

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

25p

ISSUE 771 25 October 1985

Liverpool faces Tory lockout

BY THE end of next week, the 31,000 workforce of Liverpool City Council face a lock-out by the Tory government. The Tories have robbed the city of the funds it needs to provide vital services. Now its money is likely to run out within days.

The Tories and the businessmen who live in comfort and fine houses hysterically condemn the Labour councillors for not being prepared to stand by and see a big section of the population forced to live in slums and the nightmare conditions which drive the young to crime and drugs.

Standing firm

The Labour Party in Liverpool is standing firm for what the Labour Party has preached for 80 years. They deserve to be supported, not condemned by the leaders of the labour movement. The rising support for Labour in Liverpool, up from 46 to 55 per cent in the polls, shows that the council's policies would win the next general election in a landslide, if taken up nationally. The council have given a crushing answer to the argument that militancy loses votes.

The High Court has declared the council's budget 'unlawful'. Is it a crime to build more council houses than all the rest of the country put together and open six nurseries? What the Tories demand is unemployment, cuts and misery. There is no way the council can capitulate to these demands.

Most of the council workers are now committed

By Pat Craven

to all-out strike action, not against the council, but against the Tory government, whose refusal to hand back a small proportion of the millions they have taken from Liverpool in grants is the reason for the crisis.

These workers will be fighting not just for their own jobs, but for the services to the old, the sick and the disabled and the housing programme. Nor are they fighting only for Liverpool. Next year, other Labour councils will face a crisis like Liverpool's. They will face the choice of implementing massive cuts in spending on vital services and redundancies or following Liverpool in a fightback.

That is why the whole labour movement must make sure that Liverpool City Council forces the government to back down and provide the money it needs to pay wages and maintain services. There is no easy option. The full mobilisation of the whole trade union movement is needed to demonstrate to the Tories and the capitalists that the working people of Liverpool are not going to be made to pay for their crisis. Liverpool will fight, and Liverpool will win.



Labour NEC backs Liverpool fight

THE LABOUR Party National Executive Committee has unanimously passed a resolution which "welcomes the statement issued last weekend by the leadership of the Liverpool City Labour Group and the party recognising:

1. The immediate need to take every possible step to balance the City Council budget for the current financial year whilst protecting services and jobs and maintaining the housebuilding

programme.

2. The urgent need to lift the fear and concern of council workers in respect of lay-off and redundancy in withdrawing the notices to the workforce.

3. That initiatives are welcome within the local authority arena to assist in the present situation in a way which would not be detrimental to the interests of those local authorities' own policies and programmes but which would con-

tribute to obtaining a satisfactory solution.

4. The willingness to cooperate in opening up the council books so that a group of experts from with local government can work with the City Council in examining the problems, causes and potential solutions facing the City Council and independently report on their findings.

As a consequence the NEC calls upon all sections

of the labour movement highlight the urgent need to place pressure on the Conservative government to accept the need to sit down and negotiate an acceptable financial solution which acknowledges the desperate industrial, social and physical state of the City of Liverpool and an end to the reductions in government support to local government as a whole".

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Rally round Militant

THE THIRD *Militant* rally in the 6,000 capacity Albert Hall will be a monster event! It will be a milestone for British Marxism.

Enthusiasm for the Rally has reached record levels. 50-100 Silentnight strikers are coming with their banner. One of them will be speaking.

Coaches will be descending on London from every part of the country. Scotland have organised six, Merseyside eight, Wales seven, the South West five, Northern five, together with a whole series of minibuses and cars. Yorkshire is planning on 600 attending the rally, Manchester 400, Eastern 400, and Southern 500.

The London area has a target of a magnificent 2,000! All other areas report a last minute rush for tickets. Over 100 tickets have also been sold internationally with comrades attending from Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, Ireland, Belgium, Pakistan and S.Africa.

Far from being on the decline, *Militant* has gone from strength to strength. It is this very success that has provoked our enemies into an orchestrated campaign of slander and lies against us. Don't let these attacks go unanswered! Make 3 November our greatest success yet!

By Rob Sewell

Celebrate 21 years —give £21

THIS IS the final week of the Fighting Fund quarter. We need an all-out effort from all our supporters to make it the best week ever and the best quarter ever.

Celebrate 21 years of *Militant* by donating £21. Any amount you can afford will help to raise the money we need to pay for our work in Liverpool and elsewhere.

All eyes are on us. Give them something to stare at in disbelief as *Militant* reaches its target once again.

Notts NUM regroups to fight splitters

THE BALLOT result of the Notts Miners to breakaway and form the Union of Democratic Mineworkers came as no surprise to leading activists in the NUM—but the size of the majority did.

The results would have been much closer had not the Coal Board opened negotiations for a pay rise last week for Notts Miners only—plus extra rest days and more incentive payments. The Board added that the NUM would get nothing. Alongside this came an intense propaganda campaign by the Tory press, nationally and locally, even claiming that Notts miners could earn up to £400 per week.

Notts miners should ask themselves, now the Coal Board has got the decision it wants, how generous and helpful do they think the Coal Board will be in the future?

While financial incentives were summoned up for Roy Link's campaign, NUM members were victimised and intimidated. Miners giving out pro-NUM leaflets to counter the lies of the Coal Board and the Tory press were disciplined.

Yet despite all this, nearly 7,000 miners voted not to breakaway. Although many were upset at the result, spirits are high, boosted by the narrow majority of only 26 for a breakaway in South Derbyshire

and the fact that Bolsover colliery voted overwhelmingly to stay with the NUM.

Already nearly 4,000 miners have signed a form to remain in the NUM. Branches have been formed in every pit and workplace in Notts, with acting branch secretaries, and an executive has been picked until elections can take place. Notts NUM leaders Richardson and Chadburn have been restored to their positions and by the end of the week we will have new offices in Mansfield and a new rule book.

Branch meetings will continue even if it means meeting in the local pub.

The Coal Board have announce-

ed it will not recognise the NUM in Notts. Local management have told us that all conciliation procedures will only begin with the UDM—the NUM will have no representation at local or area level. Despite this we are confident that more and more men will rejoin the NUM. Already miners are drawing their own conclusions over bad incentive deals being offered, with comments like 'Well Scargill never told us any lies over pit closures, he said all those pits would close.'

It took nearly 11 years to smash Spencerism in the 1920's and 1930's. But with the help of the TUC and Labour Party—who must honour their decisions not to recognise the breakaway—we can

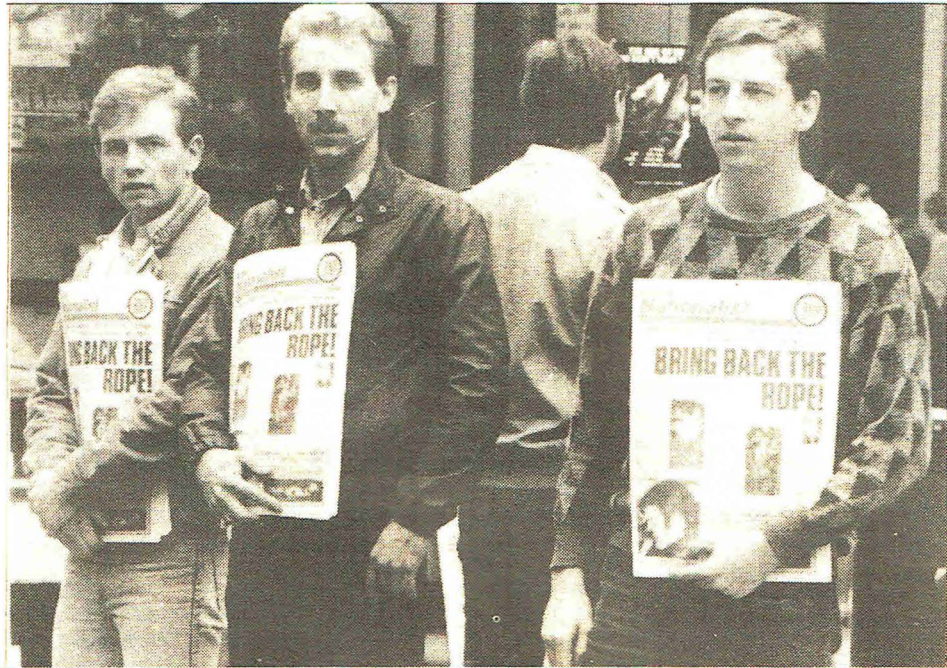
reforge the National Union of Mineworkers in Nottingham and rapidly rebuild an effective organisation to stop pit closures and win decent conditions and pay.

By Paul Kulijowski

(Acting Secretary, Sutton Colliery NUM, Notts Area, personal capacity)

● Nottinghamshire Labour MP Don Concannon has given his support for the breakaway. But at a meeting of his Labour Party branch, Mansfield South East, which he attended members voted 19 to 17 against the breakaway.

Photo: Militant



Fascist paper sellers in Liverpool.

Fascists attack Militant sellers

A FEMALE *Militant* supporter and a black youth were attacked in Liverpool's shopping centre on Saturday by fascists armed with a rice flail.

The fascists, members of the British National Party, hit out after being surrounded by *Militant* supporters and anti-racists. The black youth, who had just been passing by, received stitches in a head wound,

while the *Militant* supporter, also a young black, was severely bruised. One fascist was arrested but later released on bail.

The fascists will be met with the opposition of the labour movement head on. Liverpool District Labour Party has called a demonstration against fascist violence on Saturday 26 October, assembling at 12.00, in Church Street, Whitechapel.

Gillick defeat—boost for women's rights

THE LAW Lords have ruled by three to two that doctors can prescribe the pill to girls under 16, in exceptional circumstances, without their parents' consent.

They also ruled against the precedent set by right-wing campaigner Victoria Gillick who earlier won a court ruling preventing her daughters from getting contraceptive advice without her consent.

Rapidly declining living standards and increasing social pressures since the Tories came to power have seen a dramatic rise in pregnancies amongst girls under 16. In 1982 there were 1,490 births and 2,808 abortions in this age-group.

While Gillick ranted on after the ruling about everyone catching VD and Aids, the Law Lords' decision was a recognition of the reality in society today.

It is also a reflection of the earlier social and political development of young people. Even Lord Scarman has commented that the majority of young people "are fully able to make sensible decisions about many matters

before they reach the age of 16".

In making their decision the Law Lords will have also noted the rising anger of women and the labour movement with reactionary individuals inflicting their 'morals' on millions of others. This anger was seen three weeks ago when the Labour Party conference overwhelmingly rejected Labour MPs being allowed a 'conscience clause', allowing them to opt out or even vote against a women's right to choose abortion.

A victory has been scored over Gillick for women's rights. But the struggle is not over. The reactionary right will be on the offensive again looking for support from the Tory government. There is now talk that the Warnock Report on infertility may be brought forward. There is a danger that the government or other right wing Tories may interpret its findings to usher in a new attack.

Meanwhile the open attacks on the Abortion Act continue trying to reduce the 'time limit' to 20 weeks. This again would affect mainly young women, particularly

under 16s who are more prone to late abortions.

Women and the labour movement must be on their guard to stop any further attempt to turn back the clock.

By Margaret Crear

Miners' supporter released from jail

BOB HARKER, the Gateshead miners' supporter jailed on 3 October for non-payment of a fine was released from Durham jail on Tuesday.

He would like to thank all those who wrote to him and will reply to every letter (please do not send any more letters to the Durham jail address as they will not be sent on).

£10,000 needed now

MILITANT IS still appealing to all labour movement activists to send cash to its Defence Fund.

This is to pay for legal costs of £10,000 in the libel action brought by James White MP.

The fact that White's own Constituency Labour Party was the first to back our campaign, by a unanimous decision, with a donation of £50 shows how unhappy members were with his activities (or non-activities) as a Labour MP—not just in Parliament but at constituency level as well.

A report in the *Times* (22 October) said that according to Hansard: "Mr James White, Labour MP for Glasgow Pollok, is not mentioned in the indices at all for the sittings up to the end of last year, which indicates

that he did not make a speech or put a question, written or oral, for 18 months."

Despite the libel action being settled (see *Militant* 768), many workers continue to contribute to the *Militant* Defence Fund to ensure that *Militant* can continue to support workers' struggles, like that of Liverpool council.

Those who are still donating recognise the need to defend the right of a workers' paper to print the truth.

Now it's a question of getting the cash in as soon as possible.

Many labour movement bodies and trade unions have supported the campaign so far:—

ASTMS Edinburgh branch £50; Monktonhall SCEBTA £50; Jim Gray, Edinburgh £20;

Arun District Trades Council Sussex £15; a collection taken at Gasgoigne Branch Labour Party, Barking, raised £11; Stakes and Purbrook branch LP, Portsmouth £10; collection taken at Bingley and Shipley LPs in Yorkshire £10; Kings Park Ward, Hackney South CLP £10; Bath LPYS, Avon £10; Limehouse LP, Bow and Poplar Constituency £10; Marine Colliery, Gwent £10; Rochdale LP members £13; TGWU 1/874 Littlehampton £5; Peckham LPYS, London £5; George Kings' workers, Stevenage £5; Birmingham Kings Norton Ward LP £5; Withington LP Women's Section £5; Ian Carrington and Linda Wright, Nottingham £5; over £4 from Cotgrave striker Jo Mohammed; nearly £5 Bedford Ward, Tooting LP; over £2 from a striker from Hucknall Colliery; Colin Ahern 1/718 TGWU 50p.

By Kim Waddington



Photo: Steve Evans

Anti-apartheid protesters blocked traffic for two hours outside the South African Embassy after the hanging of Benjamin Moloise. Hundreds were arrested including singer and Labour Party supporter Billy Bragg (centre).

Students protest at racist comments

OVER 500 students boycotted lessons and picketed Waltham Forest college in East London last week demanding the suspension of the college principal.

The principal, JB Fuller, angered students with a letter he wrote to *The Times*. In it he claimed black youth committed the majority of crimes at the college and he made racist generalisations. Commenting on a visit to Jamaica he said: "The sort of loud aggressive conduct seen in Brixton was there in Jamaica" and talked about "the young Jamaicans committing robberies and assaults in that beautiful

island".

Crime and violence is the result of a capitalist society that cannot provide, jobs, hope or a future. That 'beautiful island' also has the same mass unemployment and slum conditions that are seen in Brixton, Toxteth, Tottenham and Handsworth—the same conditions incidentally that are at the root of the cause of soccer violence.

Fuller went on to say Asian students were "more peaceful" and "more successful". Fuller's crude divide and rule attempts failed to split the students who turned out in force—black,

Asian and white—for the mass picket last week.

The fight continues with the main college union, NATFHE, agreeing not to cross picket lines. The students are building support for their campaign, with a speaker at a student demonstration in Wales while Grace Sipjaki, one of the organisers spoke to the Merseyside Area Student Organisation conference at the weekend.

By Lesleigh Woodburn
(Further Education National Committee of the NUS)

Liverpool fights Labour's battle

LIVERPOOL WILL fight. The City Council's struggle to defend jobs and build homes will not be abandoned. The hysterical lies and abuse from the Tories and Liberals in the 'Liverpool against Militants' campaign and their allies in the press can only strengthen the determination of the councillors, the workers and the majority of Liverpool voters to stand firm.

The High Court has ruled that the council's budget is unlawful. Their 'crime' is to build 5,000 new homes, open six new nurseries, raise the children's school uniform grant by £22 a year and offer jobs to workers in a city ravaged by mass unemployment and urban decay. It would not be 'unlawful' to sack home-helps, cut meals on wheels and services to the sick and old. That is the policy of the Tory government.

Out of all the Labour councils who pledged to defy the Tory government's spending cuts, only Liverpool and Lambeth stood firm. Liverpool now fights on for the whole labour movement. The alter-

native is to act as agents of the Tories, let the workers suffer cuts and sackings, and wait for the return of the next Labour government.

Yet it is the policies of Liverpool City Council which would guarantee the election of a Labour government. Its stand has pushed Labour support in the city up from 46 per cent to 55 per cent, despite the sustained barrage of hostility in the press and on TV. Repeated on a national scale that would mean a bigger landslide than the 1945 Labour victory.

Keir Hardie used to ask: "What have I done wrong?" when praised by the perjured press. Neil Kinnock should ask the same question. His visit to Liverpool could have been the opportunity to throw his authority as party leader behind the councillors' defence of Labour Party policy, congratulate them on their magnificent achievements and appeal to the labour movement nationally to rally behind them.

Instead he demanded that the council "recognise painful realities" and consider options which "may not be pleasant—indeed they may be distasteful." Why does he not spell out what these options are and what they would mean? Would it be no more than 'distasteful' to condemn people to live in slums or add to the millions on the dole?

Rather than openly admit that these are his 'solutions', Kinnock and the trade union leaders who visited the city the day before, claim that an 'in-

dependent' inquiry by 'experts' will find a solution. But the books are open. Neither Kinnock nor the union leaders disputed the facts of Liverpool's financial crisis. They can see that there is no alternative option but to do the Tories' dirty work for them.

The Liverpool Labour movement must build a mass movement in support of the councillors, to prove that even this Tory government can be forced to climb down and give back the money taken from the council in grants. Already in Liverpool, there is overwhelming support from the trade union activists, but workplace meetings, leafletting and canvassing are more vital than ever to stiffen and broaden the support, by explaining the case and countering all the media distortions.

The national campaign too must be put on a new level of intensity, comparable with the campaign of support for the miners. Every workplace, council depots in particular, must be visited with leaflets and speakers to put Liverpool's case.

It is Liverpool today—next year other councils will again face the same problems. A victory for Liverpool will make it far easier for the workers in all these other areas to fight the threat of more cuts and redundancies. Liverpool city councillors are carrying the banner of the whole labour and trade union movement. It is up to that movement to make sure that they are victorious.

Kinnock urges capitulation

NEIL KINNOCK is urging Liverpool council to capitulate—to introduce cuts in jobs and services to balance its books.

That is the net effect of his statement after his brief whistlestop tour of Liverpool and his even briefer discussion with city councillors.

Apart from one or two token attacks on the Tory government in his press conference afterwards, Neil Kinnock reserved all his venom and invective for a Labour council in struggle. He condemned the councillors in the most scathing terms for their alleged 'impractical' solutions, and refused to make a declaration on their behalf.

He has put all his support behind the so-called 'independent' enquiry into the council's finances, expecting it "in days rather than weeks", to come up with a package of measures based upon balancing the budget within the council's present hopelessly limited resources.

Neil Kinnock knows very well that this means cuts in the house building programme (by capitalisation) rent rises, or redundancies, or a mixture of all three. In a somersault of logic he announced that he didn't want "Neil Kinnock to be accus-

ed of wanting job losses", five minutes after demanding that the council adopt "unpleasant" and "distasteful" options.

Once again Labour Party members will be heartily dismayed as the leader attacks workers who are involved in struggle. What has especially disgusted Labour councillors is Neil Kinnock's accusation that they gave a distorted picture of the discussions: "I want to correct the misleading impression given by other reports" he said.

In the meeting Neil Kinnock had been "like a lamb", as one councillor put it. John Hamilton, council leader, announced afterwards: "Neil Kinnock did not oppose the steps taken by the council so far".

"20 councillors met him", Councillor Tony Mulhearn said, "and we impressed upon him the total unanimity of the Labour Group over policies".

In stark contrast, at his own press conference Neil Kinnock tried to create the impression that he had laid down the law to the Labour Group. While the council leaders had chosen to emphasise the points of agreement, Neil Kinnock again reserved his fire and fury for fellow party members, in front of his favourite audience—the Tory press.

Photo: Dave Sinclair



The message from Tories and Liberals at the Liverpool Against Militant rally. Their message to the council is the same as those who argue for capitalisation.

Labour's enemies hold second rally

THE LATEST rally of Liverpool Against Militant attracted 4,000 or 5,000 people in the glorious sunshine at Liverpool Pierhead. Without the golfing brollies, (partly due to the sensitivities of the organisers, and the fine weather) it was the same middle-class and middle-aged audience as last time. It was the same speakers with the same abuse, incomprehensible arguments and invective directed against the Mili-

tant newspaper.

One of the speakers tried to explain the non-political character of Liverpool Against Militant: "We are from all political persuasions, some of us are from the Labour Party" (murmurs around the crowd). "Some of us are Liberals" (large cheers around the crowd). "Some of us are from the Tory party" (prolonged cheers from the crowd).

The main activity of the crowd seemed to be a

frenzied chanting to a pop record, conveniently cut for the very purpose—"Militant Out". When they feel their class interests are threatened, the civilised and well-bred middle-class can scream and shout and punch their fists in the air as well as any football crowd.

I came away when they wheeled on a Hungarian refugee to spell out the horrors of Communism.

By John Pickard

Kinnock snubs black groups

LEADERS OF the black community in Liverpool are extremely angry that Neil Kinnock spent, according to the *Liverpool Daily Post*, two and a half hours, discussing with the unrepresentative 'Black Caucus' in the city. He made no attempt to contact *bona fide* black or Asian organisations in Liverpool and made no reply to a letter presented to him on their behalf (sent on 17 October).

The letter to Neil Kinnock made it clear that "The Black Caucus are not, as they claim, the elected representatives of our community. Precisely who

elected them is not clear, but it was certainly not the black community.

"It is an established fact that the majority of Liverpool's black organisations do not support their stand. Moreover the position of the community was recently confirmed at a mass meeting on the 16 September, which passed an overwhelming vote of 'no-confidence' in the Black Caucus.

"We are dismayed to learn that you have decided to discuss exclusively with the Black Caucus group under the auspices of the Merseyside Community Relations Council".

The letter is signed by the following organisations:

The Merseyside Caribbean Council; The Barbados Association; The St Lucian Association; The African Council; Merseyside Anti-Racist Campaign; The Jamaican Association; The Guyana Association; Merseyside Asian Social and Cultural Organisation; The Ghana Alliance; The Ibo Union; The Hindu Cultural Organisation; The Bangladesh Association; Merseyside Action Group; Pakistan Association; Somali Association; Sikh Centre; Merseyside Indian Association.

Liverpool homes display

A STRIKING display in Liverpool's town hall shows concrete evidence of the council's determination to deal with some of the worst housing in Western Europe.

A big map of the city is a mosaic of colour. Each splash of colour is a housing project.

There are 17 major priority areas, 36 housing association schemes, 140 council building sites and nearly 100 private housing areas. Not only is it building more council houses than all other councils put together, but has abandoned the past policy of building concrete jungles which is the nightmare of most cities.

Building homes

Now it is building homes. All new building is houses and bungalows in small developments with gardens in ordinary streets.

The tenement blocks are being converted to houses by removing the tops. The small open spaces which gather litter, rubbish and graffiti are being transformed into gardens. Lighting is being improved, walkways are disappearing, new parks are appearing.

It is the end of tower blocks. In fact 87 tenements, walk-up flats and multi-storeys are going or have gone, the best record of any British city.

There are photos of tenants in their new houses with gardens, dry living rooms and roomy kitchens they had never had before.

Their words express their joy: "good, gorgeous, great", "the kids can play", "the neighbours are great", "we feel safe". "We now know what happiness is", "we're made up".

By Bill Hopwood

Teachers' support

THE INNER London Teachers' Association (ILTA), which covers ten associations of the National Union of Teachers, last month overwhelmingly carried a motion of support for the struggle of Liverpool City Council and donated £50 to the council's fighting fund. This proves that the NUT membership is not uniformly behind its national executive over taking the council to court.

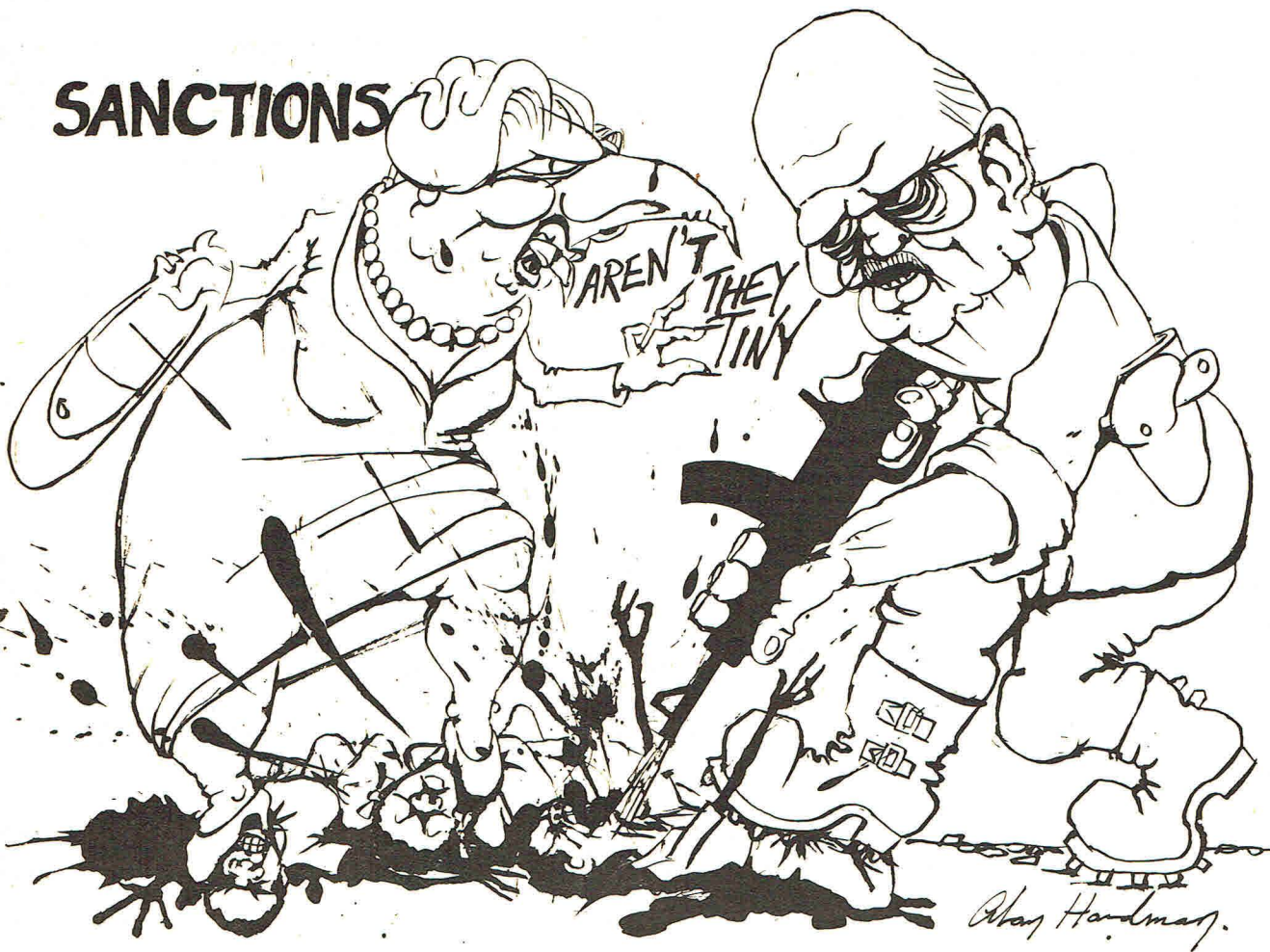
At the latest ILTA divisional council meeting, John

Dunne (Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards Committee) gave an excellent account of the events in Liverpool and was warmly applauded. The support for Liverpool City Council, despite discussions over the tactics adopted over redundancy notices, remained solid from ILTA and many of its constituent associations.

By Bob Sulakycki

(West London NUT, ILTA council member, personal capacity)

SANCTIONS



Botha defiant as more killed

SIX MORE blacks have been killed this week in South Africa. The riot police have brought in an armoury of new weapons to crush the resistance of those who risk their lives to oppose the apartheid state.

Millions of pounds worth of South Africa's arms are British, in contravention of a 'ban' on the export of military equipment.

If this is how the existing arms embargo is 'enforced' the miniscule economic measures agreed by Thatcher at the Commonwealth conference will not have the slightest effect. Indeed she boasted on TV how negligible her 'concessions' were. Not surprisingly Botha con-

temptuously dismissed the Commonwealth package and pledged to continue his policy of repression.

Sanctions

Sanctions from capitalist governments will never destroy apartheid; the British and other monopolies finance the racist system and make huge profits from the cheap labour of the black workers.

The workers are the force which will destroy apartheid and the capitalist system which sustains it. The British labour movement must step up its solidarity and support for the SA trade unions.

By Pat Craven

Victory for Labour women Marxists

MILITANT supporter Ann Bannister has been elected to the National Committee of the Labour Women's Organisation for the Merseyside and Lancashire area.

She joins Margaret Creear, also a *Militant* supporter who was re-elected for the Manchester and Cheshire area at the Labour Women's North-West conference.

Also, *Militant* supporter Margaret Manning was re-elected to the Regional Committee with the highest vote for her area. The majority of the new committee are left wingers.

Backed Liverpool

The conference passed an emergency resolution supporting Liverpool council after one of the most heated debates. This was the first time many of the women had heard a proper explanation of the issues facing Liverpool council, particularly on the question of the 90-day

redundancy notices.

The North West Conference of Labour Women was a major victory for Marxist policies in the Labour Women's Organisation.

It called for the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies and campaigns against privatisation and for workers' control. It supported the school students' strike, a national minimum wage, the reversal of all cuts, and a massive expansion of the cancer-screening programme.

Most delegates agreed that it was the best North West conference yet. There were 206 delegates and about 90 visitors—the largest yet, and more working class women than ever before. But the main improvement was that delegates were fully determined to turn the Labour Women's Organisation into an outward-looking, campaigning body.

Margaret Creear, the National Committee member

for Greater Manchester and Cheshire has already made a major start to this process. She has been to 33 trade unions, women's sections and councils in the regions.

Miners' wives

She has been involved in work with the trade unions on sexual harassment and played an important role in involving the Regional Women's Organisation in support for disputes in the area, such as the work with the miners' wives both during and since the strike.

This work included the organisation earlier in the year, of the successful demonstration in support of the miners—the North West was the only Labour women's region to call such a demonstration.

By Vivien Seal
(Manchester Labour Women's Council)



March against nuclear weapons

THOUSANDS ARE expected in London on Saturday for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's 'March for the Human Race'. There is still massive opposition to the billions squandered on nuclear weapons, and anger has grown at the Tories' plans for Trident. Many are opposed to the siting of Cruise missiles at Molesworth, and Thatcher's support for Reagan's Star Wars programme.

Peace protesters have increasingly had their demonstrations cut short by either police or the army, as seen above at

Greenham Common. Since 1981 there have been a staggering 7,891 people arrested during peace protests. The latest state action came last week when bailiffs and police were sent in against a dozen CND Cymru members occupying a building site for an underground control room in Carmarthen.

Militant supporters selling the paper at Saturday's march should meet at the *Militant* stall by the Serpentine, Hyde Park, at 10.30am.

Cleveland councillor expelled

ANDY WILSON, a Labour Party activist and Cleveland County Councillor, has been expelled from Middlesbrough Labour Party for 'bringing the Labour Party into disrepute'.

A special meeting of the Middlesbrough General Management Committee (GMC) was held on 11 October to give Andy Wilson a full hearing and hear the executive's recommendation to expel him from the Labour party. The grounds were that he had refused to use trade union printing facilities for literature published in district and county elections earlier this year and that he had brought the party into disrepute by revealing to the press private and confidential information relating to the GMC.

Andy Wilson who is on

the left, although not a *Militant* supporter, had questioned the validity of delegates to the GMC in the 25-strong GMBATU delegation (see *Militant* 753) which was the main reason for his expulsion, although he was also expelled on the pretext that he had duplicated election leaflets rather than having them printed at a trade union shop. He did this in agreement with his ward party to save the party money.

Leaflets

The duplicating of these leaflets is seemingly in breach of a 1978 agreement with the NGA. Unfortunately, no-one in the constituency, or even the region, has been able to produce a copy of this agreement for him to look at. The meeting was a farce, the right already hav-

ing decided his guilt.

Although he was given the right to speak and answer questions, once the motion was moved, the chairman allowed no debate on the motion. The vote was then carried.

Andy Wilson is the first non-*Militant* to be singled out for expulsion and shows that witch-hunts and purges will not only be used against *Militant* supporters but against any socialist who steps out of line with the right wing of the party.

Messages of protest should be sent to Eileen Ross, Secretary of Middlesbrough CLP, 6 Burnholme Avenue, Middlesbrough, Cleveland and to the National Executive Committee. Copies should be sent to Andy Wilson, 46 Parkfield Road, Middlesbrough.

Labour Clubs opposed

ONCE AGAIN the leaders of the National Organisation of Labour Students—members of the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' group—are trying to stifle debate in NOLS through bureaucratic measures.

They have set the deadline for the inauguration of new college and university Labour clubs who want to participate in the NOLS national conference to 15 November—three months before the conference actually takes place. New clubs set-up during the term will not be able to take part. Other deadlines are: 13 December—deadline for

reaffiliation and resolutions. 31 January—deadline for registration of delegates.

Resolutions should be passed at Labour Party, Labour Club and LPYS branches calling for an extension of the inauguration deadline to 13 December, and for the NOLS conference to be returned to its old period of three and a half days (as opposed to the present one and a half days) to ensure full democratic debate. Resolutions should be sent to Tom Sawyer, NEC Youth sub-committee chair, NUPE office, Civic House, 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF, with copies to Simon Kaplan, and to NOLS National Committee, c/o 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Sheffield expulsions

TWO MORE members of Sheffield Attercliffe Labour

Party have been told they are now expelled by the local right wing leadership of the party in opposition to advice from Labour Party headquarters. Already five members have been told they are expelled (see *Militant* 759). The only 'evidence' against the other two put forward by the right wing that they are 'Militant members' was that they opposed the expulsion of the original five!

Undemocratic

The seven expulsions have gone ahead even though the Labour Party's National Agent David Hughes upheld that the right-wing's actions were undemocratic.

It is imperative that protests against these expulsions in Sheffield from Labour Party branches up and down the country flood into the National Executive Committee who will hear the appeals of those expelled.

FIGHTING FUND

Deadline 31 October

This week: £3,287

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London East	1733		3250
2 London West	1209		2650
3 Wales West	1369		2950
4 Humberside	816		2100
5 Eastern	1347		3500
6 London South East	791		2100
7 Lancashire	377		1300
8 East Midlands	851		3050
9 London South West	332		1200
10 Southern	1528		5400
11 Merseyside	1511		6550
12 Scotland West	844		3750
13 Scotland East	626		3150
14 Yorkshire	1164		5800
15 South West	417		2150
16 West Midlands	837		4700
17 Manchester	476		2850
18 Northern	689		4750
19 Wales East	309		3000
Others	4979		5800
Total received	22205		70000

JUST ONE week to go to the end of this Fighting Fund quarter. Just one week for you to rush in your money.

This week we received £3,287 taking the total to £22,206. But some of the areas showed what can be achieved with an effort put in. Supporters in South East London sent in £198. Hull supporters sent in £484 which more than doubled what they had sent in the previous ten weeks and shot them into fourth place in the League.

£305 of this came from a Readers' meeting on Liverpool held in Hull. This shows the amounts of money workers will give to our paper because of our work in support of the council's fight for jobs and services. East London supporters surpassed all others with £574 collected in the week, sending them to the top of the table.

Sellers in all areas are now reporting good results from simply asking all the regular

readers and friends of our paper. Liverpool has definitely made people more prepared to donate to *Militant*. It's all down to asking! So make sure the last week is spent getting round all those workers you haven't yet asked for money. In that way we'll raise a fortune.

Don't forget to ask for a donation from the next meeting you attend. For example, this week Garston Women's section have sent a marvellous donation of £50 and Camperdown and Dudley LPYS have sent £15.

In the midst of all the activity why not take a much needed break at a *Militant* social. Has your area organised one for the weekend? What better way of relaxing and raising money at the same time than to celebrate *Militant's* 21st Anniversary?

And in the last week make an extra special drive with the old reliable—those rattling tins. Two or three public

sales with a good shake could raise £10 especially if you festoon the cans with stickers.

Make sure no opportunity for raising money is missed. Every event can and must be turned into money. We still expect to see another of *Militant's* famous record quarters. Make sure we do.

DONATIONS THIS week include:

R Smith Maidstone £5, British Aerospace £2.79, Preston Car Boot Sale £46, E Underwood Leicester CPSA £1, Readers' meeting on 'Silentnight strike' £20, Readers' Meeting at Aberystwyth University £30, B Brigham £10, Broadgreen LPYS £5, UCV rules revision conference collection £267, J Cordingley Manchester £5, D Pollard East Anglia £10, S Johnson Coventry £5, C Brookes Hull £5, F Cuthbert's sponsored run £21.66!

By Nick Wrack

Liverpool coverage boosts sales

WORKERS throughout the world are looking to the struggle of Liverpool City Council.

We have just received a letter from a new supporter in India who says: "I salute the councillors in Liverpool in their struggle against the Thatcher government. I salute the working class of South Africa in their struggle against the apartheid regime".

He goes on: "I sincerely appreciate *Militant* for your uncompromising endeavour to fulfill Marx and Lenin's goal to free the workers of all countries from exploitation".

Similarly at home, *Militant's* coverage and support for Liverpool's struggle has prompted excellent sales.

A sale lasting just 20 minutes on an estate in Bristol resulted in 13 papers sold. Over 70 were sold on a demonstration of 100 people in Manchester last Saturday.

In Hounslow supporters sold 30 papers on Saturday morning street sale and are now averaging 20 a week at their local tube station.

And in Swansea 200 extra papers were sold—over and above all the regular readers. Swansea sellers also told us "even bingo gives people a chance to express their hatred of Thatcher. In Gorseinon, whenever the number ten comes up the audience spontaneously shouts: "get her out!"

So don't forget to let us know how many you sell outside your local bingo hall this week.

By Helen Gasking

ads

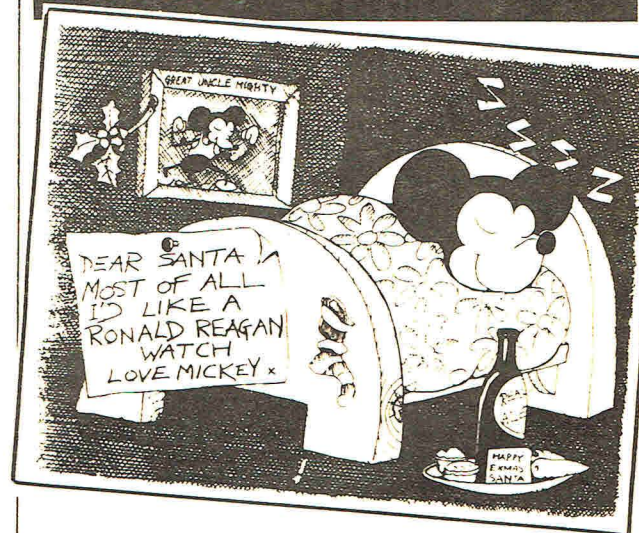
CLASSIFIED: 15p per word, minimum 10 words. SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

MILITANT 200 DRAW (NOTTINGHAM)
 1. 38 (£50) A Byrne London
 2. 41 (£25) C Thorpe B'ham
 3. 27 (£10) G Fuller Derby
 4. 196 (£5) Lush Nottm
 5. 173 (£5) H Jacks Nottm
 6. 148 (£5) M Tivey Carlton
 Drawn 17 October 1985.

RICHMOND AND BARNES CLP: public meeting. Thursday 28 November, 8pm. "Star Wars". Speakers include: Tony Benn MP, Jenny Edwards, CND, plus others. Sheen Lane Centre, Sheen Lane, Sheen, Richmond.

MILITANT carrier bags—now reduced. 10 bags for only 50p. Please enclose 25p P&P. Send order to: Fighting Fund, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9.

Order now!



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.

EPTU BROAD Left/BLOC national conference "EPTU—fight for a democratic union" Saturday 30 November, 11.30 am to 4.30 Liverpool Maryland Street annexe, near Philharmonic Hall.

Speakers. Tony Benn MP (invited) Derek Hatton, (deputy leader Liverpool Council), Pat Weathers (Liverpool city council lighting convenor), Phil Holt (National Communications Union national executive, personal capacity and BLOC secretary), Jim Greer (Edinburgh Lodge EPTU).

All EPTU members welcome. Delegates and visitors £1; cheques payable BLOC c/o 197 Hinckley Road, St Helens, Merseyside.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

£	£
Eastern	4161
East Midlands	4206
London NE	4897
London NW	5183
London SE	2764
London SW	2237
Lancashire	984
Manchester	3021
Merseyside	5717
Northern	4531
Scotland East	2415
Scotland West	2688
Southern	5584
South West	1171
Wales East	2369
Wales West	1790
West Midlands	3034
Humberside	2855
Yorkshire	3248
National	1302
Total	64156

This week: £2,463

A DAY does not go by without the Tory press telling lies, half-truths and distortions about Liverpool City Council's fight against the government.

The publication of a *Mersey Militant* in Liverpool is a great step forward in answering those attacks and explaining what is really happening. However, it is a *daily Militant* that is urgently needed, to prepare for the coming battles.

We've not got any rich backers to go to for finance, only our readers and supporters, often low paid or on the dole, who will respond with cash when the situation is explained to them.

The readers in North Humberside have proved

this. They raised a magnificent £538, giving a big boost to the Marxist Daily Building Fund.

Four supporters from West Hampshire have donated £79 and Wakefield readers have sent £150 with, they promise, more money to follow. We've had a further £213 from Nottingham, £106 from supporters in South Central London, £57 from Coventry, £204 from Southwark, £58 from South Tyne, £35 from North Tyne, and £57 from Newcastle.

Supporters in the Black Country have donated £80 while those in Bradford have managed £35 with a further £91 donated from readers.

Ask every supporter. Everyone being seen to buy a ticket for the rally can also be asked to donate to our campaign. Why make two visits when one will do?

By Dan Bintley

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.

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

STOCKPORT: Tuesday 29 October, 7.30pm at Stockport College. Speakers: Liverpool City Councillor; Frank Clayton; delegate to Labour Party conference from Denton and Reddish Labour Party and Bryan Beekingham (*Militant*).

ASHTON: Wednesday 30 October, 7.30pm at the 'Highland Laddie', Old Street, Ashton. Speakers: Liverpool City Councillor and a *Militant* speaker.

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 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. 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.

'**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.

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 5TS.

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.

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.

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.

EAST KILBRIDE: Westwood Community Centre, East Kilbride. Speakers: Bob Wylie and Sheona Sutherland (East Kilbride LPYS), Tuesday 29 October, 7.30pm.

BRENTFORD AND ISLEWORTH LPYS: Public meeting, "Fightback against racist attacks". Tuesday 29 October, 7.30pm. Isleworth public hall, South Street, Isleworth. Speaker: Nina Rahel. Speaker for Jarrett family in Tottenham, Linda Buckley.

A3 POSTERS for sale. "Stop the racist attacks". 50 for £3 + £1 P&P; 100 for £5 + £1.50 P&P. 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, or 01-515 6222.

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

Marxist Study Tapes. Listen at your leisure to leading Marxists on theoretical and historical subjects.

C60, £1: Rise of Hitler—Jeremy Birch. Post War Boom—Bob McKee.

C90, £1.25: Spanish Revolution 1931-37—Alan Woods. The Early History of Bolshevism up to 1902 (question and answer)—Alan Woods. Permanent Revolution (Historical)—John Bulaitis. Chinese Revolution 1925-7—Peter Taaffe. Chinese Revolution 1944-49—Peter Taaffe. Trotsky Commemoration Rally (20 August 1985) Ted Grant and Dave Hemson.

Also, sessions from the Marxist Weekend School, (C90-£1.25).

Dialectical Materialism—John Pickard. Historical Materialism—Tony Cross. Is Marxism Relevant Today?—Ted Grant. The Origin of the State—Roger Silverman. Is Britain a Police State—Bob Edwards. Lessons of the Miners' Strikes 1972 and 1985—Chris Herriot. Slavery—Phil Frampton. Black Nationalism—Bob Lee. South Africa: Closing Rally—Martin Legassick.

Add 10p per tape for postage. 10 for £12 post free. All cheques and PO's payable to World Socialist Books. Send to 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Political Education Material also available. Study Guides from the Marxist Weekend School: An introduction to Marxist Economics 30p. The State 30p. The Russian Revolution 40p. Popular Frontism.

Excellent introductions to four areas of study, with a guide to further reading. Add 10p/Study guide for postage. Send cheques payable to World Socialist Books to, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

The battle against heroin

JASON FITZSIMMONS was just 14 years old when he died from a heroin overdose in Liverpool this summer.

His death highlights the new epidemic of 'chasing the dragon' that is sweeping the cities. It is now cheaper—at £5 for a weekend's supply—to smoke or inject heroin than it is to get drunk on alcohol.

The Tories' propaganda goes that drug addiction is an abnormal phenomenon—like a natural disaster—that 'affects us all', and therefore no fault of the Tories. Thus the Tory minister responsible for drug abuse, David Mellor of the Home Office, glibly told the press recently that top entertainers were as vulnerable to the pushers as unemployed youth!

Such comments fly in the face of reality. The dramatic rise in drug abuse is inextricably linked to the rise in mass unemployment. In the days of near full employment in 1960 there was only one registered heroin addict—today with four million on the dole there are 100,000 heroin addicts alone, not to mention countless others addicted to hard drugs such as cocaine or sulphate. In areas of Croyth, where Jason came from, youth unemployment is as high as 97 per cent.

Dead-end life

The Tories and the capitalist system they protect has created the dead-end life of the inner city slums in which drug abuse breeds—they are the direct consequences of the Tories' profit-first, monetarist policies.

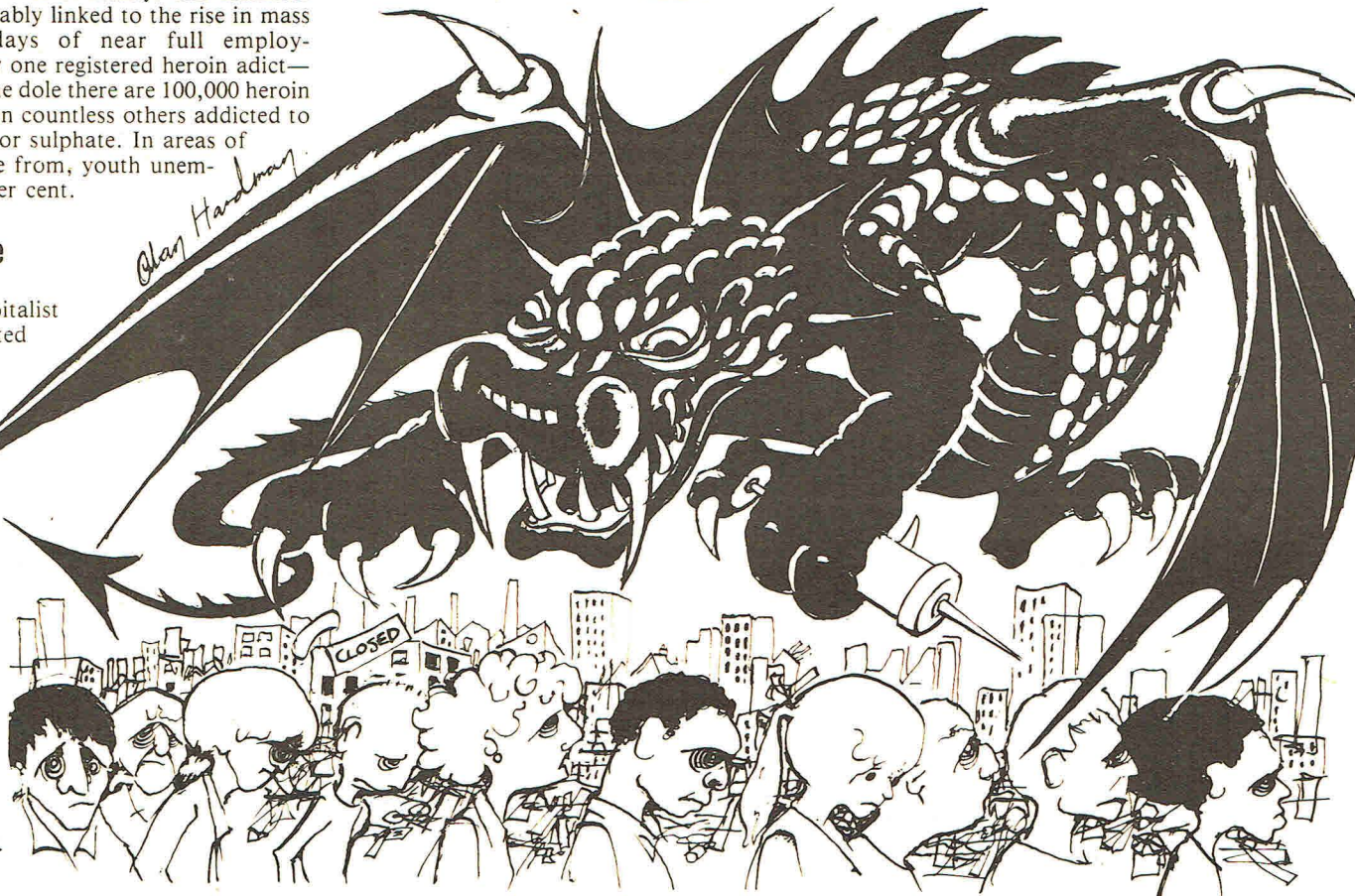
A recent survey by the Royal Edinburgh Hospital studied over 1,000 school leavers in a six year period since 1979. They found that 58 per cent of those who were unemployed used illegal drugs, compared to 38 per cent of those at work or college.

The current advertising campaign—like those on television and in the music press or Radio One's 'week of action'—will help warn against the dangers of heroin. More effective will be the local campaigns involving local authorities, community groups and the labour movement in con-

fronting the pushers and the problems directly.

But drug abuse can only be stamped out for good when the conditions that lead to addiction are tackled. That will need a Labour

Chase the Dragon out



government that implements socialist policies, not only regenerating the health service and providing adequate centralised counter measures against drugs, but also creating jobs, decent living

conditions and renovating the decaying inner cities to wipe out the despair and helplessness on which the dragon feeds.

Feature by
Ann Beales
and **Michael Morris**
(Liverpool,
West Derby LPYS)

A pushers' paradise

BRITAIN IS rapidly becoming a pushers' paradise. Tory cutbacks in the customs service are leaving docks and airports wide open for organised crime to smuggle in heroin while the mass of despairing unemployed gives the pushers a ready market.

There was much tub thumping at Tory party conference over how they were now to fight drug addiction. But their 'radical' new measures amount to little more than a drop in the ocean.

Home Office minister David Mellor declared the government were taking on 150 extra customs officers and seven more for overseas service. But this will only plug just one of the many gaping holes left in the customs service through the Tory cutbacks.

Since 1979, the customs services have been cut down by 10 per cent, or 1,200 customs officers. A customs officer, speaking at a Liverpool Labour Party meeting recently, explained that as little as 2 per cent of the drugs entering Britain were intercepted. He said that because of cuts in manpower, places like Ellesmere

Port were left un-patrolled at night.

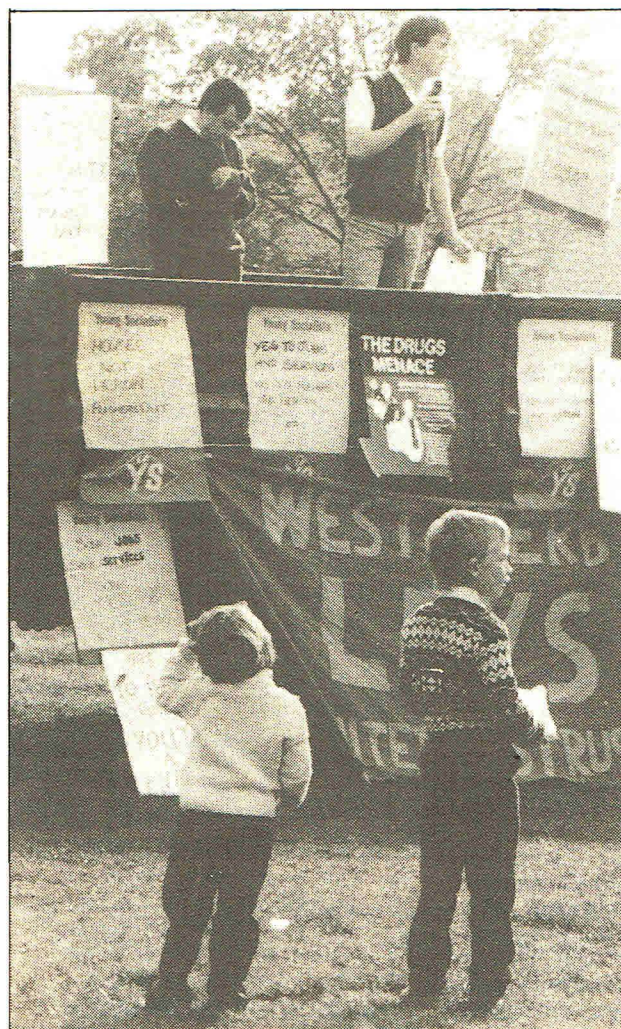
Another proposal announced at Tory party conference, was that money will be confiscated off traffickers who are convicted. It is to be seen whether the Tories will go after the pushers with the same determination and venom they did in sequestrating the funds of the trade unions.

Tory robbers

But if funds are recovered it is unlikely the money will be placed at the disposal of inner city communities. The Tories are in fact robbing money off these local authorities through their local government legislation.

The Tories hypocritically applauded Merseyside County Council for hiring six drug counsellors, at a cost of £54,000, yet the Tories have just taken £108,000 off Merseyside as a penalty for overspending.

Meanwhile, the Tory cutbacks mean that the plans of other authorities, like Liverpool City Council, are hampered as the Tories won't even discuss giving back some of the money taken off the city through the cuts in the rate support grant.



Young Socialists taking part in the Youth Against Drugs campaign. Photo: Militant

SUPPORT IS coming in to help raise funds for Youth Against Drugs. Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs have both donated autographed footballs to the campaign, which are hoped to be raffled outside home matches. Richard Branson of Virgin Records gave two LPs to be raffled, while the local LPYS branch held a social and then gave a donation to YAD.

Action demand backed

A RESOLUTION calling for action against drug addiction was carried overwhelmingly at Labour Party conference.

The motion moved by Liverpool West Derby Labour Party, demanded funding of community based counsellors, treatment and rehabilitation centres, and the reversal of the Tories cuts in the health and customs services.

It also called for local authorities to combine with community organisations and the labour movement to identify problem areas and discuss ways in driving the pushers out. It called for the next Labour government to take urgent action against drug abuse.

It was ironic that among those applauding the mover of the resolution was Labour leader Neil Kinnock. The mover was Roy Gladden, one of the 49 Liverpool City Councillors attacked earlier by Kinnock for creating "grotesque chaos" in the City. This "grotesque chaos" includes creating and saving 2,000 jobs, 5,000 new housing starts and improved sports facilities. Such policies go hand in hand with drug abuse, through bettering the environment and clearing out the slums in which despair and drug abuse breed.

Youth Against Drugs

YOUTH AGAINST Drugs was set up on Merseyside after the death of Jason Fitzsimmons. It aimed to tackle the drug problem and fight for resources to help people coming off drugs.

YAD was immediately approached by West Derby Labour Party Young Socialists branch to offer assistance where needed. At YAD's first meeting a petition was produced supporting Liverpool City Council in its fight against drugs and calling on the government to give the city more resources. The petition has been enormously successful.

The first activity was a lobby of Lower Lane Police Station. 100 people joined the lobby that heard speakers from YAD and the LPYS. A statement was handed to the police calling on them to take as much action against the pushers as they did recently when they raided the local Labour Club to stop after hours drinking (some criminals!)

Police

The anger against the police became clear during discussion at the lobby. Many said that they had given names of pushers to the police but no real action had been taken against them.

The police had earlier agreed that a police spokesman would answer questions, but they reneged on their promise. Local police said their superiors had advised them not to.

It was felt further action was needed, so a demonstration was called for on 12 October.

The build up to the march was successful with leaflets and letters going out asking for support. The night before the demo, in an illustration of support for the campaign amongst local youth, Young Socialists drinking in the Lobster pub in Croyth where bands perform were given permission to address the audience. There was widespread applause—one known pusher standing in the middle of the cheering crowd felt obliged to join in with the clapping!

The march was successful with over 100 joining in. Speakers addressing the rally from a back of lorry loaned to YAD by the city council, included YAD and LPYS speakers, local MPs Terry Fields and Bob Wareing, and city councillor Tony Rimmer.

The campaign has got off to a successful start. However, Youth Against Drugs is pledged to be non-political and non-religious. But the LPYS point of view is that for the campaign to go forward, the question of who is the best force to kick out the pushers and provide jobs and better homes to destroy the conditions in which drug addiction breeds, must be discussed in order to develop a clear plan of action for the campaign ahead.

Show your strength



IN LESS than a fortnight *Militant* will hold its biggest-ever rally. The venue for our 21st anniversary rally is the Royal Albert Hall with a capacity more than twice that of previous years. Last year 3,000 supporters filled the Wembley Conference Centre. A packed Albert Hall will be the best answer to the premature obituaries written by our enemies.

a decent future. Many of these young fighters joined the LPYS and support our ideas.

Our progress has provoked an unprecedented barrage of abuse from the Tory media. Not a day passes without a new chapter in the fairy story of our 'decline'. But the bosses don't believe this fiction.

Thatcher, Tebbit and Baker all singled out *Militant* for attack in their main speeches at Tory party conference. Thatcher, noted for her concern for Labour's electoral chances, derided Kinnoch for not taking 'effective action' against us.

The reason for this hostility from the bosses is clear. Since *Militant's* launch in 1964 its supporters have been among the hardest fighters in working class struggles. But as well as day-to-day

labour move *Militant* support a political based not on or 'pragmat' Marxism, a of society.

The Tories big business their strategy on the inter class—the *Militant* programme on of our class, class.

Sadly then the labour who put their interests before the working rightward lution of forn the Labour trade unions ed the cover t witch-hunts i wing C Labour Part still many Parliament Party who departure of who formed Democratic

They han 'old days' w ed supreme i

Despite all the attacks on our ideas *Militant* continues to grow in circulation, support and influence. In Liverpool *Militant* supporters play a key role in the city's battle to defend jobs, homes and services. Miners in every coalfield now support and sell *Militant*, following the bitter experience of their year-long strike.

Under the leadership of Marxists, the Labour Party Young Socialists are in the front line of youth struggles. 250,000 school students struck and protested against T/S slave labour and for

Rally with *Militant*

Veteran US class fighter

THE RALLY will be addressed by veteran American Trotskyist Harry DeBoer. With over 53 years in the socialist movement in the United States, DeBoer brings a wealth of experience and history to the workers of today. A pioneer of today's 'flying pickets', shot in the leg in the Minneapolis General Strike of 1934, he met Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1940 and was imprisoned for his opposition to the Second World War. At the age of 80, DeBoer is active today explaining the need for a Party of Labour in the USA.

Harry DeBoer was born in Crookston, Minnesota on 17 May, 1905, the year of the first Russian Revolution. His father was a socialist who had emigrated from the Netherlands in 1890. In his youth DeBoer listened to friends of his fathers who were 'Wobblies', (members of the Industrial Workers of the World) discussing the need for strong trade union and socialism.

He took this early socialist education with him into the coal yards of Minneapolis where he worked from 1932, a period following the Great Depression when the living standards of workers were almost intolerable. He became involved in a drive to unionise the workers in the yards and through this he joined the Communist League of America.

Strikes

This had been formed in 1928 by members expelled from the Communist Party of the United States for following the ideas of Leon Trotsky, who had been exiled to Alma Ata in Central Asia by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The CLA led a series of strikes in Minneapolis in 1934 which helped to change the face of American trade unionism. Fighting against the narrow craft prejudices of the union officials, they organised thousands of workers into a general union setting the basis for the explosion in trade union

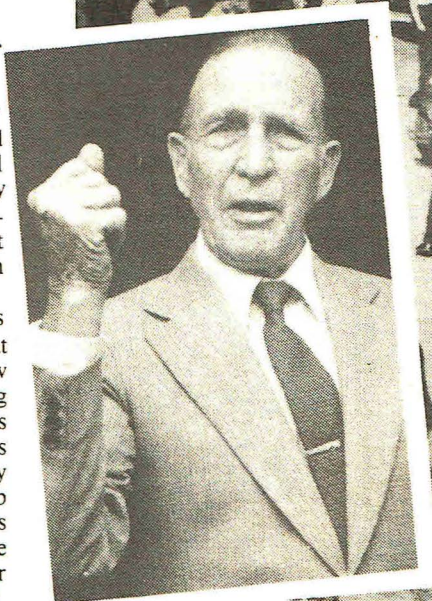
membership in the newly formed Confederation of Industrial organisations. DeBoer played a key role in the strikes as a picket captain and later in the recruitment drive which unionised 11 states in the Midwest.

It was while DeBoer acted as picket captain in the first strike that the workers developed the new technique known as 'cruising pickets', later to be made famous by the car workers. The pickets achieved great speed and mobility by using their cars to keep the scab trucks off the streets. These pickets certainly caused a sensation at the time. "A guy named Harry DeBoer is leading them," one worker said, "and they sure are hell on wheels."

There were two subsequent strikes that same year, culminating in a general strike which brought union recognition and made Minneapolis a union town. But it was not without a hard fight. During the third strike police opened fire on the unarmed strikers, killing two and seriously injuring over 60. This became known as Bloody Friday. DeBoer was shot in the leg and was laid up for some time.

After the strike, DeBoer was elected to the union's executive board and played a key role in the 'over the road' recruitment drive which established the authority of the Teamsters throughout the mid west.

By Nick Wrack



Police attack pickets during the 1934 Minneapolis strikes. Inset—Harry DeBoer.

In 1940 DeBoer was chosen by the American Socialist Workers' Party (the name use by the Trotskyists) to go to Mexico to become a bodyguard for Trotsky who had been allowed to live there.

However, it was thought that his union position was too important to give up so that was not to be. Instead he spent two weeks with Trotsky at his residence in Coyoacan discussing American and international questions. One of the issues which Trotsky stressed most was the need for the Marxists to agitate for an American Party of Labour.

Through out the latter part of the thirties, the Marxists used their

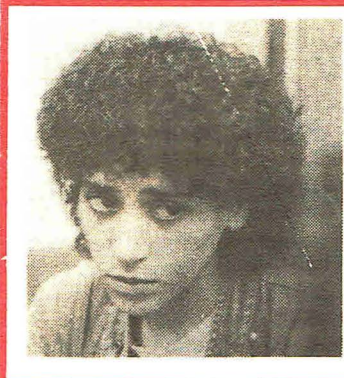
position as leaders of the Teamsters in Minnesota to raise the idea of a Labour Party and had also fought against the forthcoming world war, explaining the position that socialists should take.

For their opposition to Roosevelt's war plans, the leaders of the SWP and of the Minneapolis Teamsters were indicted under the new Smith Act for 'conspiring to overthrow the United States Government, by violence'.

The defence to this charge is in Cannon's book, *Socialism on Trial*. DeBoer, one of the defendants, was found guilty and was sentenced to serve one year and a

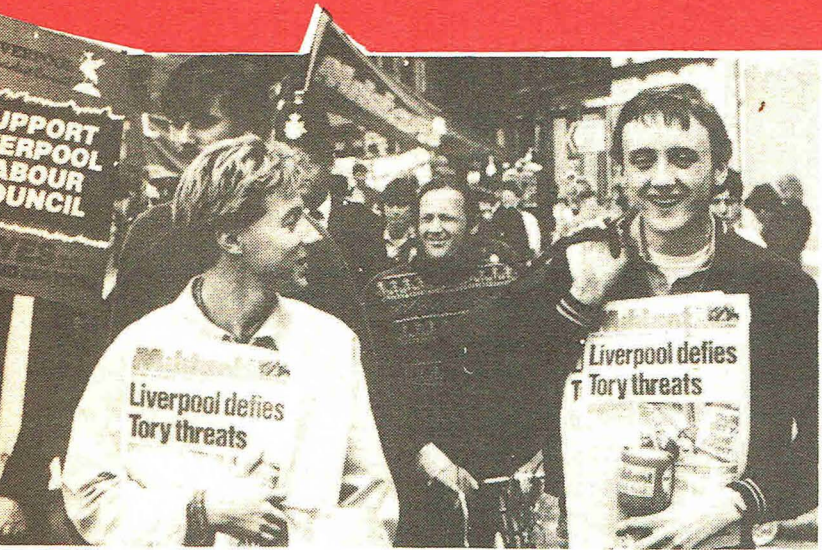
day in prison. This he did in 1944 after all the appeals had been exhausted.

Today, DeBoer remains as true to the ideas of Marxism as he was then, consistently raising the demand which he sees as the most important for the American workers—the need for a Party of Labour based on the trade unions and committed to a socialist programme. DeBoer is the link between the militancy of American workers of the 1930s and what we will see more and more in the next few years as they continue the struggle for a socialist United States Of America.



"Militant supporters are in the thick of Liverpool's fight. The rally will be a chance to hear about real socialism for a change"—
— Elaine Etim, Liverpool 8






A scene from last years' packed *Militant* rally at the Wembley Conference Centre.

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"Militant backed us during our strike, and have a strategy to save the pits now. I'll be at the rally, no fear."—Andy Fleming, Houghton Main miner



power structures. Kin-
nock's attack on *Militant*
at Labour Party confer-
ence shows that he is
swinging behind this 'old
guard', who feel more
confident in the after-
math of the miners' strike
and the confusion its en-
ding brought to sections
of the left.

But *Militant* supporters
are fighting these
organisational attacks all
the way. The right have
been forced to retreat in
a number of areas. Many
left wingers are beginning
to realise that an attack
on *Militant* is not just a
publicity stunt to gain
favour with the Tory

press, but the beginning
of an attack on all those
in the party who see
socialism as not just as a
nice idea for some time in
the future, but as a prac-
tical solution to our prob-
lems now.

Those on the left now
turning a blind eye to at-
tacks on *Militant* will be
next in line if the right
wing are not stopped.
That is why a maximum
turnout at the rally is so
important. It is a chance
for the voice of genuine
socialism in the labour
movement to be heard.
Make your voice heard—
be there!

Kent miners' leader to speak

JACK COLLINS, leader of the
Kent NUM, will be among the
top speakers at the Albert Hall
rally. His main message will be
the need for unity in the move-
ment. He told *Militant*: "The
NUM during our struggle
warned that if the miners did
not succeed, the Tories would
go on to attack other sections
of the working class. These
people are out to destroy the
trade union and political
movements of the working
class.

"Never before in the history
of the British ruling class has

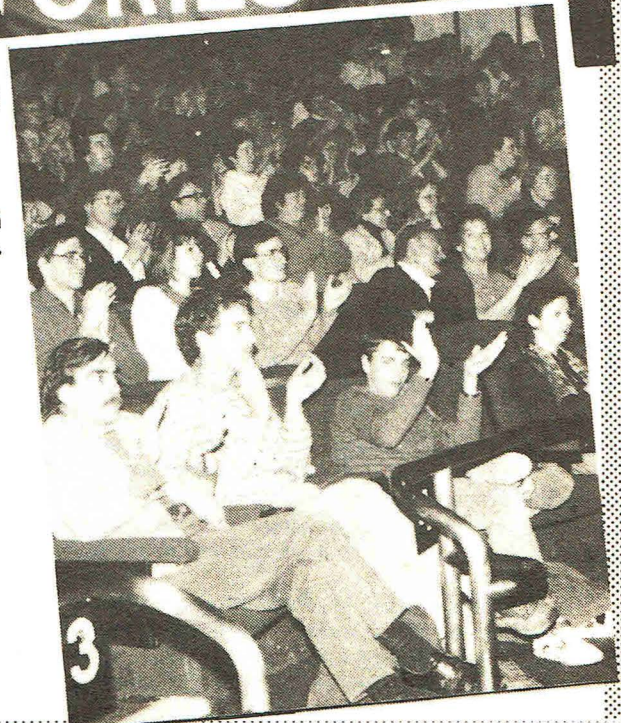
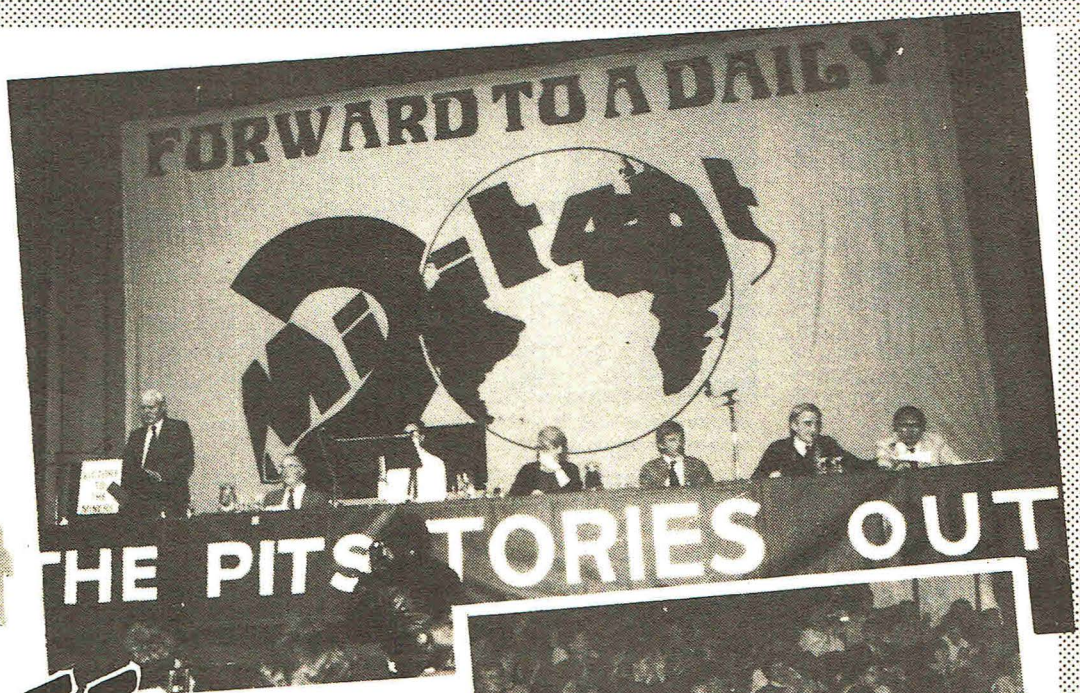
there been such an urgent need
for complete unity right across
the board, if we are to defeat
the schemes of the ruling class.
This will not be achieved by
projecting a particular in-
dividual forward, but by pro-
jecting the interests of the
working class."

The Kent NUM were one of
the most solid areas during the
year-long strike. Now the Coal
Board are exacting their
revenge. Having threatened
Snowdown and Tilmanstone
collieries with closure they have
now turned on the coalfield's

third pit, Betteshanger. Jack
Collins said: "At branch
meetings of all three pits the
board's plans to close Bet-
teshanger were rejected
unanimously. The board talk
about 'economic' pits, yet they
are talking about writing off
hundreds of thousands of
pounds' worth of equipment in-
stalled at the four faces at Bet-
teshanger, as well as wasting the
high quality coal still unex-
ploited in the Kent coalfield.
Such a waste of money is not
the fault of the men".

★ Sunday 3 November • 11am
★ Royal Albert Hall, -6pm

21 *Militant* **Third national**



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
Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Rally

★ 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 Ral-
ly) Crèche—places must be booked in
advance with children's names and ages.

Belgium, Italy, Greece

Belgium's class war coalition

AFTER THE return to power of a Christian Democrat/Liberal government on 13 October, Belgium prepared for a new period of explosive confrontation between the classes.

The leaders of the employers' organisations called for massive cuts in state expenditure. The Socialist-led ADVV trade union started an alliance with the Christian Democratic-led union to fight off the employers' offensive.

This election reflected the deep crisis facing Belgian capitalism. In the post-war boom, through heavy investments and involvement on the world market, the small economy was able to develop.

Now the growth in world trade has slowed down, the economy—based 60 per cent on world trade—has been ravaged. Belgium's national debt has risen dramatically to 120 per cent of the annual Gross National Product.

The prospect of a new world recession scares the ruling class. They have no other choice but to try and off-load the crisis onto the backs of the working class. Unemployment now stands at 13 per cent, but according to the latest OECD report, it will rise to 17 per cent even

By a correspondent
in Belgium

if world trade grows by 5 per cent every year until 1988.

The working class have shown they are ready to resist. In 1983, a government offensive was blocked by a general strike. The public sector came out; and the dispute was spreading into private industry and even drew in sections of the police. The government was left suspended in mid-air.

Timidity

Only the timidity of the union leaders saved the government from total collapse. In return a grateful government made a few minor concessions to the unions. They know that if they try to take back these concessions and more, they will be resisted. For example when, just four days before the latest elections, they threatened to cut the income of night-shift workers on the railways, railmen in Brussels



Demonstration in Liege during the 1983 public sector general strike. The militancy in the French speaking areas was not matched by the Parti Socialist's right wing programme.

walked out immediately. They were followed by rail workers from the other cities. The government had to back down—till after the elections.

For the first time ever, the Socialist trade union in the Dutch-speaking Flemish areas called for its members to vote Socialist. There was

a more than 5 per cent increase in the Socialist vote in the industrial cities of Ghent and Antwerp: this is a warning to big business.

The Socialist parties did not make such big gains as they had hoped, but they recorded one of their best results for 25 years. The right-wing programme of the

Parti Socialiste (the main workers' party in the French-speaking 'Walloon' areas), could not capture the growing radicalisation of the workers; they only gained one seat.

The more radical Flemish Socialist Party gained six seats calling for a 36 hour week, for sending back

United States missiles and for reflation. The Socialist Party leaders had gloomy faces. They had expected to eliminate the right-wing parties' seven-seat majority in Parliament. Instead the government majority increased, as they made gains from other small parties with especially the Nationalist parties' votes collapsing.

But the SP leaders could hardly expect more given that their main aim, even if they became the largest party, was to form a coalition government with the main party in the right-wing government (as they have done before).

Their programme never posed any clear way out of the impending crisis. And even the reforms promised, while attractive, would face likely sabotage in a prospective coalition with a party which has waged successive attacks on the workers, the unemployed and the youth.

The Socialist parties and trade unions must unite and campaign on a bold socialist programme, to lead the fight against the employers' offensive and raise the prospect of a serious struggle for a socialist government that will carry through its programme.

Collapse of a 'strong man'?

THE OFFICIAL position is that Bettino Craxi's coalition in Italy was a casualty of the Palestine Liberation Front raid of the Achille Lauro and the US air hijack.

The small Republican Party pulled out of the coalition, ostensibly because Craxi, the Socialist Party prime minister had let PLF leader Abin Abbas go free after the hijack.

But Craxi was as much a victim of internal problems. The ruling class of Europe were astounded by the collapse. On 11 October the *Financial Times* called Craxi's government "one of the strongest since the war" and urged it to use its position of strength to bash the working class a lot harder.

In another four weeks Craxi would have been prime minister longer than any other since the war—two years and three months. Such is the instability of Italian governments that 44 of them have bitten the dust in the last 40 years. All of them have been dominated by the Tory Christian Democrats, but in recent years they have worn a variety of masks. Craxi's was "socialist".



Bettino Craxi—such is the Italian bosses' reliance on Craxi they are now asking him to cobble together another coalition government.

Craxi survived because there was a short world boom—and because the ruling class had no alternative. Italy's bosses need to cut workers' living standards but need a scapegoat. When the crisis gets really bad sections of the ruling class will consider playing their trump card bringing leaders of the main workers' party, the Communists, into coalition.

While the boom lasted the government could have some

success; a 2.5 per cent annual growth rate over the last two years; a big boom in the Milan stock exchange (which tumbled when Craxi went); inflation down to 8.3 per cent, like most economies after the recession.

The unions lost a referendum on reducing the *scala mobile*, the wage indexing scale, due to the hesitant tactics of the CP unions (see *Militant* 26 July). But the ruling class still want to hand the working class and unemployed the bill for their growing crisis.

The public sector deficit is equal to 25 per cent of the gross national product, and the national debt is equal to the annual gross domestic product.

The bosses want a "reformed" health and welfare system to cut public spending. The first installment of budget proposals calls for reduced welfare payments, no child benefits for the first child, the end of concessionary prices for elec-

tricity, phones, train fares etc, and higher health service charges. The government faced difficulties getting these accepted.

The unions held a two hour protest on 9 October against this package; the strike got its main response in the public sector. But many workers realise that if they are not to become permanent victims of capitalist crisis, changes are needed in their organisations.

In particular rank and file Communists are debating whether the PCI is a genuine Marxist party or a social democratic party. The PCI paper *Unita* now carries stock market prices, but workers look to the party to defend their class interests.

Political developments among workers, unemployed and youth will be the main question bothering whatever coalition the Italian bosses stitch together.

By Roger Shives

Marxist campaign gains votes



IN OSTEND Yves Miroir (above) a Socialist Party candidate, stood on a Marxist programme.

Yves explained that Belgian capitalism offered nothing for the working class. He campaigned to become a workers' MP on a workers' wage, fighting for a 32-hour week, a £110 minimum wage, the uniting of the trade unions and socialist parties across the national divide and for the take over of the commanding heights of the economy.

He was presented as 11th choice in the Socialist Party's list of 11 candidates. But he came second in Ostend and was the third highest Socialist Party candidate in the region. His vote increased 6 per cent on his previous performance.

Yves' campaign generated

enormous enthusiasm. He introduced a door to door canvass to Belgian elections, in total contrast to the Socialist Party leaders' campaign which relied on slick advertising companies.

An illegal radio station, very popular and run by workers, took up his campaign. Once the result was announced workers in the packed Ostend Party headquarters sang the Internationale, socialist songs, a few imported choruses of 'here we go' and even chants of 'Liverpool, Liverpool!' A far contrast from the resigned faces of the right-wing leadership of the Socialist Party.

From a correspondent
in Belgium

Greek unions protest

THE GREEK PASOK government, re-elected earlier this year with enormous expectations of change faces massive protests against new stringency measures. These include 15 per cent devaluation, extra taxes, a two year wage freeze and lower prices for farmers.

PASOK leader Andreas Papandreu has dismissed eight trade union leaders from the party for backing a call for a 24-hour general strike against the proposals. A fuller report from Greece in a future issue.

Irish public service workers strike

ON 15 October, 170,000 public service workers in Southern Ireland struck for the day in protest at government pay policy.

This was the first all out strike of public servants in the history of the state so unpopular has the coalition government here become. The government is ruled by the Tory Fine Gael party, their capitalist ideas control the coalition.

But they try to fog the issues through the unprincipled involvement of the Labour Party, whose leaders ignore the opposition of significant sections of the Party itself and of the trade union movement.

The government intend to make the public services foot the bill for Ireland's staggering national debt. The immediate issue of the strike was the government's refusal to pay an award granted by the public service pay arbitrator whose findings are supposed to be binding on both sides.

The coalition also refused to re-appoint the arbitrator and announced their intention to impose a 12 month pay freeze in the public services.

The one day strike was 100 per cent solid, groups of workers could be seen picketing at every government office and local authority service. Even the Prime Minister was left

By Angie O'Laoighaire
(Administrative Council,
Irish Labour Party,
personal capacity)

without staff to answer his phone and had to leave for an early night because there was no work to do.

Public sector and other workers are made even more angry by the government's failure to do anything about the unequal tax burden on ordinary working class families. Southern Ireland is bottom of Europe's wage league for take home pay as a percentage of gross income. On average a single person expects to take home only 48 per cent of his or her wages compared to 62 per cent in Britain. The rich, as everywhere, regard paying tax as a mug's game.

This country already has about the lowest paid workers in Europe: 35 per cent of the population are dependent on the state for all or part of their income. A quarter live on or below the poverty line.

Public service workers need a 25 per cent increase this year just to halt the pay erosion of the last six years. Tuesday's strike showed the mood for a major struggle, but unfortunately the leaders of the Irish Congress of



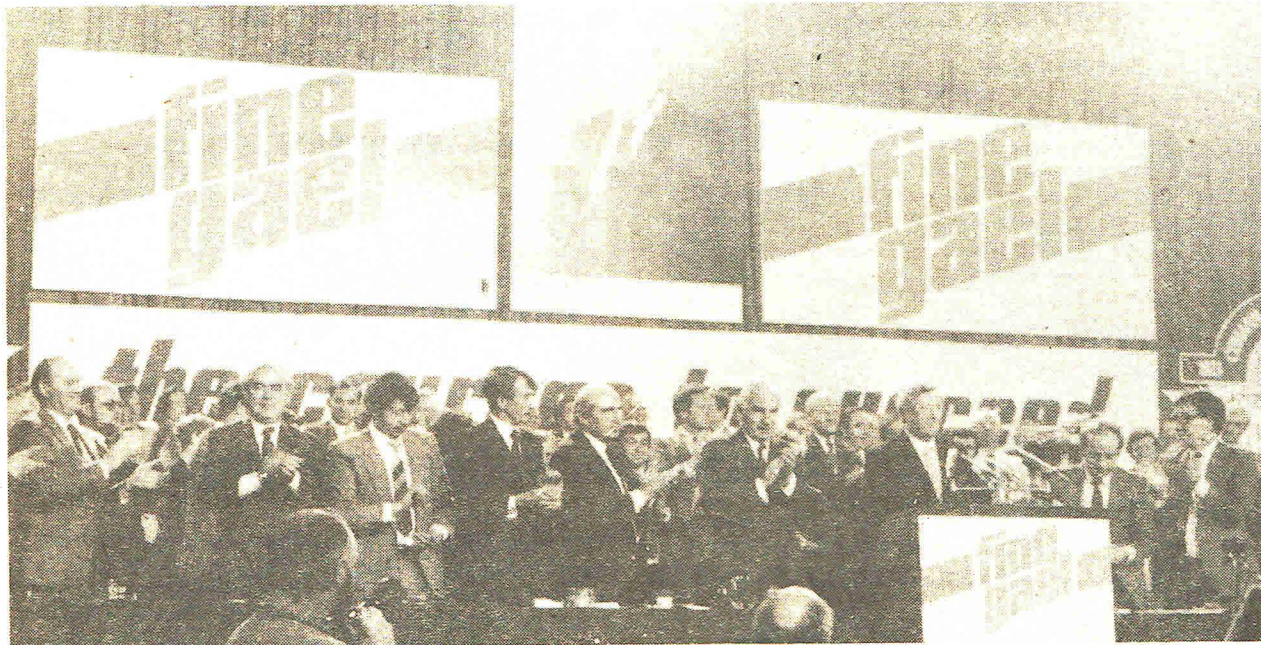
Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

Irish trade unionists march on a May Day rally in 1982.

Trade Unions have limited their campaign to that one issue of the arbitrator and his award. They have refused to involve all public sector workers such as post office and transport workers whose pay will be frozen.

Workers are fighting with one hand tied behind their

back, made worse by the confusion caused by Labour Party ministers' treacherous role in this right wing government. The union leaders have it within their power to stop the Labour Party acting as a left disguise for this Tory government. All it needs is the will.



Fine Gael at conference—their Tory capitalist policies dominate the coalition government.

Solidarity harassed after boycott call

WARSAW HAS a public opinion research centre, run by a Colonel, Stanislaw Kwiatowski. His 'researches' convince him that about a third of the Polish people are not interested in politics and only one in six are politically active.

"If the public do not wish to participate actively in political life there is no way that socialism can be achieved" he complained. Another official was more honest, saying "Politically active people are troublesome".

Poland's rulers, after all, are not concerned with achieving socialism but with maintaining the rule of Stalinist bureaucrats and military men. It isn't just the opinion polls that are run by the Army; they and the police break-up meetings, harass *Solidarity* activists and take political prisoners.

The Polish working class could certainly never be accused of apathy in 1980-81 when the independent union *Solidarity* grew from nothing to ten million in a few

months. Kwiatowski was probably trying to cover his backside against a possible low turnout in the Polish elections on 13 October.

Low turn-out

The government claimed an 80 per cent turnout for the first election since martial law. *Solidarity* itself claims 60 per cent, which was more accurate.

Solidarity activists accus-

ed the regime of arrests and beatings after their call for a boycott. The elections were very low key, all candidates were vetted by the Polish United Workers Party and the television broadcasts concentrated on personalities. No Hungarian style "liberalisation" here.

The main enticement the government could offer for voting was to say that a high turnout would show 'normalisation' and could lead to political prisoners being released.

Monopoly gamblers sweep the board

A NEW monopoly game is sweeping the world's major stock exchanges—played for very high stakes and even higher profits.

Normal takeover bids in Britain have been breaking records—in 1984 there were 259 mergers or takeovers of companies worth over £15 million, nearly twice the number ten years ago—but these are corner-shop deals compared to so-called corporate raids.

Ivan Fallon of the *Sunday Times*, says the rewards are huge... "probably more than has ever been achieved in the history of business. The raiders are just not making hundreds of millions of dollars. They are making billions".

Corporate raids are takeover bids of major corporations, often worth billions, by companies only a fraction of their size using huge bank borrowings. The 'raider' simply picks a company that appears on the stock exchange to have its assets undervalued yet easily saleable, or companies that are rich in cash.

They find a bank that, say, has been burnt by its borrowing to Third World countries and has cash to spare. The raiders, often companies with only say \$100 million in assets, then borrow up to \$2 billion or \$3 billion which is repaid at a high rate of interest from the assets of the company when the takeover is complete.

Take the aptly named Boone Pickens, a small-time oil man from Texas. He brought about the restructuring of the world's largest oil industry by raiding Gulf Oil, the fifth largest US company. He didn't succeed in taking it over, but that was not the point. When another company offered \$13 billion for it—the biggest takeover of all time—Pickens and his partners walked away with a profit of \$760 million.

Sir James Goldsmith has made himself very rich by

raiding such giants as Colgate Palmolive and taking over some of the largest forestry firms in the US. He is blunt about his motives: "Takeovers are for the public good. But that's not why I do it. I do it to make money".

Rupert Murdoch is buying up US TV stations, and in Britain the Australian brewing group Elders, of Fosters' lager fame, are putting together a bid for the largest food group in the UK, Allied Lyons. One New Yorker has made himself hundreds of millions by simply buying in to other people's raids.

But the spending spree is stoking up huge problems, not only for the firms concerned, but also the entire financial system because of the scale of the debts involved. Too many highly dubious deals are being financed, and too many people with no business experience, but an ability to convince the gullible banker, are ending up running some of the biggest firms on the planet. A big financial crash could be the result.

The takeover rush reflects the world crisis of capitalism. Uncertain of big enough profits by producing and selling new goods in a world recession, the bosses are turning in on each other, plundering each other's coffers. Profits come from speculative gambles, not new wealth creation.

The stock exchange, far from being a centre of innovation, is now just a glorified gambling den. Fortunes are won and lost on the roulette wheels with the speculation paid for by the banking institutions with their gigantic reserves of cash.

If we don't take over major industry and the banking and finance institutions under workers control and management, only the parasites will benefit from the world's rich resources.

By Pat Smyth
(Dublin Trades Council)

Killings mount in South Africa

VIOLENCE IS the only thing keeping Botha's apartheid regime in power.

Violence in the townships. This came home to people throughout the world last week when TV hanged on 18 October for the alleged murder of a policeman.

Violence against near neighbours—with new South African raids against Angola to try to bolster their puppet troops of *Unita*.

Violence in the townships. This came home to people throughout the world last week when TV cameramen filmed a cruel police ambush of young opponents of the regime in the coloured (mixed race) township of Athlone near Cape Town.

A South African

Railways' lorry was driven past a barricade. Nobody attacked the lorry first time but when it provocatively repeated its operation a few times, local people started to throw stones. As soon as the glass in the truck's windscreen was smashed, police with shotguns emerged from wooden and cardboard boxes in the lorry and opened fire. It was a modern version of the Trojan horse.

Three people were killed; their ages were 20, 16 and 12. Many more were injured, including even younger children.

● Anti-Apartheid are holding a rally in London on Saturday 2 November, Hyde Park 12-1pm. Tower Hill or Kennington Park 12.30-1.30pm Rally Trafalgar Square 3PM.

The poverty behind the riots

Dear Comrades,

I enclose a copy of a wage slip. This person works a 40-hour week and has a gross pay of £55. He works shifts in a bakery where there are mainly immigrant workers. He is married with a child to support.

But so what? His story can be repeated up and down the country. Just go into a Job Centre and see the wages on offer.

It seems to me that most of the 'leaders' of the trade unions and Labour Party believe the arguments their 'friends' in the Tory party tell them—that people are pricing themselves out of a job.

They have no reason to doubt these arguments—low wages don't affect them, they're all on £20,000+ per year. On money like that you can't possibly understand what it is like to earn £55 a week.

I feel violent when I walk around Handsworth and see the poverty and the despair on people's faces. I feel hatred when I see our so-called 'leaders' on TV who seem incapable of giving any alternative or lead to the despair, which turns into rioting. Instead of utilising all that energy the Labour leaders let it escape and call poor people 'criminals'.

I think the Labour leaders are

NAME	WORKS/DEPT. No.	W/E	Code No.
GROSS WAGES TO DATE	TAX DEDUCTED TO DATE	TAX WEEK NO.	WAGES/DOLLAR USED
DEDUCTIONS		BASIC	
Supplementary		HRSD 1	
Personal Insurance		HRSD 2	
Standard Rate at Reduced Rate		BONUS HOLIDAY XMAS	
		SICK PAY	
		OTHER PAYMENT	
INCOME TAX OTHER DEDUCTIONS		GROSS	
		DEDUCTIONS	
		INCOME TAX REFUND	
		NET	

scared. They don't want to give an alternative; after all it would upset their Tory friends.

Yours fraternally
Jasmin Barry
Handsworth

Living on the bread-line

Dear Comrades,

I live in Gillingham, Kent. Being unemployed in this area is a constant battle against indifference, hostility and downright abuse. I have a neighbour who calls me a "social security scrounger" and a few other names I can't mention here (he reads *The Sun* too much).

I am forced to live on a pittance of £28.05 per week. At times I can't even afford to take a bus into town in order to sign on. My unemployment giro cheque frequently turns up late.

This uncaring and vindictive government is now trying to push a Green Paper through parliament which will bring about so-called "reforms" in the welfare system. It is designed to cut benefits even further. I am left speechless as to the degree of hardship we (the unemployed) are forced to suffer.

But, dear old Maggie Thatcher said that people who complain about the unemployment situation are "moaning minnies" and that the majority of people are employed. That statement as far as I can see completely writes off four million people which includes one million school leavers.

If that doesn't show what the Tories really are I don't know what does.

Yours fraternally
Lloyd Marden
Gillingham Labour Party

Letters

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

Life on 'soft' drugs

Dear Comrades,

For many women in today's society there are the pressures of everyday life; bringing up the family on very little money, unemployment, bad housing etc.

Many women turn to 'soft' drugs to escape from their problems.

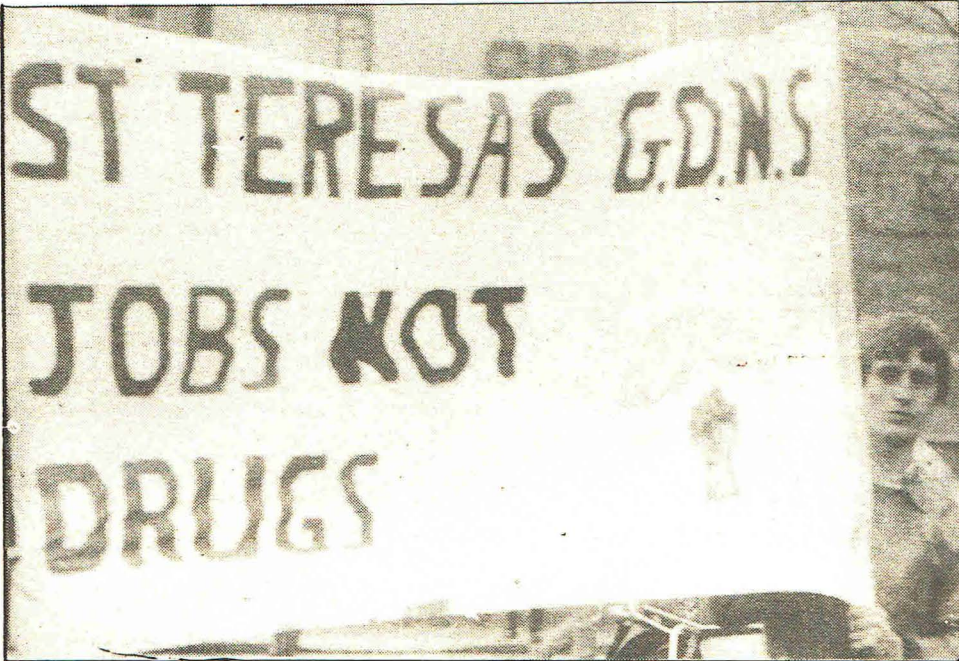
When taking drugs it makes these problems less hard at first, you find yourself much happier. The friends that you make in your drugs circle make you feel at home with them. You feel at long last in your mundane and boring life you have found people that you can talk to.

The more you get hooked

drugs

on these drugs it is much harder to get up in the morning, to get the kids off to school. So then you have a 'joint' just to get all your housework done. By night time all you want to do is to get the kids off to bed so you can have a 'good time' and have a few more joints.

The longer this goes on the more you are cut off from the real problems of society. You feel all your everyday problems are over. Then



Tenants in St Teresa's Gardens, Dublin mobilised to oust the drug pushers from their estate.

something big happens in your life like a strike, you lose your job or your husband loses his job, and the deeper your problems are.

But if you start to get politically involved this can open your eyes to life and you can see what drugs are doing to you and your children. That you don't

take care of yourself, the effects on your own and your children's health.

When you come off drugs you start to gain weight and become healthier, you don't feel so tired and you find that you can do so much work.

Each day you go without drugs the more you feel that

the only answer is for socialism. Where the working class will be able to control their own lives and would be able to eradicate the problems that make women and especially the youth take soft drugs.

Yours fraternally
(name and address withheld)

Staffordshire students

Dear Comrades,

Due to the government's cuts in expenditure, the local education authority in Stafford is putting forward a number of drastic reforms concerning school closures and a whole re-organisation of the schooling system. What they mean is cuts and redundancies. Both of them lead to a poorer education.

Last week at our school there was a meeting about these proposals, so we went along to find out just what it is all about. Before the meeting started, we saw our 'beloved' headmaster, who then told one of his deputies to kick us out. She told us that we were not welcome, and that we "had no right to be there", after all, we are

only pupils at the school.

Since the school strike there have been numerous suspensions and victimisation of pupils involved. Lately, we have both been harassed for our political views and School Student Union activities (leafletting and fly-posting, etc) and now they do this.

Recently, while being interrogated by three senior members of staff, we were told that there is no room for politics in school, especially not *Militant* politics. We have also been blacklisted along with several trouble-makers.

This clearly highlights the need for school students to unite to stop victimisation and harassment from reac-



tionaries at school.
Yours fraternally
Steve Revins
Nick Belcher
Staffordshire Union of School Students

School students on strike in February. Students are often victimised for their union or political activities. But hundreds are defying this pressure to organise in their schools.

Photo: AJ Wylie

LEFT and RIGHT

It's really very simple...

THE RULING class are in control because they're so clever. Listen to the *International Financial Review*: "The riots that started three weeks ago are continuing to erupt sporadically. The solution to these problems is for the British government to lower its interest rates from the current 11.5 per cent level for three month deposits and devalue its currency against the other European exchanges."

Cockroach Au Vin

REPORTS OF food-poisoning from hospital food are becoming regular. Recent scandals include cockroaches, bird droppings and even asbestos fibres found in food. Reports from the Institute of Environmental Health Officers and the British Pest Control Association reveal that a fifth of Britain's hospitals should be shut down because of dirt and infestation. Nearly half are guilty of other breaches of the hygiene guidelines and a fifth of hospitals are infested with Pharaoh ants. Perhaps Norman Fowler should be invited to discuss the problem over a meal—a recent dinner for top surgeons in one hospital resulted in them all getting food-poisoning.

Where there's muck there's brass

MRSAM Moore Walton hit the headlines last week when he ousted Mr Gordon Getty as America's richest man. However another interesting fact from the list of the 400 richest Americans published in *Forbes* magazine is that Mr Rupert Murdoch, owner of the *Sun* has been included for the first time. His publishing empire has earned him \$300 million. Who says that honesty is the best policy?

The Official Version

REVIEW

"NOT TO be missed!", I don't always agree with Barry Norman but he's spot on about the film *The Official Version*. That despite the inconvenience of having to read sub-titles if your Argentinian Spanish isn't up to much.

Set in Buenos Aires just after the Falklands war the story gradually gives glimpses of the mounting mass opposition to the military regime. Alicia, middle-aged, middle-class and politically blinkered, complacently teaches doctored Argentinian history to her pupils in a boy's school.

Back at her nice apartment she plays housewife and mother with the help of a maid and dutifully tolerates her smug, ambitious, entrepreneur husband who has thrown in his lot with

American big business.

Doubts begin for Alicia with the sudden return from exile in Europe of her best friend Ana who is hated and feared by the businessman husband. A tipsy reunion ends in tears for both women when Ana reveals she was framed and tortured in the military coup.

Suspicious

But worse is to come when suspicions begin to grow in Alicia that her adored four year old daughter whom her husband arranged to 'acquire' and adopt as a baby, might be the child of one of 'the disappeared', the political prisoners 'liquidated' by the military.

The message of the film is clear: "There are two sides to every story. Their version and the truth..." and it is Alicia's growing awareness of the truth that forces her not only to reappraise her non-political stance but also her job, her marriage and her future....

Made last year in Argentina the film is brilliantly acted and although I'd admit it's certainly lacking in political analysis it moved me near to tears, but more importantly to anger and socialist resolve.

By Julie Morgan

The Official Version is now showing at Curzon West End, Shaftsbury Avenue, London W1.

First of a two-part analysis of the problems facing NUPE

What response to privatisation pressures?

THE NATIONAL Union of Public Employees has been built as a fighting union. In 1970 the first ever national strike of local council workers shook the Heath government. Refuse piled up in the streets and the troops were drafted in.

In 1973 the anger of hospital ancillary workers over poverty pay exploded into the first national strike of hospital workers. Low pay was once again the running sore behind the 1979 public service strike involving every section of NUPE members. Two years later hospital ancillary workers and nurses were once again in conflict with the Tories.

The Tory government was shaken by the power and impact of the 1983 water workers' strike. As NUPE's Executive Council reported to conference: "The strike was remarkable for the unwavering support by practically every single one of the industry's 28,000 manual workers and for the united front of all three unions at every level".

The last six years of the Thatcher government has brought misery, uncertainty and unemployment to thousands of NUPE members. Public spending cuts and privatisation have slashed services, reduced wages and created thousands of redundancies.

Every section of NUPE members has been affected. But the brunt of the onslaught so far has been borne by the women members. The majority of NUPE members are women and most of them are employed in part-time jobs.

Privatisation has hit the women members particularly hard. A large number of local government and health authorities have handed work over to contractors. In the health service where the government directed health authorities to tender for contracts the majority of domestic services have been taken over by contractors.

Women hit

The result has been to brutally cut the wages and living standards of part-time women workers. Pay cuts and reduced hours have cut incomes by over 50% in some cases.

There are now plenty of examples of women working for rates as low as £1.60 an hour. They receive no paid holidays, no sickness scheme and no pensions.

And in the majority of cases the contractor does not recognise trade union membership.

But this only tells one side of the story. Authorities that haven't privatised have used the threat of contractors to force equally vicious staffing cuts. Managers have attempted to entice local union representatives into collaborating with in-house tenders for jobs. The price of collaboration has been to agree self-inflicted cuts.

In local areas workers have taken strike action to defend their jobs. Wandsworth, Medway, Hammersmith, Barking, Cambridge, Scarsdale, Oxford and Newcastle have all seen struggles mounted in defence of jobs. Some of these battles continue today. They give a glimpse of the potential for struggle against job losses.

There is nothing 'peculiar' or 'extraordinary' about these struggles, except that the anger of NUPE members has boiled over into courageous and self-sacrificing struggles. The union members have shown their willingness, and their ability, to fight.

Of course there is not a uniform mood amongst the members around the country. In some places there is complacency. In others, fear or lack of confidence.

A campaign by the union leadership to inspire and win confidence would succeed—a campaign based on linking together all the isolated and local problems. It would show members in one workplace that they are in the same boat as the rest.

The strategy of the government and employers has been a clever one. Our response has to be equal-



NUPE members, the majority women, fighting on the picket line, discussing at conference. They must be united for national action to defeat privatisation.

ly as astute. Unite the struggles. Publicise them among the members. Organise speaking tours. Campaign for cash to sustain strikers and their families.

Yet NUPE's executive has decided not to allow national circulars around the branches appealing for donations to strikes because there are so many. But a national officer retires and a 'testimonial' appeal goes around the branches so that in addition to his pension, a lump sum and free union car, he can retire with an additional few thousand pounds!

Astonishingly NUPE National Secretary Alistair Macrae told *Local Government Chronicle* in May 1985 that NUPE: "campaigning vigorously against it (privatisation—Ed) and we won, despite all the government's pressure."

And in a more revealing article in *New Socialist*, Tom Sawyer, NUPE deputy general secretary, said: "The problems of cuts in public expenditure, the problems of rate capping, the problems of privatisation—these are all industrial problems to our members,

but they cannot be dealt with industrially."

So what does Tom offer NUPE members: "We can't strike our way out of privatisation, because at the moment the trade union movement isn't strong enough to do it, so we've also got to do it politically."

We would all agree that political action is necessary. But NUPE members want to know what to do now confronted with contractors, cuts in staff and low pay. We cannot simply wait for pie in the sky tomorrow.

We need to weld together our industrial and political action. Our strikes must be linked to a campaign against the Tory government and the rotten capitalist system it represents.

Unfortunately NUPE's position has been rather ambiguous over the last few years. The union has a clear policy of opposition to contractors. But locally 'deals' have been done to stave off privatisation.

Admittedly these deals have not in the main been described as victories. It's very difficult to describe

50% cuts in staff or hours as victories. The only argument advanced in their favour by full-time officers has been that they are not quite as bad as the alternative. The difference between the two is marginal, to say the least.

A good example was the union response to the threatened closure of the school meals service in Hertfordshire. Herts announced the closure of the entire school meals service. A union full-time officer, Eddie Bradin, entered into discussions with the council.

These discussions were later revealed by the employer in a High Court action taken by the union. In an unchallenged sworn statement to the High Court, Hertfordshire's Personnel Officer said three meetings were held with the union officer.

Dubious deals

At the first meeting: "The NUPE officer indicated his willingness to investigate whether it would be possible to maintain the service and save jobs." An approach we would all commend.

But it continues: "He suggested, while emphasising that he had only been able to form a very broad view of possible costings, areas in which savings could be achieved, including reductions in hours, casualisation of midday supervisory assistance, reduction in conditions of service for kitchen staff, charges for meals, and, if necessary, casualisation of 50 percent kitchen staff."

Incredibly, it continues: "He emphasised that the discussion was informal but that, while no official agreement on these lines would be possible, it might, subject to his further consultation with senior officers of NUPE, be possible to reach an informal understanding."

These comments are taken from an employer's sworn statement. They may well have been written to suit their purpose, but nevertheless they "were not challenged in court." This episode reveals the dual and dangerous approach taken by some union officials.

The Times, in an editorial on 17 May, gave its view of the court decision: "This week's judgement, though it refers only to the single issue of dinner ladies' terms of employment, is important for it makes plain for the first time, that a downward revision of costs is possible without either a loss of employment or any major alteration in service."

"Perhaps the way is now open for uncoupling part-time rates from full-time payments altogether, to make part-time employment more casual, flexible and cheaper."

The warning was a simple one and local authorities were quick to follow this lead.

Part two of this major analysis of the problems facing NUPE, next week.



School dinner ladies in Kent fighting for jobs and children's health

A fighting programme for NUPE

Supporters of *Militant* within NUPE are fighting for a programme of action:

- ★ A vigorous and concerted campaign to protect women part-time workers who have been particularly hard-hit by Tory employers.
- ★ A recruitment campaign amongst the non-unionists based on winning their confidence that the union will fight for them.
- ★ Total non-cooperation and opposition to in-house tenders involving cuts in jobs, wages, hours and conditions.
- ★ Defence of all national agreements. No local deals.
- ★ Special national delegate conference of the

groups now under direct attack to discuss and plan tactics and strategy in launching the national fightback.

- ★ Mass membership rallies in every Division.
- ★ A real campaign to win physical, moral and financial support for the NUPE strikers in various parts of the country.
- ★ Workers cannot be left to fight battles alone and locally. To develop a NATIONAL response by linking together local issues and struggles.
- ★ To link the local fights to the broad political struggle against the Tory government.
- ★ Total opposition to witch-hunts in the labour movement. Unity is strength!

Expert analysis of NCB plans/Silentnight strike/News from NUPE

Up to sixty pits to go?

SINCE THE miners' strike the NCB has announced its intention to close 29 pits with a capacity of around of 10 million tonnes and employing some 23,000 men.

A further seven pits are being merged, with losses of much of the 1,500,000 tonnes of capacity and 4,500 jobs involved.

Already, then, the NCB has gone way beyond its plan, just before the strike, to axe four million tonnes of capacity.

But any hopes that this marks the end of what the NCB has in mind, and that if only these closures are accepted things can get back to normal, would be a severe mistake.

Ken Moses, technical director, has said that the board would attempt to stabilise production at 90 million tonnes per year. The closures already announced would bring colliery production down to this level.

Demand

But this would leave out of account additions to capacity, at Selby and elsewhere, which will average out at five million tonnes per year over five years.

With production set at 90 million tonnes this would mean a further five million tonnes of existing capacity would have to be closed each year, at least double the rate at which mines will exhaust.

By Andrew Glyn

So closure on 'economic' grounds would have to run at around three million tonnes per year.

By the beginning of 1987, the industry would have shed 40-45,000 jobs, involving the closure of as many as 60 pits.

The justification for this drastic cut in production is supposed to be the 'market'. The NCB's most important market, the CEBG expects to be using less coal as a result of nuclear reactors coming on stream, and the buying of some 'surplus' electricity from France.

The *Financial Times* International Coal Report suggested that CEBG purchases might fall by 15 million tonnes, a figure disputed by the NCB. In any case the major reasons behind the 'market' problem is the stagnation of the economy.

If production was ten per cent higher, demand for electricity would be higher and at least five million tonnes more coal would be burnt.

Added to this the CEBG is currently importing at a rate of some 10 million tonnes per year to build up its stocks.

It seems very unlikely that its imports (and those of

BSC) will continue at a high rate. Using the economy to full capacity, and exploiting domestic coal resources, would soon remove the 'market' problem.

Even the massive closure programme outlined above would not eradicate the NCB's losses. To do this would require further cuts of manpower in existing pits as work was speeded up and manning levels cut.

Perhaps another 25,000 jobs would have to go, involving a productivity increase of up to 20 per cent in two years (it has taken more than 10 years for productivity to grow that much in the past).

Productivity

Adding these job losses to those caused by pit closures would mean the industry being reduced from 180,000 miners before the strike to around 115,000 by early 1987.

But the NCB's ambitions evidently do not stop at breaking even. MacGregor has boasted of increasing output to four tonnes per man shift on every pit (an increase of about one third), with some producing substantially more.

On this basis the number of miners required to produce 90 million tonnes would be 100,000 or less. Ken Moses has backed this up

saying that if pits are to have 'secure futures, they must produce coal at no higher than... roughly £39 per tonne.'

At present only 75 pits are producing at £45 per tonne or less (excluding interest). Even excluding all those presently scheduled for closure, around 60 pits would have to increase productivity massively to stay viable (including 10 in Nottinghamshire).

Since a number of highly productive pits would be well below the £39 per tonne figure, hitting the target for the rest would mean that the NCB would be earning a huge profit.

The average price received of £44 per tonne, would leave the NCB more than enough to finance all its investment. Could the government be thinking of privatisation on this basis?

As repeatedly argued during the strike, however, considerations of profit and loss give no more justification for pit closure and running down manpower than does the state of the market.

The NCB's financial calculations totally fail to take into account that the costs attributed to the pit include items, like HQ expenses (including MacGregor's salary), which will not be saved by pit closure. As these costs, and surplus manpower, get push-



Photo: Militant

St John's Lodge lobby of closure hearing. The NCB have just broken its promise that St John's in South Wales would be first into the review procedure. Yet Andrew Glyn had shown its closure is 'uneconomical'.

ed on to other pits these become 'unprofitable' in turn.

Social costs

Further, they take no account of the costs of unemployment, in terms of dole payments and taxes lost and which have to be born by taxpayers. To close 60 pits would cost the government some £900 million per year. Two and a half times the 'subsidy' required to keep them open.

The NCB's profit and loss take no account of the fact that importing coal makes

the balance of payments worse, which pushes down the exchange rate, which cuts the living standards of all workers.

It takes no account of the fact that reserves of coal sterilised by closure could only be mined by future generations at much higher cost.

All these considerations, which are thoroughly economic, and which affect the rest of society as well as the miners and their families, are sacrificed on the altar of profit and loss. Their profit, our loss.

Co-op agrees Silentnight blacking

TREMENDOUS publicity for the four-month-old Silentnight strike has been achieved by strikers' hard work. Not only are they getting immense support from other trade-unionists throughout the country, but even the national media have recognised the importance of this struggle.

Last week Channel 4 showed a *Diverse Reports* documentary on the strike, which revealed that the local Tory MP John Lee has 2,000 shares in Silentnight. John Lee praised Silentnight chairman Tom Clarke as 'an honourable man'.

It was also disclosed that Thatcher's 'Mr Wonderful', Tom Clarke, who claims he cannot afford a nationally agreed wage rise for his workers, paid himself and his family a total dividend of £644,771 last year—that is three times the amount needed to pay all his workers the wages they are asking for.

Activities by rank-and-file members of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades union, coupled with rather more assistance squeezed out of FTAT officials, have at last blazed a way towards winning this dispute.

Raw materials are being blacked at a number of ports, including timber at Hartlepool. Last week, after talks at Fleetwood and Stranraer, an agreement was made to stop all Pandoro deliveries to Silentnight.

Drivers at Vitafoam and Harrison Jones are already refusing to move out foam to Silentnight, and FTAT is now expecting workers there

By Linden Stafford (Skipton Labour Party)

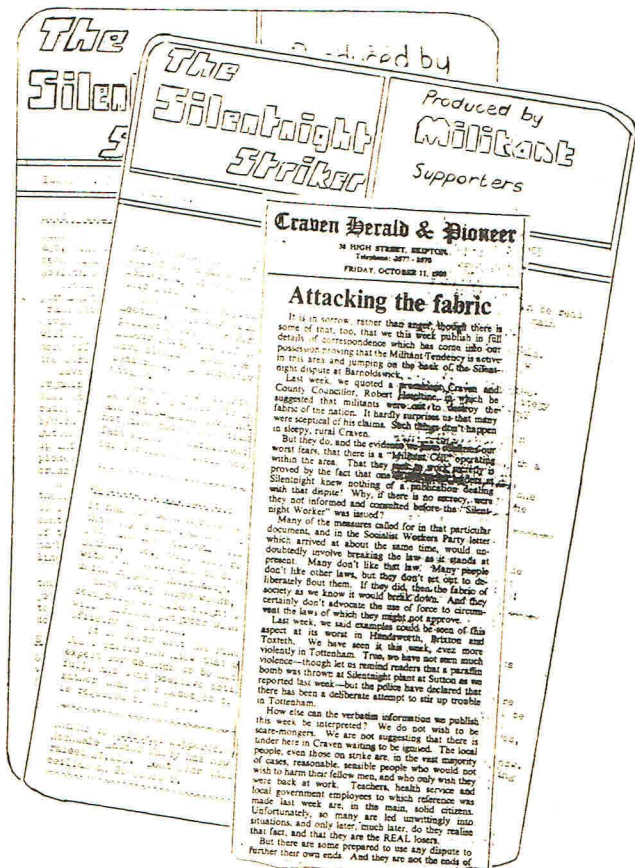
to stop loading scab lorries with foam.

Most of the drivers now crossing picket lines are non-union, and the company is spending a fortune using one-man-operated van hires from as far away as Aberdeen and Stevenage. Clearly all this is costing them considerable trouble as well as money.

Next steps

And now the Co-op has agreed to black Silentnight products. Members of USDAW in shops throughout the country are being asked to help in blacking Silentnight beds. With a concerted effort nationally, Tom Clarke and his henchmen can be brought to their knees.

In the meantime Silentnight strikers will be visiting other factories in the Silentnight Group—such as Perfecta in Wombwell, South Yorkshire—to make sure workers there realise they are next in line for management's attacks. Already there is a threat of



Silentnight Striker—produced by Militant supporters and strikers—kindly reproduced in the local paper.

redundancies at Bouyant in Nelson.

There are now clear signs that the Tories are panicking. A local Tory 'newspaper', the well named *Craven Herald*, ran a paranoid editorial expressing their 'worst fears'—chief among these fears being 'that the Militant Tendency is active in this area'!

It was generous of them, though, to reprint in full the first issue of *The Silentnight Striker*, a weekly strike bulletin produced by *Mil-*

itant supporters and Silentnight strikers.

Such attempted scaremongering has only served to give wider publicity to the strike and to socialist ideas, and strikers themselves fully appreciate the real help given to them by *Militant* supporters locally and nationally.

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

NUPE witch-hunt defeat

AN ATTACK by the union bureaucracy on NUPE's Broad Left began in the Southern and Eastern Division just over one year ago.

At the Southern and Eastern Divisional Conference held on Saturday 19 October the right-wing suffered a humiliating defeat.

Against the recommendation of the platform a resolution condemning the witch-hunt was carried with a two to one majority by delegates representing 52,000 members.

The resolution from Peterborough District Council was crystal clear: "This conference recognises the need for maximum unity in the ranks of the labour and trade union movement, and therefore condemns, without reservation, the divisive witch-hunt being organised against supporters of the Broad Left in this union, and most recently against supporters of the *Militant* newspaper."

"Conference accepts that disciplinary procedures are needed to deal with situations where this union is being discredited by individuals (or the labour movement as a whole is being brought into disrepute) but conference reaffirms the right of groups of individuals to hold and express political views without fear of expulsion and other measures being used against them."

"Conference therefore condemns the organisational measures being used in some sections of our union to suppress and totally disassociates itself from

witch-hunting". So overwhelming was the support for the resolution that there was no not one single speaker from the floor against the Broad Left.

The Divisional Council representative, Peter Fairhead, got himself into a terrible muddle arguing against the resolution.

He said that the Divisional Council had conducted an enquiry into how the Broad Left had allegedly obtained and used the names and addresses of union officers. And then complained that he had never received any Broad Left material himself!

Speakers from the floor remarked that supporting this resolution gave them no pleasure as they had expected better of NUPE.

Addenbrookes

Later in the day the conference gave unanimous support to the Addenbrookes strikers and asked the Divisional Council to purchase a mini bus so that they could organise around the Division organising for supports against privatisation.

Astonishingly the Divisional Council had opposed this resolution arguing that it was somehow "against the rule book." On this occasion the Divisional Council were given an even more severe trouncing. Not one delegate voted against the resolution!

And all this happened in what has been widely regarded as NUPE's most right-wing Division!

By a Militant reporter

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Kent coalfield fights for survival

ALL THREE branches of the National Union of Mineworkers in the Kent area have rejected the Coal Board's threat to Betteshanger colliery.

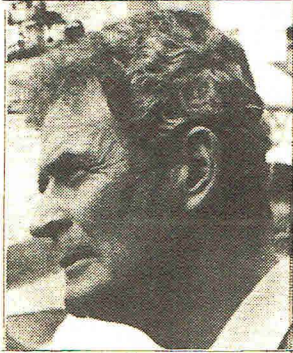
The NCB, besides attacking the 'attitudes' of the Betteshanger miners—that is, their trade union consciousness—have raised the usual 'economic' arguments.

Yet the Kent NUM have proved time and again the board wrong when they have moved to shut the coalfield's three pits—Snowdown, Tilmanstone and Betteshanger—showing that the Board have failed to exploit reserves of high quality coal.

Jack Collins

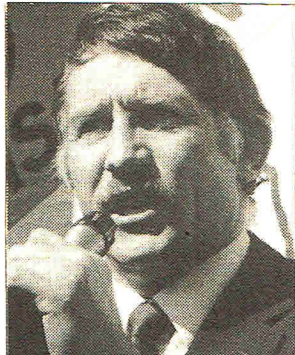
JACK COLLINS, leader of the Kent NUM, told *Militant* how the local management were in complete disarray and couldn't understand the logic of the area's general manager in pushing for closures.

He explained how the NCB have switched the axe from one pit to another as the NUM proved the pits' economic viability—"if we are to measure coalfields in this way", said Jack Collins.



Jack Collins, General Secretary, Kent NUM.

"When Snowdown was on the hit list we argued that they should look at an untapped lower seam. They said no. But the union had its way and tunnels reached this seam—it was nearly seven foot thick, with no sulphur, almost no chlorine and little ash. It is free from pollutants, thus avoiding



John Moyle, Betteshanger NUM president, a sacked miner.

acid rain and would be beneficial to the environment, can be mixed with inferior coals to upgrade them.

"We were proved right and coal is now being produced from that seam at Snowdown, called Number 7 seam."

Tilmanstone is now undergoing the closure review procedure. The NUM argue it should be extended into Number 7 seam but again the Coal Board have said no.

Again they have raised 'economic' reasons, but the



Working class leaders worthy of the name on miners' demo in London during the strike. Jack Collins, Kent NUM, who will be speaking at the *Militant* rally at the Albert Hall is on the right of the picture.

NUM point out Tilmanstone is achieving its output target, adding that in one month alone in the summer it made £97,000 profit.

Now the Coal Board have turned on Betteshanger but the Kent NUM have also had

reports that the pit is making a profit.

Jack Collins said: "We want the NCB to examine every aspect of the fields and we insist on the field's development. We also demand they recognise union

representatives which they have not done since the end of the strike.

"If Kent was developed properly it would be a very lucrative field. It is the Coal Board who are creating problems in the coal field."

Workers defend Birkenhead hospital but BUPA leaflet shows plot for privatisation

AS A follow-up to the article in last week's paper on management threats to reduce beds and staff at St Catherine's hospital Birkenhead, Julie Martin interviewed Jean Fagin, NUPE steward.

Cuts of up to 90 beds will mean the loss of up to 450 jobs and the effective closure of St Catherine's. Even if our members are offered alternative jobs at Arrowe

A BUPA leaflet has been obtained by the strikers which says that St Catherine's hospital in 1986 is a BUPA hospital—grade D, the lowest paying BUPA hospital.

Park hospital five miles away it means reduced hours and less pay due to privatisation plans there.

We have already fought off one attempt to close the hospital a couple of years ago. People now realise the situation has worsened and now we have received even more support, especially from non-hospital trade unionists.

The Health Authority have set a deadline for 30

October for the geriatric patients to be moved. Some of them have been here since the hospital was a workhouse. The move could kill some of them. That is why we urgently need more support now.

We have already set up a 24 hour picket and ambulance crews have refused to cross the picket line if it means moving either the patients or equipment.

Leaflets explaining our case have been given to all the relatives who are solidly behind us. Every day our members are working normally for the patients' sake, but they help on the picket line in their breaks and after shifts. We appeal for help on the picket line.

Resolutions and messages of support etc. C/o Chris Stonehouse, St Catherine's Defence Committee, St Catherine's hospital, Church Street, Birkenhead.

THE 'LONDON bus conference' last Tuesday voted to cease opposition to management's November programme of garage closures and other 'rationalisations' including one-person-operation.

Delegates from garages throughout London thus reversed their earlier 53 to 4 vote for non-cooperation with management's attacks on jobs, working conditions and services.

The last four issues of *Militant* have covered the fight by Battersea workers against the closure of their garage, the vote for non-cooperation and the London-wide action against management's threats of disciplinary action.

Management were forced to back down. But there was no lead or coordination of this localised response and the opportunity to build on the action was lost. Only Battersea continued.

This caused some demoralisation at Battersea.

But worse was yet to come. At the monthly meeting of the London bus conference on Tuesday, amidst cries of, 'I support you but I can't carry the lads', there was a sudden about turn and the policy of non-cooperation was abandoned.

We believe that responsibility for this retreat lies with our officials and the London bus committee.

Misleadership

At the special conference on 4 October which voted for non-cooperation a motion was put from the London bus committee calling for all-out strike in support of Battersea. It was widely recognised that this would not get support at that stage.

It was then necessary to move a motion from the floor calling for non-cooperation and negotiations to get management to drop the planned garage closures. That left the way open to step up the action on 2 November when the closures occurred—implying a possible lock-out at

Battersea.

In the meantime the full-time officials and London bus committee members kept their distance from the fight being waged at Battersea. They also failed to seize the opportunity to link up the fifteen garages which came out against intimidation of members following the non-cooperation policy—or to prepare for confrontation in November.

This is a setback for the general defence of jobs, conditions and services throughout London Bus Ltd, particularly against one-person-operation. But if we draw the right conclusions and prepare for the next round then it can serve a useful purpose.

We must wage a determined struggle for democracy and accountability within the union. We need a fighting programme to defend jobs and services. And a leadership prepared to carry it out.

By a Battersea bus worker

Keeping an eye on Manchester firemen

FBU MEMBERS in Manchester are taking 'emergency calls only' action in defence of 29-year old Bernard Lees, an FBU member dismissed for failing an eyesight test.

Mick Eves, an FBU Broad Left supporter spoke to Tom Lister, Manchester E Division secretary.

Why are you taking this action?

We feel the eyesight standard applied to our union is unfair. The only national eyesight standard in the fire service is the recruit entry standard. It is for failure to achieve this standard that Brother Lees has been dismissed. Many people's eyesight deteriorates naturally with age and we feel this fact should be taken into account when conducting eyesight tests.

Are there other firemen who could be in the same position? Oh yes, it's not uncommon for firemen to require reading glasses and this has not been the cause of any

problems in the past. Many members understand how easily they could be the one being dismissed. That, I am sure, is why there is such solid support for this action. What do you hope to achieve?

The FBU have asked that the dismissal be rescinded and the whole case adjourned until the results of a national report on the fitness of firemen, at present being compiled, has been released.

We expected this report to give guidelines in such cases. What then is likely to happen?

It's difficult to say, the Labour local authority appear to have talked themselves into a corner. There is certainly a determination amongst the membership and we shall certainly look to other brigades in our region for supportive action. I would hope the Labour authority will be helpful and comply with our request but their past record does seem to make this unlikely without a fight.



National demonstration in Maidstone last Saturday in support of NGA members on the *Kent Messenger* sacked for refusing to accept imposition of new technology.

Scottish and Newcastle bosses try it on

STRIKERS AT the Scottish and Newcastle Brewery, Moss Side, Manchester, have now been in dispute for a month over the imposition of new working patterns.

S&N bought Harp from Guinness three years ago, and has plans for doubling the workforce when the new extension opens early 1986.

They are trying to impose worse conditions and practices, eg mandatory overtime instead of voluntary at present, eliminating two meal breaks on the early shift.

They also want to start the weekly shift cycle on a Sunday instead of Monday. This means bank holiday working

and reducing of pay from double to time and half, and, in addition, introducing a three-shift system to replace the two shift at present.

The tactics of the company are aimed at demoralising the strikers. They have threatened sympathetic contractors who were on strike with dismissal and have warned the strikers that the strike was unofficial.

Please send donations and other support to the S&N Strike Fund, A Morley, 6/184 Branch Secretary c/o Ian Steward, TGWU, 1 The Crescent, Salford M5 4PR.

By Gordon Cormack (Davyhulme CLP, personal capacity)

Militant

Inside: The battle against heroin See page 7

Stop Tory poverty plan

THE FOWLER Review should be renamed the Fowler Slaughter. The plans by Tory minister Norman Fowler will slash £1 billion off social security payments.

The Tories want to push through the computerisation of the DHSS system, cutting thousands of jobs from the civil service, but above all they want to use the millions cut from social security for tax cuts to buy votes at the next election—tax cuts that will only favour the rich and well-off.

Fowler's plans will hit the living standards of millions of people, many already living below the poverty line:

- **Housing Benefit**—all households will now have to pay at least 20 per cent of their rate bill, hitting seven million people currently receiving benefit. There will be no payments for high water rates.

- **Supplementary Benefit**—this will be scrapped and replaced by Incomes Support, hitting payments to the unemployed. It will penalise widows according to their age and discriminate against immigrant workers, according to their length of residence in Britain.

- **DHSS payments**—one off payments to help the unemployed with bedding, furniture etc will stop, replaced by a 'Social Fund', payments will be repayable loans, awarded at the discretion of the local DHSS manager, with no right of appeal for the claimant.

- **Family Income Supplement**—to be scrapped and replaced by Family Credit, paid by employers directly into wages. It will be used to disguise low wages while in

many cases will mean the mother of the family not having direct access to the money. The new system will end free welfare goods and free school meals.

- **Death Grant**—abolished, replaced by loans from the Social Fund, means tested at a time of great stress.

- **Maternity Grant**—abolished, replaced by loans from the Social Fund.

Fowler had also planned to scrap the State Earnings Related Pensions Scheme, forcing people to join private schemes with rich pickings for the banks and finance houses. It would have been left to Victorian style charities to pick up the pieces of the unemployed, disabled and low paid who could not afford such schemes.

Such was the public outrage that Fowler had to step back from this devious plan.

It must be made clear to the Tories that the anger that greeted the threat to SERPS is just a taste of things to come. Sunday's TUC demonstration against Fowler must be the first step in a campaign against the 'Review', involving industrial action, based around the civil service unions and linking the fight against job losses in DHSS offices to the defence of basic welfare rights.

Thatcher's Britain is an intolerable hell as it is. The Tories must not be allowed to push us back even further to the grim days of means tested misery of the 1930's.



Photo: Militant

Millions will be hit by the Fowler Review—it must be stopped by mass action.

ST John's Colliery

Miners fight closure

THE NATIONAL Coal Board have announced the closure of St John's colliery in South Wales, without allowing it to go through the 'independent review procedure'.

But the miners at the colliery have other ideas. Production is to continue at the pit whether management like it or not. The men are refusing to let their colliery close.

St John's are not alone. A conference of mining community action committees is being organised for 9 November in Birmingham. All threatened pits are to be approached to sponsor the conference. A united front is to be offered against the board's butchery.

The 1984/85 dispute ended with the pledge that the struggle would continue in the localities. The rank and file at those pits in the front line are determined to honour that pledge. Bates, Darfield Main, Betteshanger and Bold have all made it clear they will fight all along the line. They will be even

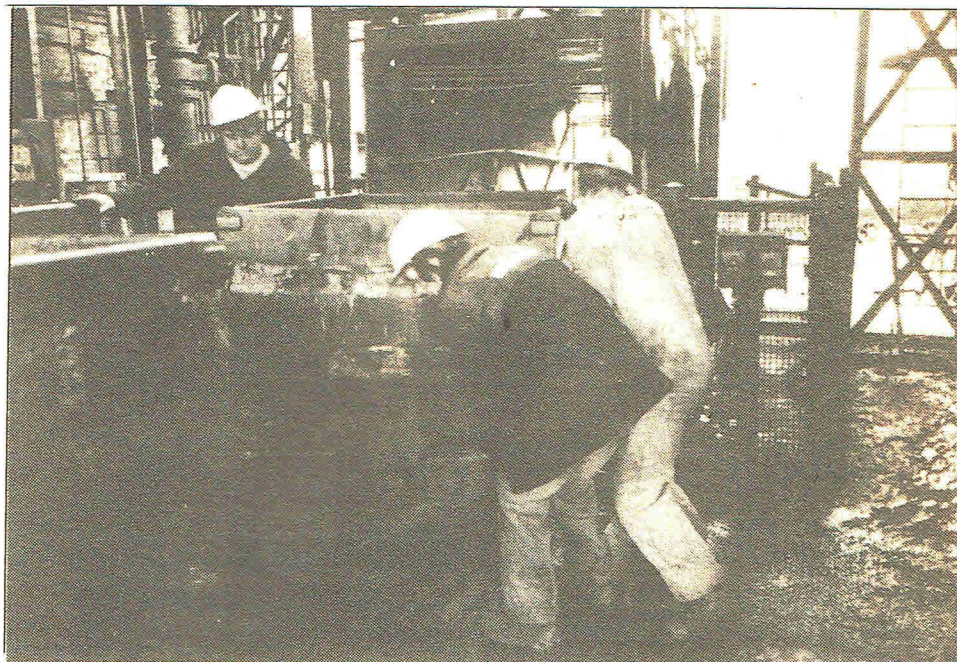


Photo: Militant

St John's Colliery in Maesteg, South Wales—the South Wales NUM will fight its closure.

stronger in their resolve if the union's national leadership put themselves at the head of this grass-roots movement.

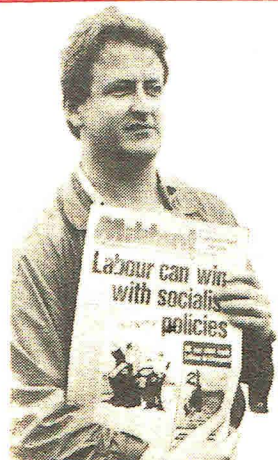
The full resources of the union must be placed at the

disposal of those prepared to fight the closures with a view to linking up the pits and communities under threat and forging a national rank and file campaign.

By Ian Isaac
(St John's NUM Lodge Secretary)

TUC demonstration against the Fowler Review, Sunday, 27 October

11am from Jubilee Gardens, marching to Trafalgar Square. *Militant* supporters meet by *Militant* banner in Jubilee Gardens at 10.30am.



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