

# Nurses defeat

# Tories

'IF WE have made history, so be it. Someone had to make a stand,' said Joan Foster, shop steward of the 40 nurses who staged a historic strike at North Manchester General hospital.

By Jane Briars  
Manchester Labour Party  
Women's Section

This magnificent strike has forced the Tories into a humiliating climb-down. They are not going to take away nurses' unsocial hours payments, but they will still be reviewed.

People poured down to join the Manchester picket line. They came from everywhere. Health workers from all over the area, workers from local factories and workplaces, Labour Party members and Young Socialists.

Two fire engines beeping their horns drew up, cheering the nurses. Messages of support came through all night from as far away as Scotland. Only one phone call was against the strike.

Phone lines to all the local radio stations were blocked with messages of support. All the patients at North Manchester hospital signed a card to the nurses. A local DJ expressed solidarity from Piccadilly Radio employees.

No wonder the Tories were worried about these strikes spreading, when public opinion was overwhelmingly behind the nurses! And what an answer to those 'realists' in the labour movement who claim that industrial action loses public sympathy!

## TUC must call one day general strike to defend NHS

thy!

Two nurses, Jean and Ann, explained their action: "This cut in our pay, which is bad enough anyway, shows what the Government thinks of nurses. They have used our good will for years. We are not blaming the health authority. We don't want to neglect the patients and they won't be. We blame the Government and this had to be done."

### Solidarity

One ward sister present was married to a charge nurse at the same hospital. Her family stood to lose £150 per month. Another nurse pointed out that the strike was not just about pay, but also about the constant deterioration of the service.

Agency nurses had been brought in for the night she explained: "You can bet your life that the wards will be better staffed than they are normally."

On the picket line nurses chanted slogans against the gov-

ernment, waving placards and leafletting to explain their case.

The nurses have shown that only union action can defend the NHS and health workers' living standards. This lesson must be applied urgently by the whole labour movement.

The North-West TUC has called for a day of action on the NHS on 10 February. This must be a one-day strike of all workers throughout the North-West against the health cuts. It must be built for through mass meetings in all workplaces with NHS workers appealing for solidarity. Mass demonstrations must be organised to show the depth of anger which exists. They must be followed by further action.

The national union leaders must also plan for action and call a one-day national stoppage. No longer can it be argued there is no mood to fight.

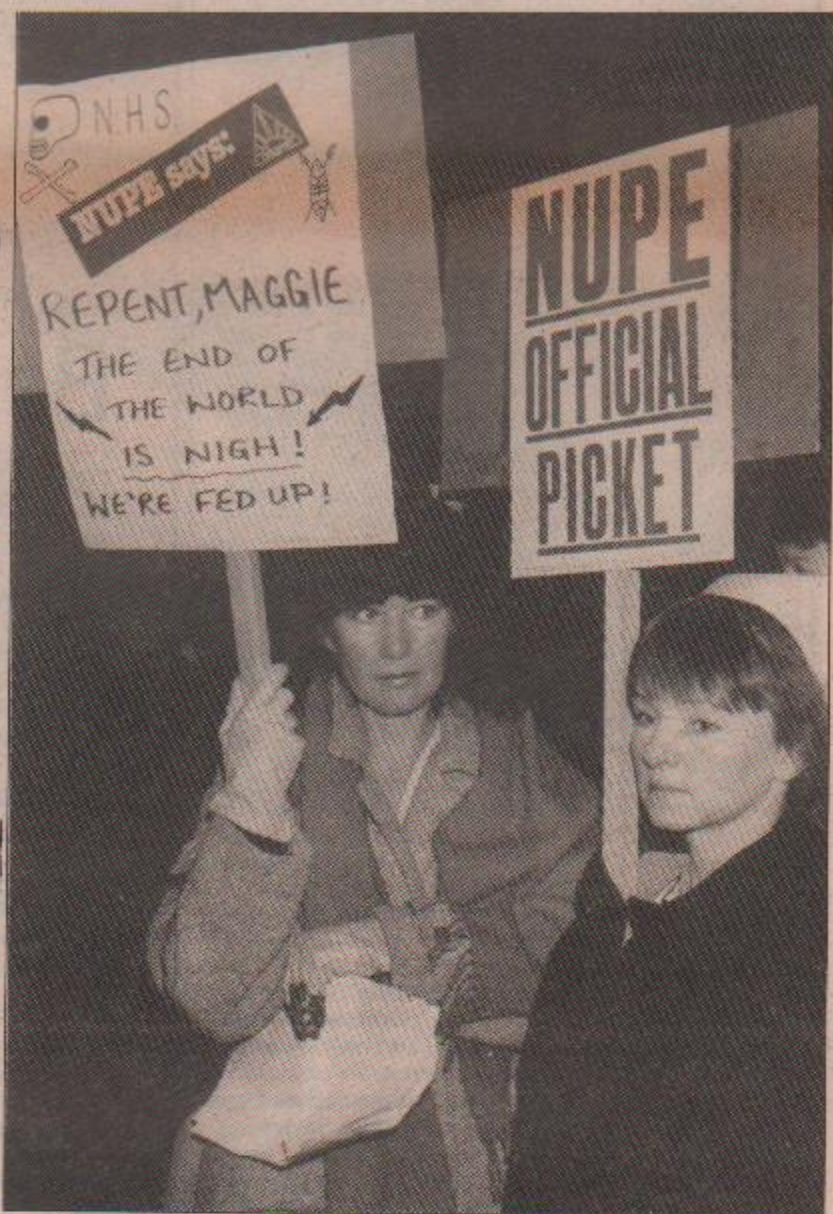
As the Manchester nurses have said, now there is no choice but to fight. This is the only action the Tories will listen to.

"Workers are appalled at the Tories' destruction of the NHS, and support health workers who act to defend it.

"The TUC should call a one-day general strike in defence of the health service. It would gain tremendous support.

"I hope to raise this idea on the TUC General Council at the earliest opportunity."

John Macreadie TUC General Council member and CPSA deputy general secretary.



On strike—Nurses on the Manchester picket line.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

special appeal  
**Raise the roof**

**Final total:**  
**£43,435**

## Thousands of pounds pour in

IN THE last week an extra £16577 has been received towards our Raise the Roof appeal. The total is a fantastic £43435 raised in just nine weeks.

A marvellous donation of £5000 was made by Nicos Remoundos on

behalf of, and in memory of, his wife, Deirdre. Another very generous £5000 was received from a long-standing supporter in London.

Special thanks go to these comrades. Their contributions, and

all the others we have received during the last nine weeks, show the tremendous support and sacrifice of our readers for Marxist ideas. What a start to 1988!

## Defend Militant

TORY PRESS headlines like "Labour to launch new blitz on extremists" and "Concerted move by Labour to crush militants", confirm that the Party's new right leadership are determined to press on with even more wide-ranging attacks on the left.

Labour activists must not allow themselves to become indifferent because of the regularity of expulsions. Every attack, every expulsion (the latest being in Stevenage and Knowsley North) must be fought vigorously. But the closure of the Young Socialists' conference and their paper, and now the threat to suspend the whole constituency in Bermondsey and unprecedentedly to expel up to 40 local Party members, represent a major intensification of the witch-hunt.

The leadership really have convinced themselves that this is the key to electoral success. But let no-one forget that after Neil Kinnock's unforgivable tirade against the socialist Liverpool council at the 1985 Party conference, Denis Healey announced: "We shall look back on this day as the moment when Labour won the next election".

Now six months after that election Labour is still in opposition. In fact the Party is still trailing Thatcher by 12 per cent. And this is not due to *Militant*: far from it. Kinnock's followers in charge of Labour councils, meekly passing on Tory cuts bear much of the responsibility.

Labour councillors in Waltham Forest had the gall to announce they are implementing 'socialist cuts'. Up and down the country council tenants and parents cannot tell the difference between these cuts and the normal Thatcherite variety.

What are the national leaders doing on the vital issue of health? Where is the mass campaign to indict the Tories for the cuts, the waiting lists and the deaths?

Tony Benn has come out and sharply criticised the leadership, which is "distancing itself both from the trade unions and from socialism", and instead relying on opinion pollsters "to tell it what to think and what to say". He warns that the 'Labour listens' exercise is seen by many as the leadership's means to abandon socialist commitments.

Even GMB right winger, David Warburton, took Kinnock to task for failing to make a public impression. He was demoted for his pains, no doubt with pressure exerted by Kinnock's office. John Prescott is threatening to stand against Hattersely for the deputy leadership. He too is lambasted for questioning in any way the direction the leadership is taking.

The Kinnock leadership is currently spectacularly unsuccessful at taking the fight to the Tories. A new poll indicates that he impresses only four in ten trade unionists, and only four in ten council tenants. But he will brook no opposition or debate within the Party.

Most of all, however, it is *Militant* that has to be dealt with, because the paper and its supporters are the staunchest opponents of the watering down of the Party programme, and would be the most demanding of any new Labour government.

The same Organisation Sub-Committee meeting that recommended Bermondsey's suspension also opened the door to a possible serious assault on the democracy of Party conference. It suggests resolutions should only deal with the leadership's policy review document, amendments should be eliminated and speakers should have to hand in speakers' cards.

Last year General Secretary, Larry Whitty was urging that constituency party resolutions should first go to regional conferences, and only if carried there on to the national conference.

The leadership are out to protect themselves from the watchful eye of the membership, 'reviewing' socialism out of sight. Their PR 'experts' have convinced them that to win power they do not need an active membership, who with their complaints and demands for radical policies are just a nuisance. All that is needed is the leader's media profile. But this was their master strategy during last year's election defeat.

Stepping up the attack on *Militant* is a central part of the leadership's political aim to emasculate the Party and to weaken its democratic structure. Every Party member and trade unionist must be made aware, it is the very character of the Labour Party that is at stake. Anyone who wants to be considered on the left must be told, defending *Militant* is to stand up for a democratic and socialist Party.

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# The victims of Labour's purge

## Andy Bevan

ANDY BEVAN, Labour's National Youth Officer since 1977, has been forced from his post at the Party's Walworth Road headquarters. Andy has been a prime victim of the Party leadership's witch-hunt against the left and its drive against the Labour Party Young Socialists.

By Frances Curran  
(LPYS NEC representative 1984-6)

Let no-one doubt that Andy's departure was a result of political victimisation. On 16 December Labour's National Executive Committee decided by 21 votes to six not to offer the newly created post of Youth and Student Officer to Andy, despite his unquestionable qualifications and experience.

They actually decided there and then to sack him. The Party leadership no longer needed to make any further redundancies: so low is morale under the Kinnock/Whitty regime, more Party staff volunteered for redundancy than the NEC financially demanded. In spite of this the leadership seized the opportunity to get rid of one of the LPYS' staunchest supporters.

It was only the threat from head office staff to black any newly-created posts which forced the right wing NEC to back down. Andy was finally offered redeployment to the finance department, which he rejected as unsuited to his political qualifications and experience. He therefore took the option left, voluntary redundancy.

Andy had the consistent backing of head office workers, and had been elected for four years running as their trade union convenor. He had been instrumental in drawing up the staff's alternative plan for dealing with Labour's financial difficulties which involved no job losses. But the NEC was not interested.

It says something, especially about the majority of trade unionists on the NEC, that not only have they presided over the destruction of people's jobs, but they have allowed the political victimisation of a union convenor. That must give real confidence to activists in their unions that these 'leaders' will come to their aid if they are threatened by their boss!

### Ex-lefts

An added irony is that Andy was appointed with the backing of even some of the old right who were prominent on the NEC in the past. He has been forced out with the connivance of those like Gould, Sawyer and Blunkett who still pretend to be on the left.

Andy Bevan had been chair of the Young Socialists for five years before becoming Youth Officer. Throughout his work he has played an invaluable role in building up the LPYS into a major campaigning force, from the skeleton of an organisation it had been throughout the late sixties.

In particular, he was the main force behind the LPYS Summer Camp, which began in 1978 and continued until 1986 when the Party closed it down. It gave an opportunity for



Photo: Militant

Andy Bevan—forced out.

hundreds of working class youth to come together for both a holiday and political discussion. Neil Kinnock was a speaker at the first camp.

Andy was also instrumental in organising the LPYS fightback against the introduction of the Youth Opportunities Programme (now YTS), with the establishment of the YOP Trade Union Rights Campaign (later YTURC).

After three consecutive election defeats the Party leadership still apparently believes it can win by shackling its youth section, and by relying on faceless functionaries with no record or interest in campaigning, rather than active, enthusiastic and committed Party-builders like Andy Bevan.

## Bermondsey suspension threat

THE WITCH-HUNT against the whole Bermondsey Labour Party has gone a stage further, with the decision of Labour's Organisation Sub-Committee at its 11 January meeting to recommend the suspension of the constituency. This will now go before the full National Executive Committee on 27 January.

By Militant reporter

This attack is based on a report submitted by Greater London Labour Party Secretary, Terry Ashton. To date no officer of the Bermondsey Party has seen a copy of this report nor been able to answer any accusations. But the report's contents seem to be freely available to the Tory press.

### Praise

General Secretary, Larry Whitty, actually paid tribute to the way the fortunes of Bermondsey had been turned round since 1983, and how they had come within a whisker of winning the ILEA election. But then he added, something had to be done about the large *Militant* presence. He did not seem to appreciate the contradiction in his remarks, that the local Party had been greatly improved with a big *Militant*



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dennis Skinner speaking at a public meeting in support of Bermondsey Labour Party.

presence, so the answer is purge the Militants!

Even now Bermondsey Women's Section is campaigning against the Alton Bill, and organising a demonstration on 21 January. Is this the sort of activity the Labour leadership wants to stop?

At the meeting the only accusation the right concentrated on, was the totally false charge of abuse and harassment in Party meetings. But former Labour General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, has publicly said: "As a member of the General Committee of the Bermondsey Labour Party I make no complaint about the way it has conducted its business. I am not a member of or sympathiser with the *Militant* tendency.

No-one has ever attempted to prevent me expressing my point of view." The Org. Sub., however, did not listen.

David Blunkett moved an amendment just for an inquiry without suspension. It received only three votes—himself, Dennis Skinner and Jo Richardson. The motion to suspend and then inquire into the Party was carried 11 to one, with just Dennis Skinner against, Jo Richardson abstaining and Blunkett voting in favour.

Bermondsey Labour Party is responding to the attacks by contacting all the constituency parties in London, affiliated unions and community groups, and has called a mass lobby of the January NEC.

Support  
Bermondsey  
Labour Party  
Lobby  
the NEC!

150 Walworth  
Road SE17  
27 January  
8.45-10.00 am

## FELS

THE LABOUR Party Youth Sub-Committee on 12 January referred Rod Alexander to the National Constitutional Committee for possible expulsion. His crime—being elected to the National Union of Students' Further Education National Committee as a Further Education Labour Students (FELS) candidate. But the leadership's favoured National Organisation of Labour Students only stood two candidates when there were five vacancies. And they failed to organise a democratic selection conference to decide on the NOLS slate, it was imposed by the NOLS National Committee.

# Gaza—Tories fake concern

THE PALESTINIAN population in the Israeli-occupied Gaza strip and West Bank are still defying Army bullets in their mass protests (see Militant 8 January).

By Roger Shives

The Israeli government's brutal repression has been condemned by a group of visiting Scottish trade unionists. Even the Israeli government's loyal defenders in the capitalist class fear that the repression will increase Palestinian militancy.

In a visit to Gaza, British Foreign Office minister David Mellor attacked conditions in the Jabaliya refugee camp and said that Israel's decision to deport Palestinian activists was "against international law." He also attacked an Israeli colonel for arresting a boy who allegedly threw stones at troops.

But Mellor, like other Tories, is not moved by any moral objection to the occupation of Gaza or to repression. His attack reflected the interests of the British ruling class.

Mellor is no civil liberties campaigner in Britain. In 1981 he labelled stone throwing in the Brixton disturbances as "criminality" not social protest and he has

attacked the left for supposedly anti-police attitudes.

Tory politicians have been silent about such atrocities as the bombing of the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps because the Israeli government are the main defenders of capitalism in the Middle East.

But Britain's ruling class have trade links with the Arab world—and they also want reactionary pro west governments to stay in charge there. The protests and repression increase the pressure within Israel's neighbouring Arab states.

## Mass movement

Mellor understands that repression can not eliminate opposition. "How long will people think that a million and a half Palestinians can just be kept under the point of a gun?" he asked.

This new mass movement potentially threatens the status quo in the entire region. Capitalist politicians would like to pressure Israel into a 'peace conference' involving the USA and other capitalist governments. Western politicians can not produce a solution in the interests of the working class, Arab or Jewish, but they hope to defuse the situation with a temporary deal.

The Tories are hypocrites.



David Mellor (inset), and innocent victims of Israeli repression.

Photos: Militant

While Mellor was condemning the refugee camps as the 'Soweto of the Middle East', Thatcher was defending the perpetrators of the real Soweto, Botha's South Africa.

She was visiting the black African states of Nigeria and Kenya

to safeguard British capitalism's trade and political interests in the area. But she openly defied all pressure for sanctions against the apartheid regime.

Thatcher's government is probably South Africa's number one trade partner and supporter.

Number two ironically is probably Israel!

The Tories only defend the interests of profit. The world is no "safer in their hands" than Britain's health service. Workers must fight for a socialist solution in the Middle East.



# No pay cuts for the nurses

THE TORIES' proposal to do away with special duty payments and introduce new clinical gradings made Liverpool nurses angry.

By a Liverpool nurse.

Over 350 nurses from Walton and Fazakerley hospitals turned out to the meeting demanding action over nurses' pay.

Rank and file workers called for industrial action including an immediate overtime ban and strikes. There was a spontaneous and unanimous vote for action. "Now you've got us, lead us," nurses told union officials.

Pat Kidd, South Sefton Nupe district committee member said: "I'm not going to let this government dip into my pocket and take between £60-100 per month. We are down to danger levels on the wards, with between two and five nurses on each."

"There are untrained staff on the wards at night to cover for dinners. I think that in January we should have a big march. Other unions have agreed to support us. If we don't keep going we will lose momentum."

The floor called for support from the North West TUC for a widespread campaign across Merseyside. There are plans for mass meetings and demonstrations, possibly leading to a strike. Other trade unions in the area have pledged their support.



Health workers protest against NHS cuts in Cheltenham on 9 January.

Photo: John Harris (IFL).

NURSES IN Liverpool have been discussing the Manchester nurses' strike against what is in effect a pay cut.

Chris, an SEN, who works nights at Walton General hospital, told us: "I support the Manchester nurses. I work two nights at weekends, and earn £320. I estimate I could lose £40 per week.

The government proposals had a huge effect on us and we got a large turnout at the AGM of our Cohse branch."

Nicola, a member of Cohse, and a staff nurse on nights at Royal Liverpool hospital told us: "I work seven days on and seven days off on nights. My take-home pay is £530 per month and I could

lose £100 of that. Our sister could lose £2,000 per year.

"Staff and patients supported the Manchester action. They thought strikers handled patient cover very well. This included nurses in the RCN, who opposed Trevor Clay's statement on this issue."

## Sick Tories

TORY "HEALTH" Minister, Tony Newton, claims many nurses earn "substantially more" than the basic wage. On permanent nights, a staff nurse could get £187.90 a week!

Newton 'earns' £40,798 a year, working permanent days wrecking the NHS, four times as much as he says a staff nurse can earn on nights saving lives!

MANCHESTER NURSES were furious at Edwina Currie when on TV the night before the strike, she advised parents of babies waiting for urgent operations not to go to court.

Still smiling, Currie told parents that many of these babies would have been born dead in the past.

PATIENTS IN the dermatology ward at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, spontaneously supported staff action against the ward's closure by tying themselves to their beds and refusing to move.

Kit Rae, NUPE branch secretary in the town told Militant: "200 ancillary jobs are at risk locally."

"Management already say domestic staff are surplus to requirement, although they retracted this after the recent work to rule. The Manchester nurses' strike is fantastic. Everybody who works in or uses the NHS should fight back and stop the Tories destroying the NHS."

By Diane Simcox

# Protests come before prayers

WHEN JOHN Hughes, the Labour MP for Coventry North East, dared to interrupt the Tory Party at prayer to raise the case of a seven-month-old constituent, he made more effective impact than a hundred front-bench speeches.

By Pat Craven

Matthew Mulhall will die unless he has heart surgery; he has been waiting four months. John Hughes' reward for demanding action from the Tories was to be banned from the Palace of Westminster for a week.

The security guards have his photo pinned up to identify him

and he could not even collect his car from the car park.

He was responding to a letter sent by Mrs Susan Mulhall, to Dave Nellist, MP for Coventry South East: "Our son has a serious heart condition which in simple terms means the two great arteries are the wrong way round, as are the pumping chambers. And to add to that, he has two holes."

"Matthew had an exploratory operation last September and we were told that if he stayed in the same condition he could go another five months without surgery. That five months is up in February.

"At the end of September we received a letter saying that our son was on the operating waiting list. I cannot sleep at night worrying about the cutbacks and the effect it could have on our son.

"The reason for my writing is really to thank you for your energy and commitment to the problem and to ask if you could think of anything we could do to bring the situation into the forefront even more so."

Dave Nellist passed the letter to John Hughes as constituency MP, but was himself to raise the issue with the prime minister on Thursday.

John Hughes' reaction was that of any worker. He did not wait for the "appropriate" parliamentary occasion. Prayers to the almighty were less of a priority than saving young Matthew's life.

The Tories were outraged at being reminded of their responsibility for cuts and for Matthew's plight. But it is inexcusable that Labour's leaders have backed his suspension from the house.

John Hughes has shown the front bench what can be done to highlight the NHS crisis dramatically.

TEESSIDE Militant Public Meeting. "Save the NHS!" Stockton Public Library. Thursday 21 January 730pm. Speaker from COHSE.

# Party chairman expelled



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Lobby against expulsions at Labour Party headquarters.

## Sell Militant

### Lothians initiative

MILITANT SELLERS in Edinburgh could not wait until after Christmas for the next issue of the paper, so they decided to produce their own. The *Lothians Militant* had articles on the anti-Poll Tax demo and strikes in the local hospital, Bilston Glen pit and the council cleansing depot.

250 copies of the broadsheet were distributed and sellers report a high level of interest, especially at trade union and Labour Party branches. Six were sold at one party branch and ten at another.

Their success was largely due to the news and comment on local issues. If sellers in the Lothians can find enough news to interest workers in the week before Christmas, then surely there must be lots in the new year from every area.

So make sure you keep local reports and features coming in to the paper! That will be the key to increased sales in 1988.

## Militant International Review

FRIDAYS SEVEN per cent drop in share prices on Wall Street, the third biggest ever fall on a single day, proves that last October's crash was not an aberration. The underlying crisis of the US economy remains unsolved.

The American capitalists are trying to offload their crisis on to the shoulders of their rivals. But this policy will make the crisis worse, bringing closer the prospect of a capitalist world recession.

This is the subject of a major article in the new edition of *Militant International Review*. Order your copy now. 90p plus 20p postage and packing from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB, or 90p from your local *Militant* seller.

ACROSS THE country, Labour Party members are under attack from the leadership of their own party. The stories on this page are only some of the worst examples of the police regime which is being imposed. But they also show that the members are fighting back, determined to continue the struggle against the Tories and for socialism and party democracy.

KNOWSLEY NORTH Labour Party's chairman, Jim McGinley, has been expelled by the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) after 13 years of service to the party. The cases against Dave Kerr and Alan Kelly, the two vice-chairmen, were postponed.

By Richard Venton

The three have between them devoted thirty years to the La-

bour Party and been elected to every position at branch and constituency level. Jim McGinley has been chairman of the constituency Labour Party (CLP) since the Knowsley North party's inception in 1983, increasing his majority each year.

One of the charges was that the three 'plotted' to deselect Robert Kilroy-Silk as MP. In fact the pot of gold of a TV job was enough to get this bare faced careerist to deselect himself.

Neil Kinnock described Kilroy-

## Dirty tactics

AFTER THREE years of witch-hunting, the right wing of Faversham Constituency Labour Party (CLP) have finally won a vote for three activists—Alan Ursell, Ann Ursell and Tom Seddon—to be referred to the National Constitutional Committee. But the depths to which some of the local right wingers have stooped defy belief.

By a Militant reporter

The three, along with another activist, Malcolm Young, have been subjected to almost constant harassment and political victimisation. This culminated in Ann Ursell receiving an obscene letter, smeared with human

excrement, and signed by the then secretary of the Sittingbourne branch Labour Party.

Ann wrote to National Agent, David Hughes, complaining about this disgusting behaviour by a fellow Party member, but was told there was nothing he could do. Instead, expulsion proceedings are being continued against her and the other two loyal socialists, who between them have 42 years Party membership.

Tom Seddon is unemployed and facing the tragedy of having his house repossessed. While he and his wife and three children await eviction, he is being kicked in the teeth by members of his own party for his socialist beliefs and for fighting for a society where there

Silk as a 'first-rate MP' and helped initiate the attack on three first-rate socialists who had the temerity to demand the right to vote on who was to represent Labour.

The NCC procedure was a sham. All the 'evidence' used came from a handful of right wingers, who, in Neil Kinnock's own word, acted as 'finger-men' against loyal socialists.

The overwhelming weight of evidence from friendly witnesses was ignored, yet the NCC had no qualms about using misinformation from Peter Fisher, who has stood against and defeated Labour candidates in council elections.

Jim McGinley forced the NCC to abandon the evidence from Tony Glover, a former Labour Party member, who was convicted of stealing £200 whilst working for the housing charity Shelter. But three political 'supergrasses' appeared.

Ex-Communist Party member Mick Kelly was allowed to appear as a witness though his written evidence was never produced. Mick Murphy sought his revenge for being defeated 65 votes to 26 by Jim McGinley for CLP Chairman in 1986.

And Bernard Donnelly, expelled from the Communist Party in 1981, employed the worst Stalinist methods, accusing Jim of attending clandestine meetings with somebody known to have been previously expelled on charges of *Militant* membership.

Donnelly openly boasted that he had organised an "independent left caucus" in Knowsley North, yet Jim McGinley was

expelled for *Militant* membership and for being in a Broad Left caucus. So much for the NEC's guidelines for NCC procedures "being seen to be fair and impartial between factions and groups".

These right-wing supergrasses will be held in contempt by working people in Knowsley. They know the right's real motives for these expulsions—to purge the socialist opposition to the planned cuts by Knowsley Borough Council.

Jim McGinley's accusers are presiding over the 'grotesque chaos' of a Labour council handing out 180 redundancy notices to Knowsley teachers, where 31,000 pupils already suffer classes over 30.

### Still a socialist

They plan to close Aged Persons' Homes and cut already inadequate provision for children and the mentally handicapped. They admit that this will lead to increased child abuse, substantial trauma for old people and the mentally ill walking the streets feeling abandoned and isolated.

Jim McGinley, recently elected as secretary of the Knowsley Campaign Group, said at the NCC hearing that he would remain a socialist and a Labour Party builder regardless of the NCC's trampling on party democracy and elementary justice.

Workers must answer the right wing by joining the party to take up the cudgels against cuts, rent rises, privatisation and redundancies.

### Knowsley Campaign Group public rally

Sunday 17 January 7 pm, Huyton Suite.  
Spkrs: Dennis Skinner MP, Les Huckfield MEP and Jim McGinley.  
**Unite against the Tories!**  
**Fight expulsions! Support Scargill!**

will be no unemployment.

Earlier this year, David Hughes had to rule that Malcolm Young had been, in effect, unconstitutionally expelled, and ordered the constituency to reinstate him. In an act of pure political spite, the CLP speeded up the investigation of the other three.

### Steamrollered

But they were not given a copy of the letter of complaint until the night of the investigation, despite protests that Labour's disciplinary code was being incorrectly applied. They have still not been allowed to see the minutes of the CLP general committee and executive committee which set up the investigation.

At the general committee on 11 December the investigators' report was steamrollered through

with no discussion. A solicitors' letter pointing out the irregularities in procedure was deliberately ignored.

This includes evidence from a tape recording Ann Ursell was allowed to make of the investigating committee. In it they openly said that where they have no evidence for charges they are prepared to concoct it.

Party members everywhere must insist that this attempted purge, which is trampling on every fundamental rule of behaviour within the labour movement, is dropped forthwith.

But as for the three, the day after that general committee they were out in the town centre doing a street meeting on behalf of the local Party and collecting signatures against the closure of a local hospital. They will not go away.

# Women's rights curbed

THE LABOUR Party's North West regional executive committee (REC), which ten months ago effectively suspended the regional women's committee (RWC) by refusing to pass its minutes, has now agreed in principle that a regional conference can take place, but the format will be decided by the REC.

The worst restriction is that resolutions not specifically the RWC's concern, such as those supporting strikes, are to be re-

ferred to the REC. This is a return to the days when Labour women were only allowed to discuss women and children.

One dispute which the RWC wished to support was that at JE Hanger, which makes artificial limbs, which one member of the committee uses. This resolution was rejected by the REC because the dispute was outside the region!

A request for expenses for disabled members of the Labour

women's organisation to meet members of the RWC as a sub-committee to formulate a document on facilities for the disabled in the Labour Party has been refused.

"Any work should be on a purely voluntary basis" is the attitude of the leaders of a party which is supposed to care for the most vulnerable in society.

The RWC's response is to timetable a full committee meeting to discuss the document and

one way or another the disabled members will be brought along.

These restrictions in the RWC's activities follow their successes in previous years, such as the demonstration against low pay in 1986, and the growing recognition among working-class women that there is no other solution to the problems they face than to fight for socialism.

By a Militant reporter

# Youth strike

**THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) has called on youth to strike against the Tories' YTS plans on 16 March.**

By YTURC supporters

At a national conference on 9 January, there was a unanimous vote for the strike. Davie Archibald, who was elected secretary, said: "The Tories are aiming to introduce a series of new measures, which are

an escalation of the attacks on youth.

"The removal of unemployment benefit for 16 and 17 year olds threatens conscription onto YTS. The Housing Bill removes the right of youth on the dole to full housing benefit.

"Now they are planning a new Unified Training Scheme for the over-18s. This is part and parcel of their plans to create a pool of cheap labour for the bosses."

Swindon Labour Party Young

Socialists (LPYS) did a survey amongst 500 young people. Two-thirds said they would be prepared to strike if the Government attempted to withdraw unemployment benefit for 16 and 17 year olds.

This shows how much support there will be for the strike when YTURC members get the message to young people.

Scottish YTURC members have called a strike on 11 February and the conference voted to support this initiative.

ive.

YTURC aims to channel the anger and despair of young people into action. Its supporters must now hit the streets, the school gates, the colleges and the workplaces with the call 'All out on 16 March!'

Leaflets and posters advertising the strike can be ordered from YTURC, c/o 29, Marlborough Avenue, London E8 4JP.



**Labour Party Young Socialists**

## More protests against attacks on LPYS

LABOUR'S NATIONAL Executive's (NEC) unconstitutional decision to do away with the Labour Party Young Socialists' national conference has provoked Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) all over the country to protest.

Rochdale CLP have demanded that the NEC members who voted to close the conference be referred to the National Constitution Committee for breaking the party constitution.

Four out of six CLPs in Edinburgh have sent resolutions to the NEC condemning its decision. They are Leith, and Edinburgh East, West and Central.

Hundreds of party members have signed petitions opposing the closure. North Bedfordshire CLP voted unanimously to ask an NEC speaker to come and explain the decision to their next meeting.

Other CLPs which have passed resolutions include Horsham, Tunbridge Wells, Coventry South-East, Blackpool South, Stafford, Edgbaston, Stoke Central, Wrexham, Upminster, Acton, Gateshead East, Nottingham North, Glasgow Shettleston and Liverpool Walton.

The NEC will consider these resolutions on 27 January. Send your letters of protest and resolutions to Larry Whitty, 150, Walworth Road, London SE17

## Tories laugh at YTS deaths

LIVERPOOL MP, Terry Fields, exposed the death rate on Tory slave labour schemes in the House of Commons. 40 young people have died on YTS so far, he reminded MPs.

Tory MPs found something to laugh at when Terry reported these grim statistics. "Conservative members laugh at the problems facing young people," he exclaimed, "at their deaths and at the horror experienced by their families."

"The figures show that it is 30 per cent more dangerous to work on a YTS scheme than in industry," he said, "yet the jobs are in much less dangerous areas of industry, including the service industries."

The Manpower Services Commission have effectively privatised health and safety on the schemes. They have passed on their responsibility for it to the 5,700 management agencies and so have no idea how it is being imple-

mented. "The MSC has only one coordinator in each area office. Their responsibilities only partly include health and safety and they are retired factory inspectors who are employed on part-time consultancy contracts."

The Health and Safety Executive has admitted that lack of resources mean they cannot cover thousands of new work places that have taken on trainees, he pointed out.

The only defence of Tory junior minister Nicholls was to call Terry's speech "tasteless even by the standards of Militant," because he said the government is callous and complacent about trainees' safety.

While Nicholls was speaking, Eric Heffer MP was told off by the Speaker for calling him an "arrogant little basket". Considering the Tory's bare-faced cheek, Militant congratulates Eric Heffer on his restraint.



Terry Fields MP—exposed death rate on YTS. Photo: Militant

## FE students plan national conference

ON 30 AND 31 January over 250 FE student activists are expected to attend the annual conference of Further Education Labour Students (Fels) being held this year in Chesterfield FE college.

Immediate issues facing FE students such as compulsory YTS, the Government's Education Bill and racism will be discussed. Tony Benn MP and Dave Nellist MP will be among the speakers addressing the conference.

The National Union of Students (NUS) which represents 1.5 million students has given no lead to FE students to fight Tory attacks. Fels is the only organisation within the FE sector which has been campaigning for NUS to link up with the education unions in the fight against the Tories.

Fels has gained enormous support for this programme amongst student union activists which was seen at the recent NUS conference in December. Cheryl Varley and Rod Alexander, the Fels candidates, were elected to the Further Education National Committee of NUS which represents approximately 750,000 students, with the combined highest first preference votes.

Already there is a serious fighting mood developing amongst student union activists.

Fels is campaigning now for a leadership that is capable of leading a mass student movement to victory by linking the struggle to defend education to the struggle of the labour movement. Fels conference will be an opportunity for all FE student activists to discuss the strategy that can defeat the Tories. All Militant supporters in the colleges should ensure they attend this event.

## How we fight the college cuts

FURTHER EDUCATION students are facing the most vicious attacks yet from the Government.

By Cheryl Varley

Already there are signs of a fightback where a strong lead has been given. Fels has been involved in leading major campaigns against local authority cuts in education.

In Chesterfield, the Labour local authority threatened to close over 100 courses effecting almost 700 students. This was defeated by the threat of joint action from workers and students.

In Manchester, Fels members organised action against the introduction of course fees for the unemployed. Some were presented with bills of up to £300! The Labour council were forced to back down when they saw the anger of the students and that they were linking up with college workers.

In Liverpool, Fels members led a campaign which defeated the new Labour council and its attempt to make cuts in creche facilities in the college. The campaign also won an increase in staffing for creches in all the colleges in Liverpool!

**COME TO CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE CONFERENCE 30TH & 31ST JAN 12 AM START**  
EDUCATION OR TRAINING WE DEMAND A REAL CHOICE



£35 A WEEK GRANT OR A REAL JOB WITH PROPER WAGES

FOR A SOCIALIST NUS  
DEFEND YOUR EDUCATION  
SOUTH AFRICA FIGHTING RACISM  
**FIGHTBACK**  
OIN F E L S  
FURTHER EDUCATION LABOUR STUDENTS

# A life <sup>Bob</sup> Herley devoted to socialism

BOB HERLEY, who fought for socialism over more than three decades, died on 16 December (as we reported last week). This is a great blow to *Militant*, who counted Bob as one of the paper's most dedicated supporters. And it is a sad blow to those who remember Bob personally for his energy, enthusiasm and generosity.



By Martin Cock

Bob had only just moved to Glossop, near Manchester, determined—despite his poor health—to open up a new chapter in his life. Tragically, he suffered another, this time fatal, heart attack.

The funeral took place on 4 January, at Dukinfield crematorium, amid the hills which cradled the first working-class struggles of the Chartist movement. In a moving socialist ceremony, comrades paid tribute to this outstanding fighter.

Bob Herley, at the age of 18, joined the Labour Party in his home area of Ealing, West London, in 1957. He was soon campaigning for the restoration of a democratic youth organisation after the closure of the Labour League of Youth by Labour's right-wing leadership.

At a time when Marxism was isolated and far from popular, even within the labour movement, Bob defended Marxist ideas in his contributions to a small journal called *The Voice* which he also helped to distribute.

In the trade union field, he was a branch secretary in the Association of Scientific Workers, later to become part of ASTMS, and delegate to West London Trades Council.

Bob really made his mark, however, in the Medway towns after he moved to Rochester in the late 1960s. In May 1971 he was elected as a Labour councillor on Rochester City Council. A few months later he became a *Militant* supporter.

He resigned his council position when the need for work took Bob to Portugal for a period, as production manager in an electronics factory near Lisbon.

Shortly after his move, in April 1974, the radical officer's coup brought down the Cactano regime and triggered a revolutionary movement of the workers.

Bob was tremendously enthused and understood the burning need for a Marxist voice in Portugal. He personally provided the finance for *Militant* to send a reporter to Portugal for more than a year.

Returning to Britain in 1976, Bob had no hesitation in putting his technical and managerial skills at the disposal of Cambridge Heath Press, who printed *Militant* at that time.

He made a very important contribution to the development of improved facilities at Mentmore Terrace, to which we had just moved. The foundations were laid for big improvements in the production of the weekly paper and other publications.

Bob left full-time employment because of his health problems. From an early age he was a diabetic and fought a courageous

battle against the disease in order to live a very active life. More recently, he unfortunately had other health problems, which together hastened his premature death.

But every weekend Bob would be out selling *Militant* in the shopping centre and around the houses in the Medway towns.

Incapable of answering his ideas or matching his energy, the local right wingers feared Bob's considerable influence. Scandalously, numerous moves were made to get him expelled from the Labour Party—all unsuccessful. When it came to the crunch, the right could never muster a majority against him. Despite ill-health, Bob would not give up his political activity, which was undoubtedly his reason for existence. He served as constituency party chair, a member of the Southern regional executive, as national conference delegate in 1982 and as treasurer of the trades council.

But his most important contribution was undoubtedly his work in helping to educate a new generation of *Militant* supporters in Kent.

## Testimony

To their shame, the right wing of Gillingham Labour Party suspended Bob from membership in 1983, threatening him with expulsion for selling *Militant*. A tide of protest ensured the reversal of this decision. It was testimony to his real standing and authority in the movement that Bob was elected as constituency party secretary in 1984.

For the comrades who knew him, particularly those in Kent, Bob is a man they will never forget. Apart from politics, he loved jazz, making at least one pilgrimage to New Orleans.

He read widely and delighted in discussing ideas, especially late into the night. But he was also a very practical socialist, determined to get things done.

Bob was sometimes impatient with people who did not match his expectations, especially with comrades who he felt were indecisive or too ready to put things off.

But Bob did not let disagreements destroy his friendships, and he was a very congenial and generous person. As comrades and friends we salute the man who devoted his life to the cause of socialism.

A Memorial Meeting for Bob Herley is being held on Thursday, 14 January at 8pm in Gillingham Labour Hall, Twydall Lane, Gillingham.

Contributions to SALEP, c/o 34, Priory Road, Gillingham.



A scene from Steve Biko's funeral

## Cry Freedom

CRY FREEDOM was described by *The Times* as "Richard Attenborough's bumper bundle of exciting spectacle and liberal sentiment". This says more about the ignorance and superficiality of *The Times* critic than about the film.

Set in South Africa in the seventies, it shows the political work and ideas of Steve Biko, a black consciousness leader, and the risks he took to raise the political awareness of the oppressed blacks.

It illustrates the conditions in the townships and the brutality of the state security forces, including the massacre of hundreds of striking school students in Soweto in 1976.

It also shows the yawning gap in conditions of life between blacks and whites and the political chasm between the white liberals, who desperately hope to prevent revolution from below by a strategy of limited reforms from above, and the black workers who want to establish a new society.

However, the friendship

which develops between Donald Woods, a liberal journalist, and Steve Biko shows that racial barriers are not absolute.

The murder of detainees by the police is vividly illustrated by the fate of Biko himself, who is arrested and beaten to death.

Woods resolves to stand against the authorities by exposing this murder. The paranoid anxiety of the police and the government to cover up their own dirty work comes over clearly. There are some good laughs at the hypocrisy of the reactionary white establishment.

Woods and his family become targets for threats, intimidation and cruelty. He is banned, which means he is unable to meet with other people or publish anything. But he writes a book on Biko and, unable to publish it whilst living in South Africa, has to escape illegally at enormous risk to himself, his wife and children.

Attenborough is a liberal;



only in this point is *The Times* correct. Much is missed out. You only get a glimpse of the power of the black South African masses. The working class does not really enter the stage. But Attenborough is a talented director with a lot of resources at his disposal. He has put them to good use in this exposure of the South African establishment. See it.

By Phil Hutchinson

## Left and Right

### Gonzalies

AT THE Islwyn Chartist rally, Steve Pitman of Newport East LPYS was chatting to Neil Kinnock about last year's massive Spanish school students' demonstrations, which won the right to free education.

But the Labour leader just laughed: "Someone's been pulling you along by the nose" he said—"what actually happened was that the Socialist government were trying to implement a free education system and the catholic church mobilised three million people to oppose this and defend the church's private schools!"

It seems Felipe Gonzalez has been telling his fellow party leader a few porkies.

### Idle rich

THE OBSERVER has discovered some people for whom life is literally one long holiday.

The champion is Rupert Deen, who begins the year in Cape Town, then skis in Europe before moving to Belgravia in London in the Spring. Then comes a hectic time in Monaco for the Grand Prix, St Tropez in June and England again for the Derby, Wimbledon and Ascot.

In July it's off to Ibiza, then back to England to shoot grouse in August. In

September he's off to St Tropez again, nipping up to Paris for the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, before trips to New York and Australia and then back to London for Christmas.

Remember him next time the Tories say the rich need high incomes as an incentive to work hard.

### Glad you're not here

WHEN PANAMA's dictator, General Noriega, went on holiday to the Dominican Republic to see his daughter, 1,000 joyful demonstrators poured into the streets. They thought that he was fleeing the country.

Later the dictator who is so right-wing that even the Reagan administration is trying to oust him told reporters that he would return and that his visit was a 'trap' to test opposition leaders who want him to go.

### Needless deaths

A REPORT to the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons has revealed that every two seconds in the third world countries, a child died and another was permanently crippled by a preventable disease for the want of \$10 of health care. Yet in those same two seconds the world had spent \$60,000 on armaments.

# Students vote to fight back

STUDENTS ARE determined to fight to defeat Tory plans for education. The National Union of Students (NUS) conference just before Christmas voted for a programme of action against the education bill, including a national shut-down and demonstration.

By John Jennings

Conference also voted for a militant policy against the Poll Tax. Students increasingly understand the need to fight alongside the labour movement if they are to stop the Tories.

Both decisions were against the opposition of the majority on the NUS executive, which is led by the Kinnockite Democratic Left in the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) and the Communist Party (CP).

Before the general election Democratic Left (DL) policy was to wait for a Labour government and hold back any protest which they claimed would lose Labour votes. At the same time, though, they refused to campaign openly for a Labour victory.

Labour's election defeat has left this 'strategy' in tatters, but the DL now argue that students are not prepared to fight. The NOLS leadership's move to the right, their failure to defeat government cuts, and their reliance on the bureaucratic manoeuvring of Walworth Road as a substitute for campaigning on socialist policies, has led to a severe decline in NOLS support at conference.

Conference was overwhelmingly on the left, and there were many Labour students there, but the DL's new realism can not win the support of most socialist students.

The Communist Party Students tried in the past to pose as a radical alternative to NOLS, without putting forward an alternative strategy. But now they are indistinguishable from the DL, both following the right wing Labour Party and trade union leaders' 'new realist' approach.

Labour's election defeat and the absence of major industrial battles made sections of conference prey to many of the DL arguments. But the severity of Tory plans, the stock market crash, and the first stirrings of protest in the colleges meant that other sections of conference were looking for a way to fight back.

The arguments of Militant supporters and the left around Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN) won the day. But the DL/CP majority on the Executive will not energetically carry through these conference policies



## TUC lobby on 1 March

THE TUC has written to all Education Alliance organisations and other groups calling for a "major lobby of parliament" against the Education Bill on 1 March. The National Union of Students (NUS) must now link its campaign against the bill to union action.

The NUS has called a national shut down on 11 February and a national demonstration on Saturday 27 February. Student unions should demand the NUS cancel the 27 February demo and support the mass lobby on 1 March to ensure worker/student action to defeat the Bill.

unless they are pushed from below.

The successful resolutions on the Education Reform Bill contained many ideas Militant supporters have advocated for years: including a campaign to rebuild the Education Alliance on a rank and file basis, and a national shutdown of colleges to build unity in action between students and workers.

### Non-compliance

Unfortunately a motion by Militant supporters which explained more clearly how such a policy could be carried out, was defeated. The Socialist Workers' Party students voted against, because the Militant supporters' motion pointed out that students

alone could not win. Incredibly the SWP cited the 1986 protests in France as an example of pure student power!

In the Poll Tax debate, the right wing 'realists' argued for a 'broad campaign' involving the church and all political parties. Militant supporters, the left and particularly students from Scotland recognised that the labour movement had to be central to any effective campaign of mass resistance.

This Militant-supported motion called for NUS to campaign for non-compliance among trade unions and Labour local authorities and joint action between students and workers, including strike action to defeat the attacks. This was carried.

But, summing up the debate, a

CP member on the Executive, Gill Lewis, gave notice that they would drop the policy when she claimed it could not be carried in the colleges. So the policy was abandoned at the first Executive after conference.

The April Conference of NUS will elect the National Executive for 1988/89. With the Education Bill, student loans, compulsory YTS and attacks on student union rights it will be the most important NUS conference ever.

### Determined

The determined mood of December's conference proved that students look to the labour movement to fight back. Any major industrial battles or a mass movement of youth as in Spain and France, will swing NUS members massively to the left. Militant's ideas, which had widespread support in the conference, will get an even greater echo.

But the conference was also a warning to NOLS' Kinnockite leadership. They have squandered the enormous capital of the miners' strike, which pushed students to the left.

Their failure to fight the government or to campaign on socialist policies has reduced their support. They could lose more Na-

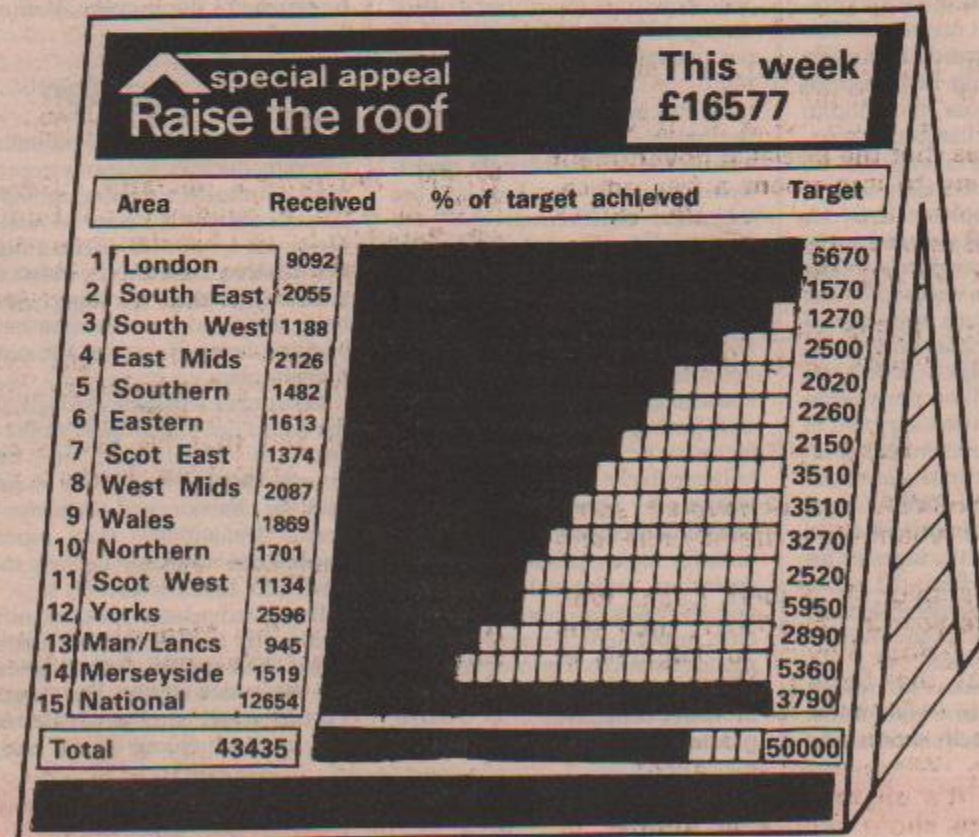
tional Executive places in April; already their majority depends on support from the CP and independents.

But at this stage, NUS members have no alternative to fighting for a socialist leadership of NOLS. There is widespread speculation that SSIN will stand against NOLS in April. SSIN supporters should be warned: failure to stand on socialist principles will inevitably result in disintegration.

At present, as NOLS' leaders move right, some activists see SSIN as a left alternative. They have even adopted some ideas put forward by Militant supporters. But fundamentally, there is no difference in programme between SSIN and the DL. When the mass of students become radicalised, they will turn to the official student wing of the labour movement.

Militant supporters will play a full part in all the actions planned to build mass opposition to the government. At the same time, mass Labour Clubs must be built based on socialist policies.

The fight for a mass, campaigning socialist NOLS will build a fighting leadership for the student movement and start to forge the real links which students need with the labour movement.



## Over £40,000 raised

AN INCREDIBLE £3,500 in four days has taken the "Raise the roof appeal" to over £40,000. (See front page.)

Militant supporters everywhere can celebrate our brilliant achievement. This is already the best ever performance on the fighting fund, raising in two months what we usually raise in three.

Thanks to all comrades who contributed to this success, which will enable our storm-damaged roof to be repaired at last. One reader Jack Harper from the Netherlands sent 25 Dutch Guilders with a Christmas card saying: "Every new tile on the roof of the Militant building is

another nail in the coffin of capitalism".

Lezli-An Barrett sent £200, while in Swansea £185 was collected in xmas tenners and fivers from readers. From the North East thanks to Michelle O'Neill for £75, Paul Johnson £50 and Bruce Robinson from Durham £15. Dave and Pat Bayle in Bracknell sent in £100.

Before Christmas, we received £170 from Pete Redfam, more than his postman's wage, and £30 from Maureen McCabe, an FE student from South London.

Militant supporters have proved they are the best fundraisers in the move-

ment. In the traditions of Marxism we can rely for continual financial support only on workers and young people who sell and read the paper.

Thousands of workers have donated directly while comrades throughout the country have shown in practice all the ways you can raise money for a workers' paper, organising fundraising events from jumble sales to darts matches.

We now need to raise another £50,000 by 9 March. We appeal to all readers—make sure 1988 carries on the way we started, growing from strength to strength.

# New stage in world revolution

Victory to Sp

ONLY VERY rarely can it be said honestly that a turning point has been reached in political developments. But the events of 1987 represent just such a turning point, nationally, but still more in the processes at work at an international level. These in their turn will then react back to create still more dramatic changes in Britain itself.

Perhaps even our regular readers, heavily engrossed in their daily activity in the Labour Party and the unions, may not have appreciated the full significance of what has occurred in every sector of the world over the last 12 months.

In the course of 1987, 70 years after the historic Russian Revolution, an important new stage has been reached in the growing international revolution, which will have a major impact in determining the shape of the next dozen years to the end of the century.

1987 opened with the mass struggles of the students and youth in France and Spain, which gave inspiration to the workers' movement to fightback. Concessions to the students in France opened the floodgates to strikes, which have assisted in the collapse of Chirac's Thatcherite policies, and made almost inevitable the re-election of President Mitterrand later this year. In January demonstrations took place in China as students there voiced their fears of a return to a more hard-line Stalinism.

The year closed with revolutionary crises in Bangladesh and in South Korea after the disgraced military regime rigged the first election for 18 years. It saw the crisis of Stalinism intensify. The last act being the resignation in December of the Czech leader, Husak.

He it was twenty years ago, after Russian tanks had brought down the curtain on the 'Prague Spring,' who replaced the ousted 'liberal' bureaucrat, Dubcek. Ironically, Gorbachev's programme of perestroika is similar to Dubcek's 'reforms' and in the changed climate of Eastern Europe now, it was Husak who had to go. Although it is not yet clear how far Czechoslovakia will implement its own perestroika.

The end of 1987 also saw the return to militant struggle of the Italian workers after a lull of three years. German workers, in the heart of industry in the Ruhr, brought the region to a standstill in opposition to steel closures. Two million Greek workers struck against the Socialist government's austerity policies.

At the turn of the year the working class of Western Europe is shaping up for a renewed wave

By Jeremy Birch

of bitter industrial battles, which will include the workers of Britain.

But hanging like a black cloud over capitalism in the west is the collapse of share prices on 'Black Monday', 21 October 1987. It was not brought about by some mystical 'loss of confidence' by international speculators. It was a clear-headed recognition that the boom of the middle eighties was coming to an end.

In the crash of '87 stock market values fell more heavily than even on 'Black Friday' 1929. It has confirmed what *Militant* has explained that capitalism has come up against its limits. No more the heady rates of increase in economic growth and world trade of the fifties and sixties, that temporarily seemed to mask the contradictions of the system.

In those decades of relative prosperity capitalism built up an enormous capacity to produce. When the prospect of a profitable rate of return beckoned, investment into new plant and equipment increased at a level not seen before.

But inevitably the capitalists reached their 'catch 22' - the working class comprises by far the largest part of the market for what is produced, but is also the sole source of the bosses' profit. The ability of industry to produce is now well in excess of the workers' ability to buy back products. But to increase the market by increasing wages would only eat into profit, the whole aim of the process.

Unable to fully utilise the industrial capacity they have already, the capitalist class has no reason to invest at the old level in more spare capacity. British investment in real terms is still below 1979.

But without investment, employment for construction workers and workers in the capital goods sector falls, bringing down their demand for consumer goods. The whole economy dips. The best that international capitalism can offer now is the 'growth recession' as the weak boom of the last few years has been described.

And that 'boom' was not based on investment, but was artificially

maintained by the spending policies of the Reagan government. To finance his record arms bill, and therefore a record deficit on the American budget, interest rates were put up to attract foreign money into government bonds. But this hiked up the value of the dollar, making American goods more expensive and less competitive at home and abroad. A record American trade deficit was the result.

Japan, Germany and even Britain were able to enjoy the expanded US market, in which American goods were outpriced. 60 per cent of privatised Jaguar production is earmarked for the USA.

The spark for the share crash was the threat by the Reagan administration, under pressure from US manufacturers and exporters, that the dollar would be devalued to give them some relief. But this would have closed off the American market to her rivals, pushing the rest of the world into recession. In fact the dollar has since fallen by more than was then being threatened.

While international capital may have learnt some lessons from 1929 - governments will not allow banks to collapse, nor will they carry through savage deflation, drastically cutting the market - the major western governments cannot even agree on a meeting to co-ordinate their economic response.

## Slump

The fundamental crisis of capitalism is being revealed. The European Commission is already considering a jump in European unemployment from 16 million to 20 million. Most likely this year, the most serious slump for 50 years will set in, bringing with it major political upheavals.

It will sweep like a tidal wave over the third world. Already beset by the crisis imposed by the continuing low level of commodity prices during the boom, the third world has experienced a net transfer of \$25 billion per year in debt repayments flowing out, in excess of new loans and aid coming in. "A blood transfusion from the patient to the doctor," as a Brazilian bishop described it. In 1987 this has been the impetus for the upheavals in Haiti, the nationalisation of the banks in heavily indebted Peru and the fall of Bourguiba in Tunisia.

Commodity prices will plummet to new lows in a slump. Yet the least developed nations are

dependent on just one or two commodity exports to bring in the precious foreign exchange.

As for the semi-developed their access to western markets will be closed up by the tightening of the US budget deficit, and the inevitable new round in the incipient international trade war. Brazil and South Korea have substantial exports to the USA. As they dry up, what effect will it have on their growing social crises?

A new world slump will have a devastating impact on the weakest links of world capitalism.

As if to mirror the brewing economic crisis in the west, although with fundamentally different causes, the inescapable and growing problems of Stalinism have been revealed.

Gorbachev's reforms mark an important new stage of development in the deformed workers' states. They are an attempt to offset political revolution from below by reform from above. He is not just haunted by the movement of the Polish workers around Solidarity in the early eighties. There is the more immediate dangers from Yugoslavia, with 1,570 officially reported strikes in 1987, or Romania with the town revolt in Brasov in December, where workers broke into the Communist Party buildings.

In his new book *Perestroika*, and in his Russian Revolution anniversary speech, Gorbachev clearly understands the snarling up of the Russian economy. His economic adviser, Professor Aganbeygan, talks of "unprecedented stagnation and crisis," during 1979-82. Production of 40 per cent of industrial goods fell.

Gorbachev sees the failure of the bureaucratic plan to produce what is needed in the right quantity and quality. But how can he, the chief representative of the bureaucratic elite, solve problems endemic to the bureaucracy itself?

His answer is to apply elements of private enterprise to make the economy more responsive: to encourage greater wage differentials and perhaps even 'unprofitable' factories being closed down.

Incapable of inspiring the workers by appeals to their collective consciousness, Gorbachev aims for higher production by the carrot of individual wage rises and the stick of increased work. Not surprisingly he now reports that resistance "can not only be felt at management level but also in work collectives".

Internationally he has turned

"peaceful co-existence" into an immutable political principle, falsely invoking Lenin in justification. Surely the final expression that the capitalist class, despite occasional rhetoric, accepts that Stalinism no more than themselves welcomes social upheavals in the west, was the serialisation of Gorbachev's book in the *Mail on Sunday*.

## Arms burden

The super power deal on intermediate nuclear weapons represents Gorbachev coming to capitalism's aid in their hour of need. He wants to curb, if only a little, the massive drain on the Russian economy of arms spending. And he is happy to help Reagan cut-back on arms as part of the new budget plan.

Of course workers throughout the world can sleep easier in their beds in 1988, safe in the knowledge that with fully 4 per cent of Russia and America's arms dismantled, the super-powers can now only destroy the world 25 times over!

But Gorbachev, most significantly, still feels obliged to repeat in his Russian Revolution speech all the old Stalinist lies about Trotsky's role in the revolution and in the building of the early



Th  
MARXIST CANDIDATES





British students

The socialist factor

Labour's class fighters

Debt crisis threatens new convulsions

Latin America A continent in

revolt



Leadership vital to topple Pinochet regime

S African miners take on apartheid



Soviet state. Trotsky cannot be rehabilitated, because he will always represent the political revolution and the final settlement of accounts with the bureaucracy by the workers of Russia. 1987 in Britain was marked by the return for a third term of Thatcher. But despite their huge majority the more far-sighted Tories feel uneasy in victory. They look with dread at the North/South (really the class) divide, and the collapse of Toryism in Scotland, the North, the inner-cities and especially Liverpool. Within weeks of their election night celebrations, leading Tories were already looking to the post-Thatcher era. Tebbit and White-law ganged up against Thatcher to block her clone, Lord Young's, elevation to the Tory chairmanship. They were not prepared to allow him this potentially important stepping stone, should he be her chosen successor. Geoffrey Howe, the former chancellor of monetarism, now talks of the need to heal the social wounds. And now on poll tax, Michael Heseltine is striking out for the leadership, believing he has found the issue on which to campaign against Thatcherism. Incredibly a delegate at Tory conference (from Scotland of all pla-

ces) pleaded for poll tax to be introduced more quickly. In Scotland that must be like the dinosaur welcoming extinction. Thatcherism But how remote and callous are the Thatcherites. Asked to help with a raffle prize, which the health service is increasingly having to resort to, Thatcher sends a signed photograph. The organisers had to add in a bottle of whiskey before they dare sell tickets for that first prize. The second prize could only have been two signed Thatcher photos! Meanwhile tiny sick babies died for lack of a bed. The wet Tories, unlike unfortunately the new right Labour leadership, are not taken in by the supposed popular support for Thatcher's 'people's capitalism' and appeal to individual self-interest. The 1987 Social Trends survey reported no movement to 'Thatcherite values' since the 1983 election. But temporarily there was an optimistic evaluation of the economy and their own personal circumstances by some voters. Even those who definitely opposed her values voted for Thatcher on this basis. What the sociologists do not

add, is that it was only because Kinnoch and Hattersley were incapable of explaining that any economic prosperity was largely illusory and certainly temporary. Whatever security and stability employed owner-occupiers may have felt they had attained, was in jeopardy. Yet just weeks before the stock market crash, Brian Gould was still proclaiming: "No-one need feel alarmed at all...I believe no major crisis is in prospect". Economists are now warning of 50,000 City job losses as a result of the crash. The BP share fiasco showed how fragile was the 'share-owning democracy'. Thatcher's 'enterprise culture' of small firms, the service sector, hotels, restaurants and wine bars will collapse like a house built on chickens' legs, as recession bites. But just at this time Labour's new right leadership chooses to dispense with any idea of replacing capitalism with a nationalised, planned economy. The purpose of their new policy review is to create a tame, sanitised party, cleansed of socialist aims. Gould and Kinnoch want to adapt the Party to a new individualist, Thatcherite consensus, which if it ever existed, is just about to be broken.

Gould seeks to integrate share-ownership with socialism. He even appeared to explain his views at a conference fringe meeting sponsored by the Stock Exchange, just weeks before the share crash. One Party official at the election post-mortem, summed up the leadership's view: "Labour has to appeal to voters who have bought their council home, own a car and have £500 worth of shares". But what are those shares worth now, and does their owner still think they are such a good investment?

Reformism The Labour leadership, unable to grasp the full depth of the coming recession, also cannot foresee the dramatic changes it will bring to the psychology of the masses. If slump will fatally weaken Thatcherism, it will also put to the test the hopelessly inadequate policies of reformism. But the leadership still have no answer to the real ideas of socialism within the Party, other than expulsions, attacks on Labour's youth and the closure of local parties. This new right temporarily has a tighter grip on the National Executive Committee than at any time since the fifties. They are trying to reintroduce the traditions of intolerance and witch-hunts of that period, when even Anuerin Bevan faced expulsion. What can they reply, however, to the general election results for the left, and especially the Marxist left, during 1987? The city with the biggest swing to Labour was Liverpool, despite the attacks and expulsions by the Labour leaders. Eric Heffer and Terry Fields recorded dramatic victories, which if repeated nationally would have swept Labour to power. The same was evident in the wrongly dubbed 'soft' South and Midlands. Dave Nellist, standing on a real socialist platform, secured the best result for Labour in the West Midlands conurbation. While right winger John Spellar who stood in a similar seat of mainly owner-occupiers in Birmingham, secured a swing to the Tories! But there cannot be a return to the atmosphere of the fifties in the Party for any length of time,

because the economic growth that gave right wing Labourism some credibility is vanishing. Both in the Party and the unions support for the ideas of Marxism will grow as its predictions and analysis are borne out by the developing economic and social crisis. Already in 1987 the victory of John Macreadie as deputy general secretary of the CPSA and his election as the first Militant supporter on to the TUC General Council shows the changes just beginning in the unions, as the standpoint of the right wing is shown to be utterly inadequate when dealing with a more ruthless employing class. 1987 was a year when all the horrors of an international system based on personal profit were laid bare. It was a year of hideous disasters at Zeebrugge and Kings Cross. There was also the sinking of the Filipino ferry, where more lives were lost than on the Titanic, and the bereaved have insultingly been offered £500 each. These were not acts of God, but the result of capitalism's drive for profit which puts human safety a poor second. It was a year when the poorest of the planet, in Ethiopia, were visited again by famine, which no charity can ever fully prevent. Even now the world continues to grow sufficient to keep everyone alive, the starving just cannot afford to buy it. While in 'affluent' London, 50,000 unemployed young people spent Christmas on the streets. Yet the Tories are savaging the health service and other aspects of the welfare state. On any of these issues a Labour leadership worthy of its name could publicly campaign against capitalism and win mass support. On health alone the Labour Party could be striking back against the Tories with leaflets, posters, meetings and rallies. Instead they arrange bland Labour listens meetings. In the course of 1988 with the threat of a new world recession, many more workers and youth throughout the capitalist world will come to see that the idea of a socialist democracy is the most reasonable and rational alternative to the instability and insecurity, and for many millions the nightmare, of capitalism.

# Historic strike wave in Brazil



"WE ARE going to try a gradual easing off of the dictatorship. Nobody has ever managed to do this up to now. If it works,....OK...If not, what will happen is that first there will have to be a period of State violence, and then after that there will be a reaction to that violence. And then we'll all be strung up from the lamp posts (our emphasis) except for me because I'll be too old."

From a correspondent in Brazil

These words were spoken in 1976 by the top strategist of the Brazilian military dictatorship of 1964-1984, General Golberry Couto da Silva.

A gradual easing off of the repression did take place. But even today the ruling class has not developed sufficient confidence in its own credibility to risk free presidential elections.

This year will bring a clash within the capitalist parties over efforts to cut down President Sarney's term of office to four years, to try to head off the explosion of anger that is building up against him. The ruling coalition (the capitalists' 'centre' party, PMDB, and Sarney's PFL) is threatening to fall apart.

The ruling class know they are sitting on a mass of combustible material. There are no democratic rights in the workplace. The only trade unions permitted are those organised according to regulations copied from Mussolini 50 years ago.

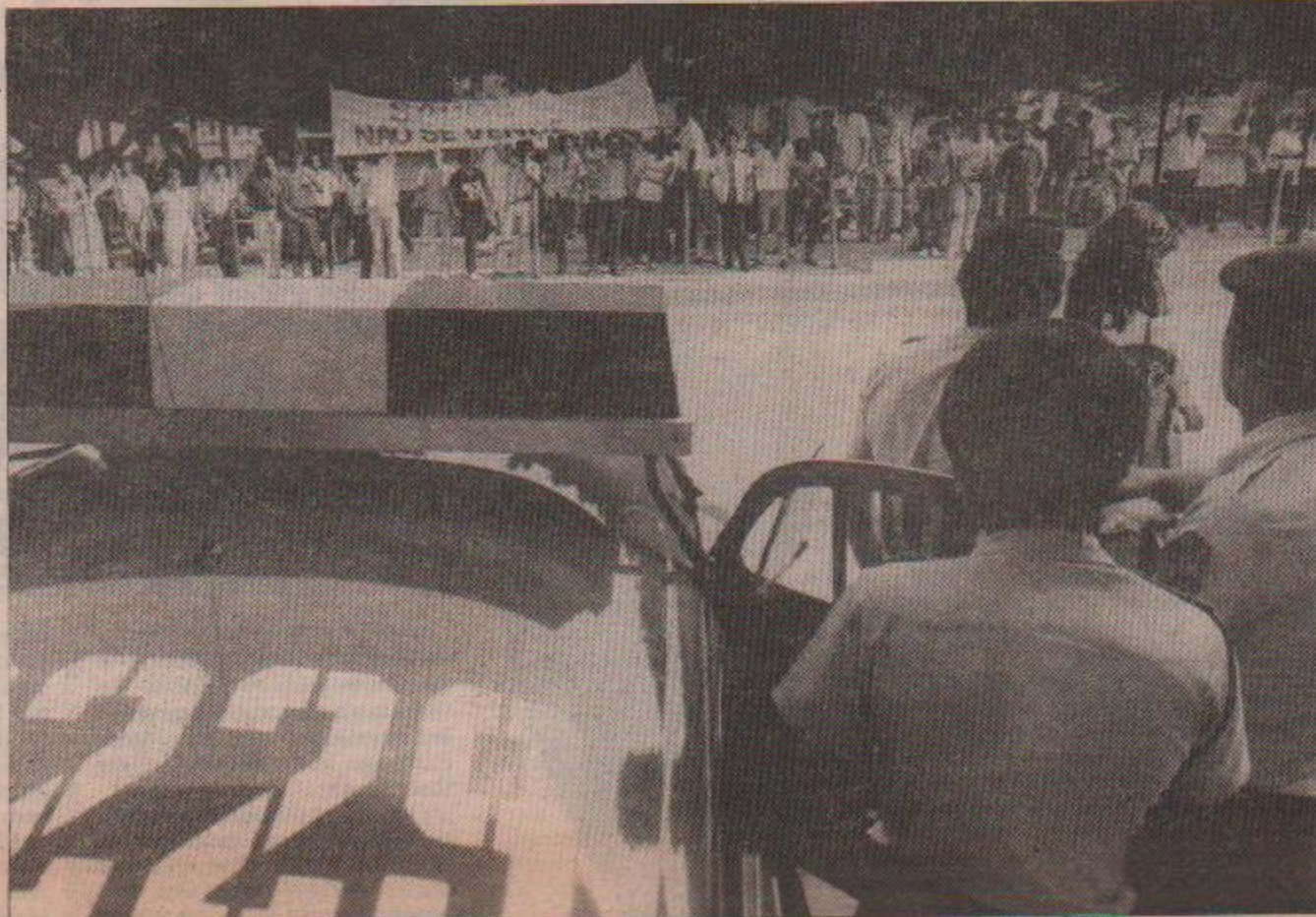
With huge sacrifices, the advanced workers have in many areas won elections to leading union positions, braving the most violent opposition of the bosses' stooges and the militarised police, and tried to democratise the organisations.

Unions where this has taken place, known as the combative unions, are stopped from organising in the workplaces. As there is no job security, activists are sacked immediately.

The only workplace organisation permitted by law is the workplace health and safety committee. Because of the repression these are useless. Brazil has the highest accident rate in the world as a result. Five thousand fingers are chopped off every year. Two out of three workers earn less than £15 a week.

Infant mortality is about 10 to 15 times the European rate in the poorer half of Brazil—the North-East—and six to seven times as high in the more industrialised South.

According to official fi-



(Top) In a shantytown. A thousand under-fives die every day for lack of clean water and simple medicines. (Above) Police face workers at a chemical plant protesting against pollution. The banner reads: 'Health not for sale'.

gures, 6 million of Sao Paulo's 15 million people live in shanties or slum tenements known as *corticos*.

In a country of fabulous natural wealth, it is increasingly clear to the masses that the blame for their misery lies with the capitalist system, locally and globally.

There is widespread awareness of the role of foreign debt payments in bleeding the continent dry. In Brazil, \$12 billion yearly (5 per cent of the GNP) has been paid to the banks while the total debt remains at \$110 billion.

New recession will bring unimaginable misery. It will also provoke a massive revolt which would link up with the whole continent.

During the last downturn, millions took to the streets to demand presidential elections. The military handed power to a civilian president in 1984, but he was elected by the Congress deputies, not directly by the voters.

## Direct elections

The vast majority of all social classes are now straining to get rid of this creature of the right wing military clique through direct presidential elections.

A clear alternative from the PT, the main working-class party, posing a socialist planned economy, would meet with massive support. In 1986 the PT had electoral support of about 6 per cent nationally and about 10 per cent in Sao Paulo.

However, the recent conference of the PT resolved

**In a country of fabulous natural wealth it is increasingly clear to the masses that the blame for their misery lies with the capitalist system. New recession will bring unimaginable misery. It will also provoke a massive revolt which would link up with the whole continent**

that socialism cannot be posed in Brazil today. A "democratic people's government", the result of an alliance with parties representing the 'middle layers' on an 'anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly' programme, was the leadership's position.

This idea is based on what they see as the low level of consciousness and organisation of the masses. Yet eight million workers were involved in strike action in the period January–August 1987—the biggest strike wave in history, which is still continuing!

A general strike against the ending of the price freeze in 1986, called at ten days' notice, had involved 15 million workers. But this remained a cry of protest; it was not taken forward to advance the political or organizational strength of the

workers.

The PT leaders did not pose a workers' government as the only way to carry out the main demand raised by the strike—non-payment of the county's foreign debt—because of their perspective that a long period was needed for the 'maturing' of their own base.

This is an echo of an idea posed by the Brazilian Communist Party previously, that the Brazilian workers are way behind the workers in countries such as Chile because no mass workers' party existed. They concluded that it was necessary to support capitalist parties claiming to be fighting for democracy, such as the PMDB.

This lack of clear leadership was the main factor behind the failure of the general strike called in August 1987—reinforcing all the prejudices of the PT leaders.

In fact, although it has not been channeled by a mass party with a class programme, it has been the mobilisation of the workers, and the capitalists' fear of revolt, which has decided the course of events. Indeed the strategists of the ruling class are more clearly aware than the labour movement leaders of the anger of the workers. They understand that the prolonged transition to civilian rule can no longer be slow-marched without causing an explosion.

In the past, the country's immense resources meant that populist politicians could make attractive promises. "We will build a million houses!" was how

one reactionary candidate tried to compensate for his complicity with the military torturers.

Now all this is changing. As a PMDB leader said: "Business is now afraid of the aftermath of populist speeches." The unfulfilled promises lead to frustration, rebellion and revolution.

A return to military dictatorship is blocked at present by the eruption of mass opposition which it would provoke. There will have to be direct presidential elections for the first time. The ruling class can hope, at best, for a politician to lull the workers with radical phrases for a period.

The prime candidate is Leonel Brizola.

Although not supported by an organised party with a real base amongst the workers, this ex-state governor—who led a successful armed resistance against a coup attempt in 1962—is currently leading opinion polls for the Presidential election.

## Expectations

Drawing on his past and his links with the Socialist International, he has built up expectations in order to distance himself from the PMDB, whose 'social-democratic' wing—now threatening to split—has been totally submissive to Sarney, and fallen into discredit.

Brizola's election, even on a reformist programme, would open up the revolutionary process again. Millions of workers would pass through the school of reformism and draw revolu-

tionary conclusions. For this reason the ruling-class strategists will aim to defuse the Presidential elections. After spending a decade as the impotent majority in a castrated parliamentary assembly, the PMDB has suddenly concluded that the powers of the President should be reduced and a parliamentary regime introduced.

Senator J. Richa of the PMDB explained the idea at a recent seminar in Sao Paulo University: "The crisis has seriously undermined the credibility of the political leaders... In Brazil the President has always been seen as a Messiah, a resurrected Moses leading us to a Promised Land with no misery and no inflation... We need a political pact which could assure a government the basis for majority support in Parliament which would allow it to carry through an austerity programme."

"Even if Brazil grew at the annual rate of the past, 6 per cent, we would have 20 million unemployed by the year 2000. But that sort of growth will be very difficult to get due to the internal crisis and to the unfavourable international situation. This perspective means that it is urgent to install a parliamentary system."

## Danger

But the words of General Golberry, quoted above, indicate the real balance of forces. All the capitalists' manoeuvres and the slow transition strategy have only managed to postpone the reckoning, as Golberry clearly understood in 1976.

The coming elections are fraught with danger for the capitalists. Millions of workers will try to use them as a way forward. With their pressure from one side, and the big imperialist powers pulling on the other, the thin fibre of capitalist democracy will eventually break in the middle.

There is no stable way forward for Brazilian capitalism. Behind the facade of democracy there will be splits among the ruling class—some regrouping for a military coup at a point where the government threatens to lose control over the masses, others drawing back from the risks involved.

With a socialist programme, linked in action to the historical strike wave and the radicalisation of the youth, the PT could develop rapidly and build a mass party capable of leading the biggest and most concentrated proletariat of Latin America to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of democratic workers' rule.

Photos: Vera Zursys, Sao Paulo

IN EARLY December the Ruhr—the industrial heart of Germany and Europe, with five million inhabitants—saw what was potentially the most explosive movement of steelworkers and miners since the end of the war.

By F. Garvie  
SPD, Cologne

The immediate cause was an announcement by the management of the giant steelworks, Krupp, that they were ditching a plan to cut 2,000 jobs at the Rheinhausen plant but saving the rest. Instead, Rheinhausen would be closed with the loss of 7,000 jobs.

On 10 December 200,000 workers were involved in strikes and solidarity actions. Of these, 100,000 were miners.

Opel car workers in Bochum, postal workers, refuse collectors, bus drivers, housewives, even farmers on their tractors, came onto the streets in sympathy. Bridges across the Rhine and motorways linking the cities across the Ruhr river were blocked, preventing tens of thousands more getting to work.

Interviewed on TV, most car drivers said they supported the steelworkers' fight. Roadblocks are illegal, but on this day the police did not intervene, and when questioned they said: "Oh no, these roadblocks aren't illegal!"

Hundreds of steelworkers stormed Krupp's palatial residence, forcing the security men to let them into the inner sanctum of German industrial capitalism. A few days earlier, angry workers had entered another 'holy of holies'—the shareholders' meeting at Krupp headquarters—and helped themselves to the cold buffet and 'Al Capone' cigars laid out for the bosses!

Faced with this movement, management has backed down and returned to the original plan. Many steelworkers regard this as a victory because their leaders do not question the capitalist logic of shedding 'over-capacity'.

But a significant minority on the works council reject the bosses' 'salami tactic' of cutting some jobs to 'save' the rest.

This tactic has already resulted in the loss of 95,000 jobs in steel since 1974, and 440,000 in coal

# Industrial unrest in the Ruhr



(Right) Workers outside steel boss Krupp's palatial villa Hügel in Essen, and (above) inside it, in front of a painting of founder Alfred Krupp.



**1987 has seen mass demonstrations on a completely new scale**

since 1960! Now the bosses want to cut 40,000 more in steel and 30,000 in the mines.

Parallel to this, jobs are being lost at a high rate in other industries. In engineering, a new wave of redundancies is looming.

Today, with the general downswing of world capitalism since 1974, these job losses can no longer be absorbed by other industries. Officially 2.2 million are unemployed in West Germany—

3.5 million is the trade union estimate.

## Recession

With the prospect of the next recession looming closer after the stock market crash, workers are beginning to realise what job losses on this scale would mean. Germany is highly dependent on exports; and the steadily falling dollar will undermine its trade

position even more, leading to further job losses.

And as if this isn't enough, the government is launching further attacks on the working class—a tax 'reform', cuts in the health service, and plans to extend hours in shops and services.

Against this background, the movement in the Ruhr marks a turning point in Germany's post-war history. At the same time, it has been the highest point in a

## Workers storm Krupp's palace

more general mood of unrest which has escalated over the past year.

1987 has seen mass demonstrations on a completely new scale—over 100,000 school students demonstrating in the spring; 20,000 railworkers in September; 100,000 postal workers on a day of action in October; 70,000 school and university students on the streets in November.

## Leadership

The whole atmosphere is charged with change. There is a need and a desire among workers and youth to struggle. What is lacking is a leadership to bring together all sections involved in action behind a common fighting programme.

The Christmas break came at just the right moment for the bosses, serving to postpone the movement momentarily. But in the words of the German proverb, "Omittance is no acquittance"—meaning that when the bosses and the government renew their attacks, the movement will erupt again with all the more force.

# Opportunities for French left

AGAINST A background of one of the biggest and most bitter strike movements for two decades, the forthcoming presidential elections will herald a new turning point in the struggle of the French working class.

By Bill Hargreaves

For the first time the workers' parties enter the campaign with a convincing lead in the opinion polls, indicating the tremendous radicalisation of French society over the last twelve months.

The return of the right in the parliamentary elections of April 1986 has proved to be a very hollow victory. Far from signalling a new ascendancy of the ruling class, the attempts of the reactionary Chirac government to attack workers' rights and living standards has provoked a wave of struggle on a scale not seen since the late 1960s.

After only eight months in power, Chirac was confronted by a student revolt that bore all the hallmarks of a new "1968", only this time on a much higher level. It was precisely the fear of such a development that forced the ruling class to pull back from an all

out confrontation with the working class.

This climbdown represented a major setback for the right—a setback from which it has not yet recovered.

On the other hand, the students' victory gave a huge boost to the confidence of the workers. This has been shown in the wave of strikes that have swept through France over the last twelve months, beginning with the four week long rail strike—the longest railway strike ever.

Since then, many other groups—including miners, dockers, building workers, printers, bank clerks, car workers, teachers, civil servants, industrial workers in both the public and private sectors, students and school students—have mounted a massive campaign of strikes and protests, in defence of jobs, against cuts in social security, housing, education, against racism and attacks on trade union rights.

The sheer scale of the movement has thrown the Chirac government onto the defensive, forcing it to abandon many of its reactionary 'reforms', including the racist nationality law.

Moreover, the paralysis of the government has reinforced the

splits within the right wing parties.

In particular, the upturn in the workers' struggle has halted the advance of the racist National Front, now facing its most serious crisis since its formation. NF support has massively declined since the infamous reference by its leader, Le Pen, to the Nazi holocaust as a "detail of history".

## Nazi-style

Big splits have opened up within the leadership over strategy and tactics, with some advocating a turn towards more openly Nazi-style provocations.

Hundreds of thousands of workers and youth have taken to the streets in anti-racists demonstrations. The massive opposition to the NF was graphically shown when Le Pen was prevented by 3,000 angry demonstrators from landing in the French Caribbean colony of Martinique.

His plane eventually landed, but another mass protest involving thousands of workers forced him to return to Paris without setting foot on land!

At the root of the present crisis is the economic impasse of French capitalism.

Today, France has become a net importer of manufactured goods. Even during the upturn that began in 1982, French capitalism lagged behind its main rivals, with an average annual growth rate of less than 1.5 per cent.

A bad economic situation has now turned into a potential disaster as a result of the stock market crash. The repercussions have been far more immediate and serious in France than in other European countries.

Chirac's massive privatisation programme, which was being accelerated in the run up to the presidential elections, was seen as the cornerstone of the government's economic policy. The first ten flotations attracted over 15 million applications. France's estimated 6–9 million individual shareholders were seen by the government as a reservoir of votes for the right.

The entire programme now lies in ruins as a result of the financial crash.

The Chirac government has been utterly incapable of solving the crisis. There are now more than 3.5 million unemployed. A further 3.5 million earn only the legal national minimum wage,

while 2.5 million earn even less.

An estimated 8 million people live on less than 50 francs (about £5.50) a day.

These conditions, together with the attacks by the right, have fuelled the mass movement. The present radicalisation could result in an unprecedented second term victory for Mitterand in the presidential elections, as the struggle shifts towards the political front.

## Radicalisation

However, it cannot be ruled out that the presidential election campaign could coincide with an acceleration of the industrial movement, opening up the prospect of an all-out confrontation.

With the present radicalisation, and the divisions within the ruling class, the next period provides a brilliant opportunity for the overthrow of Chirac and the return of a Socialist government—this time committed to socialist policies. An all-out offensive against the right, mobilised by the leadership of the workers' parties, would undoubtedly place the overthrow of capitalism on the agenda.

# Filipino reader comments on business of

# Mail-order brides

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to read your article about what we call the 'mail-order brides' business, by which Filipina women are sold as wives to rich foreigners. But you are mistaken in thinking that this is some new 'safe' alternative to prostitution.

It is an old racket. For years the classified columns of Manila newspapers have been crammed with adverts seeking 'young attractive Filipina brides' for elderly foreign businessmen—mostly Germans, Americans and Australians—who pay procurement agencies up to \$500 for their services as high-class pimps.

Women are amongst the most saleable exports from the Philippines: in addition to wives in Europe, Australia and America, there are also thousands of exploited Filipina 'cultural dancers' in Japan, 'entertainers' in the Middle East, and 'domestic helps' in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Your article also did not mention that the local market for prostitution comes not mainly from the tourists, but above all from the servicemen of the local US military bases. For instance, you quoted the case of Olongapo City, with its 14,000 'hospitality girls', but you should add that this is the site of the US naval base at Subic Bay. The first cases of AIDS in the Philippines came here and in Angeles, site of the US Clark Air Base.

Filipina women have every reason to support the struggle against imperialism which has raped the Philippines for centuries.

*Fraternaly, Lorna Demapanag, Manila.*



'Moral regeneration' under Marcos.

Photo: Piers Cavendish (Reflex).

# School meals threat

Dear Comrades,

An interesting aspect of the Tories' plans for education concerns their plan for those children who at present receive free school meals.

At the moment the cost of the meals, £5.50 a week, is paid by the education authority directly to the school. The children then receive a daily meal.

If the Tories have their way the money will be paid directly to parents as an extra amount on their giro. The implications are clear. A school meal is often the only cooked meal a child receives. The low level of benefits means that there will be a real temptation to spend the extra £5.50 on things other than the school meals.

At the same time there is a danger that the children themselves will not spend their dinner money on school dinners but, rather, on crisps, sweets etc.

If it is implemented it will mean cuts in the number of dinner ladies, and ultimately the ending of school meals altogether.

This is an issue that Nupe and other concerned unions must make a stand on, but more than that they should seek the widest support, and in particular from parents.

It would appear that the Tories are no longer content to attack education directly, but now are turning their attention towards the very food our children need.

*Dave Pollock, Scarborough.*

# Racist chants

Dear Comrades,

A couple of weeks ago I attended a European match between Aberdeen and Feyenoord. I enjoyed the first 70 minutes, but I didn't like the last 20 because I was disgusted to hear monkey chants coming from a group of Aberdeen fans.

The chants were made to a black Feyenoord substitute who came on. I was even more disgusted when the police patrolling the stadium burst out laughing at it. Then they wonder why so many people hate the police.

*A Stonehaven Militant supporter.*

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To subscribe to 6 (12) issues, send £3 (£5) to Militant, 75 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1 or 4 Waring Street, Belfast.

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# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

# Worship of sensual gratification

Comrades,

I read with interest your article on child abuse and the letter by Margaret Crear on the subject. Here in the US this is quite an issue, with, for example, a popular high school principal being charged here in Oakland with molesting several girls in his school. Although this is not exactly the same thing as the physical and sexual abuse of young children, I think there is a connection.

Particularly here in the US, living for immediate sensual gratification has become almost a religion, particularly due to the influence of TV (ie. the influence of big business) and partly due to the absence of a labor party which could

offer a political alternative.

Fast cars, loud music, fancy clothes and a fine home—there's little else to live for. Except sex. Sex is used for advertising, to sell movies and TV programs, for almost anything you can think of. Some of the most 'popular' models are young teenage girls, who are photographed in provocative poses.

If sensual pleasures are so important, if the social consequences of a person's actions are irrelevant, if sexual pleasure (really lust) is tied to everything from cars to cigarettes—then no

wonder that some people carry this to its logical extreme and act-out what they are encouraged to fantasise!

As Margaret Crear says, this is not to 'excuse' this sort of exploitation of youth (boys as well as girls), but to show that it is the capitalist system, the social crisis and the failure of the leadership of the working class that are the cause. Yes, economic factors—poverty etc.—are involved, but I think it's important to see that there is more than that, too.

*Fraternaly, John Reiman, Oakland, US.*

# MPs life of luxury

Dear Comrades,

As the crash on the stock exchange has its catastrophic effects on the British economy we will undoubtedly hear from the Tories and the bosses in industry that workers must 'tighten their belts' and accept pay increases at or below inflation.

With this in mind it is interesting to note that the New Year brings along the recent pay awards which MPs have voted for themselves.

Thatcher's wage now zooms well over the £60,000 mark with a cabinet minister having to make ends meet on £50,000 plus.

Neil Kinnock has to survive on a basic wage of just around £48,000 and then

finally we have your average MP struggling on £22,548 per year.

These MPs who produce no wealth are living a life of luxury while there are millions of workers forced to exist on supplementary benefit, the dole or low pay and young people suffer on just £28 per week YTS slave labour.

When Labour launches its 'Labour listens' campaign it should listen to the voters of Broadgreen, Bradford North, Coventry South East and Bermondsey where the candidates stood on their socialist principles as workers' MPs on workers' wages and hence achieved outstanding results.

*Allan Till, Broadgreen LPYS.*

# Opren lawyers get best deal

Dear Comrades,

The US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly is expected to announce a settlement of the Opren drug case. 1,200 victims of the drug, mainly elderly arthritics, have been attempting to get compensation for the last five years. They will receive a total payment of £2 million, an average payment of less than £2,000.

A further 450 victims will receive nothing as their claims were filed after January this year. However, the company has generously agreed to meet one claim in full. Lawyers representing the victims

will receive £4 million to cover the costs of the case, ie twice as much as the victims. So much for capitalist justice.

*Dave Archibald, Newcastle North Labour Party.*

# Nail Alton's Bill

Dear Militant,

The article 'Why I'm fighting Alton's Bill' in Militant 876, was a real eye-opener for me. Whilst being in favour of abortion rights I never realised what a harrowing experience an abortion (especially a late abortion) can be.

What an answer to those organisations like LIFE and SPUC who try to paint women who have abortions as callous murderers who end their pregnancies without a second thought. It is quite obvious to me that no woman would ever take such a decision lightly.

The labour and trade union movement has a duty to defend a woman's right to decide what she does with her own body and ensure that the likes of Alton never succeed in dragging women's rights back into the nineteenth century.

Alton thinks that his Bill will win the large catholic vote in his Mossley Hill constituency. The Liverpool Labour Party can ensure that it is the final nail in the coffin of Alton's political career.

*Les Tudor, West Derby LPYS, Liverpool.*

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# The unions must organise women workers



**THATCHER MAY be the first woman prime minister in Britain, but under her term of office the lot of working class women has suffered immeasurably.**

Women are mainly concentrated in low paid jobs, often working long and unsocial hours. This work is invariably of a tedious nature. A very high proportion of women workers are part-timers, covered by poorer, if any, employment rights.

Nowhere is the plight of women workers clearer than on the question of pay. Women have always suffered in employment from discrimination and lower wage rates, but the introduction of the Tories' 1985 Wages Act was a serious blow to all those women employed in jobs where union organisation is weak.

The most devastating effect of the Wages Act was to emasculate the power of the wages councils. These bodies had the power to enforce minimum wage rates in certain trades like retailing, bakeries, the clothing industry and others where the workers had no industrial muscle at all and had to work for virtually slave wage

rates.

In practice, the wages councils set very low minimum standards indeed. The 1980's have seen the return of mass unemployment and all wage rates have been depressed. So much so, that the wages councils wage rates have stopped tail-ending the rest of industry and have slowly become the 'norm'. In 1975 for example a shopworker employed by the Co-op earned some 49 per cent more than their equivalent shopworkers covered by a wages council order. By 1985 the same person would be earning only one per cent more than the wages council rate.

## Slave labour

The wages councils, despite all their drawbacks and inadequacies have to be defended.

All the trades covered by wages councils are predominantly made up of women workers. This Act is a scandalous attack on low paid women. It is a charter for slave labour.

A new phrase has been coined recently, 'pink collar unionism', to describe the new part-time

female workforce. They are frequently the worst treated, poorest paid and most exploited workers in any industry. Yet often they don't join unions—why?

These industries are precisely the ones where the unions are looking to recruit new members. If they seriously want to organise them, they will have to offer a proper, fighting lead to the women involved because for these women joining a union would make little sense unless the union was prepared to give such a lead on the crucial questions affecting women workers—low pay, employment rights, child-care facilities, maternity rights and transport.

The right wing leaderships of the TUC and those trade unions covering the major areas of women's employment have utterly failed to represent the interests of working class women. It falls to the alternative leaderships, the trade union Broad Lefts to take up the fight.

We talk to some women about the problems they and their colleagues face at work and the steps they believe the trade unions should be taking to fight back.

## Florence Nightingale image is changing

**WOMEN HAVE been at the sharp end of the demoralisation of NHS workers over the past few years.**

**By Winnie Murphy, Nupe shop steward, personal capacity.**

Nursing assistants, ancillary staff and nurses, the grades where women are most concentrated, are at the bottom end of the pay scale. They are the most directly affected by the deterioration of patient care. It is predominantly women workers who have to deal with the sick, the elderly and the handicapped victims of Tory cuts. The exodus from the nursing profession is indicative of the depressed atmosphere recently.

However, that is beginning to change. Women in the NHS have had enough. It is women who are moving into action now. Continued closures and the attempt by the Tory government to impose a



pay cut of up to £40 per week has propelled many previously inactive women into leading positions as shop stewards and leaders of campaigns.

In Cheshire, the Grange hospital geriatric unit is threa-

tened with closure and the loss of many jobs. For years, no shop steward has existed. Now however, stewards have come forward and are playing a leading role on the action committee formed by the Mid-Cheshire trades council. Massive potential exists for the trade union leadership to mobilise NHS workers and industrial workers to defend health care in Britain. Increasingly, unofficial community campaigns are springing up to get around the inactivity of the union bureaucracy.

Layers of even the most experienced nursing staff are beginning to explode the myth of the 'Florence Nightingale' image. First and foremost, we are workers. We will fight as tenaciously as any other workers to defend our conditions and the patients we care for. The union leadership will either lead this fight or stand aside.

## Working on the checkout

**I REMEMBER** the case of the young lad who'd worked for the company for a number of years and never been in any trouble. Staff levels were low and he'd worked all day without a break. Hunger got to him and eventually he started eating a packet of crisps on the checkout. For this 'crime' he was sacked.

Working at Tesco's involves not only great pressure when the tills are busy, but also times of unrelieved boredom. My workmates who have to spend all day sometimes, changing the tickets on the shelves must have one of the most tedious jobs going.

But the worst thing is the feeling of insecurity. How long is the store going to stay open?

Especially now with new superstores in the area there is a feeling that despite the denials of management, closure and redundancy is not far off.

Anyone who thinks working on a checkout is an easy life should give it a try. The stress is enormous. One day a week I have to work ten hours on the till, broken by a lunch break, with just a fifteen minute break in the morning and half an hour at tea-time. It is physical, too. The continuous

movement of items with your left hand results in aches in the arm, shoulder and neck, whilst the illuminated price display is responsible for headaches. In the busy run-up to Christmas, the pressure was even worse.

Membership of the shopworkers' union, Usdaw, has more than trebled at my store, but membership alone is not enough. The union has a policy for a £120 a week minimum wage and a 35 hour week, policies that no-one I work with would disagree with. What we need though is to build the confidence of all the members that the demands can be achieved and our leaders are prepared to seriously fight for them.

There is no doubt that they could be achieved—Tesco made a profit of £91 million last year. What we need is a real campaign to inspire and mobilise the members. This would also convince many non-members to join. The present policy of the union was fought for and won by Broad Left supporters, and now it is the Broad Left which has the crucial role to play in convincing shopworkers of their strength.

**By Sue, a Tesco checkout worker and Usdaw shop steward.**

## Too frightened to breathe

**THE PRIVATISATION** of British Telecom has led to the introduction of more boring, repetitive work, worse training, little job security and generally worse conditions for telephonists.

**By Judy Griffiths, vice-chair, UCW Coventry Telecoms, personal capacity.**

What was once a proud boast, to be Post Office trained, has now become an embarrassment as the service has declined. In Coventry we have young women working on temporary contracts which can mean sitting in front of VDU's sometimes on nine hour shifts, constantly referring to them as often as twice a minute.

Recently, there have been

eight cases of problem pregnancies, for example, miscarriage or still-birth. Management denies any responsibility. The temporaries, who are mainly young women, are continually harassed by management.

With new techniques available for monitoring girls they are unable to breathe on directory inquiries duties for fear of losing their jobs!

Modernisation brought speeding up of directories and with officer grade restructuring, BT hope to employ a workforce to fit traffic levels, regardless of effect on operators' duty rotas. In future they want no distinction between night and day operators. Night staff will lose their allowances and operators will be required to work 24 hour duty rotas, starting at perhaps six in the morning and finishing at two

at night if traffic requires it.

What management call modernisation, for the workforce means misery. The introduction of new technology is not opposed where it can be proved harmless to our members, but it must be used to improve the working conditions of all the staff in BT by introducing a shorter working week immediately for all grades.

Under present management there is no hope of this demand being a reality when they are hell-bent on closing exchanges and making us redundant. The Union of Communications Workers, representing our members, must begin the offensive against closures and the loss of jobs, instead of negotiating better terms of redundancy. Equally, we must build the Broad Left to turn the union into a fighting union.

## Militant

### Re-elect Scargill

THE BRITISH coal industry has been butchered since Thatcher came to office.

Manpower and collieries have been cut to less than half the number that existed then. Now, over 20 of the remaining 104 pits are 'under review' and British Coal are further threatening the future of at least 30 other pits and 40,000 jobs by demanding the introduction of 'flexible working' and six day production. A vicious disciplinary code and meagre wage rises have been imposed on the workplace. Privatisation looms in the background and more and more jobs are being given out to private contractors.

John Walsh and his right-wing and 'new realist' supporters would have us believe that Scargill and 'Scargillism' is to blame for this sorry state of affairs.

Negotiation—with the inflexible, uncompromising and hard-faced management—is the way to solve our problems. But, Brother Walsh has failed to provide us with any programme of any indication as to how or what he intends to 'negotiate' or our behalf.

### Uncompromising

In 1982, Arthur Scargill warned that 75 pits were earmarked for closure by the NCB. His prediction was proved correct. The closures could only have been stopped by a victory in the strike. No amount of 'negotiation' could have prevented the onslaught. Thatcher was determined to humble the NUM.

Since the end of the strike, productivity has increased by over 60 per cent.

But British Coal have not halted the closure programme, nor allowed its workforce any benefits from their achievements.

British Coal have consistently refused to negotiate with the NUM on major issues. How does Walsh intend to force them back to the negotiating table?

Negotiations can only be conducted from a position of strength. Scargill is in favour of such negotiation. The problem has not been an unwillingness on Scargill's part to talk with the board, but a failure on the part of the NEC to use the latent strength of the union.

Even the problem of the UDM could have begun to be tackled had the NUM taken stronger action over the disciplinary code which is despised by all miners. A victory for the NUM on the issues of the code and 'flexible working' could in itself lead to the break-up of the UDM and the re-unifying of Britain's miners. Such developments are impossible under the leadership of a compromiser or 'new realist'.

Militant supporters, despite some political differences which we have with Arthur Scargill, will be working hard to ensure that he is returned as NUM president on 22 January because he has to be returned if the union and the mining industry are to survive and thrive.

# Appeal to trade unionists

CONFERENCE '88 Sheffield City Hall, Sat 13 February. Speakers include Tony Benn. All trade union bodies (branches, workplaces, district committees, divisional councils etc) can send up to five delegates. The fee per delegate is £3. For application form and details of local transport to the conference, write to Broad Left Organising Committee, PO box 464, London E5 8PT.

Delegations received this week in-

clude TGWU branch 9/601, NCU Brighton clerical branch, Nupe Carlton and Netherfield branch, and TGWU 6/234.

Urgent: bookings for train from London should be sent c/o 143B Amhurst Road, Hackney E8 2AW. Cost is £20 return. Train departs St Pancras 7.39am and arrives back in London at 7.40pm. All cheques should be made payable to Bloc.



**Conference '88**  
Sheffield City Hall  
Sat 13 February  
Speakers include Tony Benn

## Ford: reject offer

"A NATIONAL strike is the only option open to us now. Management refuse to share any of the huge profits we have made for them. We have to show we are more determined than the bosses so they meet our claim in full." These words from a Ford worker echo the strength of feeling amongst the vast majority of workers in the build-up to a possible national strike.

Although official talks ended a month ago, Ford management are deliberately stringing out negotiations in an attempt to quell car workers' growing militancy. The union negotiators have to recognise this and say "enough is enough".

All the unions have rejected the present offer. Mick Murphy, Jimmy Airlie, and the others had better pay heed to the Ford workers' demands. There have been successful one-day strikes throughout the combine. Whilst management are obviously worried, this action has only led to an extra 2.25 per cent, still tied to a three year deal and even more strings.

The campaign for a one-year deal with no strings needs to be stepped up. With Ford UK intent on introducing more and more Japanese-style management methods, the mass meetings sche-

duled to take place on 20 January will be crucial to convince all Ford workers that an immediate national strike is the only way forward.

It is ten years since there has been a movement of this sort in the car industry. It was Ford strikers that led the attack on the wage controls policy of the Callaghan government in 1978. This time it is not only a fight against the most profitable company in the world, with British profits alone of £350 million this year, but it is against the Tories and all their anti-working class legislation.

It is clear that as with the miners' strike of 1984-85, Ford workers will need solidarity action throughout Britain and Europe to ensure a victory. Imports from Europe account for around 50 per cent of Ford's production in the UK. The European labour movement needs to be approached to ensure that the strike is effective—in particular the dockers and car workers.

- ★ For an immediate national strike!
- ★ No three year deal!
- ★ No strings!

By a Ford Dagenham worker



Ten years ago Ford workers took national action.

## Right delay Roddy's appointment



Kevin Roddy.

ONE PROCEDURAL device after another is being deployed inside the CPSA, the largest civil service union, by John Ellis, the general secretary, and Marion Chambers, the union's president, in an attempt to thwart the appointment of Kevin Roddy as the union's national organiser.

Kevin Roddy is a past CPSA president. He is currently the longest serving ordinary NEC member. For the last 11 years he has been organiser of the largest section of the union, the DHSS.

In December, at a meeting of the union's selection committee, after full consideration of all the short-listed candidates, Marion Chambers took a roll-call vote. Kevin had a clear majority in his favour.

At this point there was a walk-out by John Ellis, Marion Chambers and Kate Losinska. Chambers and Ellis have tried since to discredit Kevin Roddy's

appointment and stop it taking place.

The most serious CPSA activists do not consider this a secondary matter.

Any union executive determined to give effective fighting leadership on all questions facing its membership must try to ensure that it is supported by the very best, most qualified team of national organisers.

Right-wing officials constantly attempt to undermine the effectiveness of left-wing leaders in the trade unions. In critical battles, therefore, having officials with a proven record of organisation and struggle can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

The right wing are complaining that, in this case, the wrong person was chosen. John Ellis and Marion Chambers want someone nearer their own political views. They say that the appointment of Kevin Roddy is purely 'political'. This allegation flies in the face of

Kevin's history and outstanding qualifications. It is also rich given the fact that when the right wing controlled the CPSA executive, they appointed Barry Reamsbottom as editor of the union's journal. The *Financial Times* has commented that Barry Reamsbottom "is regarded as an organiser of the right wing".

The meeting to consider the appointment of Kevin Roddy now takes place on 26 January. John Macreadie, CPSA deputy general secretary, has commented that "The NEC has taken legal advice which fully backs its right to appoint Kevin Roddy and confirms that the NEC is the governing body of the union in between conferences.

"No matter how many procedural straws the right-wing officials grasp, the selection committee chose Kevin Roddy as the outstanding and best qualified candidate, and he will be appointed."

## Support TGWU left candidates

OVER THE next three weeks, voting takes place for seats on the general executive council of the giant Transport and General Workers Union. At present the executive is controlled by the right wing. Over the two years of its control it has moved to take the union away from the left as it has been, traditionally seen in the trade union movement.

The leadership has advocated support for Kinnock and the policies of the ex-left in the Labour party. This was clearly seen during the 1987 conference at Scarborough when the executive of the union supported the manoeuvres of Kinnock over one member one vote. It was widely reported at the time that the

president of the union voted twice on the executive when this policy was discussed.

A left majority would give Ron Todd, the general secretary, and other left officers, more confidence to tackle the ideas of 'new realism'. By joining forces with Scargill and Macreadie, a strong left leadership of the TGWU would give more confidence to the whole of the movement and in turn make the Tories and their allies think twice before taking them on.

The list of left candidates is as follows: Food, drink and tobacco, Larry Grogan; general workers, Barry Miller; textiles, Margaret Cassidy; Actss, Maureen Twomey; building, George Cane; Docks, Colin Cough-

lin; civil aviation, Chris Green; automotive, Dave Osborne; passenger transport, Larry Marden; power and engineering, John Byrne; RTC, Tony Cooper; public services, John Swinburne; agricultural, Ivor Monkton; chemical, Charlie Ball;

Region 1, London, P. Hagger, S. Riley; outside London, P. Landles; region 2, A. Frampton, J. Beckett; region 5, northern, P. Hardy; region 9, S. Womack; region 10, north, W. Greendale, the former president; elected unopposed, Alan Quinn, region 6, Dan Duffy, region 7, and two candidates from region 11.

By Ian Parker

# Civil servants back direct links

THE CIVIL and Public Services Association (CPSA), with a unanimous call at this year's conference for direct support for South African workers in struggle, is in the forefront of real solidarity with the fight against apartheid.

To further its South African campaign, the union has launched a bulletin providing branches with information and analysis of the workers' struggle in that country, plus explanation of what can be done to support particular campaigns.

Vusi Khumalo, president of the Post Office and Telecommunications Workers' Association in South Africa

By Tom Taylor  
branch secretary CPSA  
DE London North

has warmly responded to this excellent initiative: "We welcome and encourage direct links with CPSA. We look forward to your support."

The union's four leading national officials have signed a joint appeal to all branches to support the Ivin Malaza Memorial

Fund, which has been set up to support the family and continue the work of the militant workers' leader murdered by a death squad under the control of the reactionary Gatsha Buthelezi.

The Longbenton DHSS branch invited trade union veteran, Nimrod Sejake, a South African well known in the British Labour movement, to address their general meeting, and then organised a factory gate collection for the Memorial Fund. Desk collections and appeal sheets have also

been used to raise funds.

Such campaigns, and the bulletin itself, will be of great interest to activists in other unions and Broad Lefts, as well as Labour parties and LPYS branches, seeking ways of tapping the enormous groundswell of support for the South African workers' struggle in Britain against the same capitalist system.

For information or copies, please write to Steve Dunk, NEC CPSA, 215 Balham High Road, London SW17.

## B+I ferry crisis

ON WEDNESDAY 6 January the B+I ferry *Connacht* limped into Liverpool, six hours behind schedule, with tug assistance, her bow thrust and two of her four engines out of action! This was her last voyage into Liverpool.

It was a pathetic ending to the historical century and a half's link between the cities of Dublin and Liverpool.

The B+I line claim the route is a money-loser, yet other ferry companies including Sealink are already competing to take up the service.

## Mismanagement

This incident epitomises B+I's last eight years of mismanagement culminating in debts of £50 million for the company and a succession of various 'cost cutting' plans, including a 10-15 per cent wage cut, massive redundancies and the closure of the Fleetwood and Liverpool services.

Once again B+I's workforce were expected to pay for management's mistakes.

The group of unions representing the entire workforce responded, not by organising a campaign against the company but by commissioning their own 'rescue plan' including a five per cent wage cut, redundancies and other cuts!

The main opposition to the attacks came from the ship's officers, members of the Federated Workers Union of Ireland. The solidarity of the officers, forged during the two month strike of last year, and confidence in the branch leadership, forced the B+I to back down on the worst of their proposals. However, they still look set to spend 1988 just as they did last year—staggering from crisis to crisis.

By Alan Taylor,  
FWUI



Sixty workers at Dowding and Mills electrical engineers, Hackney Wick, have walked out after the company sacked 13 for operating an overtime ban. The workers, members of the EETPU, were in dispute over pay. Photo: Militant

## Nupe document will be used by employers

MEMBERS OF the National Union of Public Employees face a concerted attack on their jobs, wages and conditions from almost every direction. Many will therefore be dismayed at the contents of a document on local government presented to a recent meeting of the London Nupe local government area committee.

The document claims that within the union, the London division has always been to the forefront in winning improvements in members' wages and conditions. However, it goes on to say that now the political climate has changed, "London's local government finances are now at breaking point. We can't keep our finger in the dike—it's time to pull it out."

The way forward offered in response to the crisis in local government and the

threat of privatisation is not a determined national campaign, including industrial action, to defeat the Tories' plans. Instead it states, "The time is right for Nupe to publicly make the case for co-operation with the employers".

By a Militant reporter

Incredibly, it goes on to add that "The only way we can maintain services is by in the first instance eradicating non-productive workers. In 1980 with the new Education Act, we took the lead in order to minimise the losses. We must do the same today." It is hard to believe that this document has been produced by a Nupe official who is paid to improve and defend the conditions of Nupe members.

This document was produced to provide a 'leader-

ship response'. In reality it reveals the extent to which some full-time officials in the union have lost all confidence in the members. Much of it could have been written by any Tory employer and will be used by employers to justify swingeing attacks on Nupe members.

With 'leadership' like this then increasing numbers of Nupe members will instinctively see that rank and file activists must link up across employer boundaries to swap information and develop principled opposition to the employers' attacks. The Nupe Broad Left is undertaking this vital job and is gradually building a national network of supporters. If you are a Nupe member why don't you join the Broad Left?

What's happening in your workplace?  
Phone in your reports to  
the Industrial Editor  
on 01-533 3311  
before 5pm on Monday.



## News in Brief

### Redbrook colliery

"IF BRITISH Coal treated animals like this there would be a national outcry." This was the comment of Eric Richardson, president of Redbrook National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at the way miners at his pit, and nearby Woolley, had been treated.

Just before Christmas, British Coal rejected the NUM's survival plan for the pits. Their timing was calculated to create a panic 'close the pit' vote at both branch meetings as there was a January deadline for the £5000 lump sum redun-

dancy payment.

Altogether, over £200 million of investment has been written off by British Coal. As both Park Mill and Denby Grange collieries are in the same complex there are serious doubts about their future.

Barnsley is facing economic devastation. As a result of the savaging of jobs in the mining community, which has a knock-on effect in the local economy, Barnsley faces the new year with the prospect of one of the highest unemployment rates in Western Europe.

### Heath hospital Cardiff

HEALTH WORKERS at the Heath hospital, Cardiff, have taken 24 hour strike action in protest at the breaking of an agreement by the area health authority not to introduce competitive tendering before 1 April.

It was anticipated that the authority would try to blackmail staff to take cuts in bonus payments in order to cheapen in-house tenders. In a health authority where 200 ancillary jobs have already been lost, the threat to bonuses which raise take home pay from £67-70 for a 40 hour week to £85 per week has caused a groundswell of resistance.

The strike at the Heath hospital was a great success with all Cohse and Nupe members giving complete support, a great example of solidarity and strength in the face of management provocation.

### London fire cuts

THE CHIEF officer of the London Fire Brigade has put forward a package of cuts and other attacks for implementation this year. Whilst the number of job losses has been reduced after negotiations, the plan still involves 300 jobs going, reduced riding levels on some appliances as well as attacks on working conditions and leave arrangements.

The London regional committee of the Fire Brigades Union has recommended that the union simply 'note' the plan and then resist as much as possible in the detailed negotiations. The London membership on the union

now have to vote on this recommendation.

The danger in this strategy is that the FBU will be seen to offer no serious resistance to a major attack by the employers. Such a sign of weakness will simply give the green light for further attacks. Many of the original points which have been dropped from the proposals will simply be re-tabled at a future date.

The Fire Brigades Broad Left is calling for a vote of rejection of the proposals and a campaign against these cuts in the fire brigade.

By Matt Wrack, FBU  
London, personal capacity.

### DHSS staff victory

STAFF AT Shoreditch DHSS, East London, have won a significant victory on staffing levels. All Inner London DHSS offices face problems because of the pressure of the job, coupled with the misery of low pay. Staff turnover in excess of 100 per cent per year is not unknown.

After a week long strike at Shoreditch, supported by a one day stoppage of all the offices in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, manage-

ment gave in. In a complete turnaround from their previous position they conceded five extra trained staff immediately, extra 'consolidation' training for staff dealing with the new Income Support Conversion and an undertaking to carry out continuous recruitment to replace lost staff.

By Chas Berry, CPSA,  
Shoreditch DHSS sub-  
branch committee.

# Stop Alton's

# Bill

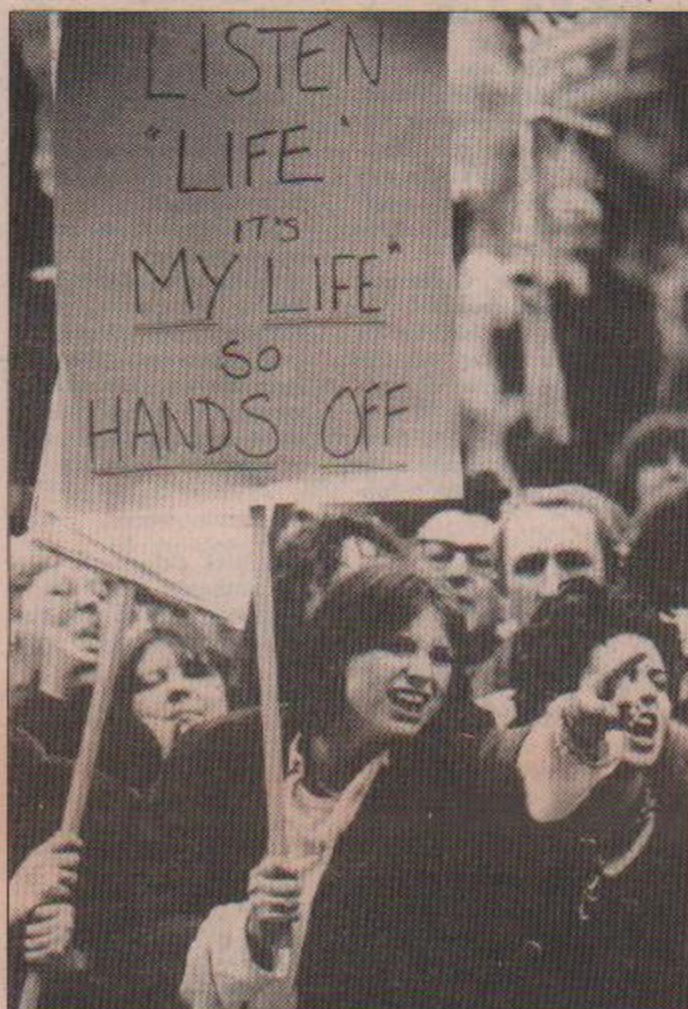


Photo: Militant  
A MASS mobilisation by the labour movement is needed to stop Alton's Bill which aims to curb women's rights for free abortion on demand.

By Teresa McKay

The need for abortion on the NHS shows the extent of the problems now facing working class women.

According to a report by Southwark Health Authority, abortion and social deprivation are clearly linked. Unemployment, lack of good quality cheap housing, inadequate childcare and benefits and the abolition of maternity grants force many women to decide that they cannot cope with the birth of a child.

'Family life' is praised by the Tories, but life for many families is becoming increasingly hard. In the last six years single parent families have seen a decline in their earned income of 38 per cent. Even after adding social security benefits and tax allowances their income still fell by 11 per cent.

Many women have an abortion because they used contraceptives which were unreliable.

### Working class women

If Alton is successful it is working class women who will suffer. They can't pay for private abortions, but rely on NHS facilities now being squeezed. It is working class women who will be most affected by the Tories, attacks on living standards.

No-one would force a woman to have an abortion against her will. Yet Alton and his supporters are prepared to use emotive propaganda, such as the abortion of female foetuses in some Asian communities, and videos showing abortion, in order to whip up reactionary attitudes and compel women who feel they cannot cope to go through with unwanted pregnancy.

The whole aim of their campaign is to criminalise those women who, through no fault of their own, find themselves seeking a late abortion.

Even so, late abortions won't be abolished by passing this Bill and the lowering of the limit to either 18 or 24 weeks. Instead we shall see desperate women forced to use back street abortionists or

### Militant stands for:

- ★ Abortion on demand.
- ★ Improved sex education in schools and the setting up of a sympathetic youth advisory service.
- ★ A massive injection of funds into the NHS along with the ending of private practice, to end late abortions and stop profiteering.
- ★ Nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry under workers' control and management.
- ★ Good quality, flexible child care available for all.
- ★ Child benefits and maternity grants which reflect the real cost of pregnancy and child-birth.

self inducement.

No-one has suggested that abortion is pleasant. Most, if not all who seek abortions are aware of what it entails. They also find it distressing. But the task of the labour movement is to deal with the conditions which compel women to take such a decision, in spite of the distress it causes them.

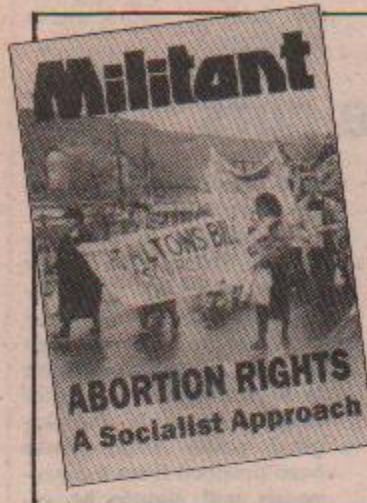
As socialists we are the real defenders and preservers of life. We want a society where everyone has a decent standard of living and the knowledge and provision of safe contraception to make abortion a thing of the past.

But legal abortion must be a woman's right as a safety net for those women the system has failed. The labour movement must mobilise its resources to defeat Alton and then go on the offensive to end the Tories' system and the poverty and social problems it creates.

### DIARY OF EVENTS

- 16 January**  
Liverpool Labour women's march  
assemble 11 am.  
Wavertree Park  
Botanic Road/Picton St.
- 21 January**  
Bermondsey Labour Party Women's section  
March to Parliament  
assemble 6.30 pm  
London College of Printing, Elephant and Castle.
- to join Torchlight procession and lobby of Parliament  
organised by Fight Alton's Bill campaign (FAB)
- Bring banners!**
- Militant Readers' Meeting**  
Florence Nightingale pub,  
Westminster Bridge Road,  
8.00pm.
- 19 March**  
National demonstration against Alton's Bill  
Assemble Hyde Park  
12.00 noon

Lobby of Parliament against Alton's Bill last October.



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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.