

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

25p

ISSUE 770 18 October 1985

Liverpool

Inside...

Gorbachev
— new broom
in the USSR?



More news
and reports
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Urgent cash appeal

WITH ONLY two weeks to the end of the fighting fund quarter we need a massive response to our appeal for cash.

Militant is in the forefront of the battle in Liverpool, and we need cash to finance our work.

Send us a 21st Birthday present. What about £21? Or a tenner or fiver? Hold a collection at work. Ask your friends and family.

In the next fortnight we need to see an avalanche of cash. Make sure we get snowed under.

See page 6

Jobs and houses

or

Dole and slums

Rally—two weeks to go

IN TWO weeks, thousands of socialists from all over Britain will come to the Royal Albert Hall to celebrate 21 years of *Militant*.

Not since before the war have socialists filled the Royal Albert Hall. Speakers will give first-hand accounts of workers' struggles, from the American teamsters' strikes in the 1930s to the miners in 1984 and Liverpool in 1985.

Also appearing are the 'Red Choir' from Wales and other socialist singers and musicians.

Show in action that *Militant's* ideas are growing and that we are here to stay. This event is a must for every socialist. Make sure you don't miss it. Get your ticket NOW. See advert, page 3.

The choice facing Labour

WHEN LABOUR leader Neil Kinnock visits Liverpool on 21 October he will face a clear choice.

Will he back the city council who have created jobs, built houses and improved services—or allow the dole queues and slums to rise again in Merseyside?

The Tory government are trying to bankrupt Labour local authorities and Liverpool has been a main target for the Tories' wrath. The city council has fought back against the Tories to give this hard hit city hope for the future.

Thousands of Liverpudlians are now working, for the council or on contract work, instead of being on the stones. Thousands of Liverpool families are moving out of slums into decent accommodation. They are getting nursery schools and a decent education. Local people know that if they don't fight the Tories, all this is in danger.

Hurling lies and insults at Liverpool's struggle, the press, who normally worship at the feet of Thatcher, applauded Neil Kinnock's attack on the city council. Kinnock and the trade union leaders will be welcomed here, but workers expect them to meet the councillors and the unions fighting the Tories and discuss how the

By Ben Eastop

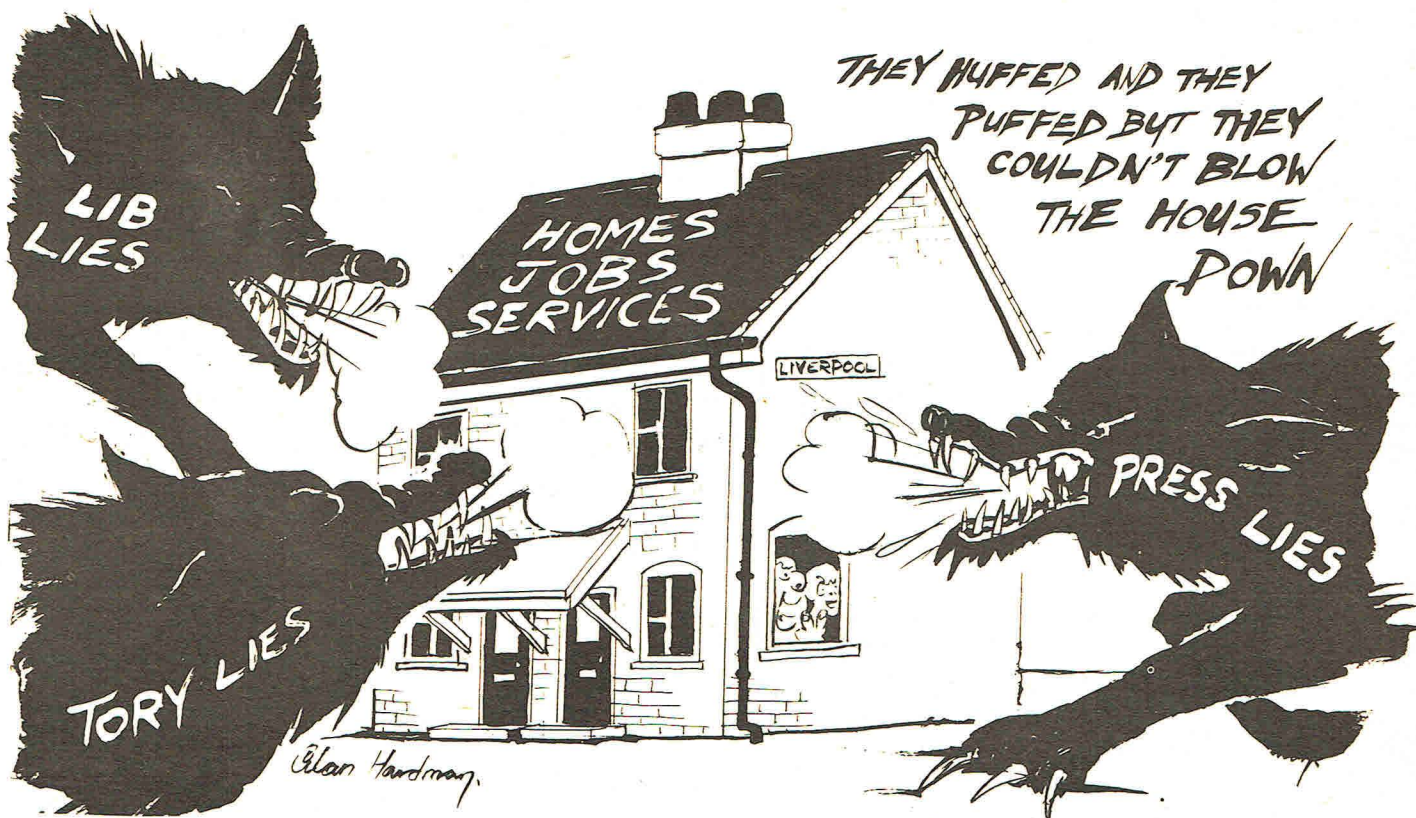
gains made since 1983 can be maintained.

The council's account books are, and always have been, open to the scrutiny of Labour and trade union leaders. Any solution that does not involve cuts in jobs or council services will be considered.

Unacceptable

What councillors and workers will not accept are calls for the house building programme or the nursery school scheme to be scrapped. Neil Kinnock talks of accepting some cuts and fighting with a "dented shield", but the knights of old used to dent their shields in battle, not by jumping on them beforehand.

Ian Lowes, chairman of the Liverpool City Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee explained to *Militant*: "The manual workers have



shown themselves willing to take action in defence of jobs and services and the local council. Like the council, we in the shop stewards committee don't see the laying off of the workforce for a month as the solution, we want to get additional resources from the govern-

ment.

"But we know the only way to do this is to use the next few months to explain the situation to all council workers and get the workforce united in action to campaign for these resources.

"We are calling on all

unions, including those who have left the JSSC, to unite with us and fight for no cuts in jobs and services, no lay offs, no sackings, no rent or rate increases and no reduction in the housebuilding programme. There are no 'soft alternative options' to fighting this government.

The alternative is cuts.

"I'm confident workers will see the need for united struggle once it is clearly explained by all the union leaders. The councillors have stood their ground, so will we".

Militant Defence Fund - strikers set the pace

NOTHING COULD show better the determination of workers to defend a workers' paper which fights for them, than this week's letter and £5 donation to the *Militant* Defence Fund from the Silentnight Strikers.

Terry Bennett, Branch Chair, writes: "I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the FTAT Cravendale 92 branch (Silentnight strikers) to offer our thanks for the marvellous support by *Militant*..."

"At our last branch meeting on Sunday 6 October 1985, it was unanimously passed to send a donation of £5 from our hardship

fund to the *Militant* Defence Fund.

"Though this fund is really for hardship cases, these people are the ones who are most aware of how much has been raised. We would have liked to have sent more, but we are unable to claim dole and we are living on strike pay, plus any assistance we can generate. We wish you luck in your struggle, carry on the fight..."

The struggle of the Silentnight strikers has set an example to all other layers of the labour movement and deserves full physical and financial support from trade unions and Labour parties around

the country.

The magnificent sacrifice which they have made to the *Militant* Defence Fund, should inspire supporters to tap the enormous reserves of support which workers have for *Militant*, especially those which *Militant* has defended in the past.

Militant has been unjustly penalised £10,000 for defending workers in struggle and they will contribute generously when approached. Many people who do not normally donate to the *Militant* Fighting Fund are prepared to part with hard cash to defend the right

of a socialist newspaper to print the truth. Workplace collections, TU branch and ward collections have been especially successful. Donations this week include:

£11 collected at Gascoigne Ward Barking CLP, Withington CLP women's section £5, Rochdale Women's Council £10, Cardiff W LPYS £20. £10 each from Bristol NW and Wallasey LPYSs and fivers from Peckham and Sunderland N LPYSs. £25 from Paul Green, expelled Sheffield City Councillor. Other supporters in Sheffield sent in over £100. £91 came in from Coventry, £85 from

Nottingham, £67 from Avon, £45 from Kent, £45 from West London and £35 from Poole in Dorset.

Supporters in all areas must rush cash in urgently! They should turn to the labour and trade union movement in particular, to help us pay our exorbitant costs. The settlement does not alliviate our financial burden. We have only two weeks in which to pay £10,000. Send money now to *Militant* Defence Fund, 5 Cremer House, Deptford Church Street, London SE8 4SB.

By Kim Waddington

Reagan the hijacker

THE US fighter planes' mid air hijacking of an Egyptian airliner would have been denounced in every Fleet Street journal if it had been carried out by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, or by a Stalinist state like the USSR.

Even though the original PLO hijack of the *Achille Lauro* and the murder of an elderly American widely condemned, what can beat the hypocrisy of the *Times* editorial on 14 October.

"The American act of interception was a technical illegality, but did it amount to more than a 'citizens arrest' followed by a handing over of known criminals to lawfully constituted authorities?"

US imperialism's act was "technically" one of war. Some American sailors on the *USS Saratoga* claim that orders had been given to shoot down the Egyptian plane if it attempted to fly on, which would have put it on par with the Korean airliner shooting of 1983. The fighter planes had to intercept three other planes before finding their target.

Reagan believes in showing his strength—when deal-

ing with weak third world countries. He would never have tried such an act with Britain or France, but with weak 'allies' like Egypt, he is prepared to ignore questions of 'sovereignty' in US capitalism's interests. His government also justify the bombing of the PLO camp just south of Tunis, which killed around 70 people including a number of Tunisians, on 1 October.

Militant condemns the original hijacking by members of the Palestinian Liberation Front (a section of the PLO) and the murder of a partly paralysed Jewish American. Such actions do not benefit the Palestinian people in whose name they were carried out.

Who does benefit? The Israeli government are able for a while to still the voice of opposition of working class and middle class Israelis who increasingly oppose the permanent war footing, the permanent insecurity and the economic hardship caused by the huge military spending. Regan gains too. His declining popularity has been boosted by this incident.

The PLF hijack of the *Achille Lauro* started as an attempted adventurist attack on Israeli territory which had to be cancelled. It became in-

stead a terrorist stunt.

Mass action, by Palestinian workers on the West Bank, linked to a call for action from Israeli workers is the only way to secure a future for the Palestinians.

The US intervention will not bring long lasting stability. The incident could provoke a further round of terrorist activity. There have already been large demonstrations against President Mubarak in Egypt, suspecting him first of complicity with Reagan and then of inability to stand up to him. Tunisia too has seen anti-US demonstrations and leaflet campaigns. Both countries get huge US military aid.

Thatcher and Howe's calling off of talks with the PLO was a farcical act of moralising. But the talks would not have achieved 'peace'. All the combatants and particularly the major powers are angling for economic and strategic advantage.

When the working class adopts Marxism and socialist internationalism the Middle East nightmare can be resolved. A campaigning socialist movement could even now begin to get an echo throughout the Middle East.

By Roger Shrivess

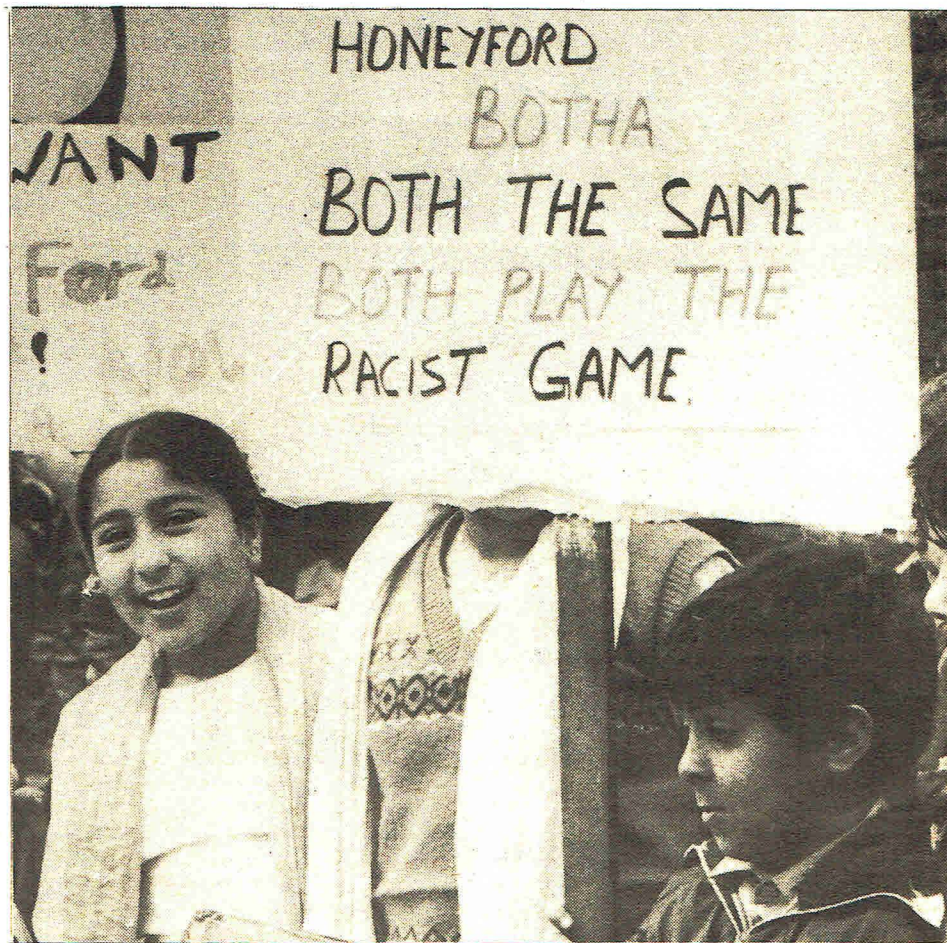


Photo: John Harris (FL)

Honeyford protest picket

HONEYFORD MUST go was the message of the 300 pickets of Drummond Middle School in Bradford on Tuesday. The picket was a protest at Ray Honeyford continuing as headmaster. Inyat Hussein, a parent who has three children at Drummond explained what it was all about.

"This man is making trouble for the whole community by writing in newspapers against the ethnic minorities. He has to be sacked. If he has got any respect he should have left himself. If he won't go there will be more protests until he does."

Despite threats that school students on strike would be kept in low classes and action would be taken against parents, only 104 children out of 532 went to school.

The Parents Action Group day of action has drawn support throughout Bradford. Teachers from Grange and other schools and local authority workers came out on strike against Honeyford. This was despite the lack of official backing from NALGO and the NUT. Many school students came out from other schools.

Numbers swelled by several hundreds more and a

demonstration took place around the streets of Manningham. As the speaker from the Parents Action Group explained at the rally: "This was not Asian, or Muslim, but a united fight." It was hoped that the new governors recently elected to Drummond take account of those views and get rid of this headmaster who stands for dividing our class on racial lines.

LPYS Public meeting at Manningham Middle School, Wednesday 23 October at 7.30pm.

Mersey Militant launched

MILITANT supporters on Merseyside are launching the first major local Marxist paper in the history of the labour movement.

The *Mersey Militant* will be a weekly, two-page supplement to *Militant*, taking up the struggles and issues affecting local workers and youth. We see this as an absolute necessity given the avalanche of lies, abuse and slanders from the local press in the heat of Liverpool City Council's battle.

As the first editorial says: "All the forces of the old, capitalist society are combining to divide and conquer Merseyside workers. The press, the Liberals and Tories all seek revenge for the marvellous spirit of defiance and class solidarity created through decades of struggle against harsh condi-

tions by our class on Merseyside..."

Mersey Militant will be a breath of fresh air after the poisons which workers have suffered from the *Liverpool Daily Post* and *Echo*. Already workers have given money to launch the paper and we will be organising an appeal for sellers and sponsors to sustain this new workers' voice. The immediate need is to help Liverpool council score a victory, but with effort and support by Merseyside workers we aim to make *Mersey Militant* a regular weekly.

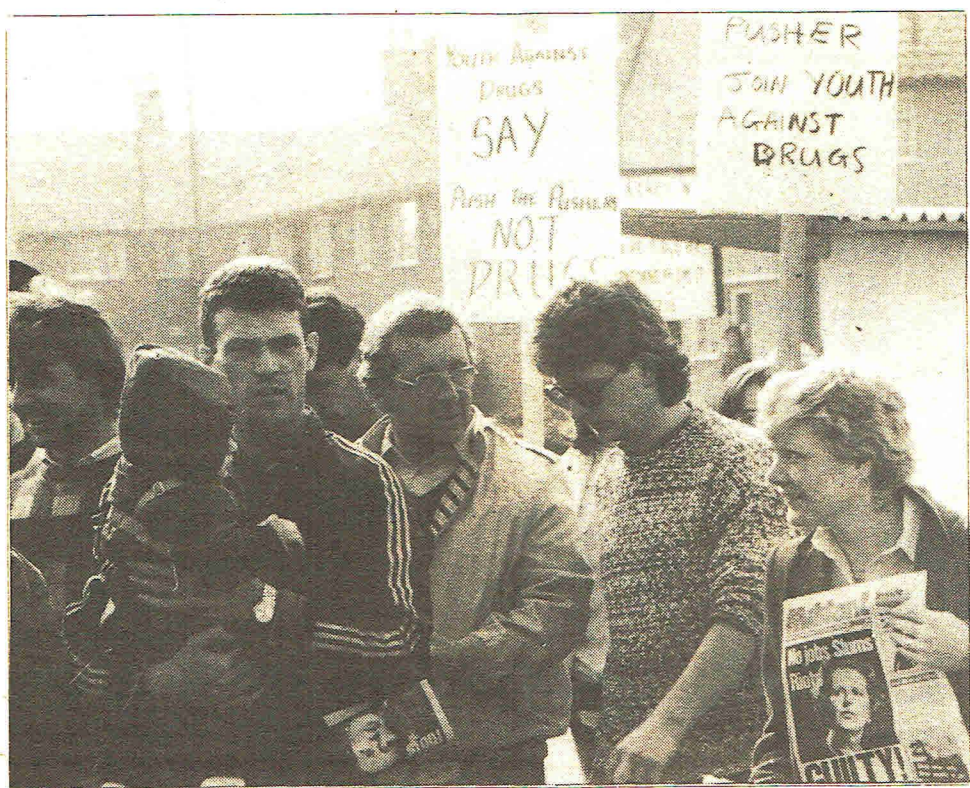
Mersey Militant is not a rival, but a supplement to *Militant*. It will be an invaluable weapon in putting the workers' case, answering the lies of the press and the half-truths of Labour's national leadership.

It is fitting that this paper is launched on the 21st

birthday of *Militant*, giving the major contribution of Merseyside Marxists to the foundation and growth of *Militant*.

We appeal to trade unionists, housewives, Labour Parties and Young Socialists to write for *Mersey Militant* and *Militant*! We ask council workers especially to take bulk orders for your depots and offices. We call on *Militant* supporters to build estate rounds for *Militant* and *Mersey Militant*. Raise the cash and use *Mersey Militant* as a weapon to raise the political consciousness of all workers. We call on comrades up and down the country to celebrate our new victory and to make *Militant* the daily voice of every class conscious worker.

By Richard Venton



March against drug pushers

OVER A hundred people joined a demonstration against drug pushers in Croxteth, Liverpool, on 12 October. It was the latest in a series of protests organised jointly by Youth against Drugs—set up after the death of 14 year old Jason Fitzsimmons from a heroin overdose—and West Derby LPYS. The demonstration was addressed from

the back of a lorry by representatives of the two organisations and local MPs and councillors. Previously Youth against Drugs and the LPYS organised a lobby of Lower Lane Police station, demanding action against local drug pushers. (A feature on the anti-drugs campaign in Liverpool will appear in a future issue).

Photo: Tina Carroll

Riots - action on police Families describe police terror raids demanded

Miners' supporter jailed

Tottenham

THREE representatives of the Jarrett family gave their side of the story at a *Militant* public meeting in Tottenham attended by 160 mainly young local residents.

Sharon, then Jackie, described the events of last week which led to the riots; the arrest of Floyd Jarrett; the death of Cynthia Jarrett; the police search of the house; and their refusal to call for an ambulance on their radios.

Jackie also described the peaceful demonstration outside the police station on the Sunday morning and the meeting on Broadwater Farm. The police had already swamped the estate by the time she left early in the evening, before the riots started.

Marcia, another member of the Jarrett family, said that the Jarretts, like all people black and white, simply wanted justice done and an end to harassment and terrorisation.

Emerson Webster from the Groce family support committee pointed to the links between police harassment and attacks on black communities with events in the miners strike.

He warned that the riots would be used to justify

massive new resources and weapons in the hands of the police for use against all sections of the working class fighting against the Tories and bosses.

Many people spoke from the floor, generally agreeing with the need for independent enquiries by local communities into the wounding of Cherry Groce and the death of Cynthia Jarrett.

The audience also agreed on the need to link the two issues into a broad campaign for democratic control of the police.

By Jenny Thompson
(Walthamstow LPYS)

Brixton

NINETY PEOPLE attended a public meeting in Brixton last Friday organised by Vauxhall Labour Party Young Socialists to discuss recent attacks on civilians by the police and the subsequent riots.

"Black people have seen over the past few years how police serve as an arm of Thatcherism," said Emerson Webster of the Groce Family Support Group. "The attitude of the police towards the black community is linked to the conditions they face in the inner-city areas.

"Thatcher's medicine for the problems of high



The Tories' answer to inner city deprivation

unemployment, bad housing and declining services is to strengthen the police force so that they can silence the cries of anguish and despair. All these problems, and police harassment and racism, can only be solved by the socialist transformation of society. Black people will be the strongest and most determined fighters for socialism as they have the most to gain".

The meeting was addressed by relatives of both Cynthia Jarrett, who died during a police raid on her home in Tottenham, and Cherry Groce, who was shot and paralysed by a police inspector in her Brixton home.

Supporting the call for an independent enquiry, Stuart Holland, Labour MP for Vauxhall, reported that he had seen Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, but had received no satisfactory response from him. He gave full support to the demand that the officer concerned in the Brixton shooting be charged.

Mark Bygrave, a council worker told the meeting that his union branch, Lambeth NUPE, had passed a resolution calling for an enquiry into the police use of firearms. "Ever since I can remember," he said, "there has been one law for rich and the law makers and

another for the rest of us". The meeting stood and applauded Steve Nally, a local *Militant* supporter, when he accused the Tories of being the real criminals. He urged all present to join with the supporters of *Militant* in the Labour Party Young Socialists in fighting for a socialist leadership within the party.

The collection for the two families raised over £50 and many people expressed support in the LPYS and in particular the ideas of *Militant*.

By Anne Hollifield
(Vauxhall LPYS)

Photo: Piers Cavendish (Reflex)

BOB HARKER, a *Militant* supporter in Gateshead East Labour Party, has been jailed for 30 days.

Bob was fined for a 'crime' he did not commit. He was arrested outside Wearmouth colliery when police charged into a miners' supporters demonstration which was applauding Wearmouth NUM as they marched back to work at the end of the strike, (see *Militant* issues 749 and 750).

He was re-arrested for not paying the fine. He told Sunderland magistrates he could not pay the fine because it would be admitting guilt for something he didn't do. On 3 October he began a 30 day sentence.

Bob's morale is high. He says in a letter: "These people who run the country make me laugh. They tell us they send bad people to prison in order to correct their ways and make them good people. But sending decent honest miners to jail because they want a job and to save communities is very bad. They make me nothing but bitter with this unjust system of capitalism."

Bob, an ex-soldier, is well known to socialists in Britain and Ireland, writing regularly for *Militant* and *Militant Irish Monthly*. He hopes to be released in time for the 21st *Militant* anniversary rally at the Albert Hall. You can write to Bob. Sent letters to: R Harker, No R58637, HM Prison Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HU.

★ Sunday 3 November • 11am

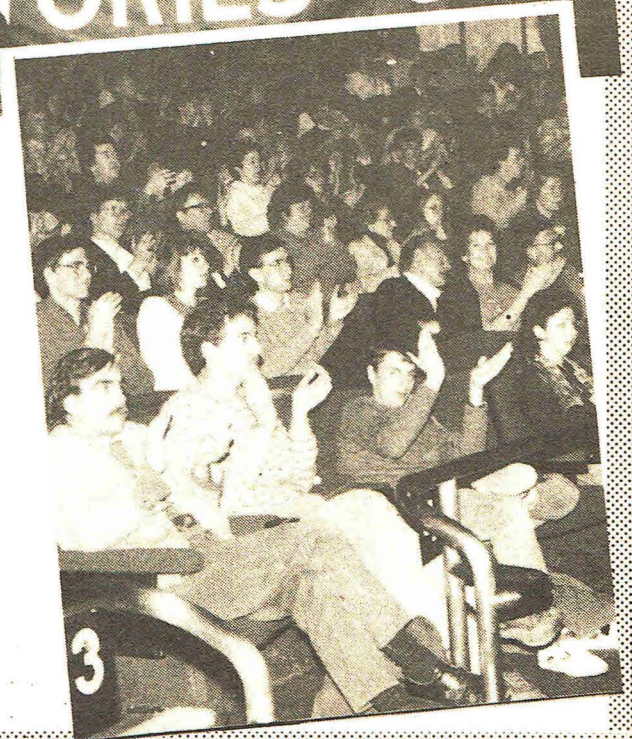
★ Royal Albert Hall, SW7

21
Anniversary

Third national



Rally



Booking form:

We would like tickets and enclose £ . . . (payable to: Militant Rally).

Name

Organisation

Address

CRÈCHE (please book now)

We will be bringing the following children

Name Age

Address

Please return to: Militant Rally, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

★ Hear: Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council), Ted Grant (Political Editor, *Militant*), Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*), Jack Collins (Kent NUM) Harry De Boer (Minneapolis Teamster Strike Leader, USA 1934).

★ Films, displays, entertainments, food, drinks. Tickets £3 (payable: Militant Rally) Crèche—places must be booked in advance with children's names and ages.

Liverpool's battle

IN THE teeth of the most ferocious campaign ever levelled at a council, Liverpool City councillors are standing firm in their refusal to cut jobs and services. That fact shines out through all the vilification in the press and the misinformation and confusion deliberately created by all the enemies of this socialist council.

In the pages of *Militant* are reports of the marvellous benefits for the working people of Liverpool as a result of the council's magnificent struggle. No other council can claim 2,000 jobs created or saved, 5,000 new houses started, school clothes allowances up from £18 to £40. These and many other gains are all the more striking when contrasted with the cutbacks and redundancies being implemented by other councils.

These reforms are the by-product of a socialist struggle in which the Marxist ideas of *Militant* have played a crucial role. Support for Labour in Liverpool has risen from 46 per cent to 55 per cent, according to the *Sunday Times*' poll. That support nationally would win Labour a landslide majority.

All the council's enemies (including the 'Communist' Party which has played a shameful role of confusing the issues and encouraging splits within the labour movement) are trying to give the impression that the Labour Group is continually changing its ground; but nothing could be further from the truth. New factors have had to be taken into account. As a result of the Appeal Court decision

to declare illegal government financial penalties imposed on Bradford District and Nottinghamshire County councils, Liverpool how has access to £7.7 million which otherwise would have been taken in penalties. Seeing the Liverpool councillors' determination to stand firm, a section of the ruling class has tried to draw the government back from the looming confrontation by making this concession.

It has therefore become possible to reduce the period during which the council will have no money to pay wages from three months to four weeks. It would be preferable to have strike action before the lay-offs take place, but if the workforce decide that tactically it would be better to accept the lay offs, and the loss of money that will mean, then the responsibility will rest solely with Baker and the Tory government. Essential services will however be maintained during the lay-off period.

This is not the course the council would have chosen to take. But after the narrow vote against strike action, it was the manual workers' unions who pressed the council to take action which, while conceding nothing on jobs and services, gives them time for a massive united campaign to compel the Tories to give back the money stolen from the council's grant.

The workers recognise that their jobs will have been saved. Not one is to be made redundant; there is to be no cutback on the housing programme. There is no acceptable alternative. 'Capitalisation' which would take money from the house-building programme to pay wages, would lead to 10,000 lay-offs in the construction industry, not for four weeks, but for an indefinite period, and long delays for those waiting for a house.

White-collar union leaders dominated by 'Communist'

Party leaders who advocate this are putting the narrow short-term interests of some of their own members before the long-term interests of the whole workforce of the city and indeed the bulk of their own members, who have everything to gain from the continuation of this Labour council. For instance, 400 teachers have been kept on who would have been made redundant if government ceilings had been applied by the council.

If any union leaders imagine that there is a better alternative they should look at what now faces their members in councils which have failed to resist the Tory onslaught. Lewisham, Newcastle and others are considering applying for 'derogation', a procedure by which in return for being freed from rate-capping, the councils hand over control of all their spending to the Environment Secretary.

The Institute of Public Chartered Accountants has expressed alarm about the future credit-worthiness of local authorities. Under the relentless pressure of the Tory government and its laws, only those councils who fight as Liverpool has fought this year will be able to prevent devastating cuts in jobs, services and housing.

The Liverpool councillors have put their money, their livelihoods and even their freedom on the line to defend their principles. They should consider any financial measures which help to protect the interests of those they represent, but the bottom line is the defence of jobs and services. It is up to the labour movement nationally to guarantee that they are joined in a massive campaign. The Tories must be forced to back down and the Labour leadership must implement the resolution passed at conference giving full backing to the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors and pledging reimbursement of surcharges and fines and the removal of any disqualifications.

Dirty press campaign

THE PAST few weeks have seen a slanderous and dirty press campaign against Derek Hatton, the Deputy Leader of Liverpool City Council. The hired liars of Fleet Street have sought to insinuate that his council expenses are in some way suspect.

When attacking labour movement activists and *Militant* supporters in particular, the press operate on the basis of "make it snappy, make it short and make it up". The *Sunday People* quoted anonymous leaders of Knowsley District Council, for whom Derek Hatton works, as being critical of his absence from his job on Liverpool City Council business. But Jim Lloyd, leader of Knowsley council has strenuously denied that any such statements were made to the *People*.

Derek Hatton's Liverpool City Council attendance allowance adds up to £4,821 a year. This is taxed. Three-quarters of the attendance



Liverpool council deputy leader Derek Hatton.

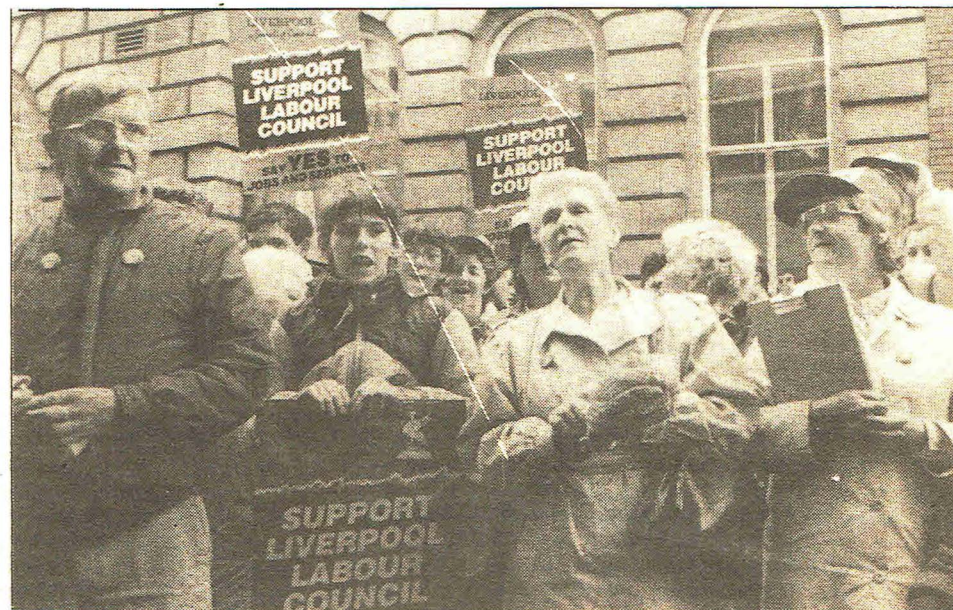
allowance, for the time Derek should be working for Knowsley District Council, is paid back to them.

The responsibility allowance as Deputy Leader comes to £1,854. It is also taxable. An amount, equivalent to this sum after tax has been deducted, is paid to the Labour Party. This is standard practice in Liverpool, but not in the rest of the country.

The travel allowance of £1,236 is fully audited by law as is the subsistence allowance of £2,386. These are incurred by the innumerable meetings in London and elsewhere in connection with the council's crisis. Expenses like home phone bills are not met by these allowances.

The Fleet Street gutter press is prepared to hurl as much filth as possible at the city councillors in the hope that some will stick. It is done to anyone who challenges the system from which these people get a lucrative living.

They do not attack the massive expense allowances of MPs or the corruption that exists in local and national government and big business. They reserve their venom for those like the Liverpool councillors who face the loss of their jobs and houses and imprisonment as a result of defending the working class.



Supporters of the Liverpool councillors demonstrate outside the District Auditors office in July.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

Morning Star doublethink

THE MORNING Star has consistently undermined the solidarity of the Liverpool labour movement behind the stand taken by the City Council.

It has attacked "the ultra-left nature" of the councillors and supported and encouraged those leaders of white collar trade unions who have tried to split the campaign by calling for 'capitalisation', a policy which would lead to the loss of 10,000 jobs in the building industry and a delay in constructing vitally needed homes.

In an editorial on 10 October it says that this capitalisation policy "has become known as creative accounting and has been used by other councils. The point is that procedures such as this buy time during which every effort can be made to build up still further the mass movement in support of the councils."

This is a monstrous distortion. 'Creative accounting' refers to book-keeping manipulation to provide councils with more money. Even this, as the *Morning Star* goes on to admit "does not solve the problem by itself. Creative accounting puts off the evil day—that is all." but 'capitalisation of assets' would not be a paper

exercise.

It would mean cuts in jobs and building. Those trade union leaders who advocate it are trying to protect the jobs of their members at the cost of those of other trade unionists.

Communist Party members in the NUT and NALGO are calling for a policy which will lead to their fellow party members in UCATT and TGWU being laid off. The *Morning Star* is encouraging them in this selfish abandonment of trade union principles.

Their hypocrisy is highlighted by their condemnation, in an editorial on 15 October, of Giles Radice's scandalous call for the teachers' unions to settle on the employers' latest offer.

Labour's right-wing education spokesman expressed concern about the financial constraints of local authorities. "Mr Radice's advice means accepting the incomes policy being imposed on local authority employees by the Tories via cash limits, ratecapping, and the array of financial penalties with which the government has armed itself" thunders the *Morning Star*. "True, Mr Radice says that after settling this year for a miserly increase, the

teachers should join with the local councils in a campaign to get more money from the government. Why not launch that campaign as from now?" The editorial concludes: "You do not increase pressure on the government by demobilising the movement when it is beginning to make an impact."

What they are accusing Radice of is precisely what the *Morning Star* and the local teachers' leaders are advocating in Liverpool. Both are guilty of sacrificing the struggle taking place now for a decent wage for teachers and jobs and services in Liverpool for a paper struggle at some point in the future.

Liverpool teachers should reject the poisonous advice of the *Morning Star* and its supporters within their local leadership and recognise that the struggle for their wage claim is inseparable from the City Council's struggle for their jobs. Already 400 teaching jobs have been saved by the council, which the Tories and Liberals would have scrapped; had Labour adopted the *Morning Star* line, no doubt these jobs could have been sacrificed in order to keep the books in order while they waited for next year's battle.

By Pat Craven

Liverpool support round up

MINERS AT COVENTRY COLLIERY unanimously passed resolutions supporting Liverpool City Council and JSSC in their fight to defend jobs and services as well as condemning the spate of expulsions of *Militant* and other left wingers in Westmidlands CLPs. (Barry Gardener, Coventry Colliery).

GREENWICH CLP has agreed to donate £200.00 in support of Liverpool Council.

ABERYSTWYTH: 65 people heard Terry Fields MP put a clear, convincing case for support for Liverpool Council. Despite the intervention of two or three sceptics, notably from the 'left' Plaid Cymru, Terry's fighting speech and an outline from Toby Bourke of the Aberystwyth Students Union

Executive on how students can play an important role in the labour movement led to warm applause and a collection of £67. (Alan Huyton, USDAW).

WEST DERBY, LIVERPOOL: the Campaign Unit set up by the CLP has organised Labour Party members to accompany a GMBATU steward on a visit to NALGO offices. The response to leaflets and discussions setting out the council's case has been excellent.

SOUTHAMPTON: Following a meeting of almost 40 trade unionists, Labour Party and LPYS members a Liverpool Support Group has been established in the City.

LIVERPOOL: 20 LPYS members lobbied the

Feathers Hotel on Tuesday 15 October. The hotel is owned by Paul Feathers—one of the leading lights of "Liverpool against the *Militant*". Feathers accused us of "causing an obstruction" while his secretary phoned the police who threatened us with arrest. (Rob Owen, LPYS NC)

ROCHDALE: 30 people attended the first meeting of Rochdale Technical College Labour Club to hear Liverpool Councillor, Leo Pease explain the fighting stand of the council. Any confusion over the issues involved dissipated during the meeting which also featured an explanation of the dispute at the Silentnight factory at Barnoldswick by Tom Scott, trade Union Liaison Officer for the Rochdale CLP. (Leni George).

Liverpool council campaign

Liverpool council cash crisis explained

AT ITS Finance and Strategy committee last Friday, Liverpool City Council effectively withdrew the 'redundancy' notices issued to its 31,000 employees. It had been thought that the council's financial shortfall created by the government's withdrawal of funds would result in a period of three months in which no money would be available to pay wages. It has now become possible to reduce this period to 28 days.

The council therefore have made it clear to its workers that the Tory imposed lockout, if it goes ahead, will last from 1 January to the 28th, after which all workers will be re-employed without any loss in conditions or accumulated benefits.

Tony Byrne, Chairman of the committee, spoke to *Militant* and explained how the new financial 'package' was put together:

"I should first of all make it clear that we were £25 million short and we are still short of that now; that is about equivalent to one month's money.

"In round figures, we can assume the normal running of the council to be about £5 million a week. The shortfall from December to the end of March would have been about £65 million. When the council issued the 90-day notices at the end of September, we said we would continue to explore ways to generate finance and clarify the position and we have done that.

"In rough figures we assumed we needed £45 million to pay for two months services and wages. £23 million was 'locked up' and unavailable for use because it was legally committed for redundancy money. The package has been basically designed to release that cash to practical use by reducing the lay-off period to less than a month, making redundancy

payments unnecessary.

"If the package could come together, therefore, £23 million of it was guaranteed. We could assume another £10 from the reserves we had put aside for emergency-only services (£15 million).

"That gave around £33 million, with a gap of about £10 million still left. If we could write off the £10 million short-fall in the Direct Labour Organisation order-book, that would have been it. But we couldn't do that until an unexpected event—the Appeal Court Decision last week over Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.

Illegal

"That court decision declared the Department of Environment system of spending limits to be arbitrary and unfair, and therefore illegal. After expert legal advice we were able to assume on that basis, that Liverpool's spending targets and rate support grant were also unfair.

"In 'good-faith' we were able to assume a theoretical income, that penalties we



Liverpool finance chairman, Tony Byrne.

were due to incur will not now be incurred. This gave us the 'key' to write off the DLO short-fall, complete the package and release the £23 million tied-up in redundancy money. Without the Appeal Court decision the whole arrangement would not have been possible."

As far as it is possible, 'normality' has been temporarily restored, although the solvency of the council as with any other, still depends on the money-market and the Public Works Loans Board. If the PWLB refuse loans it could still have a serious effect on the council, as would a decision of the House of Lords overturning the Appeal Court decision.

Liverpool council, like the government, the finance institutions and the Labour movement are in completely uncharted waters. No one knows how, or what would happen in the event of a major authority going bust. The financial package in the meantime has "demonstrated the willingness of the council to explore any avenue open, to bridge the gap", said Tony Byrne.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT Labour Party gave overwhelming backing to the continued struggle for jobs and services at a meeting of 15 October.

All but ten of 250 delegates and visitors backed a resolution opposing capitalism. This meeting approved the financial moves to reduce the lay-off to one month and release for productive use the £23 million set aside for redundancy payments.

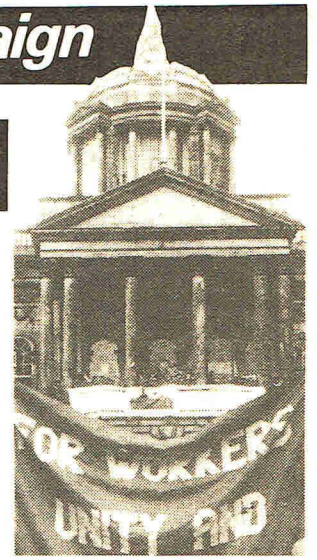


Photo: Dave Sinclair

What the struggle is all about—Mrs Thompson (left) visiting the Coulsden Place building project where she and her husband will soon be rehoused. Mr Thompson uses a wheelchair and at present they have to get it up stairs to their flat. Mrs Thompson supports the council all the way: "This is what it's all about, building houses. That Thatcher is trying to stop us. We need the money off her to get these houses finished. I want somewhere decent to live".

Progress in education reform

Liverpool city councillor Felicity Dowling, chair of the Education Committee, talked to *Militant* about the council's achievements in reorganising education in the city on the principles of maintaining standards and providing equal opportunity.

WE ARE determined that we are not going to implement any cuts in education. We are going to raise the standard of educational achievement by working class children in this city to a standard equal to anywhere in the country. It is going to be a long, hard slog to do it because we took over an education system which was falling down about people's ears. The Tory and Liberal administration before us had attempted school closure after school closure.

Everyone remembers the magnificent struggle at Croxeth comprehensive when parents occupied the school. We are delighted that just this term the school is now fully operational as a new community comprehensive school in the area. We have the system now of community comprehensive schools in every area of the city. Everyone of those schools is staffed, not on a pupil/teacher ratio as is the norm but according to the needs of the curriculum so



School students and further education students joined the demonstration on 25 September in support of the council's policies.

that every child can be taught a full range of subjects.

Good standard

Now every parent of a secondary school child knows that their child can study at whatever level they are capable of, the whole range of subjects that are normally available. It's not very trendy, it's not very pushy—it's basic education to a good standard being provided for every child.

In the situation of cut-backs we took £4 million and spent it on upgrading the general environment of the schools. Keith Joseph went to Sheffield recently and said he thought children could survive being taught in crummy environments. Well we don't think that. We put the money in and we are proud of our schools and of the fact that they are spick and span with all the new equipment and all repairs finished for the opening.

We haven't just concen-

trated on the secondary schools. We've opened nursery classes around the city, six of them so far. The council has put in to open another six. And Keith Joseph has declared in his powers as Secretary of State that there is no need for nursery education in Liverpool! Well we are going out to prove to him that people in the city know there's a need. Liverpool council is the ONLY authority that's opening nursery schools at the moment.

You have to remember Tory authorities are actually closing every nursery provision they've got in order to cut back. Liverpool council is not prepared to do that and throughout the city we have made sure that educational standards are maintained. We have issued instructions that children are not to be taught in classes of over 30.

We've also made plans to dramatically improve further education. Student Unions have been offered sabbatical officers. Every college has been instructed to make sure there are crèche facilities for the students and again we are making sure that the full range of subjects are available. We've improved discretionary allowances.

Grants

The council has taken up the very real needs in a city of gross poverty. Just equipping children to go to school is a major problem for parents so we have raised the grants for uniforms from £18 a year as it was under the Liberals to £40. So with three children, you've got £120 in your pocket to help with education, to help with the cost of clothing your children. It's a real measure of what the city council means by taking care of all its children.

About four out of every

ten children in the city are educated in Catholic schools. There are restrictions as to what we can do as an authority because they are not technically authority schools. But there has been no discrimination on the books, stationery, or materials allowance—they are simply treated as any other school. On the pupil/teacher ratios and equipment they are treated as any other school.

The difference comes in the capital programme, the money for actually building, and by law that comes direct from the voluntary sector and from the government. We can't control the way that's used.

We don't like the way the Catholic schools are organised. We've said that openly. We've said their reorganisation plan was not very good and we know that a lot of teachers are not very happy about it—lots of mixed sites, miles apart and a lot of the schools aren't up to scratch. But that's a problem we'll tackle together with Catholic parents.

At least half the councillors' own children go to Catholic schools, so there's no reason on earth why we should discriminate. But we remember that in the local elections the Liberals put out a leaflet saying that the Pope was telling people how bad Labour was. In that area we got one of the best Labour votes going because people are not stupid. Labour's not going to be divided on religious lines. ♪

Photo: Dave Sinclair

**This week
£2,477**

THE LAST few weeks have seen no let up in the slanders against Liverpool council—and its policies. In particular, there have been attempts to divide supporters of *Militant* from the rest of the labour movement in Liverpool.

This campaign has to be opposed with more information on the real issues and why it is still necessary for council workers to stand firm and fight in support of the council.

Liverpool's working class are being hit by the rich man's press and the rich man's law. This highlights again the urgent need for a Marxist daily paper. It is in this context that our campaign for extra funds goes on.

Special mention this week goes to our supporters in

Marxist Daily Building Fund

	£		
Eastern	4057	Scotland East	2647
East Midlands	3922	Scotland West	5419
Humberside	4841	Southern	1157
London NE	5008	South West	2588
London NW	2724	Wales East	1715
London SE	2033	Wales West	2902
London SW	878	West Midlands	2407
Lancashire	3010	Yorkshire	2673
Manchester	5689	National	1302
Merseyside	4360		
Northern	2360	Total	61693

Barking and Dagenham who have so far sent us £313 to help us in the campaign to build support for Liverpool City Council. These readers have promised to go round and see other socialists to raise finance.

Other areas have sent in large sums too. Supporters in West London have sent £153.50, there's £65 from Coventry, £171 from East Anglia, £53 from Harlow and £190 from Kent readers. Despite the large sacrifices already being made in Merseyside to build the cam-

paign there, Sefton readers have clubbed together and sent £170 and we have had reports from the rest of Merseyside that all readers are being approached.

The Tory press are keeping up their campaign of lies against us, make sure that your area is taking part in counter-acting them by raising the question of cash with every one of our readers and sending your donations urgently to the Marxist Daily Building Fund.

By Dave Campbell

ads

CLASSIFIED: 15p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

MILITANT Liverpool Broad-sheet 'Defend our City' 25p (including postage) Orders of 10 or more 10p each. To Circulation Department, 3-13 Hepscott Rd. London E9 5HB.

STEVENAGE *Militant*. Supporters announce a 21st Birthday Party to celebrate 21 years of the *Militant* Newspaper on Saturday 19 October 8pm at 13 Kymwell Road, Stevenage. Admission 50p.

LONDON Labour Party Special Conference, Liverpool/Lambeth/Ratecapping, a strategy for victory, Sunday 20 October 12.45pm. Venue: The Rifle Range, Brixton Recreation Centre. Speakers Liverpool Councillor, Mark Bygrave Lambeth NUPE (Personal Capacity), Eddie McParland (London LP Exec)

A3 POSTERS for sale. "Stop the racist attacks". 50 for £3 + £1 p&p; 100 for £5 + £1.50 p&p, plus postage and packing. Post free on orders of 200 or over. Send orders to Bow and Poplar LPYS, c/o 172 East India Dock Road, London E14, or phone 01-515 1718.

SCHOOL STUDENTS UNION: recruitment leaflets—£8 per 1,000, stencils for leaflets—70p each, posters—£5 per 50, activists pamphlets—20p each (orders over 20, 15p each), Badges—20p, Stickers—£10 per 1,000. All prices include p&p. From YTURC, c/o 109 Rannoch Road, London W6.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.
Now available on cassette: all centre-page articles from issue 730-755. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

Militant Meetings

ABERYSTWYTH: Weekly *Militant* discussion groups. Details, phone Alan Huyton on 615911.

MILITANT Marxist Discussion Group meetings held monthly in Swindon. Phone Martin on 24796 for details.

NORTH EAST LANCS *Militant* Readers' Meeting. Hear speakers from Liverpool Council and workers from Silent-night bedding dispute. At Swan Hotel, St James Street, Burnley. Wednesday 23 October. 7.30pm.

NORTH DERBYSHIRE MILITANT SCHOOL, 'South Africa—The revolution develops'. Speaker from SALEP and *We live like dogs* video, Saturday 19 October, 2.00pm. Doe Lea Community Centre, (1 minute from M1 Junction 29) Admission 50p, 20p unwaged. Creche available, evening social.

BOW & POPLAR Marxist Discussion Group. "Is Russia Socialist" 7.45pm. For more details ring: 01-515 5615.

Militant meetings "Support Liverpool's socialist council"

EDINBURGH: Hear Peter Taaffe (Editor *Militant*). Cllr. Tony Mulhearn (Liverpool District Labour Party). Assembly Rooms, George St, Edinburgh. Thursday 24 October 7.30pm.

HARLOW: Thursday 17 October, 8.00pm. Harlow Unemployed Centre, Wych Elm. Speaker: Keith Dickinson (*Militant* Editorial Board).

LPYS 'Fighting for our future' T shirts (red, yellow and green on white). Available now from Lesley Phillips, 5 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Road, London SE11 5 TS.

M, L, XXL for £4 or for £4.50 get an enormous baggy one! Cheques to: 'London LPYS Campaign Fund' and add 25p p&p.

TROTSKY Commemoration Meeting on C-90 tape: Dave Hemson—the Struggle in South Africa. Ted Grant—the life and ideas of Trotsky. £1.25 plus 25p postage. From World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5 HB. Also available: C-90 The Rise of Bolshevism Tape 1. The 1860's to 1890's by Alan Woods. To accompany the articles in the MIR. Also £1.25 plus 25p P&P.

DEBATE LPYS v Young Liberals v Young Tories. International Youth Year. Wednesday 23 October, 7.30pm. Grand Committee Room, House of Commons, London SW1.

XMAS CARDS now available. Pack of four cards 75p/pack. Bulk orders of 10 Packs £6.50 please enclose 25p P&P. Orders through Fighting Fund Department.

Merseyside Area Student Organisation

**One Day Conference
"Support Liverpool Council,
"Build a united fightback
against the Tories!"**

Sunday 20 October, 10.00am – 4.30pm,
Stanley Theatre,

Liverpool University Student Union.

Invited speakers include: Tony Mulhearn (President Liverpool District Labour Party), Paul Lucock (Deputy Chair FE Committee, Liverpool Council), Speaker from Joint Shop Stewards Committee, Cheryl Varley (FE Sabbatical Liverpool), Phil Woolas (President NUS), Jackie Bates (MASO Convenor).

'YORKSHIRE' *Militant* badges, enamelled metal badge, red fist on white rose. £1 each plus 20p p&p. Free postage on orders of 10 or over. All proceeds to FF. Orders and cheques to: Mike Gibbs, 37 Lincoln Street, Wakefield. Phone: 386845.

MILITANT carrier bags—now reduced. 10 bags for only 50p. Please enclose 25p Post and Package. Send order to Fighting Fund 3/13 Hepscott Road London E9.

REPORTS OF sales success are coming in thick and fast. The attacks on *Militant* in the bosses' press are not having the effect Murdoch and Maxwell are looking for!

Nearly 100 papers were sold in a weekend canvass in the Garston area of Liverpool alone. In Fallin near Stirling 25 were sold on an estate sale in just forty minutes. If these sales are followed up next week, regular paper sales can soon be set up on these estates.

Street sales reported this week include:—35 in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, 24 in Plymouth, 35 in one spot from Wolverhampton. In Cardiff where 15 were sold on Wood Street, six people filled in forms to go to the national rally. On the Queen Street sale of 30, one school student even brought a copy to assist her with a school essay on Liverpool City Council! In Bristol 23 were sold at the regular spot on Friday tea time at the underpass.

At both the Conoco Oil refinery in Grimsby and a council depot in Brighton unsuccessful sales have been tried in the past but now there are seven regular sales in Brighton and 16 at the Grimsby refinery. Other



areas should go back to workplaces they have forsaken in the past!

In addition to the 195 sold at Aberystwyth Freshers Fayre reported last week, 80 were sold at Cambridge and 44 at Brighton Poly. The activity around fresher's week has introduced many students to *Militant* for the first time. Let us know how student sales develop in your area.

The sales at the Labour Party conference at Bournemouth have a sequel. Bournemouth sellers report that 40 local people have expressed a keen interest in getting the paper regularly. Not to be outdone, Blackpool sellers organising themselves around the lobbies against the Tory Party conference,

managed a bumper sale as well with one seller alone finding 40 buyers.

The gold medal for achievement this week goes to sellers in the city centre area of Manchester who sold over 280 papers during the week of Labour Party conference. These reports, as excellent as they are, are only a fraction of what we can achieve.

In particular, we must develop our campaign to persuade regular readers to sell the paper themselves. Our paper is the best socialist paper in Britain, and our supporters have a responsibility to themselves to spread our message.

By Gerry Lerner

FIGHTING FUND **This week £2,208**
Deadline 31 October

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales West	1290		2950
2 London East	1159		3250
3 London West	967		2650
4 Eastern	1096		3500
5 London South East	592		2100
6 London South West	332		1200
7 East Midlands	797		3050
8 Southern	1370		5400
9 Lancashire	295		1300
10 Scotland West	808		3750
11 Merseyside	1321		6550
12 Scotland East	582		3150
13 Yorkshire	1043		5800
14 South West	357		2150
15 Humberside	332		2100
16 West Midlands	737		4700
17 Manchester	414		2850
18 Northern	555		4750
19 Wales East	255		3000
Others	4618		5800
Total received	18,919		70000

21 years—cash is the key to the door

ONLY A fortnight to the end of the quarter! Every reader and supporter must make a superhuman effort to ensure that we have a record two weeks.

Our enemies, the Tories and the bosses, anxiously watch this page. They know that the contributions to the fighting fund reflect a growing support amongst ordinary working people. Nothing frightens them more than workers getting organised, particularly organising hard cash to fight back.

The daily press attacks on *Militant* from the bosses' press are no personal whim. The distortions are the same whether they attack our paper, the miners, the teachers or anyone else standing up for their rights. We need to answer every lie, but for that we need more cash than ever. Every one of our readers must send a donation now but more than that we

need you to ask all your friends, relations, workmates to do the same. Appeal to your trade union branch, Labour Party ward, LPYS branch or Labour Club to make a donation.

Our readers are never short of ideas for good end-of-quarter parties. Anything from a 'Pyjama' party to a 'Curry nite' goes to organise a special birthday celebration for 21 years of *Militant*. And no 21st birthday is complete without presents! They are the key to the door for building socialism.

Remember, the bosses and their Tory press are prepared to spend any amount attacking our paper. But the wealth of support we have is represented, quite literally, every week in this column. Our tremendous achievements of the past must be repeated if we are to beat last quarter's total. With a record fortnight, we could still have another record quarter!

Donations

THANKS TO:
M Piper, Uxbridge LPYS £10; Bill Clarke, Strathclyde NALGO £2.50, Jim Mullin, Cambuslang 75p, Arthur Beer, Islington OAP £2.25; DM McNamara and A Murphy from Salford for £10 each.

Thanks also to: East Leeds YS £10; Worsley YS £25 and Broadgreen YS £5 for their donations this week. Also £26.50 from supporters in Tyneside from a Birthday social; £63 from a post-Labour Party conference rally in Leeds; £75, profit from a jumble sale in Islington, £18.01 from badge sales outside council depots and YSs in Kensington, Merseyside and £91 this week from Glasgow, proceeds from a sponsored marathon.

By Ruth Campbell

NUPE officials spy on left

Exclusive

MILITANT HAS received exclusive and disturbing evidence that full-time officials of the public service union NUPE have been spying on Broad Left supporters within the union.

Such activities would come as no surprise in some right wing unions, but will shock NUPE members and all those who respect NUPE's record in defending democracy and left wing policies in the labour movement.

We print these revelations with regret—but as an important warning for the many NUPE members, from rank and file to leadership level—who will wish to see such wasteful and potentially damaging activities halted immediately.

The root of the problem is that as the employers have continued their onslaught on public service workers, certain NUPE members have sought to put the blame on the union's left wing.

Witch-hunt

In several parts of the country witch-hunts have been directed against individual members who support the Broad Left and *Militant*.

At NUPE conference in 1985 the Executive Council reversed their old policy and decided to support a resolution attacking *Militant* and supporting expulsions from the Labour Party. Speaking in favour of the resolution Tom Sawyer argued

By Militant reporters

that: "the Executive Council is opposed to witch-hunting and expulsions."

At the time he spoke, NUPE's Southern and Eastern Division was in the midst of an 'enquiry' into the Broad Left and how they had distributed circulars to activists.

Since then further documentary evidence has come into our hands which confirms the involvement of union full-time officers in secret activities against left wingers. Members will see this as an organised witch-hunt.

As early as November 1984 Assistant Divisional Officer, Peter Farquharson, wrote to Rodney Bickerstaffe: "I have made arrangements for a 'spy' to attend the meeting arranged for 31 October (of NUPE Broad Left, Ed) to enable a report to be given to me as to whether any of the full-time officers within this Division attend."

And in February 1985 Area Officer Alan Pooley wrote a detailed report along the following lines: "Meeting at Pear Place, London on 31st October 1984. Following



NUPE dinner ladies lobbying Kent County Council in 1982. Photo: Militant. With NUPE members in the frontline of the Tories' attacks, why are full-time officials wasting the union's time and money spying on left-wingers?

prior agreement with yourself, Brother Willcox, Brother Fever (Maidstone KCC Branch Secretary—Ed) and myself kept the venue of the above meeting under observation from approximately 7pm to 8.15pm.

the advertised time for commencement, ie. 7.30pm. On his return, Brother Fever stated that there were between seven and ten persons present (male and female) but no one whom he recognised.

"As indicated above,

NUPE members will be asking their leaders why union officials are wasting time spying on their own activists.

"At no time did either officer enter the building, although the lay member did so for approximately five minutes, just prior to

we kept the building under observation for approximately 45 minutes, during which time additional people entered, but

it is not possible to say whether they attended the meeting or other parts of the building.

"At no time do I believe it was possible for anyone to be aware that the building was under observation.

"Immediately adjacent to the building is a small parking area which contained two vehicles. We took the registration number of both vehicles—xxx xxx x and xxx xxx x—I have since been informed that the 'recorded last keeper' of the vehicles were..."

NUPE members will

rightly want to know just what is going on.

Are they paying subs to an organisation which is paying full-time officials to spy and secretly follow other full-time officials?

The members face unprecedented attacks by employers whilst the union is paying officers to keep buildings "under observation". This incredible state of affairs must be stopped—now.

We would like to hear from the leadership of NUPE what steps they intend to ensure such undemocratic methods are ended.

Bosses behind the witch-hunt

THE FEAR of the ruling class of the ideas of Marxism was starkly revealed at Tory party conference last week. Thatcher along with two top members of the Tory Cabinet launched tirades against Marxism and harangued Labour leader Kinnock to expel *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

Thatcher demanded: "The Militant left will not be beaten by brave words and ritual disclaimers. If the Labour leadership is genuinely against these people, why don't they expel them?"

Tory chairman Norman Tebbit thundered: "One or two brave speeches condemning the Trots, Militants and Marxists in the Labour Party does not get rid of them".

Environment Minister Kenneth Baker scowled: "Mr Kinnock had spoken out last week against the Militants, but they still controlled Liverpool, Manchester, Southwark and Hackney. The trouble with him is that he cannot deliver".

Tory press

Their comments were left upon by the Tory press who used it to continue pumping out the lie that Marxist ideas are 'vote losers' for Labour.

Yet are Thatcher and the front-line representatives of British capitalism, or the Tory propaganda rags like the *Mail*, *Express* and *Sun* seriously concerned for the benefit of the Labour Party?

No! Their rantings repre-



Thatcher—she wants Kinnock to expel *Militant* supporters. Photo: Militant

sent the fear of the capitalist ruling class at the growth of support for Marxism amongst ordinary working people and increasing sections of the labour movement. They understand that a united labour movement with a socialist leadership

and policies would be an unstoppable force in changing society.

The attacks from the Tory party conference rostrum show where the real source of the witch-hunt against *Militant* comes from—the defenders of the wealthy and privileged in society.

It is no accident that the first calls for action against *Militant* did not come from any section of the labour movement—it came back in 1975 from the pages of *The Times*, that semi-official voice of big business. Since then the representatives of capital have been unrelenting in their demand that Marxism be purged from the Labour Party.

It is therefore outrageous that there are those in the party leadership and Labour's right wing who are eager to do the Tories' bidding. Those in the Labour party who are clamouring for a witch-hunt are playing right into the Tories' hands.

The ranks of the movement will fight any attempts to expel *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party. They understand that any section of the movement that produces such apoplexy from the Tory leaders must be doing a good job in fighting for the interests of the working class. They will judge those in the Labour Party who call for witch-hunts by the ideological company they keep.

the Redcar Constituency Labour Party.

The left in the Redcar Constituency Labour Party (seven of which have expulsions hanging over their heads) see it as their task to build the Party and to remove these anti-socialist elements on the council from positions of power within the local labour movement.

By Andy Walker
(Redcar Labour Party,
personal capacity)

Redcar row as council sell off houses

IN STARK contrast to the achievements of Liverpool City Council, Labour controlled Langborough borough council on Teesside is involved in the selling off of a section of the Spencerbeck housing estate to the private sector.

The council took this step with little consultation with the tenants and no consultation with the District Labour Party.

The tenants formed an action committee to fight the sell off. But the council was

determined to go ahead.

Indeed, when a group of Labour Party members visited the estate to try to help the tenants they were nearly expelled from the Party for doing so.

When two tenants from the estate (who have refused to move) applied to join their local Labour Party, the leader of the council moved they could not be accepted as they were 'actively working against the council'!

This state of affairs has infuriated the rank and file of

Right change tactics

LABOUR activists are furious that the right wing are diverting the Labour Party from the real task of fighting the Tories, with their witch-hunts against the left. However, up and down the country the right wing are either backing down over expulsions, or taking up a different direction of attack—this shows the growing opposition they are facing from the party's rank and file.

IN WREKIN Labour Party, the right wing only partially achieved their plans to expel *Militant* supporters. The party's Executive recommended three party members for expulsion—including two councillors, one of 17 years standing in the party. However, there was a tied vote in the proposed expulsion of Councillor Jim Bell. This expulsion proposal will now go before the party without a recommendation from the executive. Andy White of the LPYS was acquitted.

The expulsions will be fought. Telford Central branch of the Wrekin party at a packed meeting set up a campaign against the witch-hunt.

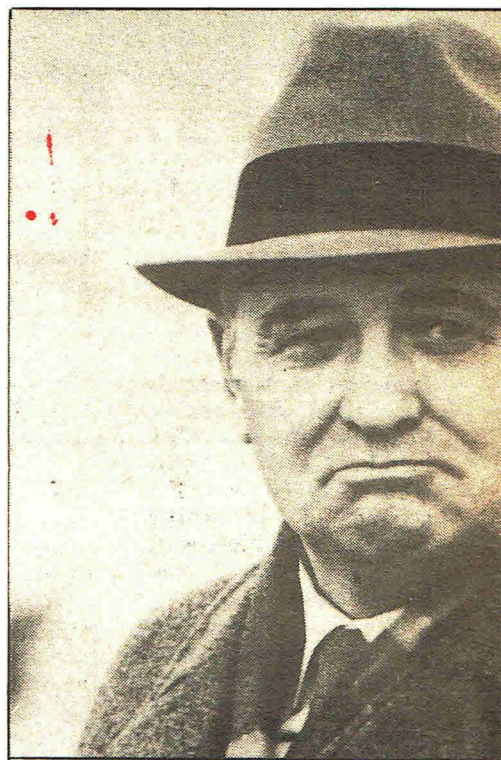
IN WALES the right wing are clearly under pressure as they change their tactics in attacking *Militant* supporters. In Cardiff South Labour Party, after

calls for an inquiry into local *Militant* supporters, it was clear that the Executive were split at their meeting last week, deciding firstly to ask *Militant* supporters to agree to certain conditions. The issue will now drag on into November.

In Pontypridd a motion calling for the suspension of *Militant* supporters was not taken, but was withdrawn so it could be 'strengthened'. Meanwhile the right-wing Executive of Ogmore Labour Party—where *Militant* supporters including NUM members at the nearby threatened St John's colliery are up for expulsion—reaffirmed their position. But they also condemned 'attacks by *Militant* supporters' on the constituency's right wing MP Ray Powell, indicating they are feeling the pressure of protests from the Welsh labour movement.

IN THE Isle of Wight where three party members have been expelled for selling *Militant* the purge goes on. Now a fourth member, Martin Clair, is under threat. He has been told to stop selling the paper publicly, even though this is not in contravention to Labour Party rules, and despite the Labour Party National Agent David Hughes saying that selling *Militant* alone was not sufficient to justify expulsion.

Soviet economy



Mikhail Gorbachev—nothing new to offer

New broom will not sweep clean

NEXT MONTH the leaders of the two super-powers meet to discuss disarmament. Both are under pressure to reach agreement because of the economic problems they face in their own countries. As well as dealing with the talks themselves and the strategic and military issues they will discuss, *Militant* will be looking at these underlying economic problems. In this article, GEORGE COLLINS examines the Soviet Union and the attempts by its new leader Gorbachev to revitalise its ailing economy, held back by the bureaucracy, incompetence and corruption of the ruling elite.

ALL THE disastrous consequences of bureaucratic rule, analysed and anticipated by Trotsky 50 years ago, can now be seen clearly in practice.

It was to try to solve these problems that the new broom Mikhail Gorbachev, was appointed state leader when Chernenko died in March. Representing a section of bureaucrats slightly younger than the doddering ruling elite installed during the Brezhnev era, Gorbachev was expected to reform the system and set the economy back on the road to growth.

The great strength of the Russian economy has been the fact that it is state-owned and centrally planned. This has freed it from the narrow limits of production for profit only, and from the plunder and sabotage of big business.

This is the one achievement of the 1917 working-class revolution that has survived the bureaucratic counter-revolution headed by Stalin from the early 1920s onwards.

Rapid growth

Despite the waste and bottle necks caused by bureaucratic mismanagement and the privileged elite, rapid growth was possible for a whole period while the foundations of the modern economy were being laid. This growth was based on exploiting the USSR's abundance of natural resources, and an almost unlimited supply of labour as millions of peasants were drawn to the cities.

Even with a minimum of planning, the relatively simple tasks of building an infrastructure were carried out at far greater speed than under the chaotic conditions of capitalist "supply and demand" (though, as Trotsky pointed out, at three times the cost).

The present-day Soviet economy, however, can no longer be managed effectively by bureaucratic decree from above. Like every advanced economy it is highly complex, requiring sophisticated decision-making at every level. The Stalinist system rules this out.

In the past, the leadership, with typical bureaucratic shortsightedness, neglected investment in new technology as long as growth could be squeezed from ex-

isting resources. The result was technical stagnation and, by the 1960s, increasing obsolescence in methods of production.

Today, average productivity in the Soviet Union is only 55 per cent that of the advanced capitalist countries.

On the other hand, economic growth led to an increase in workers' buying power and in the demand for good-quality consumer goods. The bureaucracy is incapable of meeting this demand.

The consumer goods turned out by the Ministry of Light Industry are shoddy and in chronic short supply. Not for nothing is this Ministry nicknamed "the Ministry of Queues".

Black economy

Because of the failures of the official system, a huge parallel ('black') economy has developed. It is estimated that 20 million people are working 'on the left' (illegally)—performing, for example, 80 per cent of domestic repair work.

Trade in smuggled goods is booming, even at vastly inflated prices. Sought after commodities like imported jeans are sold for £180, and *Adidas* jogging suits for £300. Even tomatoes fetch £20 per kilo in winter, and small cucumber £4 each.

What all this illustrates, in Marxist terms, is that the political system in the Soviet Union has become an absolute fetter on the productive forces. Bureaucratic misrule is crippling the economic life of the country.

Streamline

Gorbachev's 'solution' is to try to streamline the bureaucracy's grip on the economy—and even in this he is unlikely to have more than temporary, limited success.

His first move was to replace old bureaucrats with new ones, mainly his personal hangers-on. He has continued the process already started by Andropov of removing the tired, discredited hacks installed by Brezhnev during the 1960s and 1970s, and installing his own instead.

Eleven new ministers slightly younger than the Brezhnev gerontocracy, and dozens of new regional party chiefs, were appointed between March and August. In the process, some of the



One horse power motor bike—bizarre illustration of the ancient and modern in Russian agriculture

unsavoury practices of the old bureaucrats could conveniently be exposed and a few scapegoats sacrificed with maximum publicity (as in Kazakhstan—see insert right) to show the "reforming zeal" of the new leadership.

While the top clique was being recycled, official economists were falling over themselves to offer Gorbachev advice.

'Liberals' pointed out that the

to change a vigorously centralised system, designed to industrialise as brutal speed a predominately peasant country, into one with the flexibility to use the talents to which it has now given birth.

"Have you acquired greater initiative in your work over the past 15 years?" a group of 250 factory directors was asked in a recent survey. Over half of them replied



The contradictions of the system were unwittingly summed up by the mother of a Russian astronaut proudly telling *Pravda* of the telephone just installed in her village home, but adding: "It's not like the phones in the city, of course. You have to crank the handle. Getting through to Moscow from our little village isn't easy, but sometimes you succeed." (*Pravda*, 22 July).

Soviet economy is "antiquated and inflexible", and that 'conservative bureaucrats' are standing in the way of change. The latter, on the other hand, warned with equal logic of the dangers of increasing 'free enterprise'—i.e. loosening of bureaucratic control.

More liberal policies, they say, are all right in a country like Hungary which is 'small and easily governed' but could lead to 'destabilising differences in the USSR!'

The Moscow correspondent of the *Observer* summed up the situation: "Gorbachev's problem is how

'no'. A third said 'rather the reverse'."

The response of Gorbachev, like every Stalinist leader before him, is to try to strike a balance between all these conflicting pressures. Instead he ends up performing a juggling act that fails to come to grips with any of the underlying problems.

A decree published in August, contained the long-awaited economic reforms. Among its features are the following:

(a) It orders a limited degree of decentralisation, especially in con-

sumer industries. From next year, decisions can be taken at lower levels of the official apparatus. Plant managers, for example, can use up to £4 million of their profits to refurbish and update their equipment.

(b) New incentives are laid down for better work—for example, a five per cent bonus if a factory succeeds in meeting the required standards!

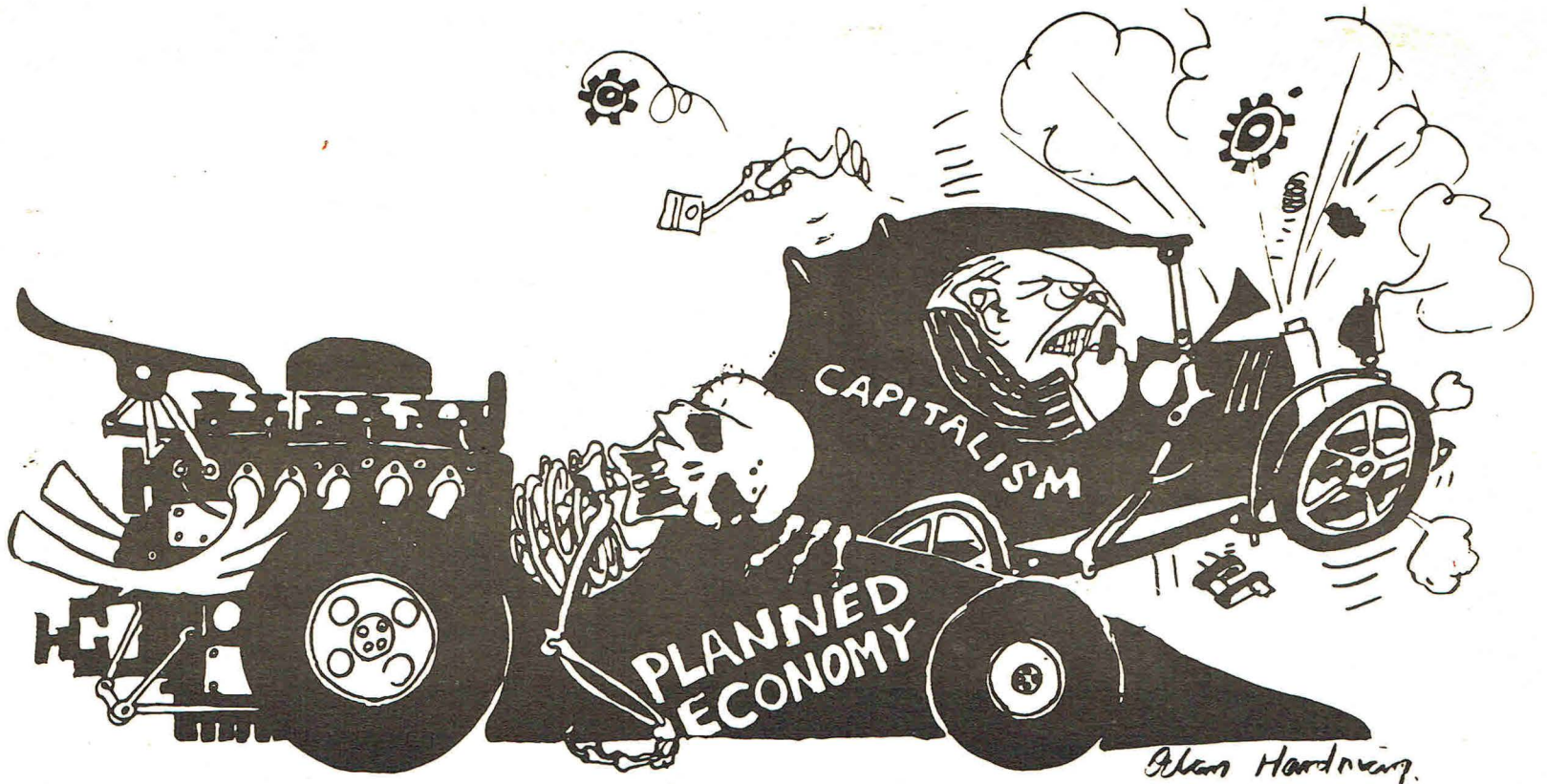
(c) Overall, however, Stalinism continues to rely on its basic method of management: the big stick. New punishments can be imposed, such as price cuts of up to 30 per cent if goods are below standard. The factory concerned would then have to make up this shortfall out of funds set aside for workers' bonuses.

Fines can also be imposed on factories for late delivery of goods. In fact there is nothing new about these measures. At various points in the past Gorbachev's predecessors were forced into similar exercises, including attacks on "bureaucracy" and turns towards "decentralisation".

Within a Stalinist system, however, the main effect of "decentralisation" is to spread opportunities for corruption among wider circles of bureaucrats—thus forcing the top leaders to "recentralise" again before matters get completely out of hand.

This will undoubtedly be the fate of Gorbachev's "decentralisation" as well. His "new brooms" will soon become just as worn-out and discredited as those they have replaced.

The workers will have no more control than before over the pro-



Trotsky on bureaucracy

As Trotsky explained in 1932:

"Centralised management implies not only great disadvantages but also the danger of centralising mistakes... Only continuous regulation of the plan in the process of its fulfillment, its reconstruction in part and as a whole, can guarantee its economic effectiveness.

"The art of socialist planning does not drop from heaven nor is it presented full-blown into one's hands with the conquest of power. This art may be attained only by struggle, step by step, not by units but millions as an integrated part of the new economy and culture." (*Towards Socialism or Capitalism?* p100)

The 'units' of the top bureaucracy, however, are terrified of letting any power slip from their hands, out of the very real fear that the workers would sweep them aside if they had the slightest opportunity of doing so. As a result, the

'millions' of the working class are rigidly excluded from management of the planned economy.

There is no room for checks, balances or initiative at plant or shop-floor level—not even the crude kind of 'regulation' exerted by the capitalist market. To quote Trotsky again:

"Every attempt to influence economic management from below is immediately assigned to a deviation either to the Right or the Left, that is, it is practically made a capital offence. The bureaucratic upper crust, when all is said and done, has pronounced itself infallible in the sphere of socialist planning..."

In fact, this opens the door to every form of blundering, pilfering, nepotism and self-enrichment by the top officials who hold all the wealth of the country as well as all the power of the state in their 'infallible' hands.

cultivating more land. Gorbachev demands that more intensive use should be made of existing land, using existing equipment.

These demands will fall on stony ground. Over every sector of the economy hangs the dark cloud of bureaucratic misrule, sapping all enthusiasm, driving millions to despair and anger. No lasting, all-round increase in production can be expected on the basis of Gorbachev's policies, or any other policies imposed on the working class by bureaucratic decree.

But this seize-up of the forces of production is only one side of Russia's economic crisis. Intertwined with the contradictions within the system are those arising from Russia's relations with the capitalist world market.

Despite its great size, it is impossible for the Soviet Union to become (as Stalin claimed) independent of the world economy which is still dominated by the USA and other imperialist powers. Today, more than ever, economic development in the Soviet Union depends on advanced technology imported from abroad.

The next five-year plan (1986–1990) will belatedly include a crash programme of automation and new technology. For example, 77,000 teachers are being trained to provide computer education in schools. To make this possible, 4,000 micro-computers have already been ordered from Japan, and hundreds of thousands more will be needed.

trialisations" on the one hand, and on the other hand look for ways of increasing the production of consumer goods.

By its efforts to "decentralise", the bureaucracy is reflecting its incapacity to administer the economy in a centralised manner—and all the more disastrous will be its future swing-back towards centralism.

But in its concern over the production of consumer goods, the bureaucracy is showing a dim awareness of the need to pacify the mighty Soviet working class—to postpone the day when this slumbering giant will rise to its feet and brush the parasites from its back.

The "dissident" movement of the 1970s, based among intellectuals, has largely been smashed. Today it is the younger workers, more educated, more critical and less demoralised than their parents, who are emerging as the force most challenging the regime.

But Gorbachev's efforts to postpone the day of reckoning are only bringing it closer.

Gorbachev is, without intending it, putting the bureaucracy on the spot. He is demanding that the resources of the country be managed more effectively in order to raise living standards. Whatever temporary and partial improvements might be possible, these efforts will eventually founder in a swamp of bureaucratic indifference and corruption.

The effect of this failure, in the

RECENTLY *Pravda* unveiled some techniques of economic management practiced in the Kazakhstan region of the USSR.

Production statistics were widely falsified. One state farm, for example, showed a profit of five million roubles by listing the sale of pedigree cattle twice over! (One rouble = about 90p).

Pravda reports: "Over a million roubles were allocated to agricultural development, but food production actually fell... One factory in four breaks its contracts for delivery of goods, and in the last four years there have been production shortfalls of over 90 million roubles."

Management on the other hand, rewarded itself generously. One senior Communist Party official built himself a hunting lodge, complete with servants' flat, out of state funds. Others secretly built a private mansion, equipped with "the best carpets, televisions and hi-fi equipment", and registered it as an apartment block with 12 flats.

Another, who already had a private house, was given a second four-room flat for his family plus a flat for each of his three daughters

But the bureaucracy is encountering new problems in paying for the imported technology, assembly lines, etc which are vital for growth. Most of its earnings of foreign hard-currency come from oil sales, which have been badly hit by the slump in the oil price.

The crisis of capitalism is exacerbating the crisis of Stalinism. Stalin's utopian policy of trying to build "socialism in one country"—ie socialism nowhere else, or "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism—is rebounding once again onto the heads of his successors.

Instead of addressing the real issues, the new five-year plan will continue tinkering with "decen-

light of expectations raised by Gorbachev's exhortations today, will be to underline the bankruptcy of Russia's bureaucratic rulers all the more glaringly.

When the Russian working class moves, the power of the regime will crumble overnight—as in Hungary 1956—and the ruling caste will be flung into oblivion. But unlike Hungary, there will be no tanks to come to their rescue.

Out of the defeat of Stalinism, the working class will construct a society of genuine socialist democracy. Eastern Europe will be transformed, and the ripple effect of a new Russian "October" would galvanise workers into revolutionary struggle around the world.

Profits

In one "experiment" of this nature, workers in a TV repair shop in Estonia are being allowed to keep their profits and finance their own business. It now takes them no more than three days to repair a TV set, while it previously took two weeks.

Gorbachev's "new leadership", in other words, is simply tail-ending the efforts that are spontaneously being made to overcome the disruption created by that same leadership.

Faced with the most developed working class in the world, the Russian bureaucracy cannot afford to genuinely decentralise power in any sense. "Experiments" in "private initiative" will remain confined to the fringes of the economy. They will not be allowed to intrude into crucial sectors such as electronics, heavy industry or transport. The bureaucracy cannot risk the development of competition that might expose their ineptitude or challenge their position.

Incurable

Politically, the incurable weakness of Gorbachev's policies is that they continue to rely on the bureaucracy to solve the problems of bureaucratic rule. His reforms will fail for the same reason that those of Stalin, Krushchev and Brezhnev before him failed.

Economically also, Gorbachev has nothing new to propose. He has no policy for increasing productivity and generating the massive new investment that is necessary to modernise the machinery of production.

He admits that four per cent growth per year, double the present rate, is needed to reach the necessary level of investment.

He demands that better use should be made of existing resources. For example, he seems to have vetoed plans made under Chernenko to increase agricultural production by reclaiming and



Peasants in Uzbekistan read the proclamation of agrarian reform in 1924. They are still waiting for the full benefits.

Portugal

THE SOCIALIST Party lost almost half its seats in the Portuguese general elections of 6 October. This is Socialist leader Mario Soares' reward for presiding over two years of savage anti-working class attacks by his outgoing coalition government.

His coalition partners, the Social Democrats, gained a few seats and are now the biggest party but the Portuguese ruling class have still not achieved the capitalist stability they have been trying to regain since the revolutionary upsurge of 1974-5.

The Portuguese revolution stopped half-way. The failure of the workers' parties to take control of the economy and society has led to economic chaos and political bewilderment.

Government has followed government, and all, right and "left", have tried to reverse the gains in job security, land reform, etc achieved in the fires of revolution after the overthrow of half a century of dictatorship. The governments have eaten away at the reforms but the determination of the work-

ing class has stopped the total reversal of the 1974-75 changes.

In these elections, the other main workers' party the Communists, also lost support due to their low-key approach, while President Eanes gained 45 seats with his own personal power vehicle, the Democratic Renewal Party. This party made demagogic claims that it could end the "bickering" of the politicians.

Ten years ago, Europe's finance houses and banks looked with dismay at Portugal.

Now the European bosses have allowed Portugal to join the Common Market in 1986, but whether the ruling class can find any other cause for celebration is more doubtful. A new coalition will have to be cobbled together. After local and presidential elections in the next few months, they will be forced into more potential confrontation by trying further attacks on the working class and rural poor.

The article below was sent in from a Lisbon correspondent before the election.

Bosses reward Soares with defeat

THE ELECTION campaign here has been very 'cold', there is no fire in any of the meetings. Neither of the two main workers' parties are really campaigning on their own policies let alone putting forward a socialist alternative.

The Socialists seem to fear raising expectations too high, like Gonzalez in Spain in 1982, though their own record tells more against them than any party promises.

Capitalism in Portugal is in deep trouble. Most countries enjoyed a breathing space in the 1984 boom, a short-lived spurt of production. Portugal saw a drop in production and a 20 per cent drop in investment.

It doesn't need a genius to guess who suffers for this capitalist failure, the working class and rural poor, condemned to genuine hunger. Hundreds of thousands of Portuguese are now homeless or living in shacks. Official unemployment is around 20-25 per cent in key industrial areas. Wages have lost 15 per cent of purchasing power in the last few years. Many workers have not been paid for months or even years.

Foreign debt

The profit system has sunk the country in a foreign debt proportionately greater than Brazil, Chile or Argentina and on a par with Zaire. The national product per capita is only half that of Spain and one-fifth of the average in the OECD rich countries league.

Portugal has a Socialist Party Prime Minister Mario Soares and these figures are used in the election by Portugal's right to attack, not capitalism of course, but "socialist statism". That is the gratitude the bosses show to reformists for doing their dirty work for the last two years.

No workers' leaders have put forward an alternative to the capitalist system. "The blame lies entirely with the governments of the last two years" say Cunhal the Communist Party leader. So the bosses get no opposition to their attempt to discredit the ideas of socialism and the big public sector which is all that remains of the revolutionary

By our Lisbon correspondent

gains of 1974-75.

The predicament of workers here in Portugal is a tragic nightmare. The working class has been overflowing with enthusiasm for the transformation of society, but it has found its path blocked by the absence of a programme and organisation which can coordinate the daily struggles of the millions and channel these energies into the establishment of a workers' democracy.

In all previous elections since the collapse of the dictatorship in 1974, the overwhelming majority of votes have gone to the left, but now the right parties have gone on the offensive. The right wing Christian Democrats (CDS) poses large-scale denationalisation and privatisation of social security. But the most important bourgeois party are the Social Democrats (PSD). In 1983 they had nearly 30 per cent of the vote compared to 12 per cent for the CDS.

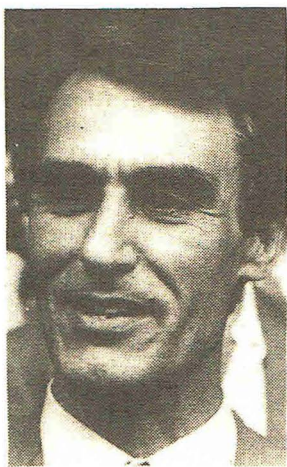
They are preparing a swing to the right but advocate 'realism'. "In the 20th century you can't go back to Adam Smith" PSD leader Cavaco da Silva has told the CDS.

The Social Democrats undoubtedly represent the more serious capitalists who were taught a harsh lesson in the '74-'75 revolution. Every time they pushed to the right, they awakened the fury of the working class who then put them out of the ring. Now they are more cautious but they can't escape the drive of capitalism to restrict the advances of the workers over the public sector, trade union rights and social security.

The PSD broke up the 1983 Socialist/Social Democratic coalition, but it is not now repeating the experiment of unity with the CDS which in its 1980-83 gover-



Mario Soares, Socialist Party leader on a walkabout in Lisbon confronts a Social Democrat election poster.



Cavaco da Silva, PSD leader. nment formula produced. . . two general strikes! It also caused a near currency collapse which only Soares and the Socialist Party leadership could 'cure'.

They used Socialist votes to impose two years of austerity in coalition with the PSD. When the austerity was due to end and a promised period of reforms due to start, the PSD (surprise, surprise) broke the pact to provoke elections. The task of the PSD is to push the middle layers of society to the right.

The majority of the workers' votes have always gone to the left. Around two million out of the seven million votes have repeatedly gone to the Socialists. But Soares has always used this backing to form coalitions with the right wing or so-called 'centre' parties. He has never called on CP workers to push their party into accepting a left majori-

CP 'determined' to hide their policies

THE CP had some mildly radical ideas in their programme such as a minimum wage linked to the cost of living. The minimum is now about £100 a month but this is not respected, if you demand this, or the right to join a union, many companies will sack you.

They demanded a subsistence grant for

destitute families, the naming of honest competent managers for public sector firms and an end to attacks against nationalised firms and against agrarian reform co-operatives.

They opposed the negotiation of US military agreements and the terms with the EEC, and the terms of external debt repayment.

But even these modest ideas were not used in an agitational way, the Party just concentrated on how "determined" they were.

ty government. The CP themselves call for an "all-party government of national salvation"! They are part of the APU (the People's Unity Alliance) with a few minor groupings.

The CP has the leadership of the mass trade union co-federation, the CGT-Inter sindical with about two million affiliated members. With a clear alternative to reformism the APU would no doubt increase its support from its one million votes in 1983. The APU though limits its propaganda to the same formulas as the other parties—we would be more patriotic, more honest and more responsible.

The CP does not pose a class alternative to the horrible record of the last five years. One and a half million abstained in 1983 and so far there is nothing to show more participation now. If many people now say "the politicians are all the same" the cynicism is hardly dented by claims that "it will be different if we're in the government along with the rest".

Not one word creeps into the CP programme of the crisis of capitalism, just a hammering away at the idea that a government of 'national salvation' with the 'will to get things done' will 'save our country' through its 'determination'.

Collaboration

The CP is a mass workers' party with a heroic record of struggle against fascism. Unlike Spain there is no massive crisis in the Communist Party; the CP vote will not totally crumble away. In Portugal as in Italy, the alternative workers' party, the Socialists have muddied their image by participation in governments of counter-reform.

However the recent history of Portugal created a peculiar situation. The threat of a Stalinist state in Portugal was used by the ruling class to play on the fear of the middle classes, but also of many workers. Their hatred of the previous fascist dictatorship was extended to

any sort of manoeuvre by the CP which did not counterpose a clear workers' democracy to Stalinist repression. At the same time the CP indulged in a binge of collaboration with governments based on capitalism.

The CP's frequent opposition to the strike movements gave a fairly wide base also for ultra-left groups which later collapsed due to their lack of working class roots and perspective for development.

The capitalist class, whose own parties were too weak to use to crush the workers, relied on Soares, who still boasts of his victory over the CP in 1975. If the numerous split offs from the SP had stayed and fought for socialism, the crisis within society and the workers' parties would give a new basis for socialist ideas.

The working class, re-aroused by attacks or by revolutionary developments in Spain, Greece, France and Italy will not allow the ruling class of Portugal any lasting victories.

Sweden, Pakistan, Chile, Panama

Monopoly and market forces in 'socialist' Sweden

SWEDEN ALSO went to the polls recently. Unlike Portugal, one of the very poorest of European countries, Sweden's living standards have traditionally borne comparison with any in the world. But as the article below, based on a feature in the Swedish Marxist paper *Offensiv* shows, this is beginning to change.

THE GENERAL election in Sweden saw the Social Democrats returned to power with a reduced majority. They hardly promised anything for the next three years: they had to see "how much they could afford".

The victory in reality owed much to the fear of a Conservative-dominated coalition government. The Moderates (Conservatives) fought their campaign on Thatcherite policies and Sweden's workers could see the effects of these in Britain and in Schlüter's Denmark. The Moderates' policies reflected a growing crisis in society.

Since the mid-'70s Sweden has experienced the longest period of industrial decline in its history. Growth was halved. The strong labour movement has built up a social security system almost without parallel, so the effects have been less catastrophic than in some countries, but under the surface, real problems are growing.

Sweden is a small country with a highly monopolised economy, very dependent on exports (37 per cent now compared with 24 per cent in 1970). Largely based on ore, steel, ships, machines etc the world decline of trade and investment has hit the

economy hard.

Industrial production fell by seven per cent between the 1974 crisis and the return of the Social Democrats in 1982, and investment was at its lowest level for 20 years.

Now the Department of Industry reckon that industrial production today would have been 30 per cent higher if it had kept up with other advanced capitalist countries' increases. Last year's boom saw Japan's production soar up 70 per cent from the previous ten years' average, USA's rose 40 per cent, France's 18 per cent, even Britain's (including oil) rose nine per cent, Sweden's crawled up seven per cent.

Devaluations

The capitalist governments of 1976 to 1982 failed with all their policies, first expansionary, then deflationary and lastly the so-called "bridging" policies of internal expansion while waiting for a strong world boom. Instead they got the new world decline of 1980.

Under pressure from the earlier reform period and from the labour movement public sector spending soared, so did the deficits, imports and interest rates. The balance of trade worsened.

So, as world trade dipped

down again they tried a desperate belt-tightening policy, strangling the important markets created by the public sector, cutting real wages by ten per cent and hence fuelling unemployment.

The Social Democrats, when they returned, used drastic measures, particularly the big "aggressive" devaluations of ten per cent in 1981 and 16 per cent in 1982, hoping this would boost exports. Nonetheless, about 80 per cent of the companies in the basic industries have used the devaluation to increase profits rather than to cut prices in a competitive battle. Certainly prices have fallen less than workers' relative wages.



The monetarist Conservative leader Adelsohn.

The government have gone in for drastic capitalist measures to quickly boost exports, productivity, profits and investment while at the same time strangling imports and lowering the budget deficit by wage limits and public sector cutbacks. Moreover the government has trusted the free market to straighten out everything including the fate of crisis-ridden parts of the economy.

New witch-hunt in Social Democrats?

ONE OF Sweden's many regional Social Democratic journals, *Zasterbottens Folkblad*, has jumped on to Neil Kinnock's bandwagon by attacking Marxists in Britain and in their own party. We print the article below.

"ONLY THE British electoral system saved Margaret Thatcher's parliamentary majority (in 1983), even though only a minority of voters supported the Tories. Another reason why the Tories could continue to govern was that voters didn't have a proper alternative.

"Labour's crisis was crippling, now that crisis is over. This was shown at the recent Labour congress. Should the Tories win again it won't be because of a feeble opponent. Unlike the Swedish Social Democracy, Labour discovered too late what the so-called 'entryists' were up



Social Democrat leader Olaf Palme

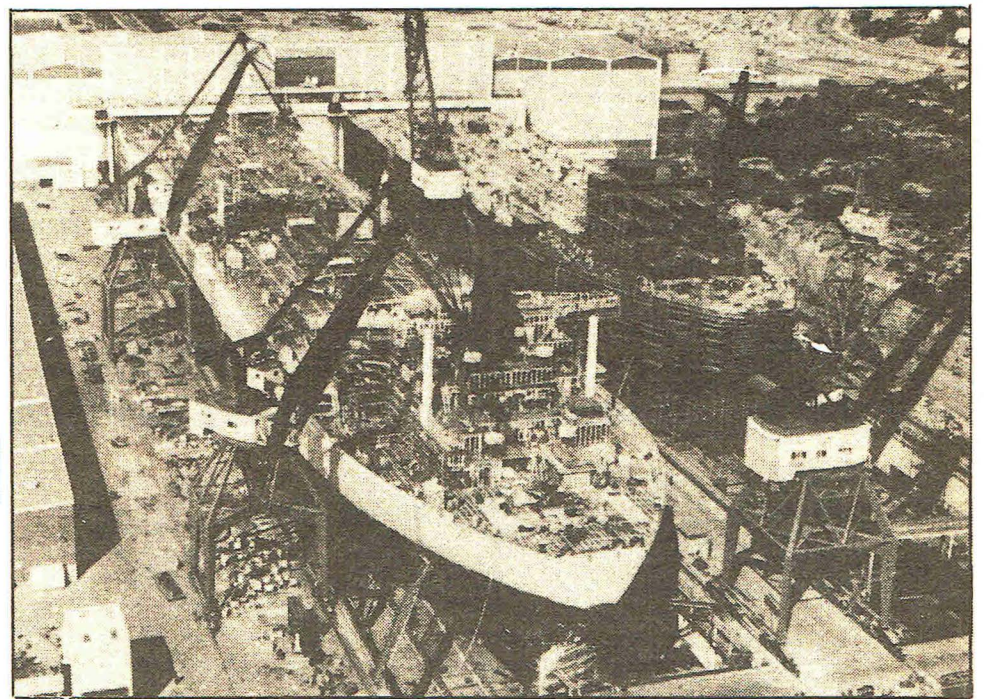
to and what it could lead to.

"While the Swedish militants were kept under control and later expelled, their British friends in the *Militant* Tendency managed to take control of the youth movement and obtained influence at many levels within the Party. As a result of that

the city of Liverpool now has Trotskyist rule.

"Many voters have difficulty recognising Labour and gave their preference to those who left Labour in the so-called Social Democratic Party which has long been in alliance with the Liberals. But this year's congress has freed Labour from the influence of the entryists and if one can believe the latest opinion polls Labour is regaining its former strength. Thatcher has finally got an opponent who can liberate the British from new Liberalism."

But as the article above shows, Sweden's workers party will not be immune from crises which will turn the working class in the direction of Marxism. Socialist ideas will grow regardless of any attempts at a witch-hunt.



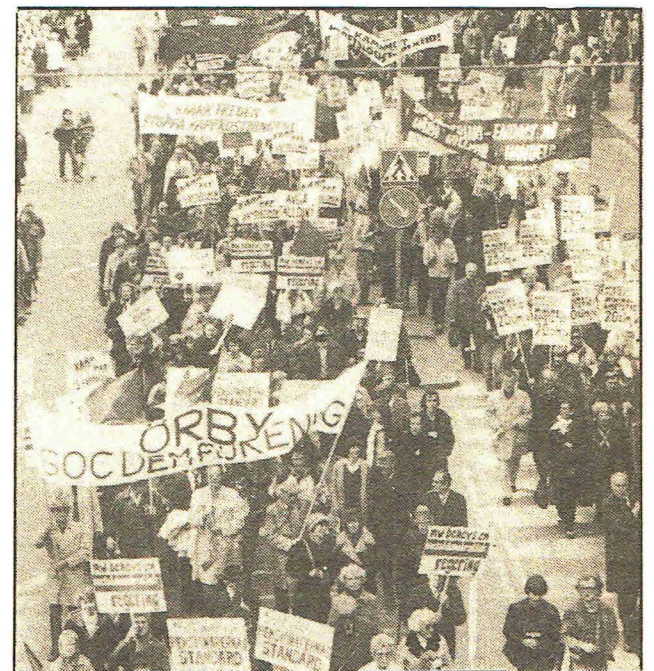
One of Sweden's crisis industries, shipping, employed 33,000 in 1975. Now it employs 11,000 and government support has been withdrawn.

Swedish capitalism has gained a temporary respite from the boom, but it has also caused an enormous redistribution of property and income. It increased the gap between high and low wages and between wages and profits, personal spending dropped relative to GNP in 1982-84, though employment increased slightly.

Wages have been kept at a level 10 to 15 per cent lower than in 1976 but profits shot up 50 per cent in 1984 alone, although only a small part of this has turned into investment. Big businesses prefer to develop into credit institutions, not least by lending money to cover the state deficit, which gives a better return than most investments.

Meanwhile competition has concentrated wealth even more, the 30 biggest export companies are the engine of the Swedish economy. No country has a more monopolised capitalism than "socialist" Sweden!

The government is threatening worse to come for workers. They are worried over a 1.8 per cent increase in public spending last year and they want this to drop to 0.5 per cent this



Sweden has a well organised and powerful working class.

year. That means further big restrictions on the home market and wage restraint.

And to what end? The boomlet of the last two years, is already fading fast. All the Social Democrat leaders' talk of Sweden being "on the right course" will disappear, drowned out by the symptoms of a new crisis, falling production, closures, depressed regions

and greater social costs, or the alternative of greater government spending to fuel the deficit.

We will also see the militant traditions of the early struggles of Sweden's powerful labour movement revived and a Marxist alternative taken seriously for the first time by the mass of workers as "affluent" Sweden comes to grips with new problems.

Socialists fight Zia regime

ON 29 September workers in Bradford heard Pakistani opposition leaders speak out against the arrest of Benazir Bhutto, acting chairperson of the Pakistani Peoples Party (PPP). The event was organised by the *Struggle* the voice of socialism in the PPP.

Farooq Tariq the coordinating secretary of the PPP workers steering committee explained the capitalist nature of the regime, with its policy of denationalisation, tax reductions and above all banning of trade union activities.

Because of this corrupt regime, over a million Pakistani youth are now heroin addicts. Drug smuggling has state support and is spreading like a cancer in Pakistan.

Fifteen years jail

Miraj Mohammed Khan of Pakistan Liberation Front explained how over 150,000 people have been arrested in the last eight years of military dictatorship for demanding the restoration of democracy. One trade union leader was sentenced to fif-

teen years imprisonment for just producing a leaflet against the dictatorship.

Pat Wall the President of Bradford Trades Council linked the struggle of British and Pakistani workers and explained "the fight for socialism is international, the capitalists and big finance companies are world wide, so workers of the world should be united for a socialist society."

Over £400 was raised for the *Struggle* fighting fund. The number of workers at this meeting showed the growing influence of the ideas of the *Struggle*.

By Qaiser Jamal

Chile

★ BATON WAVING Chilean police broke up a march of copper miners from the northern town of Chuquicamata on 9 October. The miners were demanding the release of 12 opponents of the military junta. At least 60 people were arrested as the crowds were dispersed with baton rounds and tear gas grenades.

Pinochet has made a dangerous enemy. Chuquicamata is the largest open cast copper mine in the

world, accounting for over half of the product of the state copper corporation CODELCO and producing more than 20 per cent of Chile's export earnings.

Panama

★ OVER 50,000 people marched through Panama City on 9 October to demand an independent enquiry into the murder of Hugo Spadafora, whose decapitated body was found just over the border in Costa Rica.

Spadafora, an opponent of the country's powerful

military, had earned the hatred of the defence force chief, General Manuel Noreiga by accusing him of drug trafficking. Eye witnesses say intelligence agents had detained Spadafora in Panama the day before his body was found.

The civilian president had backed the call for an independent enquiry but resigned a few days later saying he had lost the support of the armed forces. The military have forced the resignation of five presidents in as many years.

A rich crop of bankruptcies

Dear Comrades,

Recently I watched the *Money Programme* on BBC 2. It's not a programme I normally watch, not having any money, but it was very interesting.

A large part of it was about the plight of small farmers in the

American mid-west. It seems large numbers of them are being bankrupted, leaving huge debts.

The reasons given on the programme by the farmers themselves are an indictment of the system in which we live. It seems they have been bankrupted because too much food is being produced.

Storage space is non-existent, with silos and aircraft hangars creaking at the joints. Crops are left to rot in the fields as there's nowhere to put them. This is while third-world countries starve.

The ruined small farmers themselves are desperate. They are demanding the

government does something. But what can Reagan do? He represents the big business institutions which are the culprits for the crisis.

The only answer lies with the labour movement. It is our task to explain to the small farmers and businessmen the blame for their ruination lies with the capitalist system itself.

In America, the first job must be the creation of a Labour Party which must also aim at recruiting small farmers.

Yours in comradeship
John Hayes
Poole CLP and UCATT



Mountains of food throughout Europe are left to rot while millions in the third world starve.

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB

Direct links

Dear Comrades,

At a recent meeting of the Merseyside Area Committee of the CPSA we decided to build direct links with a South African trade union branch giving both moral and financial support. We also decided to highlight what is going on out there amongst the membership and to invite a speaker from the Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP) to our next area meeting.

SALEP shows the way forward for South Africa, not only getting rid of apartheid but getting rid of the bosses as well.

Yours fraternally
Dave Lunn
CPSA vice chair
Birkenhead Land Registry
(personal capacity)

Determined selling

Dear Comrades,

The first time we went to Parkside colliery we were selling papers to the miners when a union official came to tell us that his men were sick of being pestered by paper sellers and that we should leave the premises straight away, which we did after selling a few more papers.

The week after we returned and a security guard came to throw us off the pit, we asked why and he said that no-one was allowed on the

premises without the permission of the union. A miner who was talking to us at the time argued with him that he should let us stay on which he did.

When we sold some more papers another NUM official threatened that they'd get the police to throw us off if we didn't go. We went again the week after and again got thrown off. But we're going to go back because every week the miners at Parkside are seeing what the people who supposedly represent them are like, and they're buying more papers off us every time.

Yours fraternally
Lisa Giglio
St Helens
Merseyside

Dear Comrades,

Having just witnessed a television interview with Neil Kinnock in which he said the 'big-wig' trade union leaders would be meeting with Liverpool City Council next week to try and force them to be 'realistic', I have no doubt that the formulas they will try and force on the city council will involve some treacherous balancing of the books to put workers on the dole or cut services.

I think the detailed minutes of this forthcoming meeting between Liverpool City Council and trade union 'leaders' should be made public and distributed to the people of Liverpool to allow them to judge for themselves just who is best defending their interests.

Yours Fraternally
Steve Arnott
Dunfermline West LPYS

Dear Comrades,

If Kinnock's speech proved nothing else, it at least proved that a good speech does not make a good man. What honourable man attacks the very people he is supposed to protect? Thatcher for all her viciousness has never attacked her own class.

What honourable man buys personal popularity by quoting the working conditions suffered by his relatives in the mines, when he

himself has suffered nothing worse than a good education.

What honourable man states how his family were moved from an old, infested house into a decent modern one by a socialist council, yet as leader of that same party he actually refuses other people even the right to fight for better living conditions?

Yours fraternally
Vince Noonan
Birkenhead

The Labour 'leadership'



Dear Comrades,

The 'Neil Kinnock Show' last week went down a treat with the Tory press and media. However, to the hundreds of thousands of ordinary people watching, it was yet again a stab in the back.

The magnificent struggle of the people of Liverpool was described by Kinnock as "A petty

priority." Kinnock passionately said that the Labour Party had given him every chance in life. How true! He is leader of the Labour Party because he got there on the backs of the workers.

These same workers are now expected to accept their miserable lot while the so-called 'leadership' of the party fall over themselves to accommodate

big business and the capitalist system. Unfortunately for Kinnock and his ilk, workers all over the country see the struggle in Liverpool as their struggle. They will not be held back by spineless leaders.

Yours fraternally
Diane Harvey
Govan

Dear Militant,

I do not think the disgraceful behaviour of the party leadership at the conference has endeared it to the membership. Kinnock's insults were followed that same evening by a despicable personal attack by Hattersley on Eric Heffer at a television interview, at which he contemptuously dismissed Eric's walkout as a "histrionic" demonstration of "self-love".

When the deputy leader publicly insults a popular colleague in this way, things have come to a pretty pass in the party. Party unity? It should become increasingly obvious who are the real splitters.

Yours in the fight
Katheleen Jones
Bishops Castle Labour Party and Womens Action Committee

Dear Comrades,

During the Labour Party conference we saw Neil Kinnock trying to unite the movement around his pathetic leadership. The policies he advocates substitutes socialism for 'power at any price.' The working class want a socialist Labour Party, elected on a true socialist programme, not a

watering down of principles to appeal to the middle class.

I was disgusted to see the magnificent Liverpool councillors disregarded with such contempt and the year long struggle of the miners called a 'liability'. It was the spirit and solidarity of the miners that brought credibility back to the labour movement.

I am unemployed and

have been for four of the six years since leaving school. I, and thousands of young people like me, need a clear path out of the jungle of unemployment and poverty. What do we not need is the watered down waffle of Kinnock and Hattersley.

Yours fraternally
Peter Sheldon
Doncaster north LPYS

LEFT and RIGHT

A woman's place

IT'S GOOD to see the Tories practice what they preach about the 'little woman' knowing her place. During Tory conference last week Junior Minister Lynda Chalker was found kneeling on the floor stapling together speeches from piles of paper around her. She informed one observer: "No it's not mine, it's Ridley's bloody speech".

Financing 'Subversives'

THE RABIDLY anti-union *Sun* must have been a bit sick last week. One of its £40,000 bingo winners was a striker. After telling the *Sun* "I've told my workmates I will not see them go hungry" he returned to the picket line, where his union is fighting for an £8 a week rise.

The royal wee

PRINCESS DI will be relieved to hear that provision has been made at Wavell barracks in West Germany for her visit at the weekend. An extra loo has been installed kitted out with pink wallpaper and brass fittings at a cost to the British military of a mere £5,200.

Amnesia

Dear Comrades,

Neil Kinnock and his friends in the media have made great play of the so-called "impracticality" and "unconstitutionality" of resolutions at this year's Labour Party conference, which demanded that a future Labour government pass immediate legislation to repay all fines and surcharges imposed on Labour councillors and the NUM.

Kinnock's henchmen claim that

such legislation would be "without precedent". However, such people are often given to attacks of selective amnesia. For retrospective legislation—Acts of Parliament which apply to situations arising before the passage of such Acts—is by no means a novel idea.

In fact, the last instance of it occurred as recently as 1980. Patrick Jenkin directed another body to take over the functions of the South East Thames Regional Health Authority because it had not kept within the Tories' financial limits.

However, Mr Justice Woolf ruled his order invalid and illegal. But less than one month later, the Tories

passed the National Health Service (Invalid Direction) Act 1980, which meant that the court's decision was overturned and Jenkin's order was allowed to stand.

If the Tories can look after themselves as well as this, comrades will, no doubt, draw their own conclusions about a Labour Party leadership which refuses to protect working class people in a similar manner.

Yours fraternally
Tim Kaye
Lecturer in Law
University College
Cardiff

Conference kicks out MPs' conscience clause

Labour Party 85 Conference

A SIGNIFICANT victory for women's rights was achieved at Labour Party conference.

Conference overwhelmingly rejected the 'conscience clause' for Labour MPs which allows them to vote as they wish on issues that affect women. There has been anger in the movement that recently 44 Labour MPs voted in favour of Enoch Powell's bill attacking reproductive rights.

The National Executive opposed the call to scrap the MP's conscience clause. To boos, Betty Boothroyd for the NEC said Labour should "uphold the right of the conscientious objector".

However, conference felt Labour MP's should uphold the rights of women. Those 44 Labour MP's were mainly male and, on their high salaries, elevated above the economic situation faced by working people. The consequences of their action on the Powell Bill would have fallen on the shoulders of working class women who have to live in the real world of deteriorating living standards.

Massive vote

In opposition to the NEC, the resolution was overwhelmingly carried, by 5,505,000 to 61,000. The task now must be to get the Parliamentary Labour Party—where the conscience clause is written into their own constitution—to obey the policy decision of conference, the real sovereign body of the labour movement.

It was clear from the attitude of the ranks of the party that there is now a more class orientated awareness of issues facing women. This is no doubt a spin-off from the mass movement of working class women, especially in the mining communities, during the miners' strike.



Women protest in June against the Gillick ruling. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Women's rights, in particular the right to choose abortion, was seen as a class issue, and not one of 'personal choice' or a 'moral question'. The Powell Bill against experimentation on embryos and the Gillick ruling which stops under 16 year olds getting contraception advice, was seen as a new attack by the old moralist right-wing to chip away at a woman's right to an abortion.

The Powell Bill if passed, would have also stopped research into infertility and would discriminate against infertile women.

The NEC were also overturned in the debate on the women's organisation. The NEC-backed call for a woman to be included on every shortlist in selections for parliamentary candidates was rejected, by 3,875,000 to 1,731,000. Many delegates felt that the small representation of women in the

PLP would not be solved by arbitrary constitutional measures, which would apply regardless of a woman candidate's political standing.

A call for the five women's places on the NEC to be elected at Labour's Women's conference was also rejected, by 4,679,000 votes to 1,643,000.

Short booted

In moving the NEC's opposition to this call, Renee Short provoked slow hand claps and boos when she described this as a 'Militant motion'. Militant supporters have actually opposed this for the past five years!

It is inconsistent that the women's organisation does not have a direct vote on the NEC. If, however, the five seats for women

on the NEC were elected at the women's conference—and not at national conference as at present—it would disenfranchise many women trade union delegates who do not attend women's conference.

Militant supporters have argued that the women's organisation should have parity with the Labour Party Young Socialists and have one place on the NEC elected at their conference, alongside the five places elected at national conference.

However, Short's outburst shows how the right wing will use hysterical attacks on Militant to attack the whole of the left, as a substitute for political argument.

By a Militant reporter

What it means to be skint

IT WAS clear from the chairmanship of this year's Labour Party conference that the leadership were more interested in media presentation than hearing the voice of the rank and file. Only a few working class Labour Party members managed to break through to the rostrum to describe the reality of living in Thatcher's Britain.

One of the many unlucky delegates was Sheila Hall, a single parent from Brighton. Sheila was delegate for Brighton Kempton Labour Party Women's Section. (This party has over 400 women members and is therefore entitled to an additional women's delegate.

Sheila spoke to Militant:

"I wanted to get in on the low pay debate, even though I haven't got a job. When I do get work I have to leave in July when the kids break up from school, because we've got no child care facilities and I can't afford a child minder. I wanted to get over to conference what it means to be constantly skint.

"It means empty food cupboards; sitting in your home with your coat on because you're scared of the fuel bill; sending your kids off to school in winter with no warm winter coat.

Charity

"If the physical discomfort wasn't enough your nose is rubbed in it when you're forced to turn to charity. This year I applied for the first time to the local education department for financial help with the kid's school uniforms. It's the first time I've done this because we working class have got our pride and we like to provide for our families ourselves. We don't like going off cap in hand.

"They said they couldn't give me any money because apparently my supplementary benefit is enough to cover food and clothes. But they gave me a letter saying "Supply children with clothes suitable for school" which I was told to take to the WVS. Me and the kids went along but we left empty handed after refusing 'clothes suitable for the dustbin.' Unless you've experienced things like this you can't begin to describe the humiliation.

"We need socialism. When I sit in my sister's house and watch her seven year old son looking through the cupboards and fridge saying to her "We're really poor aren't we mum", it just fills me with fury and disgust at this capitalist society. Yes, and shame too—shame that all the years of Labour governments have fundamentally changed nothing."

No pillow fight at Silentnight

'We supported the miners. But you don't know what it's really like until you're on strike and go through it yourself.'

THE SILENTNIGHT workers are now facing their eighteenth week of strike action. The strike began at the bedding company's factories in Barnoldswick, Lancashire and Sutton, West Yorkshire after over 500 workers were sacked for taking strike action following management breaking no-redundancy agreements.

Silentnight strikers went to the Labour Party conference in Bournemouth to raise support and much needed cash for their struggle. Janet Seymour, a Silentnight shop steward and a member of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trade Union, spoke to Militant about the strike.

"It's very hard. We're trying to manage on £20 per week strike pay. Although we are officially sacked we can't claim unemployment benefit because they say we're in dispute. It's the same with social security—only a small amount of the strikers are getting benefits, such as the one parent families, but they're only small claims.

"As the weeks go by it is getting harder. You'll go through a rough patch wondering where it will end, but then something will happen, like a wagon turning back from the

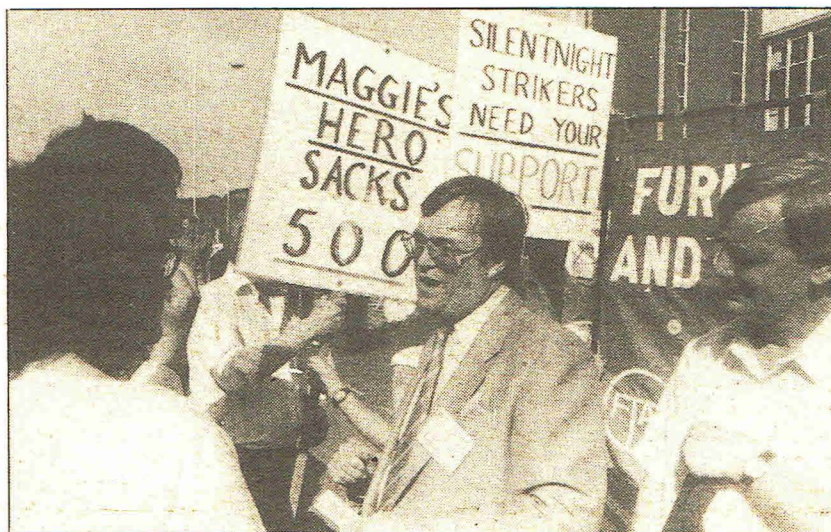
picket and you'll regain your fighting spirit. The two factories are not far apart and both workforces are covered by the same FTAT branch so we meet as one.

"But raising funds has been one of the major tasks, and we've had a great response. Here at Labour Party conference we raised £240 in the first day alone. Locally the nearby Rolls Royce factory have been holding regular collections. The NUM lodges and Miners Support Groups have been very good, giving us everything they had left over from their strike, like food parcels.

"We've been surprised how far afield support is coming from. We recently went to Hillingdon in London to talk to the local Trade Union Support Group, which was set up in the miners' strike, and they were very forthcoming. They've set up a separate committee specifically to support us.

"We've been surprised how far their strike, adopting a colliery and holding collections. But you don't really know what it's like to be out on strike until you've been through it."

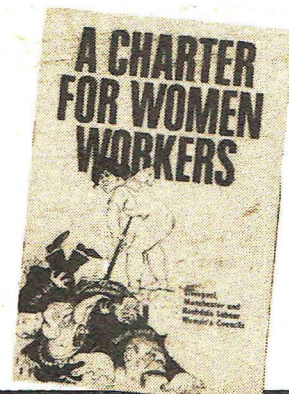
Strikers back Militant see page two



Labour employment spokesman John Prescott speaks to Silentnight strikers lobbying Labour conference. Photo: Militant

Essential reading for all Labour activists:

The *Charter for Women Workers* is sponsored by a number of Labour Women's Councils and sets out a programme to draw women into the movement. Price 40p, available from Ann Bannister, 55 Lunt Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 5EZ.



INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Sheffield
forge
steel
solidarity

SHEFFIELD FORGEMASTERS steel workers voted by a two thirds majority, in a secret ballot, for industrial action over pay last Friday.

The 330 key workers in the Aerospace division agreed to strike from 6am Sunday.

A mass meeting on Tuesday voted for all out strike and the other 670 are now out.

Management's offensive against the union has provoked this response. They have only themselves to blame.

They sacked the convenors from Forgemasters and the former BSC River Don works. They stopped the Joint Shop Stewards Committee meeting on company premises. Then they abolished the joint health and safety committee.

When the JSSC put forward a claim for a £10 a week pay rise we got the run around.

At first they offered £4. Then the managing director was sacked. The new one withdrew the offer. We pursued it and management changed their minds. They put £4 back on the table, with strings. We rejected the offer.

Then the managing director withdrew the £4 offer and left the strings up for negotiation—and had the cheek to ask us if we would accept! That was when the JSSC recommended industrial action and balloted the members, who backed the call wholeheartedly.

Sheffield Forgemasters is now a company of companies. Each section or department which does similar work has a separate company identity with Forgemasters as the holding company.

Management believe that as the companies are separate so are the shop stewards. The JSSC reject this.

The bosses are trying to break our organisation. They want to abolish the senior stewards and replace them with inexperienced ones. They aim to stop stewards from the different 'companies' meeting without management's agreement. This action is our reply.

By Arthur Millward
(shop steward, Sheffield Forgemasters)

Barnsley Area NUM demonstration Saturday 19 October. Assemble 9.30am at Courthouse car park, Barnsley. Speakers include Arthur Scargill, Jack Taylor and Dennis Skinner, and local MPs

London bus stop prepare
November
action

MANY LONDON bus services were hit by strikes last Friday. Battersea garage is on strike again at time of writing (Tuesday). Bus workers could face full-scale confrontation in early November. CHRIS HERRIOT talked to workers at Stamford Hill garage in North London.

WORKERS AT the Upton Park depot had been pursuing the London Bus Delegate Conference policy of non-cooperation with management's "November Programme", which includes a number of proposals for the run-down of the transport system within London.

The programme consists of extensive mileage cuts (ie reduced services), the introduction of joint compilation of work schedules and one person operation (OPO), and a number of garage closures.

The union feels that 'joint compilation' will intensify the workload on individual bus crews whilst the effects of 'one person operation' (OPO) are obvious—drastic cuts in manpower.

It was the decision of Battersea Garage workers (see last three issues of *Militant*) to take industrial action against the closure of their depot that led to the delegate conference call for non cooperation.

When management issued letters threatening suspension without pay for this action the workers hit back im-



mediately with the strike.

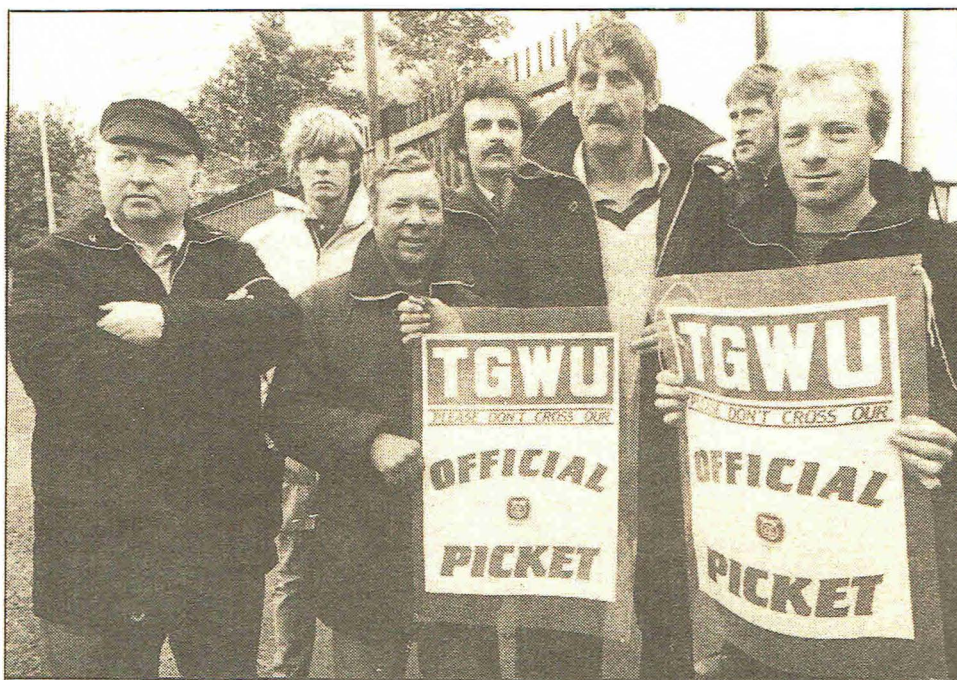
Upton Park were joined by a number of other garages in a one, and in some cases a two-day strike, as a show of solidarity and a warning to management that the workers mean business.

Stamford Hill depot joined the two-day dispute with enthusiasm. The

garage were 80 per cent solid behind the strike before even holding their mass meeting.

The unanimous vote for action was backed up by an enthusiastic response to the request for 'flying pickets' to intercept buses from other garages which ran the same routes as Stamford Hill.

However, despite the fact that as



Scottish and Newcastle brewery workers on strike in Manchester against imposition of working agreement inferior to that made with the previous owners Harp Lager. Photo: John Smith

Birkenhead hospital

WORKERS AT St Catherine's hospital in Birkenhead are fighting attempts to make substantial cuts in services. Gerry McKinley spoke to GMBATU steward Chris Stonehouse after a mass meeting on Monday 14 October.

MANAGEMENT ARE proposing to cut up to 90 beds from the hospital. This is just the latest cut which St Catherine's has faced. Already half the hospital has been knocked down and made into a car park.

This cut will obviously mean job losses and could mean the beginning of the end of the hospital. Birkenhead has lost four hospitals in the last five years.

The patients who would be moved would be psychiatric and geriatric cases. To some of the old people the hospital is their home. They have been there for years.

The shock of being moved miles to a hospital and staff they don't know could kill some of them.

Management say the hospital must lose beds in order to pay for the nurses' pay rise. They are just trying to divide the workforce.

The ancillary workers' pay claim has not been settled yet. If we accept this cut they will come back for more jobs when the ancillary workers' claim is agreed.

The mass meeting today was virtually unanimous in opposition to the cuts, any plans to move patients or equipment will be met by a picket line.

All staff will continue to work normally and materials will be allowed in, but we won't let anything go out.

We need support from other trade unions to keep this picket line going. The local Trades Council have promised support and NUPE and G&M workers at the hospital where patients are due to be transferred have promised not to accept any transfers.

We can win this dispute. A while back Allied Medical were called in to investigate privatising all ancillary services. Staff were out for 48 hours solid and we forced management to drop their plans. We can do it again.

Resolutions and other forms of support to: Chris Stonehouse, c/o GMBATU 196, St Catherine's Hospital, Church Road, Birkenhead.

Dockers and seamen
support Silentnight

SILENTNIGHT strikers from Sutton, West Yorkshire, and Barnoldswick, Lancashire, joined with other activists to discuss their strike and the ideas of Marxism at a meeting last week.

Steve Davison of Keighley Trades Council, Andy Fleming of Houghton Main NUM, and Gerry Cumiskey, an FTAT shop steward from Silentnight, stressed the determination of workers to fight back against the Tories and their anti-union legislation.

These Tory laws have enabled Silentnight bedding company to sack 500 people for taking official strike action over management's breach of a wage agreement.

Pressure is growing for further action from union and labour leaders. The lobby of the Labour party conference in Bournemouth by Silentnight strikers got a lot of publicity.

Many Labour MPs have pledged their support and intend to move a debate on the Silentnight strike when Parliament starts again after the summer recess.

Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, Terry Fields paid a special visit to the picket line at Barnoldswick last week and spoke with strikers in the pouring rain.

He was warmly applauded when he made a rallying speech, along with other Labour Party members who had arrived on the party's campaign bus.

Dockers at a number of ports are now blacking raw materials destined for Silentnight.

At Hartlepool, timber has been blacked, as a result of

strikers going there and putting their case to the dockworkers directly.

The National Union of Seamen are giving full assistance. NUS general secretary, Jim Slater, told Silentnight strikers in Bournemouth that they were the best-organised group of lobbyists he had seen at conference.



Striker Janet Segmore—interview on page 13.

The example set by ordinary rank and file trade union members at Silentnight must surely convince the FTAT leadership that any actions they initiate will be taken up with enthusiasm.

The local branch (Cravendale no 92) unanimously voted to donate £5 from their hardship fund to the *Militant Defence Fund*, in recognition of the help given to strikers.

Please send donations direct to: FTAT Cravendale no 92, Branch Strike Fund, c/o Ann King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire.

By Linden Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Rebuild pit closure resistance

THE PRESS and the media have been celebrating recent votes in the coalfields to shut pits and accept redundancy.

Many miners have been stampeded into closure votes by management intimidation and fear of losing benefit entitlement due to non-payment of contributions during the 12 month dispute.

These fears have been built up by the press campaign itself. They are collaborating, as they did throughout the strike, with the Coal Board and the Tories to create an atmosphere of panic and confusion in the coalfields.

But their temporary success is now in the process of being halted.

St. John's NUM in South Wales, who have fought a brilliant campaign against closure, were first to throw a spanner in the works by

voting 60% to 40% to continue the battle.

The lodge had created the St John's and Community Action Committee after the threat of closure was originally announced.

This initiative was followed by Darfield Main in Yorkshire and now Bold Colliery have followed suit and set up their own Community Action Committee.

It is clear that rank-and-file miners have learned many lessons from the '84/85 strike—not least of all the necessity of self-organisation at grass roots level.

In the face of the press onslaught, which has picked up on the genuine fears and misgivings of ordinary miners, no lead whatsoever has come from the area or national leadership.

Arthur Scargill has made calls for opposition to closures but he appears to have a less firm hold on the

national executive than during the strike.

What is needed is a clear, thought-out strategy for linking up those pits under threat and offering a united front against the NCB.

There is no way now for the leadership to manoeuvre. They must face up to the crisis of the industry.

The stand of St John's, Darfield, Bold and others is timely. It has lifted the morale of miners throughout the coalfield—despite the silence of the press on these developments.

The fighting spirit of these workers is a testimony to the spirit of the miners when provided with decisive leadership.

It can escape no one that this form of leadership finds its initial roots in the ranks of the Marxists within the NUM. Supporters of *Militant* have been to the forefront of the struggles of St. John's and Darfield in particular.

However, these collieries cannot guarantee victory if they are left to stand alone—no matter what calibre of branch leadership they may have.

The building of a mass, open, democratic Broad Left in every Area of the British coalfield is an absolute necessity to link up those pits in struggle and to pull the rest of the membership behind them. This is a task rank-and-file activists must now undertake.

By Chris Herriot
(sacked miner,
Monktonhall)

Photo: John Smith (FL)



Tens of thousands of miners and their families made enormous sacrifices during the strike to halt pit closures. That struggle continues. Out of their experience a new, successful, campaign can be launched.

Yorkshire campaign

IN THEIR attack on north Yorkshire pits, the National Coal Board have now threatened to close Houghton Main colliery.

Management and unions from Houghton Main were called to a meeting with the Board this week. They were told that unless the pit showed a profit within six months it would be closed.

Nearby Cortonwood is to close, Darfield Main is under threat—if Houghton Main goes too this area of North

Yorkshire, in particular towns like Wombwell, will be devastated.

Meanwhile the fight to save Darfield Main goes on. At a meeting of Houghton Main NUM £42 was collected for the Darfield Main and Community Action Committee, formed to fight the closure. The Action Committee can be contacted through M. Marshall, 17 Rimington Road, Barnsley, or telephone Barnsley 757704. (See ad page 14).

Manchester school strike

THE SO-called 'graffiti strike' at Poundswick school in Manchester has aroused much emotion on all sides, but this, and the ambiguous slogan 'Save Our Standards' has obscured the important issues the dispute raises.

The incident started when five pupils were suspended at Poundwick for allegedly painting obscene racist and sexist slogans about certain teachers on the school wall.

The school governors expelled the pupils. Following this the Council's Education Committee overruled the decision, insisting the pupils be reinstated.

Since then teachers at the school have walked out. Other teachers in Manchester supported them in a big demonstration on Friday 4 October. More action is planned, with unprecedented action from head teachers.

By Jane Briars

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the present incident the feelings of the teachers reflect the ever worsening situation in the classroom, which cannot be ignored.

Tory cuts mean that teachers have to cope in over crowded classes and all the frustration and reactions of youth to mass unemployment and poverty. It also means that much of what they teach is irrelevant to youth who see little hope of a job.

Left wing councillors and their families have been persecuted by the press, Tories and right-wing Labour Councillor for trying to act in the interests of justice.

Teachers are justified in their anger at not being fully consulted by the council. But also, guilty or not, the five pupils' future has now been damaged.

The particular problem concerned must be resolved with full consultation of all concerned and guidelines laid down for the future, with councillors, school staff, parents and pupils having a say in decision making in schools.

Local Authorities should learn from Liverpool Labour Council which has begun to tackle the problems in education.

In some of Liverpool's schools the teacher pupil ratio is as low as 1:13. The curriculum has been made more relevant to the lives of youth and their problems in consultation with pupils, teachers and parents.

Racialism, which must be stamped out, will not go away by expulsion. In Liverpool special staff are appointed in each school to tackle problems of racialism,

sexism and social problems. Problems like this will always arise under capitalism, where services are ever being cut, and society is run in the interests of the rich.

Only with a socialist Labour government bringing society under the control of the working class will these problems be fully resolved and a decent and full education provided.

Shipyard victory

SWAN HUNTER strikers at Wallsend have ended their seven-week dispute. They have successfully defended working conditions which were under attack in preparation for a management buy-out when the yards are privatised.

Management have abandoned the demand for foremen to have the right to suspend and discipline workers. They have also accepted that the conditions make it impossible for the men to take tea-breaks on board ship.

The strike has given the workers confidence in their ability to resist attacks. Two to three hundred have been on each of the picket lines at the four yards.

There has been much dissatisfaction with the attitude of the union officials. National GMBATU officials seem to have been too busy attacking Liverpool city council at Labour Party conference to get round to making the strike official.

This is a major victory, especially in a depressed industry. But it is a defensive action which must be seen as a battle won in a continuing war.

By Lynne Collins
(Wallsend Women's section)

GEC sit on cash and sack workers

GEC Telecommunications have declared almost a thousand redundancies in its Telephone Switching Group (TSG). 600 are to go in Coventry and 340 in Kirkcaldy.

If these go ahead it will mean that TSG's workforce has dropped from 7,500 to 6,000 in eighteen months. The unions also expect redundancies in other divisions of the company.

GEC has high profits and still has a good order book for System X. The real issue is that new technology in the hands of the bosses is used to replace jobs not shorten hours.

A joint union stand against redundancies

is the best defence for workers. Action must be taken to make the company withdraw the redundancy threat. Re-training, redeployment and ending overtime working are important but GEC should also use its £1,500 million cash mountain to invest and create jobs.

If they refuse GEC should be nationalised by the next Labour government so that the many skills of the workers can be used for the benefit of society.

By Phil Holfield
(ASTMS GEC 120 branch committee,
personal capacity)

CPSA leaders sabotage dispute

AFTER SIX weeks on strike for more staff, CPSA members at Ilford DHSS voted on 8 October to negotiate a return to work.

This difficult decision was mainly due to an implied threat by the right wing National Disputes Committee to declare the strike unofficial. But the "moderate" regional chairperson and the "Broad Left '84" regional secretary also did their best to isolate the strikers (see *Militant* 769)

However, this should not be seen as a defeat, more as a curtain-raiser for London-wide action for more staff, as hammered out at a meeting of London CPSA DHSS office representatives on 12 October.

Speaker after speaker at this meeting told of the horrors of working in the DHSS.

Due to Tory staff cuts it is unbearable. 30 per cent of staff resign their jobs every year to go on the dole in some offices.

In one office, some members of staff are undergoing psychiatric outpatient treatment as a result of working for the DHSS!

It was agreed that London-wide strike action was necessary to win a real increase in staff in order to make working conditions bearable.

A one-day strike is planned for 8 November to kick off the campaign.

It is hoped to build for all-out action by the end of November with DHSS Section Executive Committee members going to all local DHSS offices to explain the campaign and build up support.

By Dave Spagnol
(CPSA, personal capacity)

Crossland Filters Nottingham

200 T&GWU members at Crossland filters in Nottingham joined the picket during their one day strike on Wednesday 9 October.

Only four regular workers went in on the main shift out of 250. Only 30 out of 100 went in on the twilight shift.

Three-quarters of the workforce at Crossland Filters are on £80 per week before stoppages. Bonus earnings are between £1.12 and £2.50 a week for those on it.

The 6½ per cent offer with 0.7 per cent on the bonus did not even match the 8 per cent given to a recently acquired firm never mind the 17½ per cent claim.

Management claimed they had no money during the ten week negotiations. Three days after their third meeting they announced a sponsorship deal with Nottingham Panthers Ice Hockey team.

If management do not make an acceptable offer then further action will be taken.

John Stanley TGWU shop steward spoke to Gary Freeman

Militant

Portuguese elections

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After the riots,
Tottenham and
Brixton

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Tories hit the poor-again

THE GOVERNMENT are discussing how to cut government spending. They only have one real option in mind—hit the poor.

As NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe pointed out at Labour's conference the Tories want to made the rich work harder by paying them more and make the poor work harder by paying them less.

To subsidise possible tax cuts for the wealthy, the Tories are preparing to sacrifice those on child benefits, unemployment pay, supplementary benefits and housing benefits.

The *Sunday Telegraph* (13 October) reports that even after selling off more state assets, they will still need massive cuts.

The Social Services Secretary, Norman Fowler has already given us an unpleasant whiff of what is in store with his review of the pensions and benefits system.

Government cover up

Fowler's vague announcements did not specify where cuts would fall. But a Labour MP Gordon Brown recently filled in some of the missing details, from government papers which Fowler didn't want made public.

Hardly surprising! Supplementary benefit will shortly be called the Income Support Scheme. This innocent sounding name hides huge cuts. An estimated 600,000 households will find that their income is not 'supported' at all; they will lose all benefit.

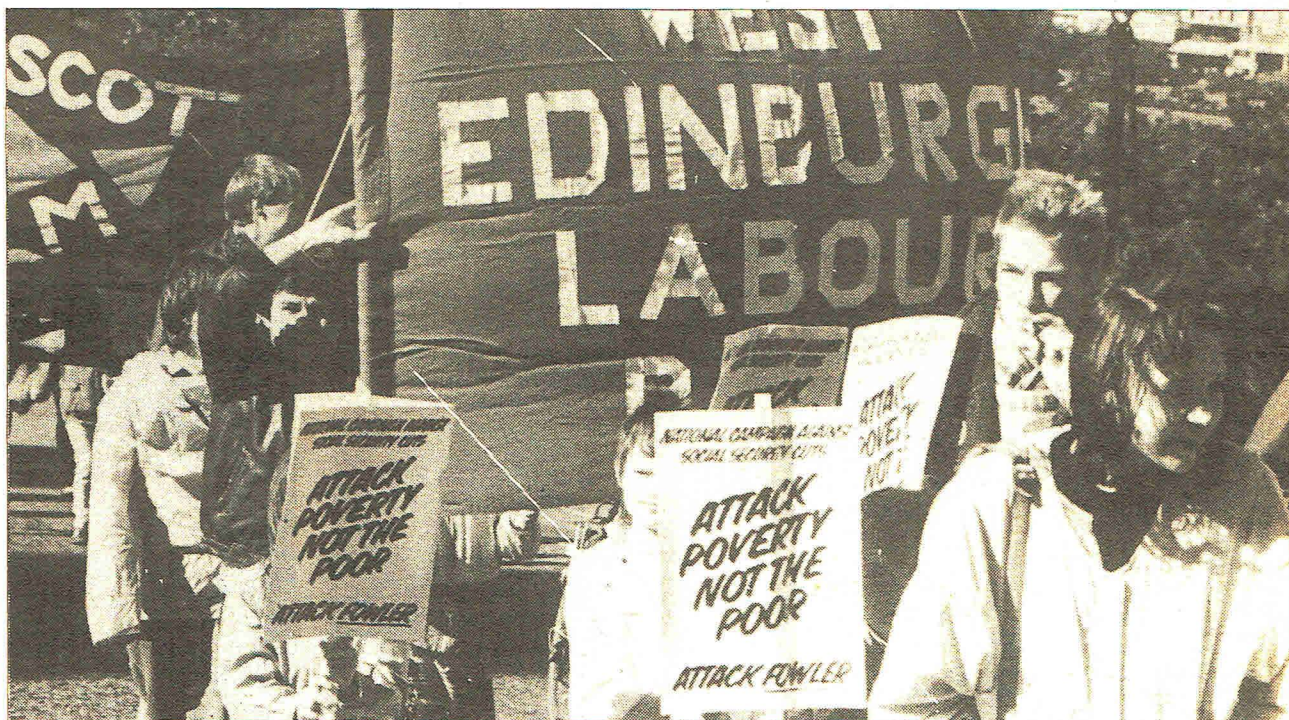
Nearly two million other households will suffer. 290,000 families will lose £5 or more, 890,000 will lose from £2.50 to £5. This includes a million pensioners, half a million unemployed and 250,000 single parents,

sick and disabled people. Fowler's advisers also reckon 3,000 staff will become surplus to requirement and therefore themselves join the dole queue.

Family Income Supplement (FIS) which helps the low paid keep their children adequately fed is to become the Family Credit Scheme. 20,000 families now on FIS will get absolutely no 'credit' and a further 100,000 families, a third of claimants, will lose £5 or more a week. As it is, only 60 per cent of the people eligible for FIS take up their rights.

Housing benefit is already facing cuts. On 25 November a million households, tenants and owner occupiers, 400,000 of them on supplementary benefit, will lose out. £1.60 could be chopped from your housing benefit if you have young people, unemployed, disabled or pensioners living with you. This was not in Fowler's package announced in the House of Commons. The government aims in all to make 7 million households lose out, a quarter of them being completely taken off benefit.

Other attacks are likely on widows' pensions, maternity allowance and death grant. This August, the central heating addition claimed by over a million households was scrapped, giving a choice to many people



A march and rally against the Fowler Review in Edinburgh last month.

Photo: Simon McTaggart (IFL)

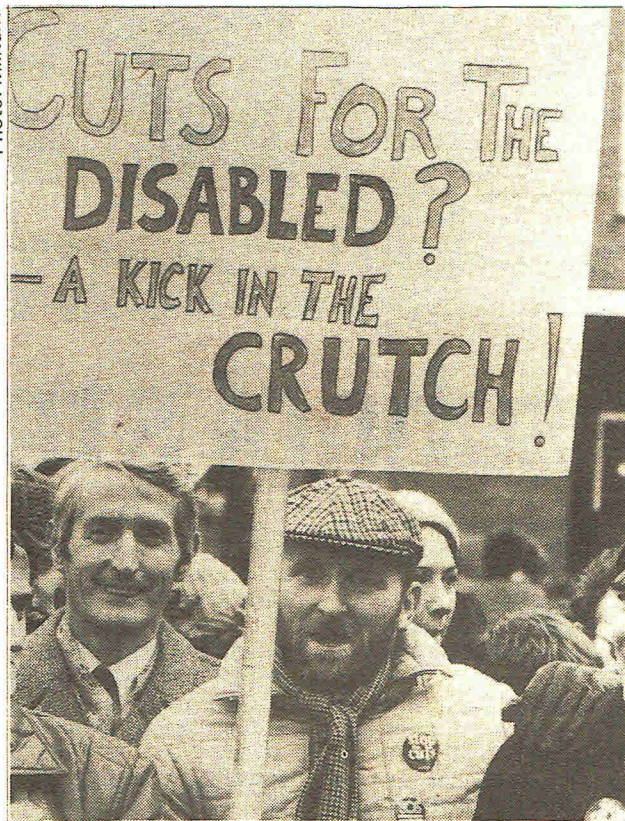


Photo: Militant

The sick and disabled will suffer more cuts.

ple this winter of heating or eating.

This government has already presided over a big cutback in many benefits. But the unemployment figures, ever spiraling upwards, have pushed up government spending. The Tories are now trying to

make the poor pay for the inefficiency and inhumanity of their own system. They also want low benefits to create a climate of fear and encourage even lower wages for those in work.

The Labour Party and the unions must campaign to expose what the government

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A CANVASS in Liverpool Garston revealed an astonishing 78.5% support for Labour. Labour Party members asked 288 people how they would vote in an election. 219 said Labour, 15 Alliance, 15 Tory and 39 don't know. In Netherley support was even greater.

"We shall protect the poor and those most in need of help" Mrs Thatcher March 1984.

"They say it's only a little bit less, £1 here or 50p there. Try telling that to the Tesco check out" Jean, single parent South London.

"A sound family life lies at the heart of a healthy society" Tory document Right Approach 1976.



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