership of Liverpool DLP and its future meetings.

The delegates had to be in at local union offices by 18 November, which they were. But the last right-wing regional committee ruled delegates from Branch 5 out of order, on the basis of an investigation which has been going on nearly two years.

Former convenor and ex GMB member Peter Lennard and other, unknown, individuals used the investigation to slanderously attack members of Branch 5. This investigation is now to be used against the branch.

## No basis

At a meeting in August between convenor Ian Lowes, the branch committee and the regional committee, the branch were led to believe that there was no basis for the investigation to continue. But it is now being used to block delegations to the DLP if delegates were allowed to participate in the constituency parties.

The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) has 56 of the 294 delegates, nearly a fifth. So the stance of the TGWU Broad Left (BL) is vital to the political balance of the DLP.

The BL was set up to increase democratic control over a local and national leadership moving to the right. TGWU members were disturbed to learn that only a selective portion of the BL was convened to discuss



From 1983 to 1987, when 47 Labour councillors were surcharged and barred from office, Liverpool council mobilised local workers and tenants to fight the Tories. The new right wing Labour group seem to want a free hand away from control by a fighting socialist District Labour Party. Photo: Militant

with the union's regional Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP). They agreed to support 3 out of 5 of the right-wing slate.

At a later BL meeting, left officials told us that if 'internecine warfare' was not avoided, the DLP might not be reconstituted. They argued for a 'broad consensus of progressives' avoiding extremes of left and right. This was 'tactics' and 'building bridges'.

But how does it build bridges to exclude four of the 47 surcharged councillors (nominated by the Liverpool Labour Party Broad Left) from the TGWU slate, two of whom are TGWU members and only one of whom is a Militant supporter. How can 'left' leaders recommend a majority of right wingers? Some of the 'progressives' on

the slate include self-acknowledged witch-hunters. Some wear two hats, spitting venom at socialists in their parties and organising right wing caucuses, while seeking backing from the TGWU Broad Left.

## Instructions

Left officials also demanded that BL members accept the decision of the selective group. In a move unprecedented since the right-wing Deakin dictatorship in the union 30 years ago, left officers instructed all 56 TGWU delegates to obey the F&GP without question.

This would give regional bureaucracies, increasingly right wing, a blank cheque to impose decisions. What is the point of having BLs or branch

votes and delegates if, as these comrades argue, "the F&GP is the TGWU's political decision-making body?"

Aided by paid party officials like Kilfoyle, bare faced manipulation may give the right a majority in the DLP for a time. Ironically, the old DLP was closed on the pretext that unions like the TGWU and GMBATU had too much influence. As the TGWU leaders have moved to the right, Kilfoyle permits the TGWU an increased DLP delegation.

Despite this, a fighting TGWU Broad Left will grow. Along with other rank and file trade unionists, they will oppose any retreat from the policies of the 47 and fight any attacks on the unions from the right wing.

# Bermondsey — a travesty of justice

JIM MORTIMER, Labour's former general secretary and a member of Bermondsey Labour Party general committee has attacked a 'secret' report by London Labour Party general secretary, Terry Ashton.

By a Militant reporter

The report threatens to expel 40 members of the Bermondsey party. Jim Mortimer told the general committee: "If a full time party officer makes allegations against party members, those members must have a right to

know what these allegations are and to speak in their own defence.

"It's such elementary justice I would have thought it was not necessary to emphasise it. This is a travesty of justice and must be stopped."

Delegates saw these accusations as a political attack because of Bermondsey Labour Party's stand against cuts in Southwark council's budget, particularly the recent childcare campaign which stopped two nurseries closing.

Southwark council leader, Anne Matthews, at the meeting

to defend the cuts, argued that we had no chance of fighting. She said we had to prove we can run council services more efficiently, in other words shifting the blame to the workforce. Her only answer was rent increases and job losses.

## Protests

One delegate who works for Westminster council said it was like listening to Lady Porter, Westminster's Tory leader.

The meeting passed, with no votes against, a resolution to

launch a defiant campaign demanding the national executive reject the report.

The Rockingham Mother and Toddler group have suggested getting up a petition against the witch-hunt. A delegate from the telecoms union NCU said his branch had already sent a resolution to their political committee.

The party has distributed a newsletter answering the attacks. Petitions are getting a marvellous response and the party plans a massive public meeting and intends to take the campaign to

every household in Bermondsey.

Letters of protest from union branches and other local Labour parties to Labour's national HQ at 150 Walworth Road London SE17, with copies to c/o 91 Mina Road, London SE17 2QS.

**Militant Public Meeting.**  
Walworth Town Hall,  
Tuesday 8 December  
7.30pm. Speaker Felicity  
Dowling. Creche available.

# Child abuse—the root causes

*Militant* readers from Brighton discussed the feature on child abuse in issue 873:

Margaret Crear should be congratulated for tackling such a subject and attempting to provide a socialist analysis. To our knowledge no other section of the movement has done so.

However, we believe there is a world of difference between a slap and the terrible systematic beatings many children face. We have to recognise the reasons for this but call people like this by their right names 'psychopaths'.

I WOULD not use the word 'psychopath' to describe abusers. It gives the impression that abusers are just flawed individuals. It may be that some mental, biological or chemical flaw exists which contributes to people becoming abusers, although I doubt it.

What we know as Marxists is that much of human behaviour is conditioned by the material conditions of society including the ideology. It may be that when we have dealt with the material conditions something further will remain, but it is difficult to anticipate this until we have stripped away the other factors.

Your use of the term 'psychopath' contradicts the whole point of the article which is that we live in a society where abuse and coercive relationships are not abnormal but built into its very structure. It's nonsense therefore to talk about solving the problem of abuse without a root and branch transformation of society.

In capitalist society children are

portrayed as being helpless victims and objects for pity whilst very little is practically done to help them. Although some young people survive, as the articles on the centre page show, others become abusers or adopt 'criminal' behaviour of some sort.

*Incest Crisis Link* published a report which showed that 90 per cent of rapists, 40 per cent of alcoholics and drug addicts and 75 per cent of prostitutes were abused children. So we have a society which pours pity on the child victims, fails to help them then condemns them when they become abusers. This allows capitalism to appear sympathetic to the victim whilst continuing the idea that crime or anti-social behaviour is an individual matter, rather than a product of its system.

You refer to 'brutal parents', but why are they brutal? Were they born that way, what social and other circumstances led to brutalising them and what do we propose doing about it? This is not to 'excuse' their actions,

These points could have been made in the article.

The other part we were unhappy with was "sexual abuse of children is not an act done for sexual satisfaction. It is similar to rape which although it takes a sexual form is an act of violence, an expression of the domination of one person over another". We feel this should not have been put forward in such a categorical way. From the limited knowledge we have at our disposal, we understand that there is disagreement among psychologists etc about this, so it is wrong to make such a definite statement.

but to explain them.

Sexual or general physical abuse is first and foremost an act of coercion and violence. An expression of the belief that someone else is in your power and you can do as you like with them.

It is a very complex issue, the main thing is to reveal the hypocrisy of the Tories who are providing conditions under which abuse will increase and be more difficult to deal with.

We also have to counteract the Tories' propaganda in praise of the 'traditional family' with father in charge, which is the most dangerous place for many women and children. At the same time we have to distinguish between the family as a social institution of capitalism and personal relationships which we believe could be more harmonious and supportive if the material and social relations of capitalism were eliminated.

*Yours fraternally, Margaret Crear.*



## Debate and action

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to say what an excellent edition of the paper issue 873 was for health service workers, covering local disputes in

the health service which we would not have known about from reading the so called 'popular press'.

The centre spread article on child abuse was particularly informative and went down well with many nursing colleagues. I sold 10 copies of the paper in my workplace and I am sure the first time buyers will be encouraged to buy a subsequent copy.

It has also encouraged some of my branch of NUPE to write an article on what's happening in our workplace as we were so encouraged to know we are not struggling on our own.

I would ask other health service workers to write in to the *Militant* and let us all know what is happening in your hospital.

**Lyn Martin, Chair NUPE Stafford District Hospitals (personal capacity).**

Dear Comrades,

On opening the centre pages of issue 873 the response of some people may have been one of doubt as to whether the sensitive issue of child physical and sexual abuse should be tackled in the *Militant*.

After reading the article I don't think anyone could possibly doubt the correctness in doing so. The response of the national press and media to cases of child abuse is to attack the family, social workers etc without ever analysing the motives or possible causes of abuse.

It is disappointing and shameful that the issue of child abuse has not been more widely taken up inside the labour movement. It is to the discredit of the Labour Party that it has not come out with a clear statement on the issue. Stuart Bell's attacks on both social workers and doctors involved in the Cleveland case were disgraceful.

The *Militant* is the first paper to deal with child abuse in a socialist context, it was absolutely right to do so and it is to be hoped that the article will stimulate debate and action in the labour movement as a whole.

**Dave Pollock, Scarborough.**

## More than an 'inconvenience'

Dear Comrades,

I was horrified to read David Bayne's letter (*Militant* 873) which condemned any woman who has, since 1967 'abused' the Abortion Act in order to alleviate the 'inconvenience' of pregnancy.

Mr Bayne does not mention that no method of birth control is 100 per cent reliable, and is mistaken in thinking that since 1967 abortion has been available on demand.

He ignores the medical, psychological and financial strain many women are under, and the consequences of pregnancy for these women and their families. Many working

class women cannot afford a large family and for whatever reason, it should be the woman's right to choose.

Alton's Bill, if successful, will not, as Mr Bayne hopes, reduce and eventually end abortion, but will instead criminalise women and seriously endanger their health, as backstreet abortions will again prevail.

I would suggest that Mr Bayne re-read Ann Bannister's excellent article (870). After all, like Alton and other men, Mr Bayne will never need an abortion.

**MJ Wattret, Liverpool.**

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## US economy bites the dust

Dear Comrades,

Reagan is planning \$30 billion cuts this year and \$45 billion next year, so whoever wins the 1988 elections will have to take the blame. They are selling \$5 billion worth of state assets right away because the ruling group don't have the guts to attack the defence industries' or the big corporations' profits.

On top of all this and the big \$8 billion

tax increase, the \$30 billion savings won't happen anyway. That's because the GNP growth figure of three per cent is being used to estimate revenues, but now with the slump coming one per cent is a more likely figure and all these budget deficit figures will go down the tubes. It's ordinary workers who'll suffer then.

**Wendy Olsen, Oxford.**

## Safety last

Dear Comrades,

The NUM national executive has instructed all areas to operate a limited overtime ban, allowing maintenance work and numerous other jobs which do not involve coal cutting to be done in overtime.

As an NUM member, I find this softly, softly approach a pathetic tactic to use to fight against the introduction of British

Coal's new disciplinary code.

British Coal have introduced this new code to get rid of militant union activists, so they can pave the way for privatisation, flexible working and more pit closures with as little opposition as possible.

In my opinion, if the best form of opposition the NUM can offer is an overtime ban that is having virtually no effect and has the membership totally confused as to what they can

can't do in overtime, the Tory-backed British Coal bosses are going to achieve all their aims.

If the bosses get their way, miners will be working in the same conditions as miners do in South Africa, where profit for the rich capitalist owners is more important than the lives of the workers who make them rich.

**Joseph Brown, Clipstone NUM, Notts.**

## 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.

□ **Inqaba** T-shirts for sale £5.25 each inc postage. Logo black clenched fist "smash apartheid and capitalism". Available in white or lemon large or XL. All surplus to Campaign for a Socialist South Africa. Cheques/cash with orders to W. Blackstock, Flat 23, 425 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow.

□ **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.

□ **Tapes** £1.50 each plus 30p p&p available from Tony Wedlake, 13 Cae Brackla, Brackla, Bridgend. *Unfolding Revolution in Latin America*—Phil Frampton. *Perspectives for the South African Revolution*—Richard Monroe. *World Economy Heads for Slump*—Ted Grant. *Lessons of General Election, which way for Labour?*—Ted Grant.

□ **"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.

□ **Christmas cards.** 25p each 5 for £1 "A worker needs Thatcher, like a turkey needs Christmas—Have a nice one". Order from: Tony Wedlake, 13 Cae Brackla, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan. 0656 652289.

□ **Unemployed** Wigan socialist seeks shared accommodation in London area for one month. Please ring 0942 58042.

□ **London LPYS** Christmas Social. 11 December 10pm to 3am. St Matthew's Meeting Place under St Matthew's Church, Brixton Hill. Near Brixton tube.

### Militant meetings

○ **Burnley** Wednesday 16 December 7.30pm. The Swan Inn, St James' St. Speaker: Lynn Walsh "The world economic crash".

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

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By Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn.

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## Militant mood in car industry

### Ford Southampton

# Why the night shift walked out

THE ENTIRE night shift at Ford's Southampton plant walked out on 25 November. The 1200 workers, members of the TGWU, were enraged that management were trying to overcome problems created by the overtime ban we've been operating in support of our claim.

By a Ford Southampton TGWU shop steward

During the night, extra labour had been put into areas where there were bottlenecks. The workers concerned downed tools, met their shop stewards and marched through every building in the plant. Everyone stopped work and marched out with them, to much cheering and clapping.

I've never seen anything like it since I've been at the plant; the mood was amazing.

The night before, management

had told the trade union committee that they wanted to lay off certain production areas on 25 November. This, they claimed, was because of stock shortage, created by stoppages at the Dagenham plant.

We knew this was a lie, there was in fact plenty of stock. The real reason for the lay-offs was the bottleneck created by our own successful overtime ban. After meetings all over the plant, we decided to walk out if any group of workers was laid off.

The following night, the conveyor reported to a mass meeting that because we had stood together, management had with-

drawn the lay-off threat. That is when they decided to get round the effects of the ban by other means.

We remember what management have been saying to us for years now—"Co-operate with us on productivity, flexibility and mobility and you'll be rewarded for your hard work."

Make no mistake, working on production lines is hard work, and getting harder. Production targets increase as labour decreases. Traditionally moderate plants like Southampton have become militant and will stay that way until our demands have been met in full.



Ford workers' wives support striking husbands in 1978 strike.

# Lost ground reclaimed

IN THE past month, car workers have been involved in strikes on a scale not seen in the industry for a decade.

By Ian Parker

As the report from Southampton shows, the quiescent mood has gone, sending shivers of panic through the boardrooms of every major car manufacturer.

Already the media are trying to whip up anti-car worker propaganda, referring to the "bad old days" of wildcat strikes of the early 70s. The *Sunday Telegraph* ran an article on 22 November, with the headline "Car firms face return of wildcats".

Although many of the strikes have been 'unofficial', they are a sign of an increasingly militant mood amongst car workers, who are determined to secure better wages and working conditions.

What is the background to this rise in militant activity?

Recently the United Auto Workers union in the USA struck a deal with Fords. It is very similar in content to that proposed by Ford UK and Vauxhall; a three year deal with a small increase on the basic wage for the first year and an index-linked rise for the following two years.

The British arm of Fords want to go further with the introduction of 'quality circles', with team leaders in place of foremen, maintenance workers on the track and the taking on of temporary workers as and when production requires. (See *Militant* 27 November)

The strikes have answered the pessimists in the industry and in the labour movement generally, who said that workers were no longer prepared to fight.

Car workers now want to reclaim some of the ground lost in the last few years. Vauxhall workers' victory over bonus payment gives a glimpse of that determination to win back what they have lost. One worker from Luton said: "This is just the beginning, but if we can do it once, we can do it again."

If anything, this mood is surpassed in Ford, which is probably the world's most profitable com-



Ford workers on the picket line.

Photo: Militant

pany. The £1,100 million profit for Ford UK since 1978 has obviously helped raise the confidence and determination of Ford workers.

After a two year wage deal that did little to add to their pay packets but only eroded working conditions, workers are angry at the prospect of a new three year deal that will benefit nobody but the Ford bosses.

Throughout the industry, the absolute necessity from the bosses' viewpoint to cut costs to a minimum, improve the quality of the product and make enough profit to research and develop new models, has meant a move to speed-ups of production lines and 'quality circles'.

At Ford's Halewood plant, for instance, production has been increased from 850 cars per day to 1200 cars. In Longbridge, a proposed six second speed-up of the

track in CAB2 would mean an increase from 26.5 cars per hour to 27.8. These extra 1.3 cars would be produced with no increase in staff; in fact in certain areas, it will mean four workers doing the work of five.

The motor industry is of vital importance to every modern industrial economy. Britain is no exception.

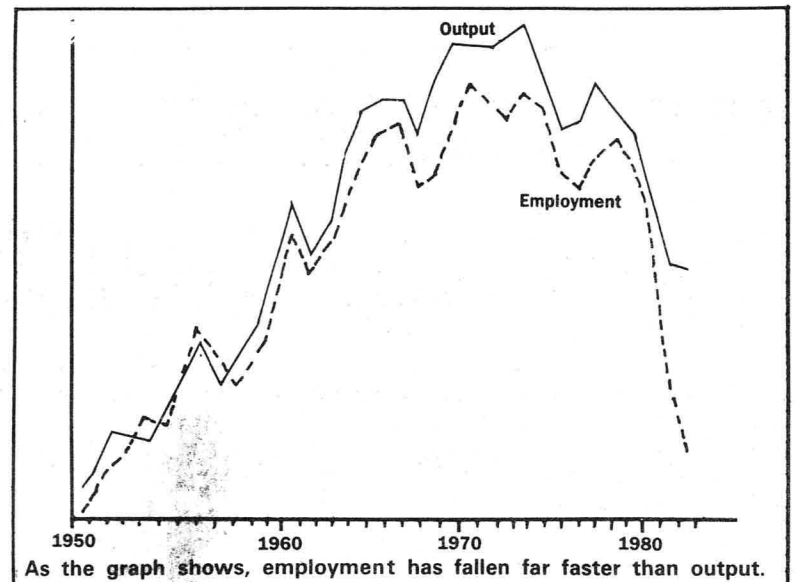
There are around 1,635,000 people involved in the motor and component industry. With 177,000 in actual vehicle manufacture, for every one car worker, eight more jobs are created. So the stock market crash and the ensuing slump has widespread implications for the whole car and component industry.

The *Financial Times* of 28 October quoted a Mr Garyl Rhys, a professor of motor vehicle economics: "UK demand for new cars would be significantly weaker

## Militant says

- ☆ No 'quality circles'.
- ☆ No to pension funds being used for re-investment.
- ☆ No to speed-ups.
- ☆ New technology to be used to shorten the working week.
- ☆ For a 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- ☆ Re-nationalisation of Unipart, Freight Rover and Jaguar; nationalisation of Ford and Vauxhall, and their integration with Austin Rover into a car industry under workers' control and management.

STOP PRESS: Skilled maintenance workers at the Southampton plant, members of the AEU and the EETPU, are taking 24-hour strike action.



next year because of the world stock market turmoil." He went on: "before share prices collapsed, the universities' forecasting team had expected domestic car registration to reach a record level of more than two million next year. Now it was forecasting 1.75 million and the figure could go below that."

He said that if there were a 1929 style world slump following the stock market upheavals there would be a bloodletting among world vehicle makers. The European car industry already suffers from over-capacity, estimated at around 2.5 million cars last year.

The forecast drop in new registrations could account for the equivalent of two-thirds of Rover group production for the year! Jaguar orders have already suffered. The American market is now likely to contract enormously; already surveys suggest that one in three US citizens are considering putting off the purchase of a new car or other

consumer durables.

Every car manufacturer without exception will face a tougher year than expected. With total employment in the motor industry in Britain having fallen by 43 per cent between 1979 and 1985, every manufacturer will be jostling for pole position for sales in 1988.

Car workers will bear the brunt in further job losses and possibly closures. Even if Ford, Vauxhall and Rover maintained their present share of the UK market, (around 45 per cent) it would be on the basis of fewer cars. The 45 per cent share would be out of a total of 1.75 million instead of two million.

The offensive by car workers at present will in turn, because of the deep industrial recession that is on the way, lead to further resistance. Then it will be in response to lay offs, redundancies etc.

Car workers are under no illusions of what they are facing in the next few years.

# UCW claim – all-out strike now

Continued from back page.

Office. The leadership must prepare for this now.

We must have mass meetings in all workplaces to explain our case. We need regional rallies with a big campaign for a maximum turnout. Strike committees must be set up in all areas now to begin to organise the strike.

We must publicise our justified case through the Trades Councils, Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialist branches, to answer the lies in the press and build active support.

As with the firefighters, who

were on strike through Christmas 1977, we will gain great sympathy for our struggle for the first cut in hours for 22 years.

Unfortunately, the UCW leadership, trying to appear 'moderate', have infuriated members with their circular which says:

"No branch will under any circumstances take a decision to initiate strike action. This instruction covers the following; instruction from supervisors to handle work, a) not proper to the office b) not normally performed by the members".

The circular also says members shouldn't strike if called upon to

attend at different times or different places or perform road runs instead of mail transfers.

Worst of all, they call for no action if union members are asked "to enter a building where an official GS strike is taking place" or "if ... a member is suspended in an office where a strike is not taking place" or "if temporary or casual employees are brought in to do postmen's, PHG or driver work."

This is a disgraceful letter, against all union principles. It must be withdrawn. It would allow work to be transferred from offices on strike to others where

members could clear the backlog on overtime. It encourages crossing picket lines. This can only serve to spread disaffection internally and threaten divisions between members.

The ballot result and numerous disputes show how angry our members are. The union must show its confidence in us by organising now for all-out strike.

The central lesson of the 1971 strike was the failure of our leaders to prepare. We must urgently take the following steps:

★ Campaign of information through all sections of the

union.

★ Strike committees to be set up now to co-ordinate disputes in the areas.

★ Mass meetings and regional rallies now.

★ Hardship funds, and family support groups to be set up now.

★ Organise publicity for support throughout the labour movement.

★ For the full claim with no strings.

★ All out strike now!

By a UCW member

## ROF: fight this deal

FOLLOWING THEIR decision to close the Royal Ordnance (ROF) Small Arms Factory (see *Militant* issue 869) in Enfield, the management are now attempting to get the workforce to accept Victorian conditions for the last year of the factory's existence. Not content with throwing over a thousand workers on the dole, they also want them to accept total flexibility of working practices, a self-policing no-strike agreement and complete acquiescence to closure.

Unfortunately, some local union officials and incredibly, national union officers, including Jack Dromey (TGWU and secretary of the joint national industrial committee) are willing to accept these conditions and only dispute the extra £750 severance money.

A mass meeting of the workforce was held to discuss the situation on 24 November. Brother Dromey opened the meeting by stating that a number of mistakes had been made during negotiations on the deal due to the unreasonable stance of the site director. But then he went on to recommend broad acceptance of the conditions demanded by management. When a number of workers called for opposition to this agreement and for action to be taken, Brother Dromey again shamefully accused "certain individuals" of "causing disunity by publishing leaflets and writing to obscure journals".

### Dangerous

Nevertheless, under pressure from the workforce he said that he would only ask for a mandate to continue negotiations—getting further assurances on closure conditions and raising the severance money.

It is somewhat ironic that Brother Dromey should be recommending acceptance of conditions very similar to those recently rejected by engineering unions in the proposed Confed deal on the shorter working week.

This holds dangerous implications for every other ROF site. If management can get away with implementing such conditions at a



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Workers leaving the Royal Ordnance factory mass meeting.

factory that is closing then they will try it on elsewhere.

Since this meeting the site director has treated any attempt to negotiate further with contempt.

Once again, this has demonstrated that so-called 'moderation'—selling basic conditions, and rights—far from winning concessions, simply encourages the employers to demand more and

more. It is clear now that industrial action, beginning with a work-to-rule, overtime ban and total non-cooperation with the closure, and building support from workers in other ROF sites, is the only way to get management to listen to the demands of the workforce.

*Militant* reporters spoke to ROF workers following the mass meeting.

## Redbrook Woolley

THE CAMPAIGN to stop the closure of Redbrook and Woolley pits in Barnsley is now reaching a crucial stage. The pit's case was heard at the regional review panel on 27 November and a decision is expected soon.

A large rally has been organised by the Community Action Group and the LPYS to reach the entire town. Arthur Scargill has agreed to speak at the rally, at Arcadian Hall, Market Street, Barnsley, on Wednesday 9 December at 7.30pm.

Eric Richardson, President of Redbrook pit explained the background to their case.

"The Board's proposals to close these pits are on economic grounds yet when the plans for Redbrook pit were made we were told it had a future. They've only just driven 1,500 driveages into a large area of coal. Now they are abandoning these plans.

"On opening the West Side washing complex, we were told as a union that the biggest advantage of such a plant was that they could blend coal to a wider scope of the market. Now they tell us they can't wash coal to the quality required for power stations and we can't blend coal to the requirements of British Steel's sulphur content.

"What we are saying is that British Coal's statements are so faulty that it becomes an indictment of their planning for our pits. What lies behind this closure programme is an attempt to take us out of capacity for production and so allow Selby to come onto stream. The paint is hardly dry at Redbrook. The new complex cost £30 million. It is clear the Board are paving the way for privatisation in line with the CEBG. We are very confident of our case and that we can keep our pit open.

"We are asking from other pits and industries that they support our campaign against closure. We believe that if the Board are allowed to get away with the closure of these two collieries, it will lead to closures in other areas within Barnsley on a vast scale. We are asking small workshops that supply our mines and small shops and businesses that our members use every day to support the campaign. Our whole town centre economy has been built on coal and will be devastated by any further pit closures."

## Solidarity with French miners

LAURENCE KNIGHT and Kevin Garrity, president and vice-president of Kent Area NUM, went to Calais on 11 November on behalf of the miners' union nationally. They carried a letter of support from NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield for the miners of Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield.

These miners, many of them Moroccans, have been on strike since the beginning of October. Before sailing, Laurence told *Militant*: "We'll be meeting Daniel Deroncourt who represents the French miners. Kent miners will be sending a donation of £500.

"Our intention is to build international solidarity through organisations like the French union federation, the CGT and the international miners' organisation to defend workers' rights internationally, whether in Europe or the third world."



## Marine colliery

MINERS AT Marine Colliery in South Wales have been threatened with the sack for taking industrial action. After the vice-chairman of the NUM lodge was sacked by the manager for allegedly making hoax phone calls to the pit and to the emergency services, the overwhelming majority of the men at the pit, believing his innocence, went on strike from 13 to 16 November this year. Miners at Six Bells also took industrial action, against what they saw as victimisation.

### Threatening

The feeling was that this action was taken against him on very flimsy evidence. Now the workers who were involved in the strike have each received the following threatening letter from the colliery manager.

"Dear....(name of miner),

It is noted that you took part in industrial action at Marine colliery over the period 13 November to 16 November 1987. In doing so you were in breach of your contract of employment. This letter is to inform you that this has been recorded by colliery management, and to warn you formally that, if you take part in any further industrial action it may lead to serious disciplinary measures being taken against you, or to employment with British Coal being terminated.

"Please note the warning that you have been given in this letter about participation in any future industrial action. No further warning may be given to you. Any further industrial action of this kind, on your part, will entitle British Coal to terminate your contract of employment.

Yours Sincerely,  
KB Pearce, Colliery manager."

By a Militant reporter



**Conference '88**  
**Sheffield City Hall**  
**Sat 13 February**

All trade union bodies (branches, workplaces, district committees, divisional councils etc.) can send up to five delegates. The fee per delegate is £3. For an application form and details of local transport to the conference, write to Broad Left Organising Committee, PO Box 464, London E5 8PT.

## CPSA Pay conference

# A strategy to win our claim

SINCE 1979 the Tories have deliberately set out to reduce civil service wage levels. Now they want to abolish national pay bargaining. Against this background, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) pay conference takes on a special significance. Delegates will want a claim that will lead to a decent living wage, but we also need a strategy which ensures we can successfully fight off the threats posed by Local Pay Additions (LPA's) and merit pay.

Under the Tories the value of our wages has fallen by £25 per week in comparison with workers in similar jobs outside. Yet the Tories' friends in high places have done rather well for themselves. Alongside falling wages we've had rising taxes. However, the richest ten per cent of the population have had their taxes cut by a staggering £3,465 million. In addition, VAT has almost doubled and we face the introduction of Poll Tax which will make 50 per cent of the population worse off according to newspaper reports.

If increased taxation wasn't bad enough, prescription charges have increased 1000 per cent, child benefit has been frozen and new health charges are being introduced.

It's time to end the Tories' one-sided war on the worse off. £83 per week take home isn't good enough. Only *motion 1* contains the elements which would lead to the abolition of poverty wages. It's not a question of "re-hashing the same old slogans" as Broad Left 84 claim. It's a question of solving the same old problems. *Support motion 1.*

## Strategy

The debate on strategy cannot be separated from the lessons of the 1987 campaign. Broad Left 84 argued that the break up of the joint campaign with the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) was the major factor why members voted against all-out action. Therefore, they reason, unity must be the "prime concern", whilst seeking support for CPSA's "preferred tactics".

*Militant* supporters argue that the decision of the SCPS leadership to pull out of the campaign was a serious blow, but the major factors behind the vote against all-out action were the continued programme of selective action and the lack of preparation by the right wing for an all-out

By Larry O'Callaghan,  
CPSA, Home Office London  
branch, personal capacity.

strike.

Broad Left 84's motion is dishonest. By leaving CPSA's "preferred tactics" undefined, the national executive would be left in the hands of the other unions. In reality, Broad Left 84 are calling for support for the discredited strategy of the SCPS leadership of long-term selective action. Only *motion 87* offers an honest way forward. We recognise that many members still have illusions that there is some alternative to all-out action. However, the true test of leadership is to dispel those illusions, not feed them.

*Motion 87* instructs the national executive to enter into negotiations with the Treasury. But while we are prepared to talk, we must also show we are prepared to fight. We must build the mood for action with a limited period of selective and national action. This must be supported by a full-scale campaign which explains to members how they can survive the hardships of all-out action and build confidence in the strength of the union to achieve an acceptable settlement. *Support motion 87.*

Of equal importance tactically is the question of emergency payments with all-out action. Broad Left 84 and, regrettably, some sections of the left, argue that emergency payments would "undermine the effectiveness of our action". However, this view looks at the matter solely in CPSA terms and ignores the wider context. The experience of all-out action, even on a limited basis, during the 1987 campaign, exposed the limitations of CPSA's current position. The media coverage in Scotland gave members a taste of what could be expected during an all-out strike.

The Tories would use pictures of starving claimants to under-

mine support for our dispute among fellow trade unionists, the unemployed, and even our own members. In such circumstances it would be difficult to raise finance and members on picket lines could be subject to attack.

If the effectiveness of the picket lines was undermined, the dispute would be prolonged.

Trade unionists engaged in strike action have a responsibility to their class. Our fight is with the Tories, not claimants and pensioners. In setting up emergency payment centres, under CPSA control, we will build the effectiveness of our action and ensure the anger of claimants, trade unionists and our members is turned against the Tories, not us. *Oppose motion 179. Support motion 183.*

## Trade unionists engaged in strike action have a responsibility to their class. Our fight is with the Tories, not claimants and pensioners

The Tories' plans for the civil service show we have no alternative but to fight. LPA's are the first step on the road to flexible pay.

Broad Left 84 and the 'moderates' attempt to sow the illusion that all our problems can be solved through negotiations—if the national executive has the will. Like the right wing, Broad Left 84's leaders have forgotten that advances are only possible through negotiations from a position of strength. Unlike the leaders of Broad Left 84, who in reality have given up all hope, we have every confidence that members will respond to the claim and strategy outlined in *motions 1, 87 and 183.*

If these are supported, the task will be to build the mood for action, to build the confidence of the members and so to ensure we'll be successful in 1988.



CPSA members taking part in one day strike over YTS.

## Civil servants take action on YTS

THOUSANDS OF civil servants in the Department of Employment (DE), members of the Civil and Public Services Association, took a day's strike action on 27 November against the introduction of YTS on management's terms.

By Tom Taylor, branch secretary, CPSA DE, London North, personal capacity.

This action caused severe disruption to the services run by DE members. Thousands of workplaces were affected, showing the strength of feeling on this issue.

Members in a number of DHSS offices also took unofficial action in solidarity. CPSA members recognise the dangers YTS poses to jobs, wages and working conditions. Whilst the union is not against youth training in principle, we must ensure we obtain the following safeguards before allowing YTS into the civil service:

- ★ No use of trainees to hide staff shortages or to do the jobs of permanent staff.
- ★ A guaranteed job for every trainee on completing their training.
- ★ Union rates of pay.
- ★ Extra staff to ensure trainees are properly trained and supervised.

In London, a delegation of strikers put these demands to Headquarters management, but it became clear during the meeting that they feel their role is to carry out the government's bidding. On this basis it would appear there is

little prospect of any serious negotiation taking place around our demands.

This confirms the analysis of *Militant* supporters that there is a direct link between the introduction of YTS in the civil service and the government's plans to make it compulsory for every school leaver. It's been estimated that 63,000 places are needed in the civil service and the NHS to realise Tory plans.

The support for the one day strike was a confirmation of the correctness of the strategy of the national executive. Although a magnificent start to the campaign, we must now prepare to escalate the dispute, should this prove necessary.

This means going back to those areas where support for the strike wasn't solid to hammer home what's at stake. We have to identify areas where support for further action can be delivered. Every branch must hold special meetings to discuss the dangers of YTS and prepare members against any attempt to extend schemes into other departments.

DE management have been used to getting their own way for far too long. Now members have had enough. The task facing the national executive of the CPSA and the DE activists is to build on this mood for action. With firm leadership and correct tactics, we will ensure YTS is only introduced on our terms. In doing so we'll achieve a victory not just for CPSA members, but for every unemployed youth.

## Colin Townsley

LAST FRIDAY, thousands of people turned out to pay their respects at the funeral of Colin Townsley, the firefighter who died at King's Cross. Two thousand of London's firefighters attended as well as many from other brigades who had travelled from every part of the country. They joined in paying a tribute to Colin and expressing their sympathy with his family.

Flowers decorated the turntable ladder from Soho fire station where he had been the Station Officer on the red watch. The loss was felt throughout the fire service and throughout the community. Hundreds of members of the public sent flowers.

The fire brigade does the same job throughout the country, throughout the world. That is why firefighters can sympathise whenever a colleague is lost. We have to run into places everyone else is

running out of. You never know until you get there exactly what sort of incident you are attending. But nobody wants to be a hero.

### Ultimate price

The fire service works on the basis that our training, our equipment and our teamwork will enable us to overcome any hazards we may face. Of course, things can always go wrong. At King's Cross, with a very rapidly spreading fire, Colin Townsley paid the ultimate price. He died attempting to rescue people from a death trap. Firefighters throughout the country will be sending their condolences to Mrs Linda Townsley and her two daughters.

A London firefighter



# Militant

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# Homes for people not for profit

**THE NEW Housing Bill is the Tories' pay-off to their property speculator and landlord friends who helped finance their election victory.**

**By Roger Shives**  
Deptford Labour Party

It aims to subject all housing to 'market forces'. In the private rented sector, the government complained: "Rent controls have prevented property owners from getting an adequate return on their investment."

So out go all controls. Instead of a rent officer fixing a 'fair rent', landlords and tenants will 'agree' a rent, in practice the market rate, in an 'assured tenancy' agreement for a fixed period of time. When that time is up, the landlord fixes a new rent.

The upshot will be a huge rise in private rents, particularly in London.

**Hundreds of thousands of tenants will be determined to fight to stop the speculators.**

The bill sets up unelected Tory-appointed Housing Action Trusts (HATs), based on the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC). These trusts can sell off flats to private property companies or housing associations.

One of the first sites likely to be chosen is the Thameside areas of Deptford and Greenwich, an extension of Docklands. In nearby Rotherhithe, under the LDDC, a flat was sold last year for £365,000 and

rents have spiralled up. The HATS would have the same effect.

In other areas, the bill gives tenants the 'right to choose' to opt out of council control to a private landlord, housing association or cooperative. Private landlords would obviously be in it for the money, but Housing Associations too will now have to get a lot of their funds from the City, which will force their rents up.

Crazily, one tower block could end up being run by several different landlords. The job of managing large estates will be made a nightmare.

Some tenants who at first sight are attracted to co-operatives will find that the difficulties of financing and servicing properties will make them totally unviable. The government seem to hope that these estates would then fall into the welcoming grasp of the big property firms.

Labour councils and local authority unions should actively oppose this bill. Coming at the same time as the poll tax and privatisation of services, it will make hundreds of thousands of tenants and council workers determined to fight.

The movement has the duty to organise that anger by spreading information about the bill, and preparing for industrial action and rent strikes. If this bill is implemented, any decent council housing at reasonable rents will disappear. Homes must be for people, not for profits!



Across the Thames from the City of London, this land in Bermondsey has been acquired by the LDDC, but not for the local people, who have recorded their protest. Photo: Militant

## Postal workers claim

# All-out strike now

POST OFFICE management have clearly decided to take on their workforce. Their friends in the Tory press are already producing a torrent of misinformation about

post office workers.

The press have vilified the UCW leadership, and management have turned down their offer of 'independent arbitration', which many

union members felt was over-conciliatory anyway.

We now have no alternative but all-out strike throughout the Post  
Continued on page 14.

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## What we stand for

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