

Militant

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BLOC

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speakers include **Tony Benn**

Save our children's lives

"THIS GOVERNMENT has got blood on its hands!" said Shrewsbury mother Judith Marshall, whose daughter Bethan had to wait nine months for a heart operation.

She was on a delegation of parents in London to petition Parliament for desperately needed cash for the Birmingham Children's Hospital. "Children have died because there are not the beds and nurses for their operations and they will keep on doing so until something is done," Judith continued.

Demonstrations

But when the parents marched to Downing Street, a Thatcher flunkey told them the prime minister did not have time to meet them. She did not dare to take up the challenge of Coventry MP, Dave Nellist, and tell them which of their children would have to die because of her government's vendetta against the National Health Service.

In one city after another health workers are demonstrating against privatisation and cuts. The agonising plight of the hole-in-the-heart children has appalled millions of working class people. But Thatcher and the Tories callously slam the door in the face of these desperate parents.

Health minister Moore refuses to come up with more money. He spelt out the Tories' brutal message: "A successful economy is an essential requirement of successful health care."

Needless to say, the economy

By Tony Cross

was strong enough for him to get a private operation without "being a burden on the NHS", as he hypocritically put it. So why should the Tories waste money on saving lives when it can be used for tax cuts for their rich friends?

"If hospitals had had the same percentage rise during the last six years as the government has in take-home pay, there would have been no problem," said another parent, Derek William Turner.

"We want no privatisation of our hospitals. It stands out a mile that that is their ultimate aim. They want 'pay up today, have op. tomorrow' and only the rich will be able to pay. So far as the Tories are concerned, it's 'I'm alright, Jack'."

Even though their children's lives depend on it, these parents are adamant they do not want funding at the expense of other sections of the NHS.

"Opposite Downing Street is the new HQ of the DHSS," Dave Nellist told the lobbyists. "£38 million was spent there on crystal chandeliers, bidets and jacuzzis. Yet the Tories offered £6.7 million to the whole West Midlands just before Christmas. That's two days' running costs!"

"Public opinion is against tax

Photo: Andrew Moore/REFLEX



The door of Number 10 stays closed to children queuing for heart operations and their parents.

cuts at the expense of the NHS," John Hughes MP told *Militant*. He was thrown out of Parliament for raising the case of Coventry baby Matthew Mulhall during MPs' prayers. "It was absolutely worth it to focus attention on this problem."

Stoppage

The Scottish TUC is calling a one-day strike of health workers against privatisation. And other workers, like Scottish bus workers, have said they are ready to strike to support them.

"NHS workers have forced concessions from the Tories through their own determined action and appealing for support to other trade unionists," said Dave Nellist.

"The TUC should bring together regional problems into a national one-day stoppage to defend the NHS and to call for a massive injection of funds."

Broad Left for the NHS

"HEALTH WORKERS throughout the country have been taking strike action. It's vital that these disputes are co-ordinated and pressure exerted for national action.

NHS trade unionists will meet together at the Broad Left Organising Committee conference to form a national NHS Broad Left which can campaign for a one-day general strike to defend the health service.

I appeal to all trade unionists, especially health workers, to attend the conference."

George Williamson, national secretary BLOC.

Defend the NHS with a one day general strike

See pages 3 and 13 for more on NHS.

Nurses show how to fight Tories

TWICE IN two days the 'intransigent', 'unbending' Tory government was forced to back down to striking health workers. First it capitulated after Manchester nurses struck over their unsocial hours payments and then gave in to the blood transfusion workers over meal allowances.

Thatcher feels extremely vulnerable on health. She was terrified by the vision of nurses up and down the country striking and winning mass support from ordinary people. Added to the growing anger over health cuts, loss of beds and the tragic waiting lists for children's operations, the Tories face widespread public resentment.

Now Scottish health workers have struck and taken to the streets against privatisation. Even in St Albans nurses have gone on strike.

Quite accurately an *Independent* headline read: "Strikes by health workers have Cabinet on the run".

What an answer to the policy of 'new realism' that has such a hold on the trade union leadership. They are obsessed with the idea that strikes and unions are unpopular. The nurses have proved that only industrial action can force the Tories to retreat, and that it does win enthusiastic backing from other workers.

But, the *Independent* article continues, "national union leaders have been keeping their heads down, confining themselves to explaining why their members are walking out."

Health workers have every right to strike, but they need the full, active support of other trade unionists. The Tories have played on their dedication and commitment to caring for the sick to keep them on poverty wages. They have carried through cuts and allowed dangerous understaffing, especially on nights, to become commonplace. The Tories have banked on the nurses' dedication and understandable unwillingness to strike in protest.

But nurses and other health workers are fighting back and will continue to fight. When they strike for better wages and conditions which will keep nurses in the service, they are fighting for their patients.

Increasingly they are seeing themselves as workers and trade unionists. The repudiation of the Manchester strikes by the non-strike leadership of the RCN, will drive more nurses towards TUC unions or to shake up the RCN and push it towards the TUC.

At the moment nurses' action has been limited to 24 hour strikes, and correctly with carefully organised emergency cover. In their sensitive position, health workers need the support in action of the rest of the trade union movement which has the industrial muscle and the ability to hit the bosses' profits.

Already the north west TUC has called for a day of action in support of the health workers. The Scottish TUC has made a similar call. There is nothing inconsistent for *Militant* supporters pushing for regional action in their areas, while firmly arguing for a national one day general strike to defend the NHS. This demand must be taken to every hospital, and raised in every labour and trade union organisation. The support building up behind the health workers, is undoubtedly the strongest mood of solidarity since the miners' strike. What an opportunity for the trade union leaders to demonstrate the potential power of the unions and to prove it has not been diminished by Thatcher.

National class action on the health service, backed up by the Labour Party leaders too, could knock back the Tory offensive. The Labour leaders should forget the Labour Listens meetings they are organising. They will be for invited audiences only, including the church, chambers of commerce and professional associations. What can they tell Labour that will be relevant for the battle against Thatcherism?

Listen to the nurses instead. Listen to the Ford workers preparing for action and to the miners voting for Scargill because he represents struggle. Instead of local Labour Parties meekly asking voters what they feel about the Party, organise a mass canvassing campaign on the health service arguing for a fight back and explaining the socialist alternative to Tory cuts.

With the Alliance in absolute disarray, with the Tories 'on the run', health is the issue on which the Labour Party and the TUC can seize the initiative. The leaders must be made to lead a fighting campaign.

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Abortion and MPs' conscience

THE OBSERVER has claimed that 30 Labour MPs were going to support Alton's reactionary anti-abortion Bill. If they do, it will be a disgrace.

By Teresa McKay

In 1985, Labour Party conference carried a resolution by 5,305,000 to 611,000 to protect, restore and extend the provision of the 1967 Act, abandoning the idea of the 'conscience' clause, to allow MPs to vote against party policy.

Among the 30 is Neil Kinnock's front bench spokesman Kevin MacNamara. Unfortunately it also includes left wingers like Ronnie Campbell. Apparently they are outraged by the Campaign Group call for a three line whip against the Bill.

Individual MPs have the right to consult their 'consciences' on their own personal lives, but no right to force their moral and religious views on women who disagree with them.

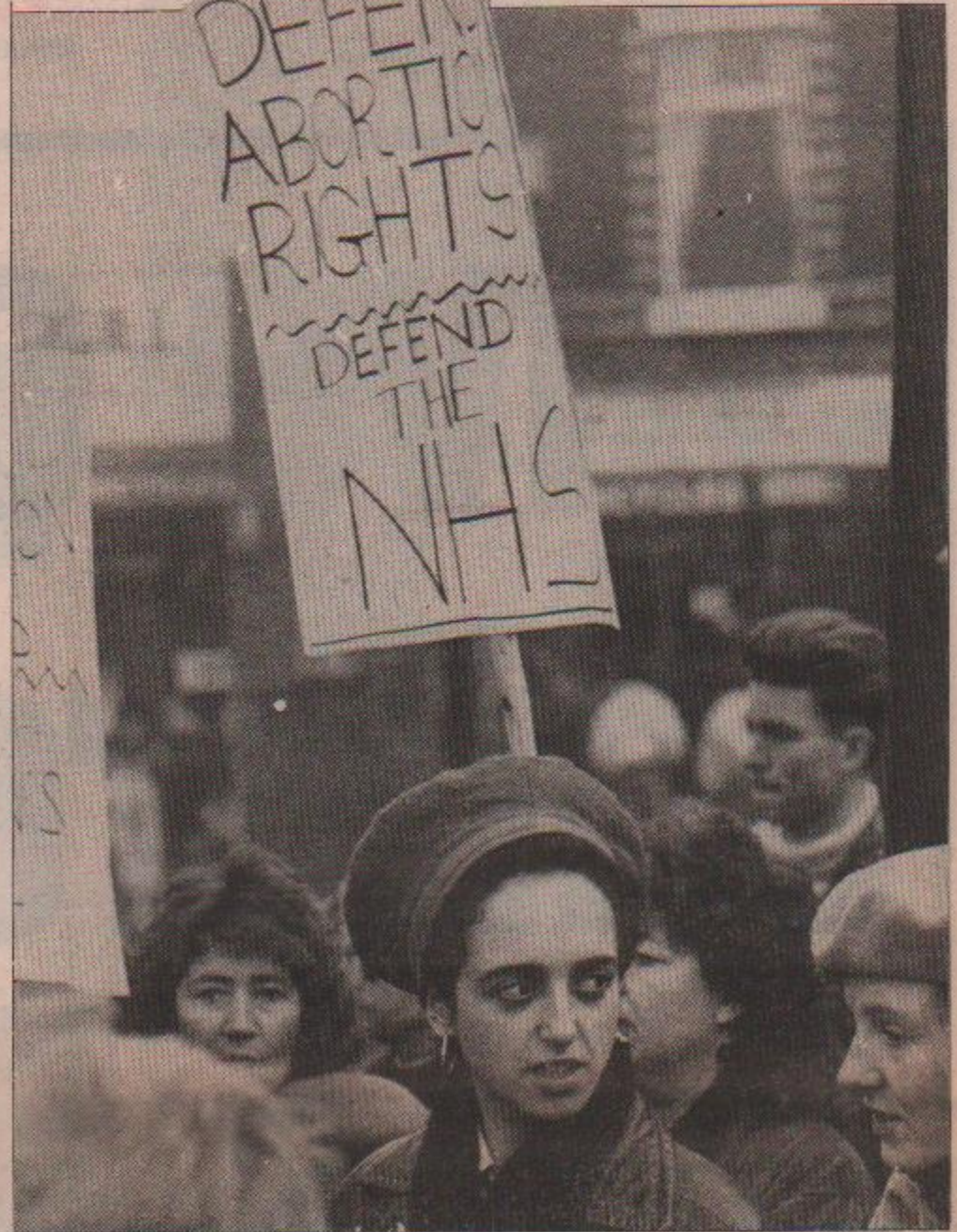
This is a class issue—not a moral one! In fact in the Marplan poll, commissioned by Doctors for Women's Choice on Abortion, a majority agreed that legal abortion should be available way beyond the limit Alton wants to impose.

The anti-abortionists may be vociferous, but they are a minority.

Where are our national leaders using the media and their resources to spell out that it will be working-class women who will suffer?

Even the Royal College of Gynaecologists says: "There is the certainty that fear, ignorance and administrative delays (ie under-resourcing of NHS and obstruction by some doctors—TM) will continue to be major reasons for late attendance for termination of pregnancy."

"These late attenders are usually women in the



Part of Liverpool march against Alton's Bill.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

greatest need of help: the very young and the socially deprived."

There will be real outrage if Alton's Bill is passed because Labour MPs use the 'conscience' clause. They need to be reminded that they represent the labour and trade union movement in Parliament—not their personal opinion.

No one argues that handicapped foetuses should be aborted. The organisations involved with the mentally handicapped will

lobby MPs demanding that parents, who carry the responsibility every day of their lives, should retain the right to choose.

Mrs Lavery, one of the organisers of the lobby whose seven year old died from a genetic disease, explained what it meant to her: waking up in the middle of the night to bathe him because diarrhoea had taken the skin off his bottom, waking up each morning not knowing whether he was alive or dead—a child dying from the moment he

was born.

This Bill must be rejected. All Labour MPs must be lobbied, especially the 30 dissidents. If they should be responsible for giving Alton a majority, by lining up with Tories and Liberals, they will never be forgiven in the Labour Party.

Those who vote for the Alton Bill won't stop abortion—that can't be stopped by legislation—they will be voting to return desperate working-class women to the back-street abortionists.

Merger splits the Alliance

AT THE second attempt the Liberals and SDP have cobbled together a policy statement. But the gaping splits between and within the two parties cannot be papered over.

The people who were going to break the mould of British politics came close to merging two parties into four!

Their merger talks descended into farce when SDP leader Robert Maclennan, who had been trying to out-do his predecessor David Owen in 'toughness', burst into tears at a meeting of Liberal MPs.

This debacle did not arise from tactical errors or personal misjudgements, but reflects the profound class polarisation in British society in the last ten years. There is no middle ground any more.

Dictated by the capitalists' need to raise profits and make industry more 'competitive' at workers' expense, the Tories have attacked trade union rights, public services, civil liberties and protection for those worst off.

This strategy has had the full backing of the leaders of both wings of the

SDP. Indeed, Maclennan's first merger policy document, (drawn up by two sons of Tory MPs!) was full of policies which even Thatcher has not yet dared support openly. These renegade Labour MPs are now at the extreme right of the political spectrum.

Members ignored

They wanted an end to universal child benefit, VAT on food and children's clothes and a commitment to keep Trident nuclear missiles indefinitely.

David Steel was happy to go along with all this! He forgot that the Liberal members still imagine themselves to be part of a radical reforming party.

At national level, the members are ignored by a leader who dismisses them as 'irritants' and lets the SDP decide his policies. Even at local level, their radicalism evaporates as soon as they experience a whiff of power. They start cutting services and forming pacts with Tories.

But they need to maintain the illusion of radicalism. They could not stomach the open capitulation to Thatcherism in the first Steel-Maclennan document. So they forced Steel to disown it and come back with a new statement with all the most controversial policies taken out.

And the 'tough' Maclennan went along with this. Like the legendary American politician, he was saying: "These are my principles; if you don't like them... I'll change them."

With this new formula they may now get the merger agreed, but the damage is done. The Liberal rank and file have seen what their leaders really stand for.

There is no way in which capitalism can be reformed. For workers, and any Liberals who genuinely want to reform society, the only alternative to Tory/SDP policies is the socialist programme of Marxism.

By Pat Craven

Striking back at privatisation



Tebbit's moonlight serenade

"ALL OUT now" chanted angry domestics, ancillary workers and nurses when Lothian Health Board said they would go ahead with privatisation of ancillary services.

Over 2000 from every hospital in the Lothians went on strike against these plans, lobbying the board on 14 January.

Privatisation would devastate pay and working conditions. The private tenderers offer between £1 and £1.40 per hour for ancillary staff, a drop of nearly 50 per cent for some workers and a third for the majority. Sick pay and holiday pay would be scrapped.

More than 150 nurses joined the strike, with new confidence after the Manchester nurses' strike forced the government to back down over scrapping un-social hours payment. The following Monday ancillary staff struck and held mass meetings to discuss further action.

One binman told pickets outside Gogarburn hospital that they would join them if health workers went on strike, as they were next for privatisation.

Members of the public told health workers to keep up the fight. The time to act is now, with a one day strike of health workers with solidarity action organised by the STUC. Health workers should address mass meetings and call for support for the NHS.

With an angry mood against the poll tax, there would be great public support for action to stop the Tories.

By Sharon Yeoman

(NUPE south hospitals branch personal capacity)



An ambulance driver shows support for protesters in Edinburgh.

Photo: Steve McTaggart.

NORMAN TEBBIT, former Tory party chairman blames everyone for the problems of the NHS—everyone except the Tory government.

He attacked the BBC for what he called a "torrent of health service horror stories." But most of all, he savaged the nurses for allegedly causing shortages.

"How many nurses now use the extra time off from a shorter working week to work at the hospital down the road while the nurses from that hospital are moonlighting at the first?" he asked.

What a nerve! As you might expect from a man affectionately known as Dracula, nobody could "moonlight" more than Tebbit. As well as MP for Chingford (basic wage £22,500 plus umpteen extras) he is a director of British Telecom, Blue Arrow, BET and Sears Holdings.

Tebbit is a director of firms involved in staff recruitment (he used to be unemployment minister), transport (who told you to get on your bike?), and shoe shops (well, he is the Chingford boot boy.)

Tebbit himself steered BT's privatisation through Parliament; now his BT directorship alone pays between £5000 and £20,000 a year. If nurses earned £400 a week, nobody would be forced into agency work on top of their arduous NHS jobs.

But it is nonsense to blame the shortage of nurses on moonlighting. Shortages are caused by low pay and Tory cutbacks. Some health authorities underspend on nursing to cover for cuts elsewhere. Tebbit's venom can't hide the government's responsibility for the NHS crisis.

By Roger Shives

Tory cuts—no more

"LINWOOD NO MORE. Bathgate no more. NHS no more?" read one placard on the 2500 strong NHS workers' lobby of Greater Glasgow health board offices on 18 January.

Eleven Glasgow hospitals stopped for four hours to lobby the board meeting discussing the government order to speed up

privatisation of hospital laundry and catering services, at the cost of thousands of jobs.

Porters, cleaners, cooks and many nurses joined the lobby, leaving only an agreed emergency staffing level at these hospitals. One nurse pointed out that staff shortages made emergency level the normal level of service.

The board refused to let union delegations address their meeting. But now health union leaders have agreed with the Scottish TUC to call a 24 hour general strike in the health service and are considering selective industrial action by other workers.

Fight the cuts—fight expulsions

Manchester

"THE STRATEGY we adopted to fight Tory cuts and defend the city's jobs and services has totally failed" said John Nicholson, the left-wing former deputy leader of Manchester's Labour council.

This 'left' council has totally capitulated to the Tories. 4,000 jobs are set to be axed. *Militant's* warning of a 'winter of discontent' has been borne out.

South Manchester College students' union has called a conference to prepare a city-wide strike of schools and colleges to lobby the council's next meeting on 28 January.

The union side has walked out of the education joint consultative committee. Nalگو is discussing balloting for strike action on 25 January and its convenors are calling its 9,500 members to a mass demonstration on the 28th.

In an attempt to divert attention from the fight against the cuts, council leader Graham Stringer and deputy director Steve Machin have called for the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from Withington Labour Party.

After an incident at a social held by Old Moat branch, Stringer and Machin raised allegations of 'violence'. The truth is, however, that they deliberately provoked the incident, as a pretext for trumped-up allegations of 'intimidation'

against the left.

Marxists totally oppose violence and intimidation, above all within the labour movement. Supporters of *Militant* work to win support on the basis of ideas, relying on arguments and facts. Personal attacks and intimidation are alien to the labour movement's democratic traditions.

The council leadership, however, clearly has no confidence that it can maintain political support for its policy of cuts. They are desperately resorting to a campaign of dirty tricks against those opposing them.

Targetted

Stringer has targetted Withington because of the party's growing opposition to the cuts. *Militant* supporters have topped the poll in two ward election shortlisting meetings and resolutions have been passed condemning the cuts.

After the incident at the social, there were calls for an investigation, which were agreed by the constituency party executive. But letters from Stringer, Machin and other right wingers reveal that they do not want an impartial investigation into what happened, but a springboard to a purge of the left.

Machin has even gone so far as to smear *Militant* supporters with responsibility for the attack in December on Liverpool council leader, Keva

Coombes—which was the work of fascists!

It is also ironic that Stringer should be raising a hue and cry about 'intimidation'. In 1983 he was reprimanded by the Labour Party for his part in the notorious 'art gallery brawl' in 1982 when his coterie attacked right-wing councillors.

Now he and his supporters are taking every measure to try to intimidate and suppress opponents of their cuts. Councillor John Byrne has been thrown off the city party executive after 15 years' service. The women's council chairperson has been kicked off the city party.

Militant supporters have faced verbal and physical abuse and threats, for which one councillor had to be reprimanded by his local party. But in Withington they are sure that the majority of party members will not be stampeded into supporting a witch-hunt.

Stringer claims that *Militant* has been defeated in the debate over the cuts. But the mass lobbies of thousands of workers will show that only the socialist strategy explained by *Militant* can defeat the cuts.

If 40 nurses can beat the Tories, what could 40,000 council workers do?

By a Militant Reporter

Knowsley

THE KNOWSLEY Campaign Group's public meeting was the perfect reply to the expulsion of Knowsley North Labour Party's chairman Jim McGinley.

200 people cheered Dennis Skinner MP, who lambasted Labour's right: "People are expelled for selling *Militant*, but the press won't just say 'Well done'. They will demand more. Once you set that hare you can never catch it."

Other speakers compared the fighting policies of the disqualified Liverpool councillors with the cuts of Knowsley. Most of the audience applied to join the Campaign Group and £340 was raised from unions, party branches and individuals to implement Jim McGinley's pledge to build a socialist Labour Party.

By Richard Venton

Dudley

DUDLEY EAST Labour Party have called for an inquiry into former councillor Les Millard, a party member for 14 years. The right wing threaten to expel him for selling *Militant*.

On the council he never voted for rent increases or other attacks on working-class people's living standards. But now Dudley council have put up rents and are poised to cut housing and social services.

A campaign of protest has been launched. Send protests to the constituency party secretary, Mary Whitehouse, 77 Merryfields Road, Russells Hall Estate, Dudley DY1 2NO, with copies to Les Millard, 86 Dimmocks Avenue, Coseley, Dudley.

Stop the Baker bill

AT THE National Union of Students (NUS) executive on 17 January Colette Williams proposed that NUS organise a mass turn out for a demonstration on 1 March and support that day's TUC lobby of Parliament against the Education Bill.

Demonstration

This would have meant cancelling the proposed 27 February demonstration but it would have given the best opportunity for years to build worker/student unity against government attacks on education. Unfortunately Colette's proposal was heavily defeated.

Despite the difficulties of getting a turn out on a Saturday, student unions and area organisations should now build mass support for the NUS 27 February demonstration. Area organisations are being asked to send one coach to the TUC lobby.

By John Jennings

Black sections' tactics fail

LAST YEAR the labour movement was shocked by revelations that Camden council has repatriated homeless Irish families and was considering doing the same to Bangladeshis.

Camden was one of a number of London Labour councils who followed the Greater London Council's (GLC) example in adopting anti-racist policies. They declared themselves equal opportunities employers, set up race relations units and contributed to the GLC's 'anti-racism year' in 1984.

Now these councils are carrying out policies which are reversing the very policies they championed before. Linda Bellos, black

Councils and racism

leader of Lambeth, is advocating £60 million of cuts. In Haringey, Bernie Grant MP voted with the Tories for cuts of £15 million. Merle Amory, the black ex-leader of Brent council, also presented a cuts budget.

What difference do their protestations of anti-racism and their race relations units make now to the black workers they will sack or who will suffer the effects of their cuts in services?

In fact the local government financial crisis now even threatens the race relations quangos they set up. Camden has been accused

by its housing race relations officer of closing down their unit. Brent has frozen a number of posts in theirs.

United

When the old majority of Liverpool council were conducting a battle against Tory cuts, slanderers accused it of being racist. But by leading united action of black and white workers against the Tories, the council provided houses, jobs and improved social services for blacks and took a principled stand against

racism.

The council leaders identified with black sections, and their white sympathisers, have all failed to fight Tory cuts in the way Liverpool did. The result has been the worsening of black workers' living standards, the reversal of any positive steps they did take against racism and discrimination and the reduction of many of their most publicised policies to empty statements.

By Colin de Freitas

Anger at Lambeth cuts

GREG VINCENT is on the Lambeth Council Joint Trade Unions Committee. Leading advocate of black sections, Linda Bellos is leader of Lambeth council. Now the council is putting through £60 million of cuts. The council's staff should be 11,500. It is already understaffed and the cuts will mean reducing it to 9,400 by March 1989. Greg told *Militant* about black workers' reaction:

"The Lambeth council black workers' group had a conference with 3-400 black workers there. No doubt Linda Bellos would have been delighted at this turn-out, except that they voted overwhelmingly against the cuts she wants to put through.

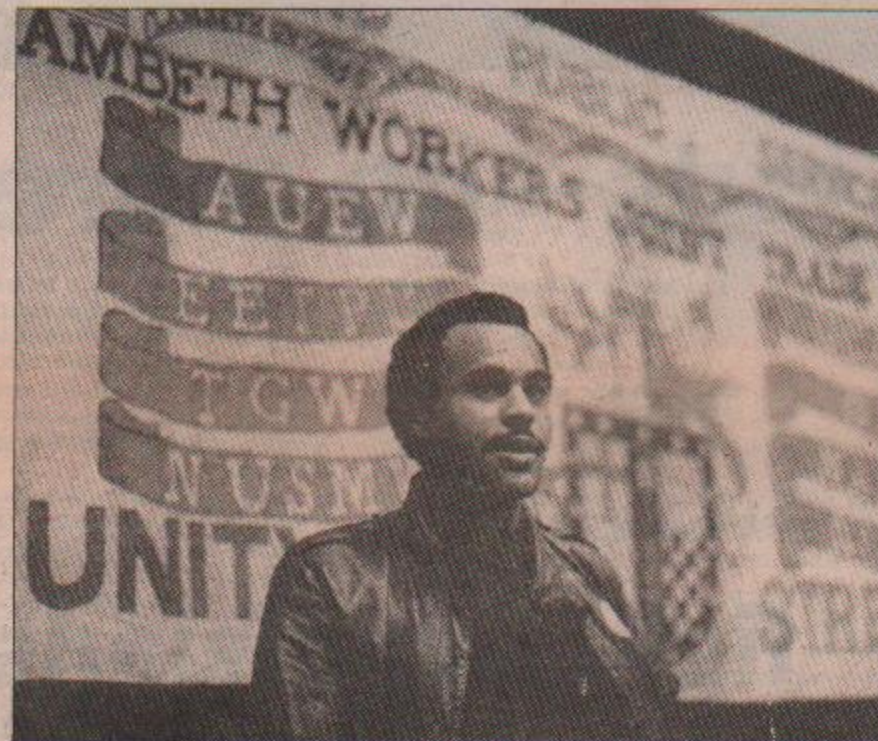
"I'd criticise the black sections because they have got their positions but are putting through cuts like these which have a devastating effect on the black community.

"In Lambeth they will mean 1,000 jobs will go. The last in, first out rule will mean all the black people recruited by the council will be out.

"The cuts will also mean the closure of nurseries, community groups, advice centres and a complete rundown of council services, especially repairs.

"The environmental health don't even visit council properties now. Blacks live in some of the worst housing and now there will be no prospect of getting out of slum housing. Bellos wants to cut 26 per cent of the jobs in housing!

"In my job I frequently come across



Greg Vincent with the Lambeth joint unions' banner at the LPYS black youth rally last year. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

black women who have been in bed and breakfast for at least eighteen months. For some it's been up to four years. One young black woman had to abandon her baby in the homeless persons' unit just to get an interview.

"The waiting list has been closed for several years, so people can't get

onto it, or even into housing associations, because the council is a referee for them.

"This year we must build the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. There will be a one-day strike in March. It's in the lap of the unions to get black workers involved in the fight against the cuts."

Blacks and the Labour Party

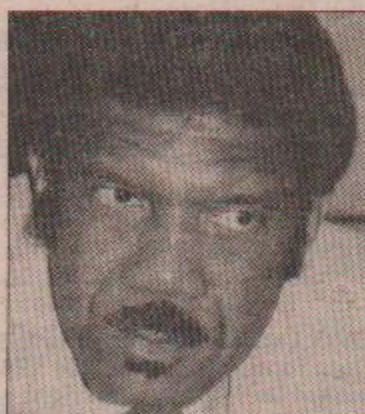
BILL MORRIS, deputy general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and the most prominent black union leader, has put forward a plan to end the 'trench warfare' over black sections in the Labour Party.

In an article in *Tribune* he proposes a black socialist society, affiliated to the Labour Party but open to all "who share its basic objectives, to advance the interests of black people and of socialist politics".

This is a welcome rejection of the arguments for black sections which would have led to divisions on racial lines.

The campaign for black sections, Bill Morris rightly says, has "failed to mobilise real mass support in the black community. The time has now come to move from protest to politics".

He also notes a sharp decline in Labour's support amongst black



Bill Morris.

people. Although a big majority of blacks still vote Labour, the number doing so has declined since 1979, in line with the general decline in Labour's vote.

This drop in votes has not been because of the absence of black sections in the party, which have never been supported by the majority of blacks inside and out-

side the Labour Party.

It stems from the disgraceful record of previous Labour governments on immigration controls and the lack of an effective programme to fight on burning issues like police harassment, democratic control of the police and all the social problems black people face—double the average rate of unemployment, the worst housing and racial attacks.

Despite this, black workers and youth remain Labour's most loyal supporters. But the party must take decisive steps to get them actively involved.

Unlike black sections, the black socialist society proposed by Bill Morris is not based on racial criteria which he rightly rejects. But if it is to be open to all members, this raises the question of what role it would play.

To make an effective contribution to the party it would need to be organised as an anti-racist

society to tackle the fundamental question of the fight against racial oppression. To make it an organisation affiliated to the Labour Party like the Fabian Society or the Socialist Educational Association would be to marginalise this burning question.

It must take up the vital issue of defending black people but also defend the movement against attempts to use racism as a weapon to divide workers.

Marxists in the party have consistently argued for local anti-racist committees, as an integral part of the party, campaigning against racial attacks, particular immigration cases and generally raising the level of consciousness on the question of racism.

The biggest gap in Morris' proposal is the lack of a programme on which his society would campaign.

He says that blacks have enormous talent to offer the Labour

Party. There should be more black representatives at every level of the movement, but workers' representatives must be judged on the policies to which they are committed and their record in the movement. They must also be fully accountable to those they represent.

The Labour Party Young Socialists have repeatedly shown that a socialist programme and campaign attracts blacks into political activity. To be effective, a socialist anti-racist society would have to follow their example.

The struggle against racism is inextricably bound to the struggle against capitalism. It is time the Labour Party conducted a vigorous campaign against racism, putting forward a socialist programme to destroy the social conditions that create it.

By Nina Rahel

MP attacks Post Office Privateers

THE ULTRA-REACTIONARY Tory MP for Billericay, Teresa Gorman, tried to get Parliament to abolish the Post Office monopoly in delivering letters on 12 January. This move would have meant the effective privatisation of the service and was opposed by Labour.

Coventry MP, Dave Nellist, was Labour's spokesperson in the debate.

"The Post Office has been profitable for the last ten years," he pointed out, "...not least because of the work and effort put in by postal workers throughout the country, as a result of which productivity has risen by over 20 per cent over the past five years.

"That is why the fat cats in the City of London are awaiting with glee the pickings from the next round of the prime minister's sale of the century."

He warned that the privateers, like Rupert Murdoch's firm TNT, would keep pressure on and that it would have to be met by a national campaign by postal workers, supported by other trade unionists, to defend the publicly owned service.

"The eyes of the right are firmly on Girobank and the counter services, because those businesses are worth £86,000 million, (and) because the counter services occupy valuable and profitable high street sites, in every town and city in the country."

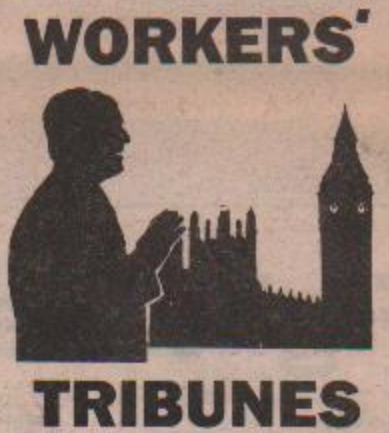
"The Tories seem to have a pathological hatred of publicly owned industries. They denigrate them. Then, after privatisation we are all expected to believe that BT is now magic. Those were the words of the hon. member for Billericay.

"Nationalised industries may be state owned, but they are still managed by people who are against public ownership. I believe that Bryan Nicholson (the Post Office chairman) falls into that category. Such people are not there to defend publicly owned industries and to extend them, but to prepare them for privatisation.

"There is an alternative. We could restore the image of nationalised industries and give credence to our forefathers and mothers who campaigned in the labour movement for public ownership, by having genuine public ownership.

"Those who work in the Post Office and in other nationalised industries, together with the trade union movement representing the wider population and the government, should organise the industries on a tripartite basis to provide not for the privateers whom the hon. member for Billericay represents, but for the whole population."

The motion was lost...for the time being.



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WE WANT A 3-WAY CHOICE

* Real Jobs With Real Pay

* £35 Per Week Education Grant at 16

* Proper Training with Trade Union

Rates of Pay

STRIKE!

campaign starts



THE CAMPAIGN has started for the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) youth strike on 16 March. YTURC members are out visiting

workplaces, colleges and schools to build support.

Below is the experience of one YTSer who has joined the campaign:

EDINBURGH TRAINEE, David Rosie's scheme involved cutting slabs of marble on a bench saw. He was given no proper training for operating the saw and no protective clothing.

It was a one man business and his boss usually had 'paper work' to do, leaving David to work a potentially lethal machine on his own.

Left to freeze

The marble was sprayed with cold water to keep it cool during cutting. So David got soaked and when the only heater ran out of bottled gas his boss refused to replace it for over a week, leaving David to freeze.

He also had to use strong adhesives, but ventilation was inadequate and he was given no breathing apparatus. He often left work with a sore head from

the fumes. Imagine the consequences of being overcome by fumes and falling onto the saw; it doesn't bear thinking about!

As if all this wasn't bad enough, the only place for David to eat his lunch was the toilet!

There are thousands of other youth suffering conditions like this in silence, hoping to get a job at the end if they keep quiet. If the Tories get their way, thousands more will be conscripted onto these horror story schemes.

Only YTURC and the Labour Party Young Socialists are seriously fighting for the rights of these young people. Join the youth strike!

By Gary Smith
W. Edinburgh LPYS

Plymouth

College dictator

WHEN IS a union not a union? When it's controlled by the boss.

By a Plymouth FE college student
(anonymous for obvious reasons)

At Plymouth College of Further Education the students' association is controlled by the principal via the association's treasurer—who is a member of the college staff! It is a standing joke in the

college. Its building is a portable classroom of about 30 square feet. This is meant to provide for 12,000 students!

A month or so ago we tried to set up a Labour club in the college. We collected 150 names on a petition in support of forming it. But when we presented it to the association president, he untruthfully told us that the association's constitution says it is non-political. He also indicated that he was prepared to leak the names on the petition to the college!

One student was reported to the principal for distributing leaflets and given a final warning. The association's treasurer backed up the principal, even offering to call in a witness to confirm the incident! The student was amazed at how much the principal knew about him. The president must tell him everything!

We have a watertight case for setting up our club. But the association is not affiliated to NUS and so there is no higher body to appeal to.

We will be taking students to Fels conference to get national support for our campaign. A student has been victimised and threatened with expulsion for campaigning for democratic rights.

We are fighting for these rights and a union that fights for its members. There is a great deal of discontent about the association and so, though there may be a struggle to come, we are confident we will win.

By Paul Crowson
Chesterfield tech student

FELS CONFERENCE

Education or training
we demand real choice

CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE
30-31 JANUARY
12 noon start



Chesterfield

Rally to greet Further Education conference

CHESTERFIELD LPYS and tech college Labour Club have called a youth rally in the town on Saturday 30 January, before the Further Education Labour Students (Fels) conference.

With the call to fight for a future, it aims to unite students, unemployed, YTS trainees, and young workers against the

Tories and their plans to destroy education and job opportunities for youth.

A march from the town centre will rally at the tech to hear speakers including MPs, Tony Benn and Dave Nellist. Already Chesterfield trades council, Chesterfield Labour Party and Derbyshire NUS have pro-

posed to send delegations with banners.

Last year at the college, student action defeated county council threats to close over 100 courses in the college, which would have effected almost 700 students.

Chesterfield students realise that they alone cannot defeat Tory plans. We will be at-

tending Fels conference to link up with other FE students to fight for a national leadership that is capable of waging war on the Tories and defeating their plans to destroy education.

LPYS grows despite attacks

"OUR RESPONSE to the Labour leadership's attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) is not to crumble, but to double," says Marina Logan, newly elected treasurer of one of the LPYS branches in Glasgow, Pollok.

Two LPYS branches have just been formed in the Pollok constituency. There was a brilliant mood at both inaugural meetings, one of which was attended by eight and the other by a magnificent 35! Most of the people attending were under 18, so the lowering of the LPYS age limit is no problem.

"By mid-February we aim to have another new branch established, making three in our constituency," says Marina.

Bike in the USA

YOUNG WORKERS in New York who found themselves under attack from the city's reactionary mayor turned to the trade unions for support.

The city's Mayor Koch needed a scapegoat to divert attention from scandals that were threatening his administration. So he decided to blame bike messengers for traffic chaos and banned them from three avenues.

"The bike messengers fought back," reports the American Marxist paper, *Labor Militant*. "They organised, they marched, they cycled. Up to 1,000 took part in a mass meeting. They took part in the Labor Day march and asked for support from the unions."

The ban was thrown out in court. Now young socialists in the Youth Defence Campaign are trying to get the bike messengers to organise in a union.

The bosses think youth are unorganised and so try to get away with murder when it comes to young people's rights. But the New York bike messengers show that youth can fight back and win.

POSTERS AND

leaflets are now available for the YTURC strike. Leaflets cost £10.00 per 1,000 and posters £4.00 per 100. Order them from YTURC, c/o 29, Marlborough Avenue, London E8 4 JP.

The Tories' model industry

MOST PEOPLE think modelling is a life of luxury. Some "page three" women who appear semi-naked in the Tory rags earn a small fortune. So do some Sunday supplement models.

But most girls who enter the business do so to break out of monotonous jobs or supplement poverty wages.

One model told us: "Despite leaving school with good qualifications, I couldn't get a job in the north east. Friends and family persuaded me grudgingly to give modelling a go."

After several interviews she was told she had to be trained which would cost, depending on the model agency, between £30 and £100 for a course. She would also need a portfolio of photos of herself, costing from £70 up, a new wardrobe of fashionable clothes and a wide range of cosmetics.

This is a huge cost for someone unemployed. Model agencies are a Tory dream. After you pay for your own training, there is no guarantee of work because there are so many models and so few jobs.

By Ann Smith

Being a trainee model is like being on a Youth Training Scheme except that there is less security than on YTS and no regular income!

It's almost standard that the first fashion show you do, you work for maybe 17 hours without pay; this is after you've been trained.

"Unemployment has created an increasing pool of trainees, so at every fashion show, most models will be unpaid 'trainees' to cut down on wage bills. If we had a union, we could do something about it, but any girl who protests doesn't get any work any more."

Most models resent the idea some feminists have that models are collaborating in putting women down. "I don't believe being a model helps bosses exploit women any more than being a woman in any

low paid job.

"The feminists should attack the Tories and their system. It makes my blood boil when people with good homes and a reasonable standard of living condemn girls like me for trying to make ends meet. Most of them have never been in that sort of situation."

Many models would agree with the feminist claim that modelling tends to create gender stereotypes. Most disapprove of "page three" girls but feel that the feminists should fight to destroy the exploitative system which leads to such demoralisation.

Even in the Tories' 'dream' industry, workers can see through their lies. "I've been active in the LPYS for five years. The only way to stop exploitation of all working class people is to overthrow the corrupt system that feeds on poverty and creates despair."

A socialist society based on need can still have photography and fashion but as works of human creativity unfettered by the capitalists and untainted by exploitation.



The modelling industry isn't all fur coats, particularly for the numerous "trainees" who bring huge profits for the fashion houses.

WHETHER YOU work in heavy industry or in a new high-technology job; whether your job is dirty and hard or one which many people think 'cushy', what happens to you at work may interest other readers.

Make *Militant* your paper by writing about your own experiences.

Working on the production vine

A GROWING number of workers depend for much of their livelihood on seasonal work abroad. It is no longer just an 'adventure' for students before settling down to 'respectability'. A young Irish woman tells of her experiences.

I HAD BEEN working in Holland, in dusty factories packing tulip bulbs, so stories of the French grape picking season, getting free food, accommodation, and as much wine as you wanted sounded good.

So we went to Villefrance, chasing the chance to earn an honest day's pay. Outside the

station, we were approached straight away with a job. I don't know how we would have fared otherwise as both agencies had long queues of migrant workers.

We found out later that this farmer took us on because four French workers had walked out on him the night before. We were driven to an old house which I am sure had been used for animals, with nothing downstairs. Upstairs there were cement rooms, each with five or six beds.

One room had a sink with cold water. There was no heating and only an outdoor toilet. They are supposed to provide facilities for hot showers as you get very sticky

and dirty. But I didn't know that and felt happy enough.

Between my bed and the next girl's someone had written: "I spent two weeks on this f..... farm and I broke my back doing it. I don't think my back will ever be the same."

On your knees

In the field, the farmer gave us a small hook and told us to cut the grapes off at the stem. You were bent over all the time. It was easier for me than for the others because I am small but even so I began to feel the pain after an hour. Taller people were on their

knees most of the time.

Food money was taken out of our wages. I liked the breakfast, soup and as much bread as you could eat, but the rest of the food wasn't fresh. What you didn't eat at lunch came back in the evening until it was finished.

Cooking was done by the farmer's mother, who must have gone to the supermarket to buy cheap food before the season and served it up day after day. We could have bought our own food and done better for less money. The wine was mainly watered down!

On the third day it rained but we had to work on, even quicker

to stop the crop being ruined. To come in wet to a cold house was really depressing.

Hardship

The only thing that kept us going was that everybody was in the same boat. Irish, English, Welsh, French, Nigerian, Moroccan and Polish workers sang and joked in the fields.

One day later after I left I was in hospital in Paris. The cold and hardship and the hitch hiking for jobs had led to me going down with a bad kidney infection.

Left and Right

Legal disorder

A FORMER US Air Force captain in Vietnam, Brian Wilson, is now an anti-war protester. While he was attempting to block a train carrying weapons for the vicious right wing Contras, a Navy train ran him over, severing both his legs. Thousands demonstrated in California to protest at these injuries.

But the train's crew, presumably encouraged by their military employers, are suing Brian Wilson for what they call "post-traumatic stress disorder" following the incident. Another chance for lawyers to get rich and for the military to throw responsibility on to innocent

peace protesters; it is typical of Reagan's capitalist America.

No longer news

LIBERAL controlled Tower Hamlets council recently closed down Princes' Lodge hostel for the homeless, leaving 24 people with nowhere to go. About half of them were Vietnamese, former boat people who could not believe that a country which welcomed them a few years ago could treat them like this.

For the press and the government, helping refugees from Stalinism was good propaganda. Helping the victims of capitalist cuts is just bad economics.

The new realists

THE LABOUR Party membership card for 1988 has had to be withdrawn because of an omission. They forgot to print Clause Four of the party constitution which calls for public ownership.

A simple error? A Freudian slip, showing wishful thinking by the right wing? Or was it just someone on the right jumping the gun?

LABOUR'S RIGHT wingers do suffer from poor memory. Remember they used to claim that purging the left would make Labour attract more votes and more members. 40 people in a Salford tenants' association campaigning against cuts and privatisation signed up to join the Labour Party recently.

When their leaders went to the local branch meeting, they found just three people there. (Right wing policies are so popular!) The Labour 'stalwarts' told the tenants: "You can't join, you've only come to take us over!"

Incidentally, workers involved in important local government battles should know that Labour's national executive local government committee was cancelled recently due to lack of business. Perhaps they didn't have any left wingers to expel.

Thanks to Terry Harrison and Phil Frampton.

IF YOU have any stories (true ones, of course) which you think would make good items for "Left and right" please send them to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Liverpool —A City That Dared to Fight

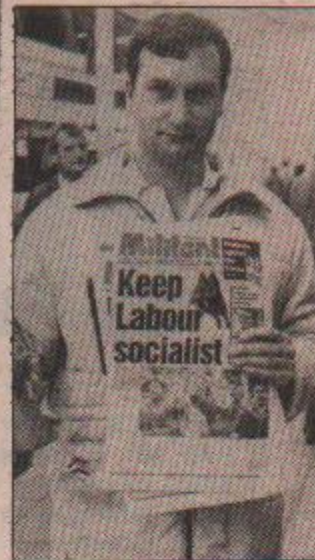
Launch tour by
Peter Taaffe
and Tony
Mulhearn

**Provisional dates
(all February):**
London press
launch, 9th; Liver-
pool, 10th; New-
castle, 11th;
BLOC conference
(Sheffield), 13th;
Edinburgh, 15th;
Bristol, 15th;
Glasgow, 16th;
Manchester, 17th;
London, 18th and
19th; Eastern
region, 22nd.

Book that makes history

Liverpool
A CITY THAT
DARED
TO FIGHT

Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn



Sell Militant

Staffs sales rocket

ON 10 February, Fortress Books, the newly established socialist publishing house, is launching *Liverpool—A City that Dared to Fight* by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn. Here Peter Taaffe, speaks to Kevin Ramage about the book.

THIS BOOK sums up the most important experience of the labour movement, perhaps next to the miners, since Thatcher came to power in 1979. The struggle between 1983 and 1987 in Liverpool is rich in lessons.

We should never forget that Liverpool in 1984, along with the miners in 1981, was the only section of the British working class to force the Tory government to retreat. The experiences of Liverpool are still extremely relevant. For instance, an estimated 700,000 council jobs are now threatened by privatisation. In London alone, a minimum of 5,000 jobs in Labour councils could go as a result of ratecapping. And now there is the poll tax.

What Liverpool demonstrated is that you cannot pursue Neil Kinnock's policy of the 'dented shield'. Labour councils can either act as agents of the Tory government, or take the Liverpool road, to mobilise working people in a mass movement of resistance and if necessary even 'illegality' which we believe can be justified.

We have to rescue from

under a mountain of lies, misinterpretation and falsehoods the real experience of 1983-87, just as we have to rescue for the present generation the real lessons of Liverpool's rich history. For instance we deal with the attempt of the capitalists to split the working class on religious lines and the mighty battles of the transport workers, dockers and railworkers of 1911, the 1919 police strike and the inter-war struggle against unemployment.

Marxism

We show the origins of Marxism and Trotskyism in Liverpool and the role of those who struggled to establish the first beginnings of what became *Militant*.

This shows that *Militant* is not a kind of artificial creation grafted on to the working class or the labour movement, but a product of the explosive social conditions in Liverpool for more than a century which have been expressed in an extreme fashion in the 1970s and 1980s.

The suggestion in some papers that the appearance of this book and a week

later of a book by Derek Hatton, also about the struggle in Liverpool, represents a conflict, is nonsense. The press is mischief-making, as on the many occasions in the last five years when they have tried to imply that *Militant* supporters were split.

I believe that Derek Hatton played a crucial role in the council struggle between 1983 and 1987. He has written a personal account of his background, his history and the role he played in the struggle. He firmly defends the ideas of *Militant*.

We on the other hand have gone into a much more detailed analysis of the different phases of the struggle and tried to draw out the lessons.

Perhaps the two books will appeal to slightly different audiences. One will have a 'popular' appeal to people with a passing interest in politics. Ours will be for the advanced working men and women, the youth, the blacks, the serious students of socialism who wish to learn the lessons of Liverpool and apply those lessons to the struggle today.

I would like all *Militant*

supporters to buy a copy of the book and make sure that all those who read the paper buy one. But the book should be sold not just in meetings and bookshops. We have to make it as widely accessible as possible to ordinary workers who might have a somewhat hazy idea about what happened in Liverpool.

Book clubs

That means new initiatives to circulate Marxist and socialist literature, like book clubs somewhat similar to the Left Book Club of the inter-war period, selling in the workplaces and creating discussion groups around the books which Fortress will produce in the

next period.

The establishment of this new socialist publishing house is a historic step for the labour movement. Apart from its political lessons, the sales of the book will provide the necessary income for it to go on to other ventures.

With the sharpening of the crisis of capitalism, less and less will capitalist publishing houses be prepared to print anything even remotely socialist. The labour movement, socialists and Marxists must rely on their own forces.

This is the first of many efforts and therefore it deserves the support of the widest possible number of those interested in creating a fighting socialist labour movement in Britain.

Liverpool—A City That Dared to Fight

Special offer.

The book is due for delivery from the printers on 27 January. Get your order in now! Softback £5 + 90p post, hardback £8 + £1.20 post.

Special offer closes 13 February.

From Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL

Name

Address

.....

ORDER
NOW!

We need £50,000 in eight weeks

FOLLOWING THE success of the 'Raise the roof' campaign over Xmas we've set our sights on raising a further £50,000 in the next eight weeks.

Undoubtedly, 1988 will prove to be a year of bitter struggle, with the Tories' attacks on education, health, welfare and democratic rights. Already, there has been an explosion of anger from nurses over attempts to cut their pay.

Many other groups of workers face major battles this year. That is why *Militant* badly needs extra resources to aid effectively the struggles of the working-class movement in Britain and internationally.

But to achieve these resources we appeal to our readers in the labour and trade union movement to send us the cash, like Virginia James, a low-paid NUPE member in the NHS in Chorley, who responded to

our appeal by sending £50!

Our supporters are the best fighters for socialism and therefore the most self-sacrificing.

A supporter in Hampshire with a young daughter was forced to take time off work when her husband became ill. Her Victorian-style bosses sacked her! Yet she was still prepared to make a donation of £25 to the Fighting Fund out of her last wage packet.

Sacrifice

Another example of sacrifice to spread the ideas of Marxism came from Stephanie Brice a single parent in Bermondsey who donated £20.

Working-class women are also under attack from Alton's anti-abortion rights Bill. *Militant* supporters are in the forefront of the campaign against this bill, explain-

ing the issues involved at the *Militant* public meetings being organised up and down the country. Make sure that good Fighting Fund appeals are made at these in order to assist our campaigning work.

Because they are prepared to make a stand against the Tories, *Militant* supporters constantly face attacks, not just from the ruling class but by those Labour leaders who refuse to support a fightback. *Militant* supporters facing a witch-hunt in Huddersfield responded by sending £45 including a £5 donation from a Tech college student.

Despite all the activities which *Militant* supporters are engaged in, they still find time to raise the Fighting Fund by enjoying themselves! Supporters in Paisley held a disco and raised £89. Make sure your area organises a social activity over the next eight weeks of the campaign.

Finally, thanks to this week's contributors: Fiona Philips, a BIFU member from Manchester, £35. Sue Lewis IRSF, Caerphilly, £10. P Skelly NUR, Llantrisant, £10. C McDonald CPSA, Barrhead, £5.

Winners of *Militant* 'Raise the roof' raffle

1st Prize: £500 worth of personal computing equipment (or cash equivalent): M MacDonald, London. 043528.

2nd Prize: Weekend in Paris for two worth £250: W Tierney, Liverpool. 061441.

3rd Prize: Colour TV worth £150: Jane Farmer. 094360.

Four Prizes of £25 gift tokens from World Socialist Books: R.Green, 089210. Mrs M Gathy, 088992. W.Murry, Grimsby, 037717. J.Thompson, Surrey, 083801.

56 PAPERS were sold outside Hem Heath colliery! This is the best recorded sale in one day outside a workplace ever, reflecting the growing mood of militancy in the North Staffs coalfield. Can any sellers beat that? If so write and tell us.

Sales are rapidly increasing after the Xmas lull—sellers up and down the country are taking the paper to health workers, miners, car workers, offering *Militant* as the only alternative to the lies of the *Sun*, *Express*, etc.

Supporters in the West Midlands sold eight going around a pub and big increases in sales are reported from sellers breaking new ground, particularly around hospitals.

Coventry and Warwick Hospital workers bought seven last Friday and seven were sold outside Brighton General Hospital after supporters had almost given up their pitch following several weeks of poor sales; 30 were sold in Edinburgh at the lobby of the Area Health Board.

Back in the West Midlands, Birmingham sellers told us that on the Masefield estate ten copies were sold in just one street. One woman chased sellers down the road to buy one after her husband had refused to buy a copy!

Sellers in South Staffs report 21 sold at Littleton pit, seven at Lea Hall and eight at a Scargill election meeting in Rugeley. In Wales 15 *Militants* were bought outside Cynheidre pit and 35 outside a Scargill election meeting near Newport.

But the prize for the greatest initiative shown in selling this week goes to a 14 year old from Bonnyrigg, Midlothian, who asked his father to take a clipboard around the Miners' Welfare Club. The result: 15 names and addresses of people wanting *Militant* delivered weekly. Well done! Keep up the good work.

By Ruth Campbell

Workers' share or work

LABOUR'S BRYAN Gould, with his endorsement of share ownership, has become infamous in the labour movement. At last year's Party conference he was howled down when he again tried to justify this policy. Now he claims he was misunderstood. Apparently it was not individual but collective share-ownership, through trade unionists having a stake in the company they work for, that he was advocating all along. 'Popular socialism' not 'popular capitalism', he says.

BILL MULLINS examines Gould's ideas and whether they would give any say for



Bill Mullins was a senior shop steward at the now closed Rover cars plant in Solihull.

workers in the running of industry, and outlines what workers' control and management really mean.

"EMPLOYEE SHARE-ownership schemes have always been seen as an extension of social ownership", Bryan Gould wrote in *Tribune* in November. Collective share ownership is a new form of "decentralised socialism", based on the traditions of "Robert Owen, Guild Socialists and the co-operative movement." But is there anything 'new' in Gould's policies? Would they work? Should they be taken up by a future Labour government?

First of all, much as he may try to deny it, the reason he brought forward these ideas, especially in the immediate aftermath of the election, and in a way that the press could so easily 'misunderstand' them, was precisely to accommodate Labour to what the leadership believes is the popularity of Thatcher's 'share-owning democracy'.

But Thatcher won in 1987 thanks to a temporary stabilisation of the economy and of incomes for many, and thanks to the abject failure of Kinnock and Gould to inspire workers with a vision of anything better. No-one really believed that a handful of shares in a privatised company made them partners in that industry's prosperity. Workers who bought shares in denationalised companies did it as a flutter, responding to the expensive media hype. They had no intention of extending their share portfolio into the established private sector.

Since then these new shareholders have seen the value of their small investment plummet, with the stock market crash. They will think a lot more carefully before buying again. Similarly, how would a group of trade unionists thank Gould for urging them to negotiate a stake in their bosses' firm, only to see the value of their collective share-holding collapse?

There is nothing new in the Gould view. It is the same old reformist notion that there is a unity of interest between the workers and their employer, when the fundamental conflict in society is between capital and labour. And that somehow stealthily, bit by bit the working class can encroach on the capitalists' domination of the economy.

Compared to Gould, Robert Owen was a giant. He was an early propagandist for socialism, one hundred and eighty years ago. It is true he mistakenly believed that by example the capitalists could be convinced of the virtues of communal ownership. But at least he lived and

campaigning before a modern, organised, strong working class had fully emerged, with the power to fight for control of society.

Gould takes as his model the Swedish scheme of 'worker investment trusts'. In the *Tribune* article he condemns as old-fashioned the theory "that only state ownership meets socialist requirements...such people are considered eccentric these days even in Albania". Such is his haughty and ignorant contempt for the programme for the transformation of society that has fired the spirits of generations of Labour activists, since the early pioneers of the Party, and is enshrined in Clause Four of Labour's constitution.

In Sweden the theory is that company profits above a certain level are paid into a fund on behalf of the employees, which, writes Gould, over a period of "10 to 30 years become the biggest source of investment capital", and under union control. On television he actually described this as "labour hires capital".

In reality this dream has been used by the right wing Swedish union leaders to hold back workers' struggle for more tangible benefits, like wages.

These funds actually only own about 5 per cent of the Swedish economy, and long before 30 years is up, the capitalists even in supposedly tranquil Sweden will have acted to cauterize any possible threat this scheme might ever pose to their ownership and control over the economy. They organised a massive drive in the press and even held employers' demonstrations against these limited proposals when they first being introduced.

Especially with a new world recession looming, the myth of a common interest binding the classes will break down. Apart from anything else with economic crisis how much profit will there be to pay into the fund?

Gould also cites the example of the issuing of shares to American workers since 1980. But this too has been used to induce workers to accept wage cuts. Chrysler workers for example took \$585 million dollars of wage cuts in return for \$165 million of shares. Eastern Airlines gave their workers a 25 per cent shareholding, but in return they had to accept a wage cut of 18 to 22 per cent.

Gould, however, sees Sweden and the West German system of co-determination as a means of introducing industrial democracy. Nothing could be further from the



truth.

In the post-war period, on the basis of a long economic boom, mighty trade union movements developed in western Europe, particularly at shop-floor level. The bosses everywhere tried to weaken and ensnare trade unionists into all sorts of participatory schemes. Participation between workers and the capitalists is always of the same type as the relationship between horse and rider.

The German co-determination scheme was actually set up by a team from the British TUC in the post-war chaos that was Germany. Supervisory boards, with a minority of worker representatives, were instituted in all companies over 500 workers. By this means the independence of the unions was undermined, as the insidious message got across that the workers and the bosses were on the same side.

As for any real say for the workers, one participant summed it up: they were allowed to "choose the colour of the handles

on the screwdriver"!

In Britain many schemes have been tried to trap the unions, from Mondism following the defeat of the 1926 general strike to the participation schemes in the seventies. And it has been Gould's counterparts in previous right wing Labour governments who have been the most enthusiastic sponsors.

But the now disgraced former Labour minister, John Stonehouse, clearly expressed the view of the right on the difference between workers' participation and workers' control or management: "We must establish a clear distinction between workers' participation and workers' control. The former is acceptable the latter is not...The experience in co-operative management, has shown that management expertise is a somewhat rare attribute which cannot be developed in every Tom, Dick and Harry."

The Bullock report in 1977 recommended workers' involvement on the board of management, similar to the German

scheme. But even this was fiercely opposed by the employers. They did not want the workers to get even a glimpse of their boardroom deals. The report was dropped.

Imagine the opposition the British capitalists would wage against Gould's share-owning plans, if they were a threat.

Control

But Bullock did reveal the enormous strength of shop-floor organisation, with 300,000 shop stewards, and widespread elements of workers' control. In the print, on the docks and in the car industry, workers were imposing more and more control over the day to day right of 'management to manage'. Elements of real industrial democracy were coming from below, not handed down from above.

In my own factory at Rover, Solihull, we had forced management to accept the principle of 'mutuality'—they had to get the agreement of the shop stewards

re-ownership ers' control



before they could do anything. We had complete control of job transfers on the basis of seniority and control over manning levels. Increasingly we were gaining control over the right to hire and fire, with a steward permanently stationed in the personnel office, to ensure union activists were not discriminated against when new workers were taken on.

Workers' control exerted like this on management by the strength of the shop-floor, is a million miles away from the ideas of cosy workers' participation with management, as put forward by Gould and the right wing.

Of course it is still only industrial democracy in embryonic form. We never had any illusion that from this, bit by bit, we would take over the Rover. That required the political act of a socialist Labour government, backed up by the organised working class.

Workers in nationalised industries have long been aware that their bureaucratic, highly paid management is no different to

that in private industry. You only have to look at Michael Edwardes (appointed to Leyland by the last Labour government) or Ian MacGregor to be convinced of that.

That is why at the newly nationalised BL in the mid-seventies, *Militant* supporters raised the demand that the main board comprise: one third elected by the unions in the company, one third by the TUC to represent the interests of the working class as a whole, and one third appointed by the Labour government to ensure the company was run in line with the general plan for the economy. This was adopted by the BL combine shop stewards committee.

The union representatives, therefore, had a clear majority, and we added that they should be accountable and should receive no more than the wages of ordinary workers in the industry.

Militant still puts forward this demand for workers' management of the current nationalised industries.

POPULAR SOCIALISM will ensure that shares are issued as rights issues, and will enhance the wealth and control of the workers in the companies for which they are issued. — Bryan Gould

Coupled with this programme must go demands for the democratisation of the TUC and the unions themselves. All full time officials should be subject to regular election and the right of recall, and live on the same standard of living as their members.

But in BL, instead of our programme, the Ryder report set up by the Labour government, established a participation scheme. It was supposed to bring the shop stewards into the decision-making processes of management, as long as they respected commercial secrecy. In fact, as always, it implicates the unions in the already predetermined decisions of management, compromising them in the eyes of their members.

Participation is also aimed at tapping some of the working knowhow of the employees, in the interests of company profit.

Taken in

At the top tier of the participation structure was the Cars Council. Its joint-chairs were Michael Edwardes (BL chairman), and Derek Robinson, Communist Party member and chair of the shop stewards' combine, who was completely taken in by the participation process.

Shortly after Thatcher's 1979 election victory, Edwardes showed Robinson, his 'joint-chair', who was really in charge, when he sacked him. Under the Tories participation was over. But the only big factory to have campaigned against the whole scheme had been the stewards from Rover.

Of course under the Tories, with closures and redundancies, and the offensive from a more aggressive management in industry, many of the examples of a high degree of shop-floor workers' control have disappeared. The bosses could no longer afford it.

But the costs for workers have been high. British industry's profits have temporarily revived during the eighties. But this has not been due to a major introduction of new machinery, it has been through speeding up the tracks, cutting back on manning levels

and increasing workloads. Workers' control means a check to the bosses' ruthless drive for profits, which otherwise would run straight over workers' health, conditions and safety.

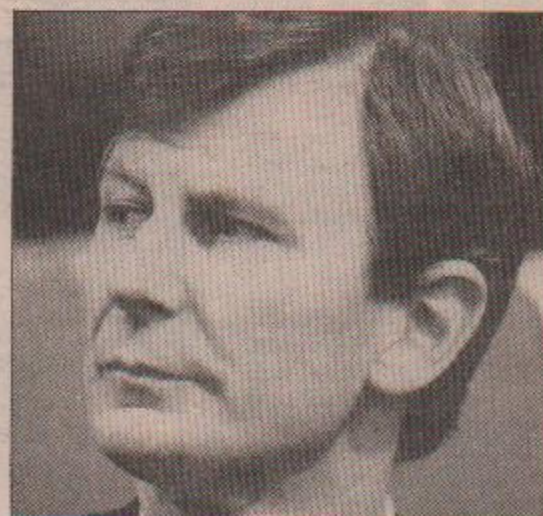
But despite Thatcherism the power of the working class remains fundamentally intact. In the car industry, where this move back towards domineering management has been particularly obvious and the check imposed by the stewards has been weakened, Ford workers are threatening again national industrial action. Austin Rover and Vauxhall workers have been involved in action in the last few months. In the mines there is a mood of simmering discontent, which has broken out in local strikes and walkouts up and down the coalfields.

The official statistics for strikes give little of the real picture in industry. A major factor in the level of strikes is the utter pessimism and downright hostility to industrial action of the union leaders. Workers in Britain are not content with their wages and conditions, far from it. They have little confidence that their national leaders will give them determined backing.

But with new younger and more hardened union activists coming forward, and having to contend with an economic system falling into deeper crisis, again they will take up the fight to constrain the freedom of action of their management, through shop-floor strength and workers' control.

In a period of new intense class conflict, workers' control over the input and output of industries will more come to resemble Trotsky's depiction of the workers' check over the bosses in such a climate: "Workers' control in this way is not a prolonged 'normal condition' like wage scale agreements or social insurance. The control is a transitional measure, under the conditions of the highest tension of class war and is conceivable only as a bridge to the revolutionary nationalisation of industry".

Increasingly elements of workers' control, which will only be wrested from the bosses after serious struggle, will be seen as representing dual power in the



workplaces. A new authority has arisen in the factory throwing down the gauntlet to the authority of the capitalist management. Such a situation cannot last indefinitely, one power or the other must prevail.

Workers' control is a preparation, an apprenticeship for the full management of industry and the economy by the working class. But that is only meaningful within the context of a nationalised, planned economy. Workers' control over the bosses is a spontaneous movement from below within capitalism. Workers' management proceeds from above, based upon a workers' government and a centralised plan of production.

Management

With the share crash, and economic turmoil in prospect, increasing numbers of Labour and trade union workers will take up the demands of *Militant* for the nationalisation of the 200 major companies, to replace capitalism in crisis with socialist planning. These companies and the economy as a whole will be under the management of workers through their class organisations.

Once in full charge of the running of society and the economy, ordinary workers will themselves come up with the most suitable methods of democratically administering their own workplace and industry. But the management of each industry will be in the hands of elected representatives of the workers in that industry, other workers and of the socialist government. With all the democratic safeguards enforced by an active and aware working class, which will prevent the growth of bureaucracy. They will be making the main investment decisions and planning growth in production in the interests of the majority of the people.

Any programme less than this, which pretends to offer working people the opportunity to be involved in management, perhaps even to have the deciding say, without having to go through the battle to take society out of the hands of the capitalist class, is nothing but a deliberate and dangerous fairy tale. Such is the policy of Bryan Gould.

"The leaders are those on the streets"

"WE WILL support the uprising and we will continue to demonstrate against the occupation. We only have stones, that's true, but we will win with our spirit. We will die or we will succeed. We have no choice."

By George Collins

These words, by a 65-year-old Palestinian refugee in Gaza, sum up the unprecedented defiance and militancy among the masses in Israel's occupied territories. Spearheaded by the youth, every section of the Arab population has been drawn into struggle in the escalating confrontation since early December.

For twenty years (see box) the people of Gaza and the West Bank have been systematically robbed of their land, humiliated, oppressed, and used as cheap labour in Israeli factories.

Now the pent-up anger is being released. Israel's answer has been to send in more troops. By last week over 30 demonstrators had been shot dead, hundreds wounded, and 2,000 arrested.

All this has only deepened the anger in the teeming Arab towns and refugee camps. The youth, with revolutionary clan reminiscent of the black youth of Soweto, have fought Israeli troops with stones and created no-go areas.

In Gaza they even barricaded the police station and the prison!

The uprising already has its place in history as a giant step forward in the Middle East revolution

The Israeli regime, characteristically, is looking for 'agitators' to blame, and has so far deported 13 Palestinian leaders. But, comments a journalist, despite being repeatedly "beheaded", it seems "the body may be able to manage better by itself".

As a Gaza resident puts it, "the leaders now are those on the streets throwing the stones".

But there are signs of increasing organisation among the activists as they search for a way forward.

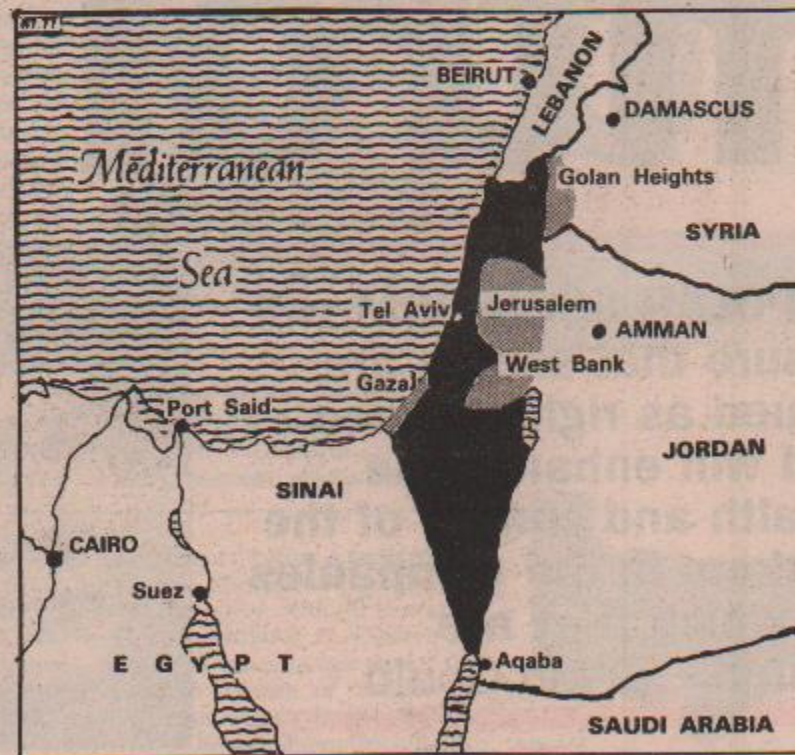
Leaflets have been handed out throughout the West Bank and Gaza, signed by trade unions, women's groups, professional groups and "Committees of Struggle", stating the immediate demands: troops out of the refugee camps and Arab towns; free municipal elections; an end to land confiscation; cancellation of VAT; extension of the general strike.

In Gaza, in the absence of any mass alternative, the fundamentalist Islamic Jihad movement has gathered more support. But fanatical defiance on purely religious lines can only deepen national divisions and strengthen the grip of right-wing nationalism among the Israeli masses.

This is a crushing condemnation of the policies of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which for over twenty years has claimed leadership of the struggle, and is seen as a rallying point by most Palestinians, but is giving no lead on the ground.

Under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, the PLO has combined guerrilla struggle and individual terrorism with an opportunistic dependence on the regimes of the Arab world.

This has condemned the PLO to the worst of all possible worlds.



Palestinian youth, armed only with stones, are daily defying Israeli soldiers ready to shoot.

Militarily it is impotent against the Israeli state. Politically it has been tossed to and fro in the splits among Arab rulers, with its different factions attaching to different Arab capitals.

Arafat at present is clinging to the idea—backed by western capitalist governments—of a "peace conference" under UN auspices to solve the Palestinian question.

No doubt the Palestinian masses would welcome a negotiated end to their misery; but it is wildly utopian to expect a democratic solution to be sponsored by the capitalist, landlord and feudal regimes of Israel and the Arab states. In Israel itself democracy is limited, and in many Arab states non-existent.

At best, supporters of a "peace conference" hope to achieve an autonomous Palestinian homeland within the boundaries of the occupied territories, subject to some degree of control by Israel, Jordan, or both.

Even this idea is utopian. The Israeli regime, though split on tactics, is fundamentally united on the military question of keeping effective control over the occupied territories.

As Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Shamir explained to a BBC interviewer on 13 January, Israel

wouldn't accept the decisions of a "peace conference" anyway, so why raise expectations?

Hundreds of thousands of Jewish settlers have been placed in the West Bank and Gaza in a deliberate policy of colonisation. The Israeli Labour Party as well as the right is committed to keeping them there—Labour goes no further than calling for an end to further settlement, and limited autonomy.

The present struggles have made clear the irreconcilable gulf separating Arab from Israeli on the basis of capitalism and landlordism.

Jewish settlers on the West Bank call for new settlements as "an appropriate Zionist response"; while Arab leaflets declare that "the volcano ignited by the Palestinian people will not be extinguished until we have accomplished an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital".

Even if, miraculously, both sides agreed on returning the occupied territories to the Palestinians, there is no way that Israel or the Arab states could allow it real independence.

Such a state, born out of the fires of revolutionary struggle, would be in crisis from the outset. It would be a constant source of conflict and

instability throughout the region. Capitalism itself would be in danger of overthrow, giving rise to a deformed workers' state as in Syria.

Neither Israel nor the unstable Arab ruling classes could allow such a situation to arise. All their efforts to negotiate a settlement will come to nothing in the end.

The present watershed events confirm what Marxism has always maintained: on the basis of the imperialists' carve-up of the Middle East and the rule of capitalism, there can be no peace. The Palestinian masses will be forced to seek a revolutionary solution.

Now, more clearly than ever, the question is posed: what is the way forward, to break the grip of Israel, as well as the power of the reactionary Arab rulers?

Only a Marxist programme, linking the national struggle of the Palestinians to the socialist transformation of the whole Middle East, can show a way out.

Mobilising for the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism, and the establishment of democratic working-class rule in every country,

THE STATE of Israel was created in 1948, when Britain was forced to withdraw from Palestine because of increasing national conflict. In the ensuing civil war, which was largely a scramble for territory, the militias of the minority Jewish population were better armed (chiefly from Eastern Europe) and better organised than the Arab armies sent against them.

The 1949 cease-fire marked Israel's borders, leaving Gaza occupied by Egypt and the West Bank by Jordan. In the course of the war, 750,000 Palestinians were forced out of Israel, settling in camps in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Hundreds of thousands, including the descendants of the original refugees, still live in the same camps today.

After 1948, Israel's population grew through Jewish immigration from Europe and the Middle East. Massive military and economic assistance from the imperialist powers, chiefly America, turned Israel into a modern industrial country, but at the same time a 'client' state of imperialism, an armed fortress against the Arab revolution.

During the 1967 Arab-Israeli War Gaza and Sinai were captured from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan area from Syria. Israel later annexed the Golan, along with Arab East Jerusalem. Sinai was handed back to Egypt under the Camp David Agreement. Gaza and the West Bank, with about 1.5 million Palestinians remain, after twenty years, under Israeli military occupation.

a serious campaign for Marxist policies would open up new perspectives for Israeli as well as Arab workers.

Under workers' rule, all the problems created by imperialist domination could begin to be eliminated. Poverty could be alleviated, and privilege abolished, through the planning of production under the control of the working people.

Workers' governments, with a vital interest in mutual cooperation, could reach agreement on homelands for the Palestinian people as well as Israelis—subject to the rights of minorities and returning Palestinians—and other national groups, within the framework of a socialist federation of the Middle East.

The greatest significance of the present struggles is that they are based, not among exile groups, but in the Palestinian heartland, where the working class is strongest.

The strike movement in the West Bank and Gaza underlines the class basis of the struggle. While terrorist actions push Israeli workers into the camp of Zionism, the mass movement in the occupied territories has opened up serious doubts and division in the Israeli ruling class.

The worsening economic crisis will deepen the class divide between Israeli workers and the Israeli ruling class. A programme of clear working-class demands from the Palestinian side, including basic rights and conditions for all workers, would find an echo among Israeli workers.

It would help to create a situation where sections of Israeli workers, especially the youth, could be won to a programme of working-class internationalism, and further isolate the regime.

The movement in the occupied territories has also found an echo in the Arab countries, with the Egyptian regime clamping down on pro-Palestinian demonstrations. Palestinian workers and youth, scattered throughout the Middle East, could spread the spirit of revolution and link up with workers in other countries.

The *intifada* (Arab word for uprising) already has its place in history, comparable to South Africa's Soweto uprising of 1976, as a giant step forward in deepening the experience and raising the sights of Arab youth and workers towards the real tasks of the Middle East revolution.

Way forward

Haiti's election farce

IN HAITI'S presidential 'election' on Sunday the masses voted with their feet, with fewer than one in ten turning out.

By Colin de Freitas

The day before, more than 80 per cent of people stayed at home in a general strike to protest against the electoral farce, stage-managed by the military regime.

Candidates were chosen by the Electoral Council appointed by General Namphy's junta. They had to print their own ballot papers, and organise their own distribution!

Liberal and left candidates did not

take part, and only obscure reactionaries contested the election.

It has been reported that the Tonton Macoutes militia were again involved in intimidation, this time forcing people to vote.

Namphy was forced to debar open supporters of the previous Duvalier dictatorship from taking part. This shows the massive opposition to any return to Duvalierism.

Pressure was also put on Namphy by US imperialism. Because of its vicious struggle against the Nicaraguan revolution, the US is concerned about cleaning up its image in the area. It cannot afford to be seen giving support to a farce.

Nevertheless, the victor—apparently Maginat—will be a stooge of the military. The new regime will have no credibility.

Isolated, and presiding over the most grinding poverty, it will be highly unstable. This raises the danger of a return to military dictatorship.

At present there is no credible opposition leadership around which the masses could be mobilised. Only the working class, organised on a socialist programme, can show a way out of Haiti's vicious circle of imperialist domination, mass poverty and dictatorship.



What future for these children?

Victories for Turkish workers

ON 31 December a strike of 840 shop assistants in the Migros supermarket chain in Turkey ended in victory.

The workers were fighting low pay (£90 per month), long hours and harassment of trade union activists. Strikes are illegal under Turkey's dictatorial regime.

But, despite pressure from the regime and employers, and near starvation, the workers held out. Migros were forced to back down after TURK-IS, the main trade union federation, became involved.

The settlement was one of the highest achieved since the 1980 military coup—totaling, with benefits, a 300 per cent increase backdated to 1 May 1987!

Migros is owned by KOC, one of Turkey's major monopolies, which also owns textile and machine factories, import and export companies, and shipping interests. The Migros workers' achievement will set a precedent for other KOC workers.

This strike, the first shopworkers' strike, reflects the growing militancy amongst Turkish workers. 1987 has seen the highest recorded level of strikes since the military took over.

A strike by 3,000 leather workers ended in victory in November—all the more significant as the workplaces involved were small and scattered.

The ruling right-wing Motherland Party won the recent election partly by fixing it

and partly by the lack of enthusiasm for the divided social-democratic opposition, which offered no radical alternative.

Despite this, all the signs are there of a huge workers' movement building up in Turkey.

Inflation stands officially at 50-60 per cent and the economy is in a mess. The serious capitalist newspapers state that the "worker problem" has not been solved in spite of the dictatorship.

Rank-and-file pressure is mounting on the formerly pro-government TURK-IS, and its leaders are threatening a general strike. Major clashes between the classes are likely in the period ahead.

By Tim White



Turkish Social-Democratic leader Ecevit at mass meeting before 1980 and (above) in a military court after the coup.

Letters from Middle East

THE SAUDI Arabian regime, with King Fahd as a figurehead, has shown its true face. It is unable to control, or even influence, the declining economy.

On 31 December a budget deficit 35.9 billion Saudi rials deficit was announced for 1988 (SR7 = £1). This drove home the dramatic decline of the Saudi Arabian economy. Now that the oil price has slumped, revenue is now only one-fifth what it was seven years ago.

The phenomenal wealth that Saudi Arabia produced has been frittered away on immensely expensive projects that, at best, are 90 per cent show and 10 per cent production.

The cities look grand, but create very little wealth outside service industries. There has been no real attempt to develop industrial production.

Also in the field of energy, Saudi

Arabia could generate millions of megawatts a day from solar power.

Instead, with the foresight of migrating lemmings, the Saudi ruling class has jumped off the cliffside.

The estimated four million foreign workers—mainly from Asia—are the main work force. A minority are western, specialising in computers and oil production.

The wages of all sectors have fallen to approximately half the level of six years ago. This is partly a result of inflation, and partly of the fall in the dollar.

Workers try to send home most of their wages to their families, who depend on it. Hence, when the shock announcement came on 4 January that a tax was being levelled only on foreign workers, a social explosion took place.

The response by all foreign workers

was a burning anger and a stream of resignations rained in on the King's ministries, even though the King had cut and run to escape the deluge.

From every city came the letters and phone calls, from hospital workers, shopkeepers and industrial workers. Even some of the multinationals threatened to pull out.

The climbdown came. "King Fahd ... has issued an order to abolish what has the issue in this regard..." (*Saudi Gazette*, 5 January).

Despite the attempt at secrecy, all foreign workers are now aware of their power.

The prospects, however, remain bleak for the Saudi Arabian economy and especially for foreign workers. But even when many of the foreign workers do go home, the Saudi ruling class will be left to face their own Saudi working class, who will stay behind. *From a foreign worker.*

Palestinians. (...)

Should these deportations take place, still more hatred and bloodshed might follow. I hope that you will make all possible efforts to help prevent this from happening.

Mattityahu Peled
Member of the Knesset

Extract from Knesset debate on 8 December 1987:

KM Y. Matza (Likud): How many (Palestinians) did you deport in the last year? Defence Minister Y. Rabin (Labour): In three years I have deported three times as many as you (the Likud) deported in seven years.

KM C. Biton (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): Bravo, bravo! Can you really be proud of that?

Defence Minister Y. Rabin (Labour): Yes, I am proud of that.

London LPYS is organising a picket of the Israeli Embassy and Defence Mission.

Date: Wednesday 27 January

Time: 11.30

Place: corner of Notting Hill Gate and Palace Gardens.

A COPY of the following letter, from a left member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) to members of the Socialist International, has been received by Militant. We reprint extracts.

Jerusalem, 3 January 1988.

Dear friends,

I find it necessary to write to you urgently concerning the plans of Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin to carry out a deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories.

Mr Rabin seems fond of this method of deporting Palestinians without any form of trial. During Menachem Begin's term in office, the use of deportations was stopped; but Rabin reintroduced it in 1985. (...)

On this very day the army authorities, under Rabin's guidance, have issued deportation orders against nine more

USA Presidential election "A lot of working class resentment"

IN THE next weeks the eyes of the world will be on the mid-western US state of Iowa, where the first primary (vote to choose party candidates) for November's presidential election will take place.

The problems facing US workers and youth, with recession on the horizon, are immense. Recently the *Wall Street Journal* showed that the number of families living below the poverty line have risen to 12 per cent during the Reagan years.

What this means in political terms is summed up by a legislator from Kansas: "There's a lot of working-class resentment out there, a feeling that we've had the economy run for the sake of high times on Wall Street...at least among working-class voters there's an opportunity to run a populist campaign".

And if anyone doubts the need for an American party of labour, as an alternative to the Republican and Democratic parties owned and controlled by big

business, they should ponder the words of a Republican senator whose constituency covers the town of Girard in Kansas:

"When Wall Street gets into trouble they holler, and they get help." But, he adds, when farmers appealed to the banks for help they were denounced as speculators!

Girard has its place in US history as the town where the Socialist Eugene Debs began his presidential campaign in 1908, and the workers' newspaper *Appeal to Reason* was printed. It is on these traditions that the mighty present-day working class of the USA will launch its reply to Reaganism.

By Arthur Copus

Militant will cover the presidential election campaign, analyse the developments and examine the perspectives facing the USA, which are of decisive importance for the whole capitalist world.

Jobs, not shares!

Dear comrades,
With the stock exchange crash making a mockery out of privatisation, what better opportunity for the labour movement to campaign against the Tories' cut-price sell-offs?
In this light the response of the biggest steel workers' union, the ISTC, to the announced privatisation of British Steel is a disgrace.
Their national executive decided not to fight privatisation but to opt to get the best share deal possible for its members.
As a private company, British Steel would undoubtedly see massive job losses in line with every

other industry that has gone private.
The union's decision is an abrogation of its responsibility to its members. But the rank and file are not so short sighted and will view the privatisation with suspicion.
Workers throughout the steel industry must launch a fight against this latest attack on the industry which has lost thousands of jobs in the last decade by putting pressure on the union leadership to campaign against privatisation, linking up the fight with other threatened industries in the public sector.
Andy Walker, Middlesbrough Labour Party

Classified ads

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

SALEP Greeting cards to be sent to South African workers' movement. 75p each including postage, £6 for 10. For large orders and any further information, contact SALEP, Box 77 London E8 4TB.

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

Militant scarves £3, hats £2 (inc. p&p). Various colours, proceeds to FF. From M Fallon, 64 Woodbrook Ave, Mixenden, Halifax HX2 8PZ.

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

Militant red enamel flag badges. £1 each + SAE to Mick Griffiths, 20 Trilby St, Wakefield, W Yorkshire. Special offer 10 badges for £8.



Militant International Review

Out now. 90p plus 20p postage and packing from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB, or 90p from your local Militant seller.

Read Militant Irish Monthly the Marxist paper for workers' unity and socialism. January 1988 issue now out, with articles on:

Enniskillen bombing; Joe Higgins stand for Labour; Strike against Youth Training Programme; World recession; Women and the cuts.

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

Back file of Militant nos 1-877 plus 50 old Militant Irish Monthly 75 old Left/Socialist Youth Any offers? to box no 69, World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

Tom Fraser remembered

Dear comrades,
Tom Fraser, whose tragic death was reported in Militant 878, was always on the left. He joined the EETPU in 1964 at Ferranti, where he firmly established the branch, campaigning for a democratic union to advance not only pay and conditions, but the wider political issues.
Labour's middle-of-the-road, middle-class image repelled Tom, who held that Clause IV, the aim of a

planned, publicly owned, democratically run economy was the only way forward.
The local right-wing party members' condemnation of Liverpool Labour Party only strengthened his support for their fight. He backed YTURC and always encouraged the LPYS. He read Militant and donated to it every week.
He was elected as district councillor for Firhill, the area where he had lived

since childhood. Victory was assured by Tom's lively socialist campaign and long record of activity in the community.
The title councillor did not turn his head at all. He remained straightforward and modest, a doughty fighter for the folk he lived amongst and represented.
Kevin Scott, Coleford Labour Party

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Raise workers' horizons

Dear Militant,
I would like to congratulate you on a recent article on Diego Rivera which was both enlightening and entertaining. Unfortunately it was far too short to do justice to an artist of the calibre of Rivera.

No doubt articles about the miners' presidential election are of more importance at this moment in time, however it seems culture as a topic for discussion is seriously neglected by your paper.

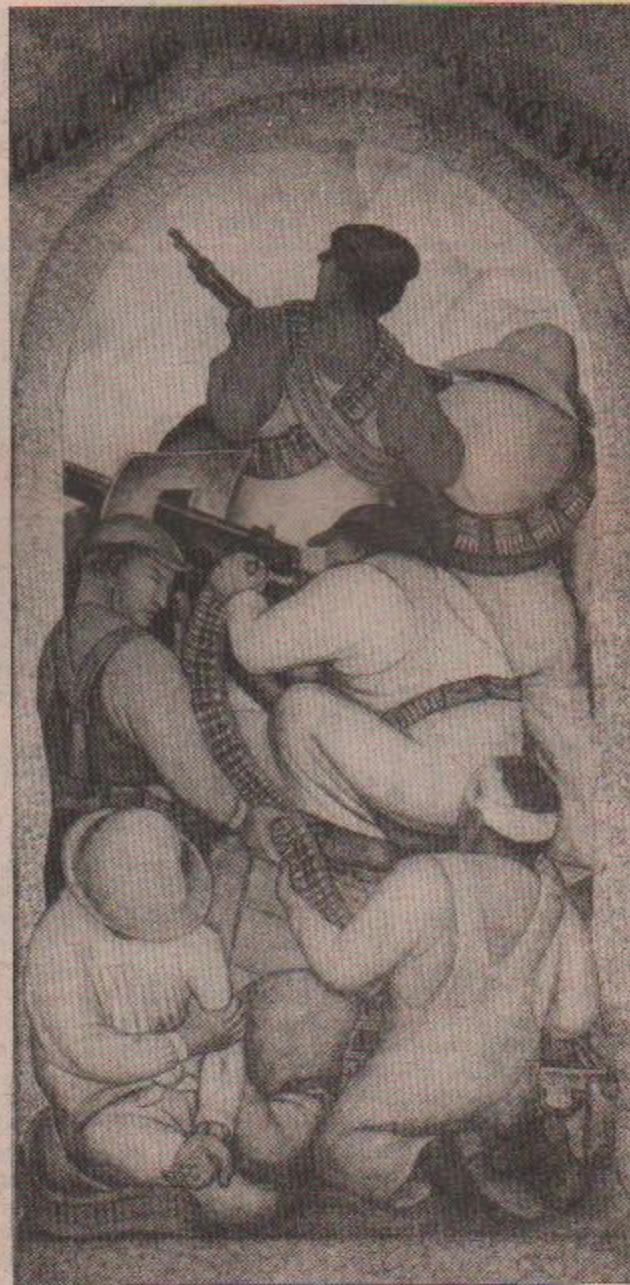
At a time when the majority of people's cultural level is of a materialist (not in the philosophical sense) 'beer, fags and skittles' type, which no doubt suits the rich in society by keeping everyone ignorant of their interests, then it is vital that honest newspapers like yours try to lift not only people's political horizons but also their cultural horizons.

Throughout history numerous authors, artists, poets, etc, have lived most of their lives in poverty while the enjoyment of their work has been monopolised by the wealthy.

As socialists it is our duty to open people's eyes to the massive cultural treasure house lying unopened, waiting to be explored, not in the dim and distant future but now!

If the only purpose in life is to struggle like hell until we all get a three-bedroomed semi-detached, complete with car and all 'mod-cons', then it seems totally irrelevant struggling for a socialist society.

Howard Lovcraft, Huddersfield



The Trench by Diego Rivera.

So angry

Dear comrades,
Think of this—a young 16 or 17 year old working in disgusting conditions and getting absolutely demoralising wages.
You would never find a 30-40 year old man or woman working like this with these disgusting wages, so why should we? It makes me so angry.
Now Margaret Thatcher is bringing out this crappy JTS, making us work for our dole. This is demoralising. Every day makes me angry. Every day makes me want to fight even more.
I bring you back to the question... why should we? The question is on the lips of all the youth of today. We have simply got to take some action against the Tories.
Elizabeth Young, Maryhill, Glasgow

Fight prejudice

Dear comrades,
At the moment the Tories are forcing Dame Jill Knight's virulently anti-gay clause through Parliament. This clause will make it illegal for councils to "promote homosexuality". This would mean councils being unable to give financial aid to gay advice centres.
What is worrying is that some Labour MPs have given in to this vile clause. The labour movement must move into action and defend what little rights gays and lesbians have left.
All too often we hear stories of 'queer-bashing'. The fact is that the majority of this country's gay and lesbian community are working-class and they cannot afford the lawyer and protection enjoyed by the elite and therefore have to suffer discrimination and prejudice.
Salvation will only come with a socialist Labour victory to eliminate the roots of all forms of prejudice and build a system of equality with men and women, black and white, gay and straight, young and old, all working for a brighter future not for a privileged elite but for all.
Martin Gardner, Crewe

Red alert

Dear comrades,
Thank you for printing my letter on the run-down of the health service in Maidstone. Since last October, Maidstone hospital has been on amber alert. They are only admitting emergency cases, maternity and paediatric patients. On 4 January they declared a red alert. Only the unions stopped the casualty unit from closing. If it had closed the two nearest hospitals would not have been able to cope. Patients in urgent need of treatment might have had to be taken to a London hospital, over 40 miles away.

The hospital management must take its share of the blame. They decided to sell off the nurses' home. Because of a mixture of high prices for housing, low wages for hospital workers and poor public transport, they are unable to find new nurses.

If there were a major accident there would not be enough beds for the victims.

Bob Excell, Maidstone Labour Party

Left on street

Dear comrades,
The effects of Thatcher's cuts were really brought home to three Cardiff LPYS members whilst walking into the city centre.

We came across an elderly woman lying flat on the pavement outside a taxi depot. She told us that she had been lying there for over an hour and asked us to call an ambulance.

While we were waiting for the ambulance to arrive the owner of the taxi company told us less than pleasantly to move because we were putting off potential customers!

When the ambulance arrived, the crew told us that since it was not an 'emergency' there was nothing they could do because of the shortage of beds and staff in Cardiff hospitals. All they could do was call the police!

The police then told us that she was drunk and did not need our help and that they would take her home.

We know that this lady suffers from cancer and also faces domestic violence.

It is a disgrace that the only thing the capitalist system can offer her is to be left alone because of the starvation of funds from the hospital and social services.

Jeremy Dear, Cardiff Central LPYS.

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Alexandra Palace
Sunday 19 June
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New Militant pamphlet out now!

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One-day general strike to defend NHS

OVER THE past few days we have witnessed the amazing spectacle of government ministers squirming with embarrassment at the strike action taken by nurses in Manchester and health service workers in Edinburgh.

Mick Barwood
national officer, Bloc.

In just the length of one night shift, nine years of Tory neglect of the NHS came into the living rooms of millions of working class people. The Tories quickly tried to end the controversy by going back on their plans to put an end to nurses' special duty payments.

However, the floodgates, once opened are not easily closed. For once the press barons, the BBC and ITV have had to reflect the growing mood of anger and despair of all health service staff and the fears of health service consumers.

Night after night the truth comes out. Deaths of premature babies for the want of an incubator in a special baby care unit, or the tales of the parents of young children who are involved in a 'waiting game' which may ultimately result in their kid dying unnecessarily.

These are the realities of the NHS in 1988. It is this that has

caused millions of working class people to consider how such events can be stopped.

Amongst the voices raised in anger against the Tories have been the hospital consultants and many distinguished figures from the medical field. Unfortunately they seem to have silenced or at least put into the shade the leaders of the labour and trade union movement.

At a time when public opinion has risen to such levels of disgust over the destruction of the NHS there has never been a more appropriate time to mobilise support for health service staff. This should be done by organising a national one-day general strike which could halt overnight Thatcher's privatisation plans and may even signal the end of her despised government.

Privatisation

It is not enough, however, just to raise that demand in the pages of a paper. We will be encouraging every delegate to the Bloc conference, where the health service will be one of the major discussions, to take a resolution back to their union for a one-day strike to be held for the NHS. In particular, the Broad Lefts in Cohse and Nupe have to publish material now to

BLOC
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Conference '88

**Sheffield City Hall
Sat 13 February**

Speakers include Tony Benn

campaign for a lead to be given by their unions. Meetings of health service workers should be organised now by Bloc supporters and those in NHS unions.

Bloc is producing material and we will be launching an NHS Broad Left at the Bloc conference on 13 February, planning a na-

tional conference and a series of regional meetings. Between now and then, however, every hospital in Britain must be visited to ensure the hall is crowded with health service workers. We believe that within a very short period of time the NHS Broad Left could become the biggest in the country.

Low pay-how do we manage?

THERE IS growing unrest amongst low-paid NHS workers. I work in a day hospital for the elderly. For working a part-time twenty and a half hour week I bring home, after deductions, £54. The occupational therapy helpers in the same unit, working a 36 hour week, take home, after deductions £68.

Militancy

How can people manage on these pay levels? Women working as cleaners and catering assistants are paid less per hour than we are, along with other ancillary workers. Only last week the blood transfusion service workers were taking industrial action over reductions in meal allowances which would mean a pay cut to them. A wave of militancy is sweeping through rank and file NHS workers—they have had enough of cuts, closures, reductions in services and privatisation.

Speech therapists in the *Therapy Weekly* magazine were complaining bitterly about how their union, Astms, was handling pay rise negotiations. Nurses and other workers, including speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists are leaving the NHS because of low pay. The PTA Whitley council to the Pay Review

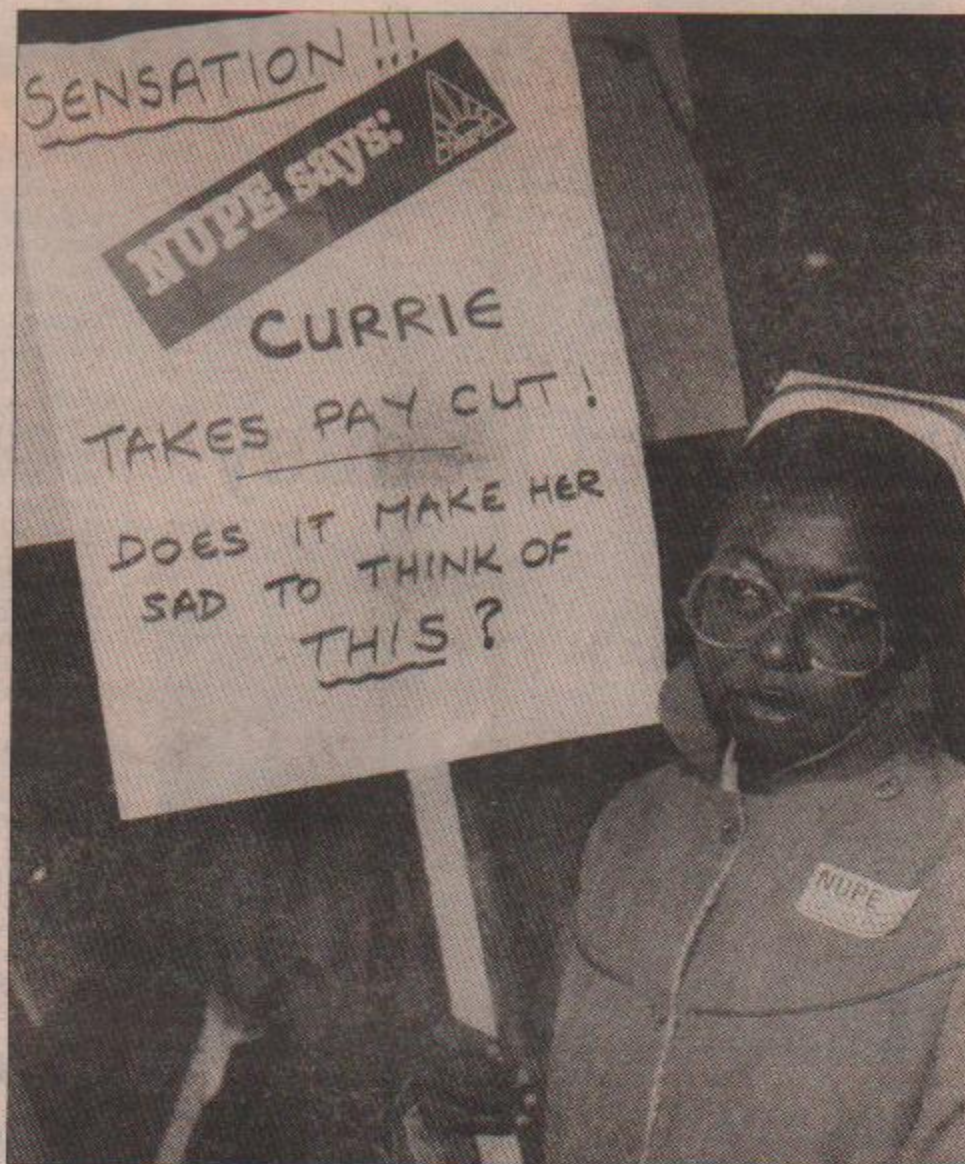
Body clearly states that the government should give substantial pay rises to the professions allied to medicine by increasing expenditure in the health service.

The way to create the necessary funds will be to nationalise the pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management. Despite the low pay in the health service, workers in the majority want to be in their respective trade unions. However, one woman told her Cohse branch secretary that she could no longer afford the union subs because to her it was the price of a loaf of bread.

Minimum wage

More and more trade unions are taking up the question of the implementation of a minimum weekly wage. My own union, Cohse, has a policy of £125 per week or two-thirds the average national wage. The trade union movement as a whole must take up the demand for a minimum weekly wage and take it out to the members, campaigning and fighting for it to be implemented so that workers no longer suffer poverty.

By Gwyneth Cullen
Cohse



Manchester night nurse on strike recently.

Photo: John Harris

What we say

- ★ TUC must call a one day strike to defend the NHS.
- ★ Minimum wage of £125 per week for all health service workers.
- ★ 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ No to all hospital closures on grounds of economies and cutbacks.
- ★ For an end to privatisation within the health service. Present schemes to be ended.
- ★ Abolition of all charges including

- those for dental and optical care.
- ★ For a completely free health service. Health care on the basis of need, not ability to pay.
- ★ For the control and management of the NHS to be vested in the hands of health workers themselves.
- ★ Nationalisation of pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers control and management.
- ★ For a socialist Labour government committed to a full socialist programme which, for the health service, must include the above demands.

Cuts, cuts, and more cuts

HEALTH SERVICE workers are now faced daily by cuts, cuts and more cuts.

For the first time many of the previously silent professional and medical staff have begun to voice opposition now that they are realising that the very existence of the NHS is at stake.

The latest cutbacks are finally destroying the illusions that even health workers who previously voted Tory had. Many of them are contemplating, or are taking, industrial action over a number of issues.

Last week the national media gave a great deal of coverage to the Manchester nurses who voted for a 24 hour strike against the government's proposals to cut unsocial hours payments. This one-day strike by one group of nurses did more to win public sympathy and support for their plight than the NHS trade union leaders have done with their years of negotiations.

At my own hospital, the night nurses were asking for a ballot to take similar action despite their morale being very low prior to the Manchester strike. Hundreds of thousands of nurses all over the country must be feeling the same.

By Mike Griffiths
porter and Cohse member, Pinderfields hospital, Wakefield.

Grange hospital, Northwich

MID-CESHIRE unions have joined forces by forming an Action Committee to fight the savage cuts within the Crewe Area Health Authority.

An inaugural meeting was called by the Mid-Cheshire Trades Council, following pressure from Militant supporters, and immediately the committee decided to organise action against the closure of the Grange Hospital in Weaverham, near Northwich.

The news of the closure, with the loss of 90 nursing staff plus ancillary workers, was brought to the meeting by acting Cohse steward, Christine Price, who appealed for support to protect jobs and the lives that would be threatened by closure.

Solidarity

The Action Committee has organised a meeting of the hospital's workers on 2 February, to discuss the tactics for organising a fightback.

The establishment of this committee is the most positive show of solidarity in the area for years.

It was inspired by the example of the Town Action Committee in nearby Crewe, formed to fight the closure of wards at Leighton Hospital and the redundancies at the local BREL works. Trade unionists and Labour Party members throughout the country should be prepared to take similar initiatives to support the health workers and to tell the Tories: 'Hands off the NHS'.

By Matt Davis

How I sell Militant at work

RAVING LUNATICS or monsters is how the Tory press and Labour's right-wing leaders present *Militant* supporters. But when people at work see a *Militant* shop steward helping them to fight for better pay and conditions and taking up their day to day problems, the hostile propaganda is countered. We are seen to be fighting on their behalf.

The majority of people that buy *Militant* off me are Nalco members, often stewards and branch officers that I meet at work. I sell the paper at stewards' meetings and branch committees and my buyers do not all work together. They work in offices,

childrens homes, day centres for mentally handicapped people and so on. In fact they may be miles apart. I therefore have to remember to break my journey if I pass an establishment where one of my 'regulars' works to ensure that they get the paper.

The main thing is always having the *Militant* with me and not leaving them behind. Even if it is just a few copies in a wallet file, you never know when you might come across somebody who is interested.

By Roger Bannister,
Liverpool Nalco.



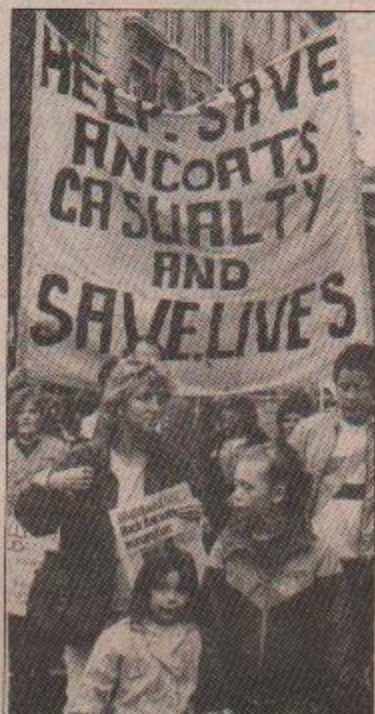
Manchester protest

THE MANCHESTER Central District Health Authority, which covers the Manchester Royal Infirmary, the Royal Eye hospital and St Mary's, met on Tuesday to discuss cuts and proposed redundancies.

By a Manchester health worker.

More than 300 workers from the hospitals lobbied the meeting, calling for opposition to the cuts. The authority is verging on bankruptcy. Only weeks ago it was reported that they'd had difficulty paying the wages of the workers. Their answer to this crisis is to propose 150 redundancies in the hope of saving £10,000 per year on each job. As Steve Riddles, Nupe chair said, "How many NHS workers get £10,000 per year?"

Letters have been issued to workers in the three hospitals asking for volunteers for voluntary redundancy or early retirement. The letter then goes on to say that if there are no volunteers then the 'option' will be compulsory redundancies. The job cuts are being sought amongst the



Ancoats protest last year. secretarial, administrative and technical staff. As one Nalco member said, "They classify us as non-essential, yet without us the place would fall apart".

Hillend hospital

OVER ONE hundred nurses have been on strike for a week at Hillend hospital near St Albans in protest at the suspension of two of their shop stewards. One of these, Jane Taylor Barclay, of the Confederation of Health Service Employees (Cohse), was suspended for informing the local press that cuts were costing lives.

Management tried to throw her out of the union room and when a fellow steward refused to open the door, he too was suspended. Jane told us that 95 per cent of the night shift were on strike. In addition to suspending her, management are refusing to recognise her as branch secretary.

On Thursday, members of Cohse and the other main health union, the National Union of Public Employees, at eight local hospitals are taking strike action in support. Money for the strikers is already coming in—£250 on Tuesday alone.

By Andy Viner.

Campaign round-up

THEY SAY 'by your friends shall you be known'. Well, John Walsh appears to have a very dodgy friend. North East Derbyshire Labour councillor, Fred Hopkinson was approached by Tory councillor, Valerie Poulford, and offered thousands of Walsh stickers and hundreds of manifestos. "If you want any more, just contact me", she said.

At Pontyberem, in South Wales, 600 turned up to the Arthur Scargill meeting.

Phil Cullen, who chaired the meeting, predicted a majority for Arthur in the South Wales area. Eight lodges have nominated him. 35 copies of the *Militant* were sold.

Child labour

Meanwhile, an enthusiastic Aberdare audience of 1000 heard Scargill declare, "I don't want to see cheap coal imports coming into this country which are the results of the labour of eight and ten year old children in Colombia and South Africa."



According to a Littleton NUM member, the 'Mickey Mouse' overtime ban is having a divisive effect, splitting members, who see the ban as ineffectual, from branch leaderships, who also realise that its effect on production is negligible, but who are bound by national policy. There is also a danger that when the ban is lifted, the Board will use this to cut back on overtime. A full overtime ban needs to be operated.

Interview with miners' leader

KEN MAUGHAN, chairman of Northumberland NUM spoke to Ged Grebby, in a personal capacity, after the Ashington debate between Arthur Scargill and John Walsh:

Arthur received two standing ovations at the meeting of around 200 members. In contrast, Walsh got a very cool reception, with the main gist of his comments being that confrontation is no good for the NUM. When he pointed out that the deputies had got much further in their negotiations with management, someone heckled, "Aye, that's Judas money for what they did in the strike".

Walsh also made it clear that he would talk to management over the six day week and 'flexible working'. Virtually all the questions were directed at Walsh—he was twice pressed to answer a question on whether he would do a deal with the leadership of the UDM. He refused to answer. Afterwards the men commented that he didn't give one straight answer all night.

Arthur said that there was a place for every miner in the NUM but not the leaders of the breakaway outfit.

When questioned on pit closures, Walsh gave an answer that British Coal would have been proud of, saying that in his own area there were no old pits left and that we couldn't afford to be

dinosaurs. He was also asked why hadn't he followed Arthur Scargill's example and resigned to stand for the leadership. "My job might not be available when I go back for it" was the reply. After his performance I can see why he's not confident of winning! Even the men who have a grudge against Arthur left the meeting feeling disappointed—they must have been asking themselves, "Is that the only alternative?"

This election is vital to the future of our union and industry. If Walsh wins, it will be a green light to the management to press ahead with the six day working week and pit closures. There are now only two pits left in the Northumberland coalfield—and the Board are closing Ashington pit in March. The other pit, at Ellington, is in the Board's low profitability range. If Scargill doesn't win, we can kiss goodbye to mining in Northumberland.

Scargill's victory will be a big boost for us. We can then go on the offensive to save our jobs. British Coal's meaning of the word 'flexibility' is that the men have no power, the boss has the flexibility to treat them like dirt and do what he wants with them. What's happened in Yorkshire shows the mood is there for a fightback—the sooner the better!

What happened at Bentley?

THE DISPUTE at the Bentley colliery, which had begun to simmer before Christmas, flared into life recently when three men in a driveage were transferred to other tasks.

By Simon Duerden.

As the driveage was about to enter a position where possibly large bonus could be earned, Bentley miners struck immediately after the Christmas holidays. Many men feared that if the management were able to get away with deciding who works where and who earns the large bonus, the unity of their union would be threatened.

By Thursday the South Yorkshire coalfield was virtually completely picketed out. On Friday the dispute began to spread into North Yorkshire with Kellingley and pits in the Selby complex being shut by flying pickets.

During the course of the Frickley dispute last summer the area executive had played a decisive role in stopping the dispute and we saw the sickening spectacle of leading NUM figures talking of crossing picket lines. In one or two cases this actually took place.

This time however the executive and the Yorkshire officials maintained a deafening silence. Once again a golden opportunity was lost to show British Coal that the Yorkshire area of the NUM had had enough of the ceaseless attacks from management by calling out the whole coalfield.



Bentley miners lobby the South Yorkshire panel.

Branches began to hold special meetings to decide their attitude to the dispute and it has to be said that although there was a militant, determined mood in many of the Doncaster pits, the mood was not so strong in other parts of the South Yorkshire coalfield. This was reflected at the South Yorkshire panel meeting on the Sunday which voted to return to work to allow negotiations to take place with the management. Management have offered the NUM at the pit a disputes procedure this week and have also agreed not to put new men into the driveage. Disputes procedures usually take weeks or months to arrange.

The Thorpe end of the Hatfield-Thorpe complex is not now going to be opened up due to bad indus-

trial relations in the South Yorkshire coalfield and until the NUM accept flexible working. Management are obviously attempting to blackmail the militant mood of miners in Doncaster into accepting their dictatorial commands.

They will fail. This dispute reflects the growing bitterness of Yorkshire miners. Bentley pickets commented on how well received they were whilst picketing other pits. Indeed many miners at North Yorkshire pits not picketed were very disappointed. It also shows that whilst the rank and file will fight and that Yorkshire miners won't cross picket lines, a vacuum exists in the leadership of the area. The silence over this action has been a disgrace. As we go to press, talks are still continuing.

Photo: John Harris

'Would you accept it?'

"IF YOU were in my shoes, losing £13 per week, would you accept it?" This question was fired at Alan Tuffin, general secretary of the Union of Communications Workers, by a young member attending a meeting of Southend Mechanised Office postal workers.

Southend postal workers were the first to take action in the recent dispute. The local branch committee has asked the membership to reject the deal negotiated between the UCW leadership and the Post Office, which will result in many members losing out in a big way as a result of the reorganisation of bonus schemes.

The meeting had to be brought

to order when some members heckled Tuffin. Nick Rayner, the Southend UCW (POPA) secretary, said: "The membership must reject the offer. The position of the Broad Left has been effectively taken up in Southend. We must carry on the industrial action for a three hour reduction with no strings attached".

Post Office workers must fight. In Southend, the postal workers are completely against local management on issues such as casual labour, loss of overtime, demands for higher productivity, and cramped working conditions. Also privatisations hang over the postal services.

By John Mckay.

News in Brief

Dowding and Mills

THE DISPUTE at Dowding and Mills in Hackney Wick has entered its second week. The strike started when the management fired 13 men for refusing to work shifts as part of a wages dispute. Already there was an overtime ban in force, but even before any action had been taken, the management waved the big stick by sending a letter out to all the workers at the site threatening to fire workers if they did.

After the sackings the entire shopfloor decided to come out. The EETPU have made the strike official. The company has been moving jobs normally done at the Wick factory to other non-

union branches in the group. A scab driver has removed material on several occasions. It turns out that he is working for the company's security firm, Amalgamated Security.

Support for the strikers is tremendous, with the local food van donating their wind shelter and wood for the brazier coming from other workers. Assistance has also come from the lads' local pub, the Lord Napier.

Donations and messages of support should be sent c/o the Lord Napier, White Post Lane, Hackney Wick.

By Tim White

Ford Halewood

SOME COMMENTS from workers at Ford Halewood: "Two years ago the company said, 'Let's make the cake bigger together, and then we can all have a good slice'. We did and we're still getting crumbs. We're already digging trenches around Pork Chop Hill. We can't accept this deal."

"I'm not saying Ford are tight but one worker clocked on for 15 minutes ancillary overtime and unfortunately died of a heart attack. Ford's benevolent attitude towards their employees meant that they withheld

his pay because he'd died before he'd done the full quarter of an hour."

"This lad was busting to go to the toilet. He asked permission to go. The foreman said 'No, wait 20 minutes'. 20 minutes later he asked again, and again he was refused. Three quarters of an hour later the foreman said 'OK, you can go'. The lad smiled and said 'It's alright now.' The foreman looked puzzled but thought nothing of it until he opened his desk in the break and found a nasty mess."

Bristol postal workers dispute

THE NIGHT shift at the main sorting office in Bristol walked out on 14 January in protest at management's attempts to cut the Christmas bonus despite the fact that three million more items were sorted this year than last.

This followed strikes at the Bath, Calne and Chippenham offices. Management in Bath had given assurances that the bonus would be the same as last Christmas but went on to cut it from £171 to £131. Management have consistently whittled down the bonuses over the last three months as

an underhand way of cutting wages.

Anger has been building up for a long time over this and it also reflects the disappointment felt by many at the missed opportunity for a national stoppage before Christmas, to gain a three hour cut in the working week. Local union officials, like their national counterparts, have failed to give a lead. One even disassociated himself from the action in the press.

Militant supporters in the UCW are calling for an extension of the action to gain the full bonus and for an emergency meeting of Bristol UCW branch to decide the way forward. We are also calling for a vote to reject the derisory deal on hours offered by management and for national industrial action to gain the full three hours reduction.

By a Bristol UCW member

STOP PRESS: London UBO dispute. The national disputes committee has now agreed to widen strike to involve job centres in the Inner London West area. Negotiations are now taking place at a national level to try to resolve staffing and transfer arrangements. The broad left '84 section leadership has been called on to produce more publicity, including a pamphlet for the membership.

London UBO strike spreads

Workers react to national recruitment ban and mergers of job centres and UBOs

THE STRIKE of civil servants at Camden A unemployment benefit office against compulsory transfers and staff cuts has now spread to Camden B, St Marylebone A and B and Westminster UBO's.

Nicola McNulty, CPSA DE London region secretary, personal capacity and

Amanda Lane, branch secretary CPSA DE Avon

In a separate development, CPSA members in Westbury on Trim UBO, Bristol, came out over shortages of staff. In West London, protest action against the sacking of casual staff is planned in the Hammersmith area.

The common factor in

these disputes is a ministerial directive to Department of Employment (DE) management to balance the 1987/88 budget following a massive overspend last year. Initially a national recruitment ban was imposed. Then the merger of job centres and UBO's provided management with further ways of making savings through attacks on staffing levels and conditions of service.

In London, the dispute began when management tried to compulsorily redeploy 'excess' staff into job centres which were short-staffed - due to 18 staff being sacked a week before Christmas.

Their union, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA), is demanding any transfers should be on a voluntary basis and that any staff who do move are replaced. Members do

not accept that offices are over-staffed. In the past, even management accepted that offices with high turnover rates and inexperience levels warranted extra staffing.

Intolerable

In Bristol, management has said that the recruitment ban prevents them from taking on more staff to reach the level their own figures say they should have. These disputes back up the view expressed in articles written by management consultant Margaret Exley in policy journals. She argues that single-minded concentration on cost-cutting has taken priority over improving the service to the public. If management get away with staffing cuts, intolerable pressures will be put on staff, leading to a further

deterioration in the service.

Every CPSA member therefore, has a stake in this dispute. Support for the strikers has been magnificent. DHSS members have voted to black any scab work. Over £1000 was raised in collections last week. CPSA regional officials are calling on every member to support union policy by:

- ★ Refusing to work overtime;
- ★ Refusing offers of detached duty;
- ★ Operating a work to rule.

Donations and messages of support to (for London), Phil John, 7 Fowler House, South Grove, London N15 5QJ; (for Bristol), CPSA strike centre, c/o Astms, 1 Henbury Road, Westbury on Trim, Bristol. All cheques payable to CPSA Fighting Fund.

'Guts not cuts' wanted in Brighton.

200 COUNCIL workers, members of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), have voted to strike over plans by Brighton's Labour authority to make cuts in jobs and services. Cutbacks of up to one in five jobs are threatened in some departments.

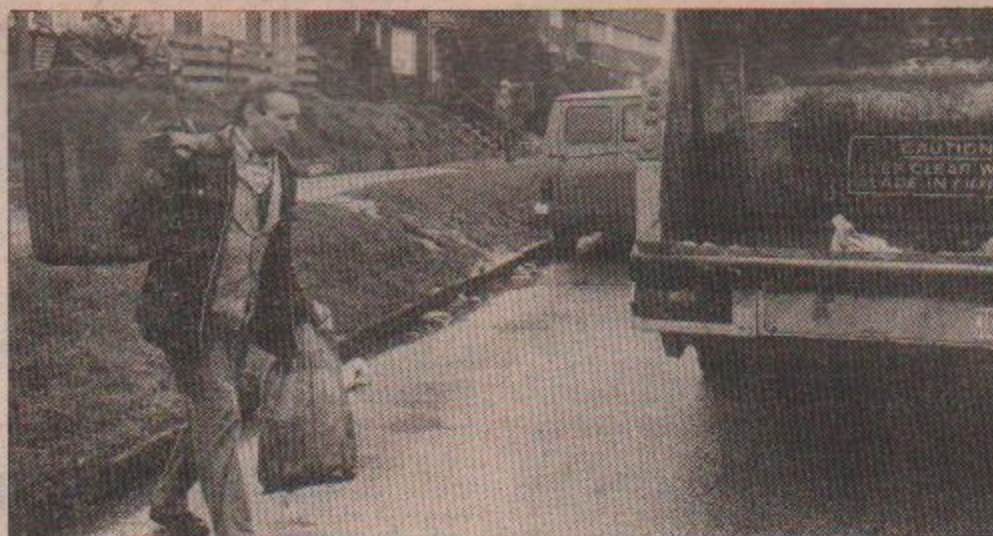
By Paul Cadman, Brighton Nupe, personal capacity

We will also be lobbying councillors at their next meeting in protest.

Despite admissions by leading councillors that the authority is "swimming in money", reductions in spending to 'avoid' Tory ratecapping is being lamely extended as "the best way to preserve services" by council leader, Steve Basam.

Commitments

Nupe workers have consistently argued that any turning back on Labour's manifesto commitments to defending jobs and services is nothing more than the dirty work of the Tories.



One in five jobs are threatened by Brighton's Labour authority. Don't do the Tories' dirty work!

Branch secretary, Tom Barwell, has said that Labour councillors should apply 'guts not cuts' to Tory threats of ratecapping.

"Growth in spending, visible gains, backed up by a co-ordinated campaign amongst local councils and town hall unions to end

ratecapping and privatisation is the only way to defend jobs and improve council services. A climate of cuts offers no defence. Nupe workers will only support growth."

Such fighting talk has struck a chord amongst many other workers in the

council, and there are signs that this action will spread. Nupe now spearheads the growing consensus of support for defence of jobs and services against Tory attacks and a strengthening of links with other Labour councils.

MSC workers strike

THE HEART of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) has been hit by a strike over the unagreed introduction of the Youth Training Scheme. 21 CPSA members in the Community Programme branch of the MSC's Sheffield head office, walked out last Thursday on indefinite strike.

By a Sheffield CPSA member

They came out in support of the union's demands for

YTS to be introduced only when the following conditions are met:

- ★ Trainees to be paid the same union rate as other clerical workers;
- ★ No job substitution;
- ★ A guaranteed job on completion of training;
- ★ Recruitment of extra staff to ensure proper training.

The action was triggered off by the imposition of a YTS trainee on the workforce without consultation with CPSA. The members

will remain on strike until the union's demands are met or until an assurance is given that the trainee will be removed and no others brought in.

Embarrassment

The strike is an acute embarrassment both to the MSC and the Tories. MSC head office is responsible for manning all YTS schemes and yet the staff who work there realise how it's being used to attack

trade union rights. What's more they are prepared to stand up against the propaganda machine of the MSC and back their words with action.

Messages of support have already been received from all over the country, including the London UBO strikers. Send support to Andy Duncan, or Yvonne Alton at CPSA strike centre, c/o Sheffield Coordinating Centre Against Unemployment, 73 West St, Sheffield.

Defend abortion rights

IN LIVERPOOL city centre on 16 January the labour movement organised a mass protest demonstration by workers against the Alton anti-abortion Bill.

By Terry Harrison

"It's like going back to mediaeval times when a woman was just a vessel, there to produce children. Women are not going to accept that!" Cathy Wilson, secretary of Liverpool's women's council echoed the anger and determination of the marchers.

A thousand people marched, with union banners from Fords, Nalco, Liverpool Trades Council and other labour organisations.

During the march a letter of solidarity was delivered to Usdaw members, who are facing redundancy, because of the closure of Blacklers.

After the march, a large meeting heard speakers from the women's organisations, the trade unions, health service workers, and Labour's youth organisations.

Terry Fields, MP for Broadgreen, said "For far too long we

have been on the defensive on this issue; we have responded to a small minority in society. The majority of women, when the issues are explained to them, would be totally opposed to what Alton is doing." He went on: "We are pro-life, we are pro-better conditions for the working people."

Political fight

Ann Bannister spoke on behalf of the national women's committee of the Labour Party: "The campaign against Alton's Bill is political not moral." She went on: "It is not just a question of legislation, but an attempt to stop women having abortions."

"No woman has an abortion out of choice, it is the Tories' fault, because of the failures in the health service, in education. It is the failure of this system that is the reason why women have an abortion."

The final speaker was Linda Douglas, YS member on the national executive of the Labour Party. She reported that a resolution moved by her, calling for a national demonstration against Tory cuts in the national health

service on the fortieth anniversary of its establishment, had been passed.

David Alton claims he has 80 per cent support in Liverpool for his Bill. But this was the result of a phone-in organised by the Liverpool Echo. The labour movement is actually backing the paper which has sacked 11 NGA members.

The real response from Liverpool people was shown on the streets on Saturday, where the marchers received tremendous backing with £80 collected.

Demonstrations were held all over the country. The largest was at Glasgow where 3,000 marched and *Militant* supporters sold over 50 papers and 70 abortion pamphlets.

In Birmingham over 1,000 marched through the city centre. Banners appeared from trade unions such as Nupe, the metal mechanics and the AEU, along with those of the Labour Party and the YS. Forty papers were sold and over 20 pamphlets.

Workers everywhere are showing their determination to fight the Alton Bill.

See also page 2.



Labour women's demonstration against Alton's Bill in Liverpool last Saturday.

A Marplan poll shows that public opinion supports legal abortion well after the 18th week of pregnancy.

Figures reveal that 80 per cent of women and 75 per cent of men support abortion after 18 weeks when a woman's health is concerned.

Only one in eight are opposed and one in ten undecided.

67 per cent are in favour of late abortion where there is likely to be foetal handicap and less than 17 per cent oppose it.

Seven out of ten people support abortion after 18 weeks in the case of rape victims.

58 per cent support it for under-age schoolgirls who do not realise they are pregnant. Only 21 per cent oppose it in these cases.

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST ALTON'S BILL
MARCH 19/ HYDEPARK/ 12.00 NOON
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What we stand for

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

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