

# Militant

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The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 855 7 August 1987

## Socialist Summer Camp

A week of politics sport and enjoyment

See page 3

### US warships raise Middle-East tension

# Reagan's gun-law in the Gulf



Stricken Kuwaiti tanker reflagged as the Bridgeton, with US 'protection'.

## Fighting fund hits the top

£48,072 has been raised for *Militant's* fighting fund this quarter, £10,000 more than a year ago. This is a brilliant achievement. No other paper in the labour movement can boast such support.

Forward to £70,000 by 3 November.

Forward to a twice weekly *Militant*.

AT LEAST 275 Iranians were killed in clashes with Saudi Arabian state forces in the Muslim holy city of Mecca, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

By Jeremy Birch

They were the latest victims of the Gulf War, a bloody seven-year battle between the two murderous dictatorships of Iran and Iraq.

Many were young revolutionary guards. They had been specially mobilised by Ayatol-

lah Khomeini's frenzied religious regime to demonstrate against those Gulf states like Kuwait, which are collaborating with United States imperialism to support Iraq in the war.

Reagan's gun-boat diplomacy threatens serious escalation of the Gulf war. Kuwaiti tankers are now provocatively sailing under the stars and stripes. There is talk of America bombarding the Iranian naval base of Bandar Abbas should any of these tankers be hit by Iranian armoury. After

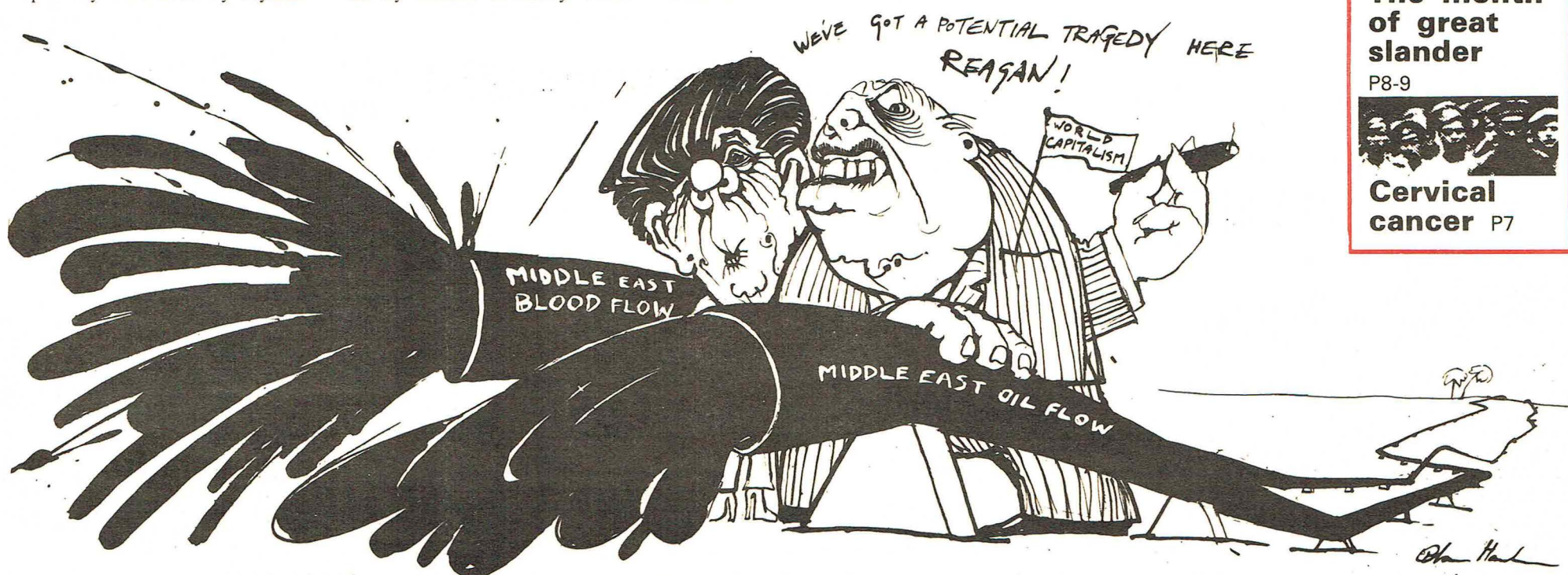
last year's brutal bombing of Libya, this would be another murderous American attack on a third world country.

### Reagan's 'peace'

This is 'peace-keeping' Reagan-style! Never mind that it was US armed and financed Iraq that began the 'tanker war', to damage Iran's vital oil exports. Iraqi oil goes by pipeline not tanker. So inevitably Iran retaliated against the tankers of Iraq's allies, like Kuwait.

American imperialism has left a trail of blood around the world. It is not concerned about protecting Gulf lives. Reagan intervened to defend the economic interests of Western imperialism and American prestige and influence. The Gulf sea lanes must be kept 'free', because 50 per cent of Japanese and 35 per cent of European oil supplies flow through them.

For Reagan himself, an aggressive show of strength (continued on page 2)



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Russia 1917:

The month of great slander

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Cervical cancer P7

# Militant

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## Gulf Crisis

THE DEATH of 300 Iranians in Saudi Arabia; the demonstration of one million in Tehran on a 'day of hatred' against the Saudi and American regimes; the increasing build up of a heavily armed US flotilla in the Gulf supposedly to protect reflagged Kuwaiti tankers; the holding of naval manoeuvres by Iran in the same narrow waters; the reported further advances in the renewed Iranian land offensive; add up to an explosive mixture, in the tinder box of the Gulf.

Over seven bloody years the imperialist powers and Stalinist Russia have been content to let Iraq and Iran exhaust themselves. No intervention was suggested despite attacks on 300 merchant vessels.

For the superpowers a victory for either side would upset the delicate balance of forces in the Middle East. However, they were filled with foreboding at the prospect of an Iranian victory.

Although, despite the rhetoric of the Ayatollahs, they have carried through a frenzied religious counter-revolution, attacking all the rights of the working class. But the superpowers fear an Iranian victory over Iraq would establish it as the predominant force in the Gulf, able then to turn its attentions on to Kuwait and the Emirates and holding a potentially dangerous grip on the West's oil life-line.

Both America and Russia therefore have supplied Iraq with arms, but still the Hussein dictatorship is clearly weakening. This is the principal motive for US intervention, and for the UN resolution calling for a ceasefire. American imperialism hopes that its armed presence may force Iran to the international negotiating table. While the Iraqi regime welcomes foreign involvement, as perhaps its only salvation from outright defeat.

Reagan is also attempting to recoup something of the ground lost with the other Gulf states, through the Irangate debacle. But this strategy is fraught with risks. It could lead to American attacks on Iran, dramatically increasing the tension and the anti-US sentiment throughout the Middle East. Reagan sent US marines to assert order in the Lebanon. When 241 of them were killed in one terrorist incident, American imperialism was sent scuttling home.

So Reagan's European allies have been reluctant to commit their own naval forces, even a few minesweepers, to the Gulf expedition.

Even America's client states in the Gulf are unwilling to be too associated with Reagan's intervention. Kuwait has refused landing rights to US mine-detecting helicopters, and Saudi Arabia has not allowed its minesweepers to be used.

These reactionary semi-feudal dictatorships are mortally afraid of internal opposition, which could be fuelled by open military co-operation with US imperialism. In 1979 Saudi rebels took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Kuwait has seen a number of bombing incidents this year, possibly carried out by agents of Iran.

So the Khomeini regime consciously mobilised revolutionary guards to take advantage of the annual mass pilgrimage. Khomeini addressed the pilgrims before they left. The demonstrations they staged in Mecca were to warn off the Gulf states from collaboration with Reagan, with the threat of Iranian inspired internal dissent.

The Iranian government may well have been prepared for bloodshed this provocation could cause, which would only serve to hammer home the message more sharply. There were reports of Iranian 'pilgrims' deliberately blocking off streets to the Grand Mosque, inviting the retribution of the Saudi forces.

It is possible as a result of mutual war weariness that a settlement could eventually be agreed between Iran and Iraq. But none of the fundamental problems of the masses will be resolved. And neither the impotent UN nor American aggression offers them any solution.

Workers' rights and conditions are trampled upon in all the countries of the Gulf. In Saudi Arabia the right to vote, to organise and to strike are ruthlessly denied. The Iraqi regime murdered the leaders of the 'Communist' Party, upon whom it had leant previously for support.

The labour movement internationally must demand the withdrawal of American warships and an end to imperialist interference. It should raise the slogan of the unity of the workers and peasants of the Gulf states and of the whole Middle East, in a struggle to throw off oppression and capitalist dictatorship, and to build a socialist federation.

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## 'An MP on our street'

"I've never known it for an MP to come to our street before," was one man's response to a street meeting addressed by Pat Wall in Bradford last week.

Ruxana Rasheed was inspired to organise it on her street after the many held during the election campaign.

The date was set for Thursday 30 July. She told her friends and family and the day before put out a leaflet in English and Urdu. On Thursday at 5.30, a couple of local Labour Party members arrived to help knocking up for the meeting.

Local people came out

to tell them that it wasn't until 6.30, and would they like a cup of tea? When it started spitting with rain, an Asian man offered his house for the meeting if it was raining at 6.30.

Two comrades went off with megaphones down the street announcing the meeting in English and Urdu. As Pat arrived the crowd started to grow.

At 6.30 the meeting started with 60 to 70 people packed around the street corner. For the first time, there was a group of Asian women at the meeting as well.

Pat spoke about the poll tax and thanked



Pat Wall addresses a street meeting.

people for their support in the election, but also pointed out the need to join the Labour Party and fight for socialism.

After the Urdu translations there were questions and answers. As a result, 14 people signed up for the Labour Party. But above all, it showed that Pat Wall hadn't for-

gotten the people who had voted for him, that he is a workers' MP who is prepared to go onto anybody's street and that the old tradition of street meetings is back to stay.

By a Bradford Militant supporter.

## Liverpool—surcharged councillors need cash

THE CAMPAIGN to raise the money to pay the Liverpool councillors' surcharge continues.

The total surcharge, together with court costs, is £348,000. That amount of money must be found or they could face eviction from their homes and bankruptcy. The councillors' crime was to fight for jobs, housing and better conditions for the workers of Liverpool.

In doing so, they carried out the policies of the labour and trade union movement. The responsibility for paying off the fines should not rest with

them. It is the responsibility of the whole labour movement.

At the moment, negotiations are going on over the terms of payment. The councillors are trying to get an agreement to pay so much per month.

### Donations

Whatever amount is agreed on, the key will be raising regular donations. Within the Liverpool council workforce, many workers already have 50p per week deducted at source for the fund.

Fords workers at Halewood have promised £250

per month. Plans are underway for a tour of the local workplaces to get similar pledges.

However, this appeal is not just to workers in Liverpool. The councillors were fighting for all workers. Nationally and even internationally there has been a marvellous response to the stand of the council. That respect for the councillors needs to be turned into cash urgently.

What you can do:

- 1) make an individual donation or better still take out a standing order for a regular payment.
- 2) get your CLP, ward branch, union, shop ste-

wards committee etc. to make a donation or take out a standing order

3) Invite a surcharged Labour councillor to speak at your labour movement meeting.

Rush donations and requests for standing orders and speakers to The Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, c/o Merseyside Trades Council Unemployed Centre, Hardman Street, Liverpool. Make cheques payable to The Liverpool Defence Fund. Standing orders made out to account no. 50211195 at the Co-op. Bank Liverpool branch.

## New council lurches right

FURTHER WORRYING signs that the new Liverpool council will not be prepared to fight to defend the gains of the past were seen last week.

The outrageous decision to sack student sabbatical workers was ratified. Cemetery charges were increased too.

Liverpool is one of the rate-capped authorities. Quite correctly, the Labour council leaders demanded a meeting with Ridley, the Environment Minister, to discuss the need for more money. Unfortunately, Harry Rimmer, the new council leader, specifically said that he did not want the meeting to be lobbied by the local authority workforce.

Rimmer is also prepared to adopt an all-party

approach to Liverpool's financial crisis, taking the Liberals along with him. This is the height of naivety. Harry Rimmer says he is not prepared to "go wingeing to the government for more money."

The last Labour council never went wingeing for money. They built a campaign based on local authority workers.

Sir Trevor Jones had the bare-faced cheek to call Rimmer, "Harry the Slasher". This is the pot calling the kettle black. But the nickname could stick, unless Rimmer and the rest of the Labour leaders begin a union-based campaign to defend jobs and services.

By Mick Whale.

## Reagan's gun law in the Gulf

(Continued from page 1)

against the Khomeini government and a military incursion into the Gulf, is also an attempt to rebuild some public support after the humiliation of Irangate.

But his denunciation of Iranian terrorism is the ultimate hypocrisy. The Iranian regime is guilty of some hideous excesses, with its terrorist attacks recently in France for example. But no-one believes Reagan was not fully informed about the secret sales of US arms to Iran, and the diverting of the cash to finance the counter-revolutionary Contra

terrorists in Nicaragua. Now a reflagged tanker or even a US warship could be struck by American weaponry sold by the Reagan administration to Iran.

But it is the workers and peasants of Iran, Iraq and the other Gulf states who will suffer continuing bloodshed and misery. A million have perished in the Gulf War already. Their interests are the same, to throw off the reactionary regimes—the Iraqi dictatorship, Iranian Muslim fundamentalism or the Saudi Arabian feudal monarchy — and to escape from the deadly embrace of imperialism, by taking control of society into their own hands.

A socialist federation of the Middle East is the only guarantee of peace in this tortured region. At last, the masses could benefit from its immense natural riches.

# Tories leave safety up in the air

WITH AIR flights and passenger numbers at record levels, can Britain's air traffic control system guarantee safety in the skies? Trade unions representing air traffic controllers have expressed serious fears. *Militant* talked to a Civil Aviation Authority worker:

THERE HAS been a great deal written in the press over recent weeks about the crisis in air traffic control. Some people have tried to write this off as scaremongering by the unions at the height of the holiday season. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Since 1972 when the CAA was 'hived off' from the civil service, there has been growing concern not only about the management of the organisation, but also the conflicting priorities it has to meet. The CAA has been under pressure since being hived off to fund its activities by charges on the airlines.

In recent years a number of air traffic functions at airports like Liverpool and Bournemouth have been undertaken by private contractors.

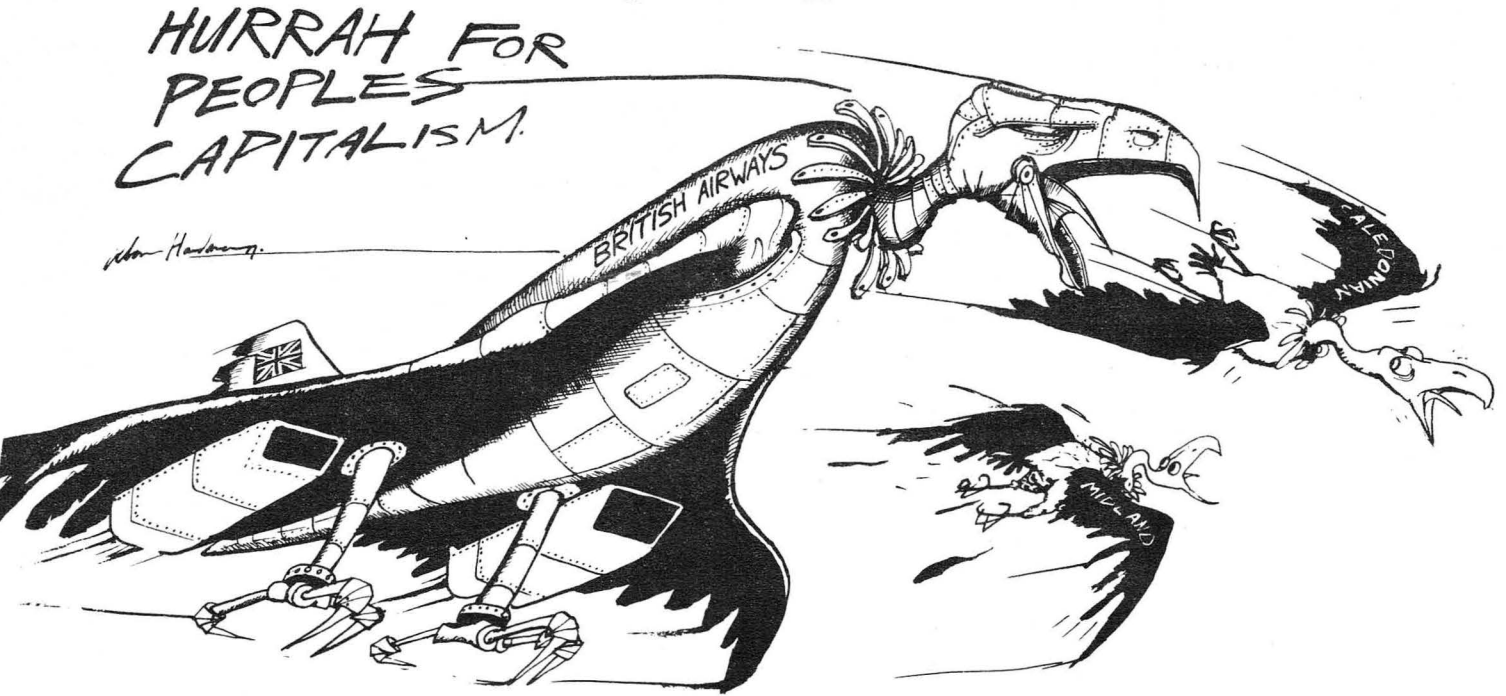
## Collision likely

Now with the privatisation of the British Airports Authority, there will almost certainly be attempts to pull at least one of their airports out of the CAA system, and hand it over to a private contractor, as the Monopolies and Mergers Commission recommended. This will be fiercely resisted by union members. It is the Government's drive for competition and privatisation which is at the root of many of the problems of the ATC system.

Gatwick is now the second busiest in the world (second only to Heathrow). So attention is sharply focused on the ability of the CAA's computer system to maintain its air traffic control system.

The CAA should be using the most up to date equipment to ensure the maximum safety, in some of the busiest skies in the world. But the computer it is using was installed in 1972 and will not be replaced until the early 1990s at the earliest, and perhaps not even that soon.

In a recent survey, just two out of 214



controllers at the London Air Traffic Control Centre, reported they had not experienced a failure of the West Drayton computer in the last six months.

Equipment failures are a regular fact of life and management procedures are poor. It is only due to our skill that there has not been a major mid-air collision. Private discussions are about "when" rather than "if".

Various private enterprise solutions are being put forward, ranging from full scale privatisation of the system to breaking up the CAA and reforming it into several separate enterprises. But safety and the profit motive are incompatible. Safety costs money, but it is money well spent.

The Government must accept its responsibility to provide an air traffic control system that is safe for passengers rather than cheap for airlines. It must end the provision of ATC by private contractors and place it in the hands of the CAA. In addition it should finance the CAA directly and recoup the costs from the swelling profits of the airline industry.

# and one big airline rules

REMEMBER THE Tories' arguments against nationalised industries? 'They don't give a decent service', 'huge impersonal monopolies', 'give them back to the people'.

The merger of British Airways and British Caledonian shows they were all cheap lies.

When British Airways was privatised, it was hailed as a victory for free enterprise, returning freedom to the skies. Now just a year later BA is swallowing up one of its main home rivals—British Caledonian. So much for free competition!

The merger will create the largest airline outside the United States. It will control over 60 per cent of British airline trade. BA

already dominates Heathrow, and B.Cal dominates Gatwick.

Even before the merger BA declared pre-tax profits of £162 million. Together with B.Cal it will now be carrying some 22 million passengers and have assets valued at around £1.2 billion. A company this size will be in a powerful position to squeeze its remaining British competitors out.

The Tories have set up a private monopoly, which will not even have the pretence of public accountability. It will answer to the profit lust of a few big shareholders, and nothing more.

The ordinary air travellers will have to pay a monopoly's prices, and put

up with deteriorating standards particularly on internal routes.

The Tories are resisting any attempts to refer the merger to the Monopolies Commission. In this they are enthusiastically supported by the BA/B.Cal bosses. Even some Tory MPs are concerned by such blatant favouritism.

So the Thatcherite myth about "giving industry to the people" is exploded. The Tories happily operate the laws of modern capitalism, to concentrate economic power in the hands of a small number of unaccountable, uncontrolled big business cliques.

By Tim White

# Docklands railway is a hi-tech farce

THE QUEEN officially opened the Docklands Light Railway last Wednesday. The flash ceremony turned into a farce when the computer-run train refused to move and a driver had to take over.

The hi-tech system, with its 'driverless trains', has been heralded as a hyper-efficient method of transport. But no-one knows when the railway will really open, because of a stream of technical cock-ups.

Automatic doors have been opening when the trains have been running. The track at times passes over deep disused dock basins. One train actually ran through buffers and was left hanging over a roadway.

The management seem to have left safety low down the list of priorities in their attempts to save money by cutting corners and keeping

staffing levels at a bare minimum.

The trains will only be manned by one person, a 'train captain'. His or her duties will include closing the doors, inspecting tickets and collecting revenue, helping the public, challenging vandals (which should be fun on a Saturday night) and, if the automatic system fails, driving the train as well!

## Union rights

It will be interesting to see how the trains react when there is an obstruction on the line, human or otherwise.

DLR management have also introduced new methods of industrial relations. They have refused to negotiate with the NUR and Aslef who organise London Underground workers. Hammond of the EEPTU has made approaches (probably on

the basis that the trains run on electricity!).

They obviously want to isolate the workers from other Underground workers.

So, who will benefit from these manoeuvres and the £140 million of public money the DLR is likely to receive? The plan is undoubtedly to flog the lot off to private enterprise. This could mean the first step towards privatisation of the whole Underground network. The unions must point out this danger.

The new system shows great potential for transport if workers and the community had control over it. Workers could be guaranteed decent conditions and the public could have cheap, safe, efficient public transport.

By Bob Russell.

(Willesden no. 1 NUR branch secretary, personal capacity)

# Lobby for safe ferries



LABOUR PARTY Young Socialists and Labour Party members and trade unionists demonstrated outside Dover Eastern Docks on Monday, 8 August.

The demonstrators demanded that lives come before profits on the ferries after the official whitewash of the Zeebrugge ferry disaster.

Sue Haney, sister to

Geoff Haney, one of the crew who was killed in the disaster, was infuriated by the report. She came straight to Folkestone and Dover from Manchester to see what could be done to spotlight the main issues, safety and the owners' responsibility.

National Union of Seamen (NUS) officials, told her that if bullheads (the

main safety measures needed) were fitted, this would result in job losses. They seemed to have forgotten that 37 crew lost their lives.

But Sue received a warm response from two packed Labour Party meetings and individual railmen and seamen.

By Eric Segal

## Workers Education Group Socialist Summer Camp

What's on when?

Sat 8 Aug. 7pm: South Africa—the struggle continues.  
Speakers from Inqaba Ya Basabenzi.  
Sun 6pm: Debate—Labour Party Black Sections vs. Militant.  
Mon 2pm: Debate—Labour Co-ordinating Committee vs. Militant.  
6pm: Militant Readers' Meeting—Ted Grant.  
Tues 6pm: Northern Ireland—Richard Venton.  
Wed 6pm: Debate—Middle East.  
Thurs 6pm: International rally—Alan Woods and international speaker.  
Costs are £40 for the week (£75 for a family) or come for a day for £6. Don't miss out! Come to Bracelands campsite, Christchurch, Coleford, Glos.

## Keep Labour socialist

# Labour councils—fight or cut?

## Glasgow housing

"IT'S NOT wall to wall carpets, it's wall to wall beds," complained a tenant of the Castlemilk Housing Scheme here in Glasgow. "You are talking about families who have maybe five kids in a three room apartment. You have to live there to know what it is like."

Castlemilk is larger than the town of Perth, yet has nothing like the social amenities, services or decent shops. "A desert wi' windaes," is how another tenant described it.

But it is only one of the overcrowded, damp, soulless townships built for Glasgow families, without any thought to the creation of a liveable environment. Now unemployment averages 35 per cent on these housing schemes.

60 per cent of Glasgow's population lives in council housing. With over 170,000 houses under its control, the District Council is the biggest landlord in Western Europe. Unfortunately it also has the reputation as the biggest slum landlord.

Despite recently borrowing £120 million privately (an avenue now closed off by the government), the shortfall between the

By Councillor Larry Flanagan  
(Glasgow District Council)

Council's housing finance needs (some £2,000 million over the next decade) and its likely income is astronomical. And each year the Council pays out in debt charges roughly the same amount as it receives in total rent income!

The private sector is busy re-developing the City centre into an affluent, expensively priced residential area for 'young upwardly mobiles'. And the recent Grieve report suggested that the vast housing schemes be broken up—in other words privatised. But it is not Barretts or Laings they need on Castlemilk or Easterhouse, but real capital investment to redesign the schemes, building the back and front doors that tenants want, and



A workman outside flats on Glasgow's Possil estate. The District Council is the biggest landlord in Western Europe.

tackling the problem of literally crumbling multi-storey blocks.

The £120 million 'off the balance' money is being used to show what can be done, but much more is needed.

The re-election of a Tory government is therefore a disaster for Glasgow's housing. But when 59 out of 66 councillors and every Glasgow MP are Labour, the workers of this city certainly did

not vote for a Tory housing policy.

The Labour leadership of the Council must fight back to ensure Glasgow does not suffer the effects of Tory housing policy.

## Lothian

LABOUR WILL freeze recruitment for 1,000 jobs if it accepts the £18.3 million worth of cuts the Tories are imposing on Lothian Regional Council.

By Andy Clachers  
(Edinburgh District Labour Party, personal capacity)

The cuts, along with £9 million worth off Edinburgh District Council, will also mean a 10 per cent across the board increase in council service charges and a drop in housing benefit staff of 15 per cent through natural wastage. Labour's promise to create nursery places and its expansion of the home help service will be stopped. The home help service will be halted.

"If the councils go ahead and make cuts, it would mean a vicious attack, in particular on the

poorest and most needy section of society," warned regional councillor, Keith Simpson.

But a joint meeting of Regional and District Party delegates voted for the "dented shield" policy and to "frustrate" the implementation of the poll tax.

### Tories rejected

Since the 1983 general election, the Tories have lost control of both the councils, and now have only two out of ten MPs in the area. Lothians people decisively rejected the Tories, but Rifkind, Thatcher's representative in Scotland, is carrying on attacking them.

But they did not vote for Labour councils to distribute Tory misery, either. On 4 August, the Regional Council meets to discuss its budget. "On that day the Labour group must give a lead to the campaign by stating quite clearly that they are not prepared to carry out Tory cuts," says Keith Simpson.

## Manchester

MANCHESTER CITY Council last week voted to increase rents by £2.00 and for a freeze on recruitment, aimed at shedding 4,000 jobs in the next two years. Last April, they passed a 'package for jobs' which raised rates 20 per cent and rents £1.50.

Further unspecified cuts of £38 million are planned. But council leader, Graham Stringer, says they can "create models and symbols of a socialist alternative to Thatcherism."

Since 1984, services have been expanded in Manchester, up until now. Now all the gains are under threat, as none of them are statutory obligations.

The union leadership have supported these cuts, but there is every sign that there will be fierce opposition among their rank and file.

By Councillor John Byrne

## Southwark

AFTER TWO long nights of debate, the majority Labour Group on Southwark Council voted for a cuts package designed to bridge a £3 million deficit still existing for the financial year 1987-8.

Labour leader and Bermondsey councillor, Anne Matthews, argued for a package of cuts which included a selective freeze, voluntary redundancies and stopping all capital projects. It became clear in the debate that the so-called 'voluntary' redundancies would become compulsory. Workers would be redeployed and sacked if they rejected their new posts.

Militant supporter, Councillor Brian Kelly, vigorously opposed the measures. "Instead of attacking the council workers and tenants of this borough, the Labour Group should give a lead and mobilise the people of Southwark in a campaign to obtain more resources from the government," he said. But his motion to this

effect was rejected.

Anne Matthews said his alternative was just wild optimism. "The Tories won the election. The miners and printers were defeated when they had a better chance, so there is no way we can win. We must just manage as best we can."

Ken Carlisle, councillor for Bermondsey's Abbey Ward, said there was no point 'pussy-footing about' and the Labour Group should do the job properly. He proposed a £2.50 rent increase, but this was rejected in favour of the Group leader's package.

Cuts motions were rejected twice, but eventually around 11pm on the second night, one was carried after many councillors had left.

It is expected to mean at least 500 redundancies, serious staff shortages and a further deterioration in already inadequate services.

By Southwark Militant supporters

## Right-wing manoeuvres in Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT Labour Party (DLP) has at last had an Annual General Meeting after being suspended for some months.

Whatever their excuses, the right-wing had caused the suspension because they could not stand a DLP that was not fully behind the council's right-wing policies.

### Cameras

Before the first election, several angry delegates pointed out that the Yardley and Small Heath parties, both bastions of the right, had not contributed financially to the DLP for over five years. The treasurer reported that only individual acts of charity had prevented court action over unpaid bills.

The right came to the

meeting seemingly well prepared but the vote for chair tied between their candidate and the soft left's. Another meeting will have to be held to resolve this impasse.

After the meeting, it became obvious that the well prepared right-wing delegate arrives at meetings not only with a pen and paper, but also a camera. A Sparkbrook delegate photographed Militant sellers while another right-winger told them, "Still a member of the Party, then? There must have been an oversight on our part."

After witnessing this behaviour, no-one would be surprised at Birmingham's poor election results.

By a Birmingham Labour Party member

## Good News?...

IN 1987, Labour Party subs rose to £10. Part of the rise was to pay for Labour Party News.

They would have hoped for more than what they get, a glossy magazine deliberately aimed at moving policy to the right. In four issues there has been one letter.

Reader participation is limited to a questionnaire in the current issue. It is aimed at "maximising revenue". Readers are asked what credit cards they own, if they read Readers' Digest (but not Militant, Tribune or even Labour Weekly), what consumer goods they own, about their hobbies and holidays (did you take three holidays last year?) and if they own stocks and shares!

Party members are out-

raged at threats to close Labour Weekly and Socialist Youth, especially when they realise that Labour Party News is what the leadership wants to replace them with.

By Kevin Parslow

## ...no, says Eric

THE CLOSURE of Labour Weekly, Socialist Youth and New Socialist would be deplorable, says Eric Heffer MP in a statement to his Constituency Labour Party.

"Part of the management restructuring that is underway would be the redundancy of the International Secretary," he points out. This would mean that "no longer would Labour have a serious international role", despite internationalism's important part in



socialist philosophy.

Pointing out that Socialist Youth breaks even, he says he believes the papers should con-

tinue even if they need a subsidy and that Labour Weekly should be developed into the Party's daily paper.

# IUSY festival—marxists face intimidation

**THE INTERNATIONAL Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) festival which was held in Valencia from 19th-24th July, was attended by 106 members of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) from all over Britain. To the British delegation the festival was of great political importance, given the situation facing youth and students throughout Europe and in particular the school students in Spain.**

The festival, which was held to mark the 80th anniversary of IUSY, itself founded on Marxist ideas, was widely criticised for its lack of politics. As one local newspaper reported it had more in common with a holiday camp than a meeting of international socialists.

Despite having originally booked more than 106 places, the LPYS were informed that only 50 would be allowed in. We immediately mounted a protest at the gates. When the first 50 credentials were issued to us they they were marked with a red triangle in the corner—the security guards (from the Spanish Socialist Party) had clearly been told to watch out for them. When other delegations saw what was happening they started changing their credentials in solidarity and joining the demonstration.

## Credentials

Finally, after 6 hours in the gruelling heat and having initially been told that it was absolutely impossible to allow the rest of the delegation in due to there being no more credentials, meal tickets or tents, the full LPYS delegation were allowed in with all three provided!

Next morning LPYS members were turned away from the "welcome" rally—they didn't have red spots on their credentials which were issued the previous night to delegation leaders, whilst the LPYS remained locked out.

Each day discussions were organised. Despite it being a camp of 5000 there were only facilities for about 1,000 to participate in these. Each consisted of four to six platform speakers followed by a

By John Jennings

handful of only very short contributions. In one discussion on the Middle East the LPYS entered 16 names to speak and not one was called.

However, we still intervened at every meeting—outside selling Socialist Youth, LPYS pamphlets and so on—and tried to speak in the meetings. It was clear that youth attending the camp were looking for an alternative from the IUSY leadership. Many described the horrendous conditions that faced youth in their countries. In the discussion on youth unemployment and the economic crisis, one German young socialist commented that he didn't know why he'd come to the event, when following the discussion young people faced the same problems as before and yet no alternative solution was offered by the IUSY leadership.

The ideas of the LPYS did get an excellent response when they were heard—the call for the international Labour movement to supply arms to the workers and youth of South Africa, for example, received rapturous applause in one discussion, as did a comrade who outlined the track record of the LPYS on involving women in political activity.

This contrasted starkly with the attitude of IUSY—whilst 40 per cent of delegations had to be women, there were no child-care facilities at the camp. In addition, following an assault on one female, when a security guard had pinned her against the wall and offered her money for sex, no action was forthcoming. It was the British

delegation which organised a meeting to discuss the incidents. Extra lighting, toilets to be open all night, and a democratically accountable security force were demanded. One of the IUSY bureaucrats offered the disgraceful "solution" that female members should have notices pinned to their backs in three different languages saying "I am not a prostitute."

A member of the Spanish School Students Union was removed from a discussion on the Spanish school strikes. Following protests, an LPYS member was picked up and manhandled by six security guards, forcing his arm up his back and putting their hands over his mouth.

Other intimidation during the week included the spray-painting of anti-LPYS slogans, racial abuse of black LPYS members, and threats of violence, in particular from individuals in the Danish section. A group of Spanish young socialists who said they had been wary of our delegation addressed us at the end of the camp describing us as the best one and that they were proud to know us.

## Hostile

For every member of the British LPYS delegation the camp confirmed the need for international socialism. This was particularly confirmed at a meeting of about 500 called by European Marxists. The meeting was leafletted by individuals from the Danish and Swedish sections, calling the Marxists undemocratic and splitters. Yet despite intimidation, with some of these individuals trying to disrupt the meeting, the best traditions of open and democratic debate were displayed, with speeches allowed from these openly hostile delegates.

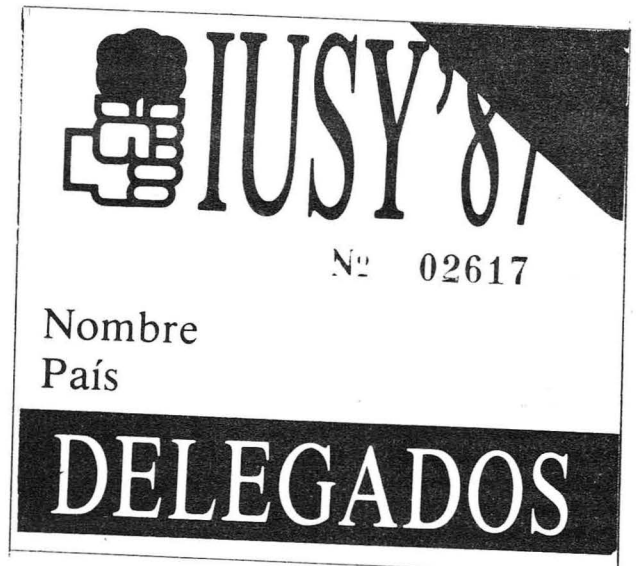
This IUSY festival was organised around the theme of solidarity. However, questions must be asked about democracy and accountability within IUSY.



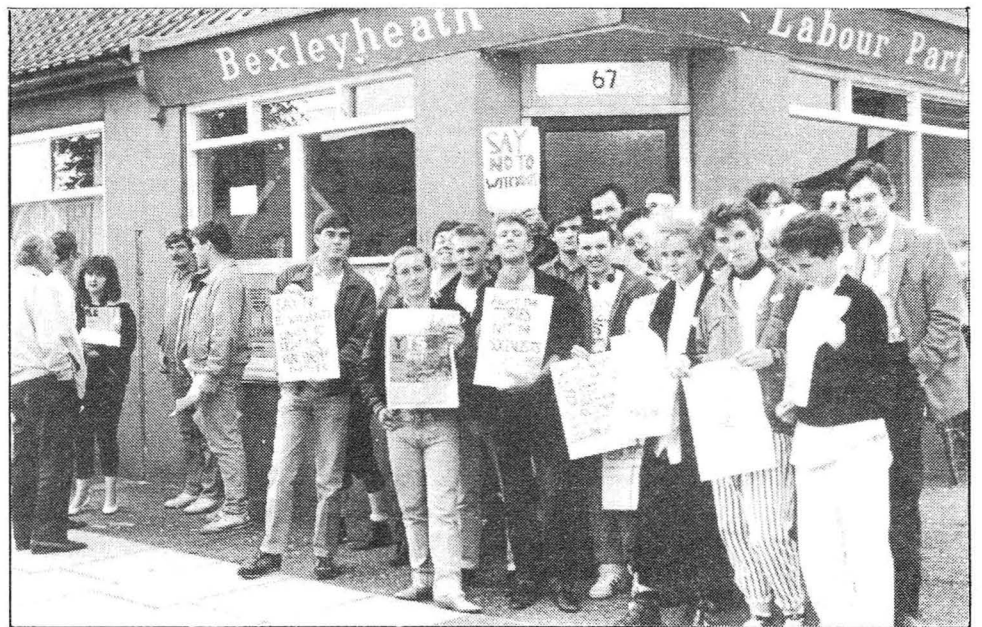
Threats and intimidation failed to dampen the resolve of the Marxists.

**This festival was organised around the theme of solidarity. However, questions must be asked about democracy and accountability within IUSY.**

Right: Only the British delegation had triangles marked on their credentials.



## Defend Lois Austen



## Scottish Youth March

LAST WEEK'S YTURC march through Central Scotland supported by Labour MPs Harry Ewing and Dennis Canavan made it clear that the Tories are in for a hiding when they try to introduce compulsory YTS in September.

Despite monsoon-like weather, workers and young people showed massive support. Over 1200 signatures were collected pledging support for YTURC's campaign against industrial conscription. 21 copies of *Socialist Youth* were sold and nine young people joined the Labour Party Young Socialists.

There might have been one more signature but a young SDP member in Alloa had to phone up to find out whether he could sign the petition. Sadly he failed to return! At Jaegers' factory in Alloa where many YTS workers are employed, the shop steward fully supported the march and passed around petitions and collecting tins in the factory.

It's Stirling too the march felt the warmth of our class when two fire

eaters performing at the local festival donated their street collection to YTURC funds. In Cowie youngsters of seven and eight followed the march chanting "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out!" as we marched to the local bowling club where every person in the bingo hall pledged their support.

The march was given a full page write up in the local Falkirk paper and we got great support when we held our street meeting and day of action. Saturday shoppers laughed and cheered as we sang and danced our way along the busy streets. After four long days the support had made us even more confident that the Tory YTS plans will be ferociously fought by young people.

It's up to YTURC and the LPYS to channel this anger into a massive national fightback through the labour and trade union movement.

By Alistair Duncan

OFFICERS OF Bexleyheath Labour Party are trying to expel Lois Austen, a 17 year old member, who has been an inspiration since joining the party when she was 15. For two and a half years she has devoted the majority of her time to building the Labour Party and especially the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS).

During that time she estimates she has recruited 18 to the party including most of her family. Lois played a dynamic role in building support for the sacked printers at Wapping, and has built a strong Labour Club at her college.

Her reward has been constant threats and obstacles from some in the party. Her LPYS branch was unconstitutionally shut down, then

re-established without her knowledge! Now she has been referred to the National Constitutional Committee on the charge of "sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the party."

No opportunity has been given to Lois to answer any of the allegations against her. In fact, the first she heard of them was in the local paper when it carried the headline: "We expose the red infiltrators," leaked by certain right-wing party members to stir things up.

## Priorities

Tremendous support for Lois has already been shown. Over 300 signed a petition against this witch-hunt at London Labour Party Conference and a lobby of 35 was recently held outside the Bexleyheath General Management Committee—twice as many

lobbied as went into the meeting, showing the weak state of the party.

A lot of activists are questioning the priorities of the party given the fact that there is now not one Labour councillor in the constituency.

One of those behind the attacks, Constituency Labour chairman Alan Hooper, resigned his position at the meeting.

Lois summed up her position: "I am committed to fighting for socialism. Whatever happens that commitment cannot be dampened."

All socialists should send protests to Bexleyheath Labour Party, Labour Party Rooms, 67 Pickford Lane, Bexleyheath, Kent. Messages of support to Lois Austen, 44 Lulworth Road, Welling, Kent.

By Jags Kirby

The press gang

# Fewer and bigger

THE NEWSPAPER industry in Britain is dominated by a few monopolies. Murdoch recently grabbed *Today* for just £38 million to add to the *Times*, *Sun*, *Sunday Times*, and *News of the World*.

The business is run for profit. And that has political implications. For a start, half a tabloid's revenue and two thirds of that of 'serious' papers comes from advertising rather than the cover price and he who pays the piper calls the Tory tune!

Since 1980 ten out of 17 national

dailies have changed hands. Lord Young decided not to refer the *Today* deal to the Monopolies Commission; none of Murdoch's grabs have faced investigation.

Murdoch gave Lord Young an ultimatum; either give him a free hand or the deal is off. Young felt deeply moved; he must save the 500 *Today* jobs! Murdoch of course sacked 5,000 workers at Wapping but Young 'forgot' that. On top of this another 2,000 jobs have gone from the *Express*.

## Friends of labour?

CAN THE labour movement overcome the Tory big business views of these giants? A few 'socialist' millionaires say they are already doing so.

But *News On Sunday*, launched only last April, is currently said to be losing £130,000 each week. Heralded as the great champion of the workers, it has reduced its staff by 45 per cent. "The paper that bites back" bit off more than it could chew.

A joint venture of 'socialist' multi-millionaire Owen Oyston and huge investments from union and local authority pension funds created a paper which many Labour supporters hoped would break Tory press domination.

### Control

But the trust left control in Oyston's hands even though initial finance from unions and local authorities totalled £5.2m. compared to Oyston's initial stake of £500,000! 11 of the top 12 investors were unions or local authorities but their sole representative on the board was Ron Todd.

*News On Sunday* is now in receivership and a "rescue package" gives Oyston and TGWU control with 37.5 per cent ownership each. Individual share holders control the remainder.

Millionaire Robert Maxwell pretends to support

Labour as long as they don't challenge the capitalist system! Maxwell owns 12 printing plants in the USA worth \$500m as well as his Mirror Group Newspapers.

Maxwell closed his *London Daily News* after five months. This "friend of labour" is amongst his real buddies at functions like the recent Aims of Industry binge to present the National Free Enterprise trophy to British Airways.

Apart from his cavalier attitude towards workers' jobs, Maxwell often intervenes to take any sting out of articles in the *Mirror*. During the miners' strike, he censored his industrial correspondent's comments on Thatcher's personal vendetta against the NUM.

An article by John Pilger on how the Youth Training Scheme was used for cheap labour was held up for two months so a reply from unemployment minister Tom King could be printed next to it. And when readers wrote in backing Pilger's views five to one, the letters were accompanied by another long 'reply' from King.

Pilger went on to *News On Sunday* but resigned because the editors wanted to produce a leftist *Sun*. Even the 'communist' *Morning Star* has sold its premises to the degrading 'soft porn' *Sunday Sport* firm so the *Sport* can produce a daily nudes sheet. How can workers get journalism sympathetic to their

cause?

In 1983 *Militant* supporter Jon Ingham moved a resolution at Labour Party conference calling on the movement to create its own daily paper to counter Tory press lies. The composite was passed but the resolution was ignored.

Now Labour's NEC even plan to close *Labour Weekly*, *New Socialist* and *Socialist Youth*, all of which carry articles unlikely to be endorsed by the right-wing dominated NEC.

### Alternative

Is there any alternative to a capitalist press? A recent *Times* editorial claims: "Fierce free market competition for readers, writers, advertisers, artists and managers is...the best guarantee of free choice for the reader, free expression of ideas, real freedom of the press."

What free choice when access to this propaganda machine is restricted to millionaires putting forward millionaire ideas? *Militant* stands for the nationalisation of press facilities under workers' control and management.

Press space should be apportioned to political groups according to their support with special provision for minority groups. At present the only minority represented in the national press are the rich!

By Ruth Campbell



Ex Labour MP and press tycoon Robert Maxwell sacked 250 workers at the *London Daily News*. Previously he had refused to recognise the print union SOGAT and tried to sign a no strike deal with the National Union of Journalists. Photo: Steve McTaggart.

## Method in their madness

"THE RULING ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class," Marx and Engels said in 1847. The press help to spread those ideas, but they do it in different ways.

The "serious" papers built up a reputation in Britain for informing their own class on the political problems of their day. *The Times* had the reputation of telling the truth in small things to lie all the better on important issues.

*The Times* reflected the views mainly of dominant finance capital, but it was careful to keep an independent critical role looking after what it saw as capitalism's long term interest. Murdoch has turned the Thunderer into just another flag waving Tory rag.

*The Times*, the *Independent* and the *Guardian* put forward ideas of some kind. What about papers like the *Sun*?

Most papers have a silly season during August. The *Sun*'s silly season is any day with a 'y' in it with front page headlines

such as "Freddie Starr ate my hamster" and features like "Is your neighbour a werewolf?". Even *Sun* journalists call their paper the *Beano*.

But they have a purpose apart from making their proprietors very rich. They put forward what they call "common sense" politics i.e. reactionary prejudices which fit in well with Thatcherism. Just read them when a strike comes along.

The comics treat politics as something foreign and left wing politics as something diseased. The experience of previous right wing Labour governments sadly helps this. Their aim is to stop the working class realising its own potential political strength.

Workers will read a socialist paper which shows how workers can change society. The growth in support for *Militant* shows that. The best way to fight the ideas of the ruling class, *Sun* style or 'serious' is to help us move to a twice weekly then a daily *Militant*.



SUMMER TIME and the selling is easy, so take *Militant* on the streets. Many areas have town carnivals and festivals. Comrades in Newham, London sold over 50 *Militants* during their "People's Festival." They also sold pamphlets and invited people to throw a sponge at someone with a Thatcher mask on for 10p a

go!  
Make the Saturday high street sales lively with stalls, megaphones and petitions as well as papers. People will stop and talk when the weather is fine.

Don't forget, though, if you go on holiday and have regular sales, make sure somebody else delivers them.

## LEFT and RIGHT

### Entente violente

NATIONAL PLASTICS, a section of the Courtaulds' multinational say they have done their bit for the entente cordiale by sending a sample riot helmet to the French gendarmerie. They hope for a big order for what they claim to be the hardest hat on the market.

What's more it's been personalised, a bit like a customised car with the RF gendarmerie emblem

on the front. Harry the designer "made a beautiful job of the emblem" gushed the sales manager. I don't know if the workers and students who have been on the receiving end of police attacks will be able to appreciate the aesthetics of the situation.

### Some mistake surely

THE GREATER London Labour Party's officials have apologised for a

terrible error in their election rally in Fulham. They told national officials: "Being our first rally, there was some confusion over it being for party members only, and a number of genuine electors were admitted in error." Letting the public into meetings? Where do you think you are, Liverpool?

### Thatcher washes whitest

DESPITE BUYING press and TV space only on the first 11 days of the month, the Tory Party were still

by far the biggest spenders on advertising in June. Their total of £2.66 million outdid every other 'brand' with Whiskas Supermeat at £1.58 million a poor second.

The total Tory spending for May and June was just short of £4 million, more than twice Labour's record expenditure—and that excludes poster advertising where the Tories got most of the prime sites.

Neil Kinnock should ponder on this a bit. You can't beat the moneybags party at this game. Why not try socialism at the next election?

# End the chaos of cancer screening

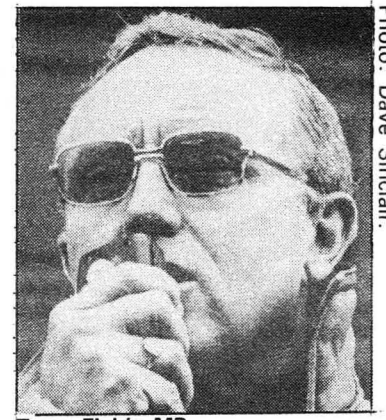


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Terry Fields MP.

**“ONE OF my constituents was diagnosed as suffering from cervical cancer in January. In February it was confirmed, but this woman must wait until December before she can start to receive initial treatment to combat that potentially killer disease.”—Terry Fields in Parliament on 8 July.**

**“President Reagan has had a third recurrence of skin cancer on his nose and will go into hospital tomorrow to have more tissue removed.” The Independent 31 July.**

Speaking in Parliament on 8 July, Terry Fields, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, demanded that the inquiry by Liverpool Regional Health Authority into the recall of 487 women for cervical smear testing be made public, and a system of recall screening be established nationally.

“Cervical cancer is a cancer of the neck of the womb, or the uterine cervix. It is one of the most common causes of the premature death of women. Over 2,000 women die unnecessarily of cervical cancer every year. Those deaths are preventable, provided adequate screening techniques are used and women receive appropriate treatment...it is incorrect to assume that only older women are at risk. A woman becomes at risk when she begins sexual intercourse, which varies widely from person to person. Therefore, there should be no minimum age limit for women requesting a first smear, and publicity should be given to the need for screening from at least the age of 20.

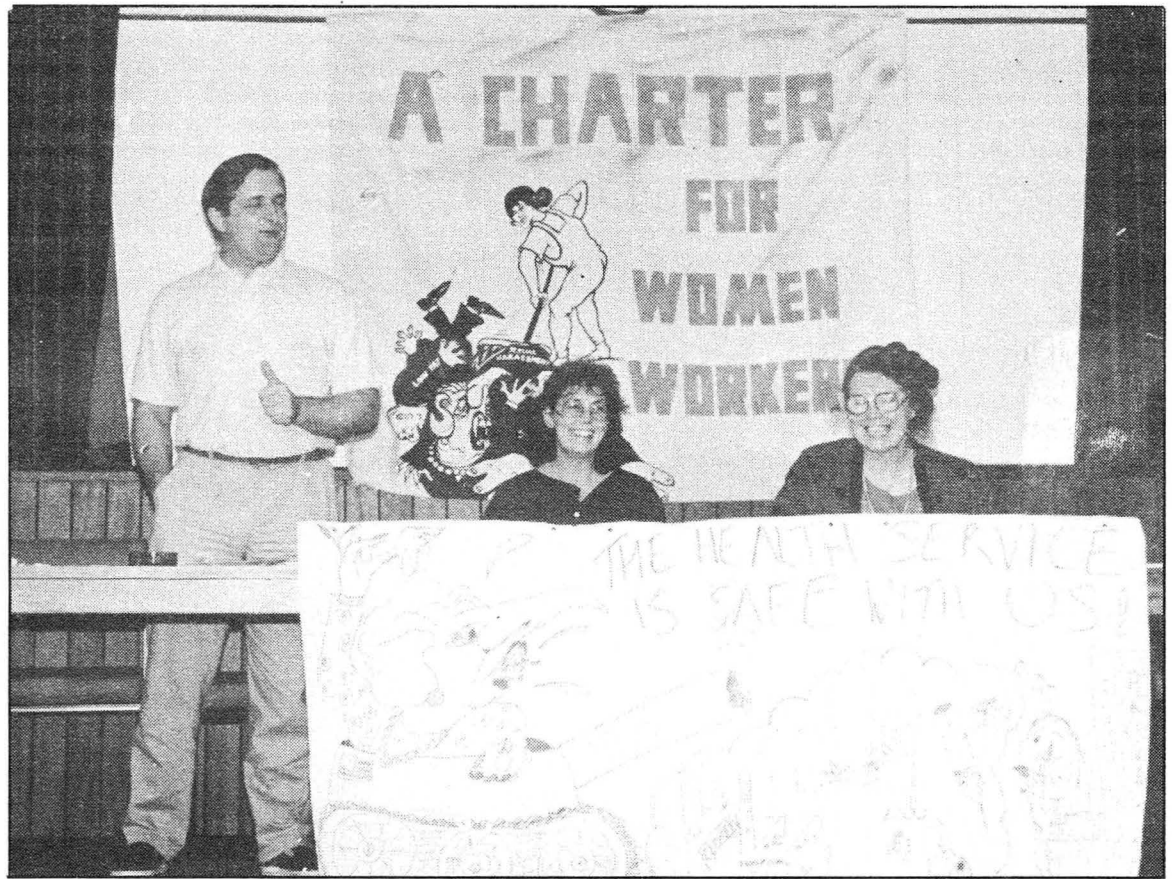
throughout the country. The internal review conducted by the Liverpool health authority is totally inadequate for that purpose...The two most vital things that are required...are a public inquiry and a national quality control scheme to... ensure that monitoring of the results is carried out...

On 3 July the Minister reported that 75 health authorities were now computerised...75 out of 191, which is equal to 39 per cent of all area health authorities. That means that the other 61 per cent are not computerised.

The Minister also reported that 19 of those 75 health authorities had call and recall systems. That means that nine per cent of the 191 authorities are attempting to deal with the problem of cervical cancer.

This is an exposition of scandalous complacency by a woman Minister dealing with a problem that affects the nation's women...I am making ten demands on behalf of the women's council, the community health authorities in the Liverpool area and Liverpool women:

1. A national, integrated, NHS-based call and recall system.
2. Mobile screening units to visit estates and shopping centres.
3. Health authorities to seek out women at high risk, not depend on women volunteering themselves.
4. Screening facilities available at the workplace, or time off to visit a clinic.
5. Well Woman clinics operating throughout the country.
6. Women doctors available wherever possible to carry out the tests.
7. Follow-up tests to be done with sensitivity, explaining if it is due only to a technical problem.
8. Use of the most up-to-date equipment available.
9. Counselling for women when cancer is detected.
10. Oppose the privatisation of NHS services and support the public ownership of supplies to the NHS. ”



Tommy McGloughlan describes the long shifts involved in working in the Health Service, while the NHS is left to crumble. Photo: Graham Smillie.

## Investigation

In 1987 the Liverpool area health authority revealed that, during the 21 months between March '83 and December '85, nearly 800 cervical smear test slides had been passed as 'normal' when in fact abnormalities were present which required further investigation. The health authority decided that 487 should be recalled.

One hundred of those people have since received, or are receiving, treatment and some have had hysterectomies. One can imagine the distress and worry if one's wife, daughter or grandchildren, or if my wife, had that problem. Tragically, there have been reports of at least one death, if not more, within the Liverpool area.

...The error which puts hundreds of Liverpool women at risk, must be thoroughly investigated and the findings acted upon by providing screening services

**ON 25 May, Liverpool Health Authority announced the decision to put out to consultation the proposed closure of five major hospitals, cut-backs in acute and orthopaedic back up beds and slashing the health budget by a further £5.35m. Liverpool Labour Womens' Council have made this its priority campaign since that day.**

The response has been tremendous. A city-wide petition is appearing in pubs, clubs, hospitals and schools. The response isn't only in moral support, we got permission from our local authority and in 2.5 hours we collected £100! As part of our campaign we held a public meeting on 21 July on the theme "Defend patient care and workers' jobs". 60 people, many representing health trade unions, heard a NUPE am-

balanceman, Tommy McGloughlan, give a glimpse into the life of a poorly paid NHS worker during a recent 60 hour shift.

Lily Hopkins spoke of her traumatic experience after being told that she was one of the 487 women recalled by Liverpool Health Authority because abnormalities had been found in a batch of 800 cervical smears, this dates back from March '83 to December '85. One hundred women have since received or are receiving treatment and some have had hysterectomies. At least one death, if not more, has happened here in Liverpool.

## Public inquiry

A number of these women have organised themselves into a support group and Liverpool Labour Womens' Council is supporting their demand for an independent, public inquiry and to

help raise money for a test case if necessary.

Cathy Wilson, secretary of Liverpool Womens' Council urged the audience to fight the closure plans and to join the political battle to save the NHS. The economic and social conditions here in Liverpool demand a first class health service.

The meeting voted unanimously to continue our campaign by a demonstration and lobby of the Health Authority on 25 August. It also resolved to support the women fighting to change the system of cervical cancer screening, so that never again will anyone go through such a nightmare. A further £35 was raised to help the Save Liverpool Hospitals Campaign.

**By Cathy Wilson**  
(Secretary Liverpool Women's Council)

# Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	8499		9400
2 East Midlands	1771		3250
3 Northern	2278		4600
4 Scotland East	1383		2800
5 Scotland West	1686		3500
6 Eastern	1303		3050
7 South East	970		2250
8 Wales	1986		4850
9 Yorkshire	3130		8450
10 South West	619		1900
11 West Midlands	1574		4850
12 Merseyside	2211		7500
13 Manchester	1077		4050
14 Southern	788		3100
15 National	17,498		6950
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,771</b>		<b>70,000</b>

AT THE time of writing, we've already raised £10,000 more than the total for last quarter. This reflects the practical support for our ideas during the election campaign when over £20,000 flooded into our offices.

Sellers all over the country explained our ideas on the doorstep and on the street, asking for donations and Solidarity price from every paper sale and shaking their rattling tins.

We have no rich backers, but rely on the pennies and pounds of ordinary working people who want to see an end to the misery of capitalism.

But it's not just at election time that we're asking for cash. Our total of £4,893 since our last issue shows that every-

thing else may slow down in August, but not our sellers' enthusiasm for fundraising! On the streets of Putney, collections on a paper sale brought in £29.50! In Harlow, £20 was raised using our new Appeal sheets.

Money continues to come in as well from public meetings, with £60 from Hull, £212 from Sussex, £40 from Hackney, £33 from Walton and £151 from Battersea.

There are countless donations from trade unionists every week: Paul Harrison COHSE £15; Eddy Gulliford NUPE £20; Paul Lewis NUTGW £5; Jim McGuinness UCATT £10; Margaret Phillips NUT £5; Gedling NUM extras £6 and a fiver from a Renishaw Park miner.

The bulk of our money comes from donations from the working class, but our readers are always thinking of other ways of raising cash. So thanks go to a Cheshire reader for £5 for haircuts!; Harlow readers for £8 from a Trivial Pursuits evening and Derby readers for £25 from their social.

The final chart will appear next week, but don't waste too much time patting yourself on the back, the new quarter starts now and we want to make sure it's a record one!

Thanks also to: Helen and Andy Walsh, Manchester £15; Gedling readers £12.34; J Paterson Luton £10; John Ingleton, Hackney £9.50; M Prendergast, Leicester £6; L de Roberto, Gillingham £20 and special thanks to 'anonymous' Hackney, for £1,500.

# The month of the

## From July to August when the Bolsheviks were hounded and persecuted

AFTER THE defeat of the July days, the Bolsheviks had their backs to the wall. Their press had been smashed and many of their leaders were being hounded. The reaction was further boosted by the 'revelation' that Lenin was really in the pay of the Germans. This lie peddled by a couple of drunken adventurers, implausible though it was, was suddenly seized upon by the press with all the power of the establishment behind it.

The ruling class had felt the full weight of the revolutionary threat to their rule, in the July demonstrations and in the growing sympathy amongst the masses for Bolshevism. So all the forces of capitalist opinion turned their fire on those who dared to challenge the accepted order—the Bolshevik leaders. As Trotsky explains all the parties virtually ceased attacking each other, to concentrate on "their common baiting of the Bolsheviks".

For workers today slanders and gross personal abuse by the capitalist press and politicians of those who fight back, will seem all too familiar.

In every major strike the paid slanderers of Fleet Street wheel out their lie machine. It was directed at Arthur Scargill throughout the miner's heroic strike. John Macreadie of the CPSA has recently been a target.

### Press smears

The more effective, the more determined to change society, then the more degenerate and despicable are the smears thrown at workers' leaders. Capitalism in crisis has no answer to the real ideas of socialism and Marxism, it has to resort to desperate attempts to besmirch them in the eyes of ordinary workers.

Militant and its supporters have been picked out for the most concentrated attention by capitalism and its various means for moulding public opinion. And through the pressure from capital, the right wing in the labour and trade union movement have joined in.

It was in their persecution of Liverpool Council that the capitalist papers excelled themselves. "Slanders poured down like Niagara". Did not every serious commentator and political party sink their differences in the smears they threw at Liverpool Council which almost alone stood up to Thatcher's cuts? Every vile, groundless accusation was dreamt up by the Tories and the press of "intimidation", "jobs for the boys", "misuse of public money".



Lenin disguised to avoid arrest.

Roy Hattersley libelled the councillors with charges of "literal and political corruption". Robert Maxwell sunk to the level of blaming the Militant Tendency for the tragedy at the Heysel football stadium in Belgium.

Of course the denigration and the physical attacks on the Bolsheviks in July were far more severe. But in the revolutionary conditions of the 1917, the danger posed to capitalism was more immediate and grave.

The Bolsheviks survived this month of lies and slurs. Their members tempered and hardened by the experience. By August a new chapter in the Russian Revolution was already opening, in which the Bolsheviks were able to take a leading part, throwing off any mud that might have stuck, and building the support in the ranks of the working class, that allowed them to be the decisive force in the dramatic days of October.

Militant here reprints extracts from Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, on the 'month of the great slander.'

## Russian revolution 70th anniversary



The Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party in 1917.

### Extracts from Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution

On a scale hitherto unheard of, the slander was sown in the thick of the popular masses, a vast majority of whom had heard of the Bolshevik leaders for the first time only after the February revolution. Mud slinging here became a political factor of primary importance...

But how did it happen that the materials of a preliminary investigation appeared in print, and moreover just at the moment when the shattered offensive of Kerensky was becoming a catastrophe, and the July demonstration in Petrograd was revealing the irresistible growth of the Bolsheviks? One of the initiators of this business, the attorney general, Bassarabov, later frankly described in the press how, when it became clear that the Provisional Government in Petrograd was wholly without reliable armed forces, it was decided in the district headquarters to try to create a psychological change in the regiments by means of some strong medicine...

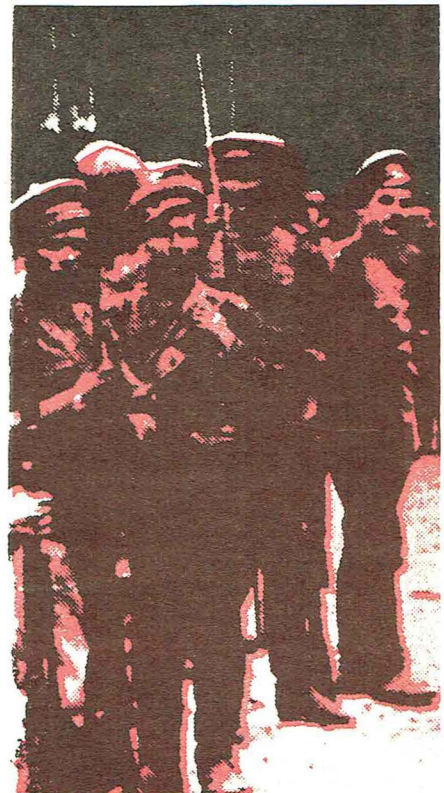
Zinoviev appeared at a sitting of the bureau of the Executive Committee (of the Soviet), and in the name of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks demanded that immediate measures be taken to exonerate Lenin and to prevent possible consequences of the slander. The bureau could not refuse to appoint a commission of inquiry.

But the July days had produced a serious shift of power to the right, and moreover the Soviet commission was in no hurry to fulfil a task obviously in conflict with the political interests of

those who had entrusted it. The more serious of the Compromise leaders—that is, properly speaking, only the Mensheviks—were concerned to establish a formal disconnection with the slander, but nothing more. In all cases where it was impossible to avoid making some direct answer, they would in a few words clear themselves of guilt. But they did not extend a finger to ward off the poisoned sword poised over the head of the Bolsheviks. A popular image of their policy was once provided by the Roman proconsul, Pilate...

### Dirty accusations

Speaking on the 17th at a joint session of the two Executive Committees, Trotsky said: "An intolerable atmosphere has been created, in which you as well as we are choking. They are throwing dirty accusations at Lenin and Zinoviev. (Voice: 'That is true.' Uproar. Trotsky continues.) There are in this hall, it appears, people who sympathise with these accusations. There are people here who have only sneaked into the revolution. (Uproar. The president's bell long tries to restore order.)...Lenin has fought thirty years for the revolution. I have fought twenty years against the oppression of the people. And we cannot but cherish a hatred for German militarism... A suspicion against us in that direction could be expressed only by those who do not know what a revolutionist is. I have been sentenced by a German court to eight months imprisonment for my struggle against German militarism...This



everybody knows. Let nobody in this hall say that we are hirelings of Germany, for that is not the voice of convinced revolutionists but the voice of scoundrels" (Applause)...

On July 5 Lenin, in a conversation with Trotsky, raised the question: "Aren't they getting ready to shoot us all?" Only such an intention could explain the official stamp placed upon that monstrous slander. Lenin considered the enemy capable of carrying through to the end the scheme they had thought up, and decided not to fall into their hands...

The disinclination of the Soviet Commission to begin the promised investigation finally convinced Lenin that the Compromisers were washing their hands of the case, and leaving it to the mercies of the White Guards.

The officers and junkers, who had by that time broken up the party printing plant, were now beating up and arresting in the streets everyone who protested against the charge of espionage against the Bolsheviks. Lenin therefore decided to go into hiding—not from the investigation, but from possible attempts upon his life...

While agitators of the hostile camp were telling a thousand stories—Lenin is on a destroyer, Lenin has fled to Germany in a submarine, etc—the majority of the Executive Committee hastily condemned Lenin for avoiding an investigation. Ignoring the political essence of the accusation, and the pogrom situation in which, and for the sake of which, it was launched, the Compromisers came out as champions of pure justice.

In company with Zinoviev, Lenin passed a number of weeks in the environs of Petrograd in a forest near Sestroretsk. They had to spend the nights and find shelter from rain in a haystack. Disguised as a fireman Lenin then crossed the Finland border on a locomotive, and concealed himself in the apartment of a Helsingfors police chief, a former Petrograd worker. Afterward he moved nearer the Russian border, to Vyborg. From the end of September he lived secretly in Petrograd. And on the day of the insurrection he appeared, after an almost four months' absence, in the open arena.

The German government could obviously have helped the Bolsheviks, not with ideas, but with money. But money was just



# The great slander



Soldiers of the First Machine Gun Regiment after being disarmed, following the 'July Days'.

what the Bolsheviks did not have. The centre of the party abroad during the war was struggling with cruel need: a hundred francs was a big sum; the central organ was appearing once a month, or once in two months, and Lenin was carefully counting the lines in order not to exceed his budget. The expenses of the Petrograd organisation during the war years amounted to a few thousand roubles, which went mostly to the printing of illegal leaflets. In two and a half years only 300,000 copies of these leaflets were distributed in Petrograd.

**Was it in actual fact possible for the possessing classes to surrender their place to the Bolsheviks without having made a last desperate effort to trample them in the blood and filth?**

However, in spite of the swift growth of the party and of money receipts, *Pravda* was, in physical proportions the smallest of all the party papers...

In order to send papers to the front, it became necessary again and again to take up special collections among the workers. And even so, the Bolshevik papers arrived in the trenches in incomparably fewer number than the papers of the Compromisers and Liberals. Complaints about this were continual. "We are living only on the rumour of your papers," wrote the soldiers...

The character of the accusations, and of the accusers, inevitably give rise to the question, how could people of normal mould believe, or even pretend to believe, in this notorious lie which was inept from beginning to end? The success of the Intelligence Service would in truth have been unthinkable, except for the general atmosphere created by war, defeat, ruin, revolution, and the embitterment of the social struggle. Since the Autumn of 1914 nothing had gone well with the ruling classes of Russia. The ground was crumbling under their feet. Everything was falling from their hands. Misfortunes were coming down on them from all directions. How could they help seeking a scapegoat?..

The July slander against the Bolsheviks least of all fell down out of a clear sky. It was the natural fruit of panic and hate,

the last link in a shameful chain, the transfer of a stereotyped slanderous formula to its new and final object, permitting a reconciliation of the accusers and the accused of yesterday. All the insults of the ruling group, all their fears, all their bitterness, were now directed against that party which stood at the extreme left and incarnated most completely the unconquerable force of the revolution. Was it in actual fact possible for the possessing classes to surrender their place to the Bolsheviks without having made a last desperate effort to trample them in the blood and filth? That tangle of slander, well snarled up from long useage, was inevitably fated to come down on the heads of the Bolsheviks...

During the July events the Bolsheviks themselves sought for an alien and criminal hand in certain unexpected excesses that were obviously provoked with malice aforethought. Trotsky wrote in those days: "What role has been played in this by counter-revolutionary provocation and German agents? It is difficult at present to pronounce definitely upon this question... We must await the results of an authentic investigation... But even now it is possible to say with certainty that the results of such an investigation will throw a clear light upon the work of Black Hundred gangs, and upon the underground role played by gold, German, English or 100 per cent Russian, or indeed all three of them. But no judicial investigation will change the political meaning of the events. The worker and soldier masses of Petrograd were not, and could not have been, bought. They are not in the service of Wilhelm, or Buchanan, or Miliukov. The movement was prepared by the war, by oncoming hunger, by the reaction lifting its head, by the headlessness of the government, by the adventurist offensive, by the political distrust and revolutionary alarm of the workers and soldiers."

**T**he history of all revolutions and civil wars invariably testifies that a threatened or an overthrown ruling class is disposed to find the cause of its misfortunes, not in itself, but in foreign agents and emissaries...

Under these theories about the revolutionary role of foreign agents, as under all typical mass-misunderstandings, there lies an indirect historical foundation. Consciously or unconsciously, ev-

ery nation at the critical period of its existence makes especially broad and bold borrowings from the treasury of other peoples. Not frequently, moreover, a leading role in the progressive movement is played by people living on the border or emigrants returning to the homeland. The village against the city, the backwoods against the capital, the petty bourgeois against the worker—they all defend themselves under the guise of a national force resisting foreign influence. Miliukov portrayed the Bolshevik movement as 'German' for the same reason in the last analysis that the Russian peasant has for a hundred years regarded as a German any man dressed up in city clothes. The difference is that the peasant was making an honest mistake...

When it comes to a threat against their material interest, the educated classes set in motion all the prejudices and confusion which humanity is dragging in its wagon-train behind it...

## All parties bait Bolsheviks

The struggle of the other parties among themselves was almost like a family spat in comparison with their common baiting of the Bolsheviks. In conflict with one another they were, so to speak, only getting in training for a further conflict, a decisive one. Even in employing against each other the sharpened accusation of German connections, they never carried the thing through to the limit. July presents a different picture. In the assault upon the Bolsheviks all the ruling forces, the government, the courts, the Intelligence Services, the staffs, the officialdom, the municipalities, the parties of the soviet majority, their press, their orators, constituted one colossal unit. The very disagreement among them, like the different tone qualities of the instruments in an orchestra, only strengthened the general effect. An inept invention of two contemptible creatures was elevated to the height of a factor in history. The slanders poured down like Niagara. If you take into consideration the setting—the war and the revolution—and the character of the accused—revolutionary leaders of millions who were conducting their party to the sovereign power—you can say without exaggeration that July 1917 was the month of the most gigantic slander in world history.

**16 June—Kerensky orders new offensive at the front.**

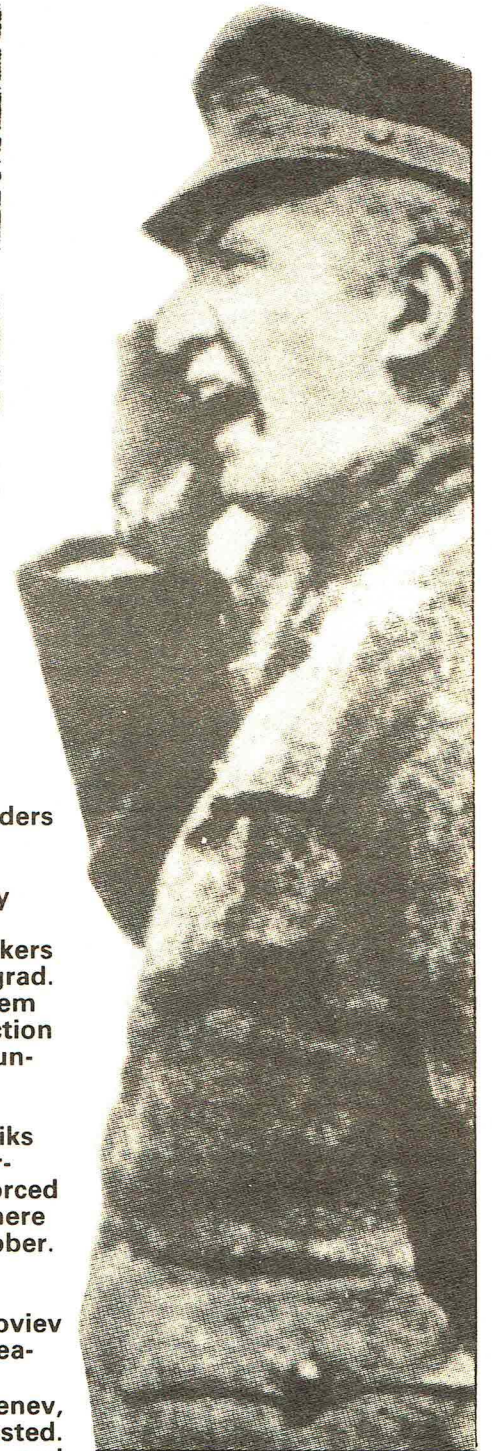
**3 to 5 July—The 'July Days': mass armed demonstration of workers and soldiers in Petrograd. Bolsheviks restrain them from outright insurrection before rest of the country ready.**

**Lenin, Trotsky and other leading Bolsheviks accused of being 'German agents'. Lenin forced to go into hiding, where he remains until October.**

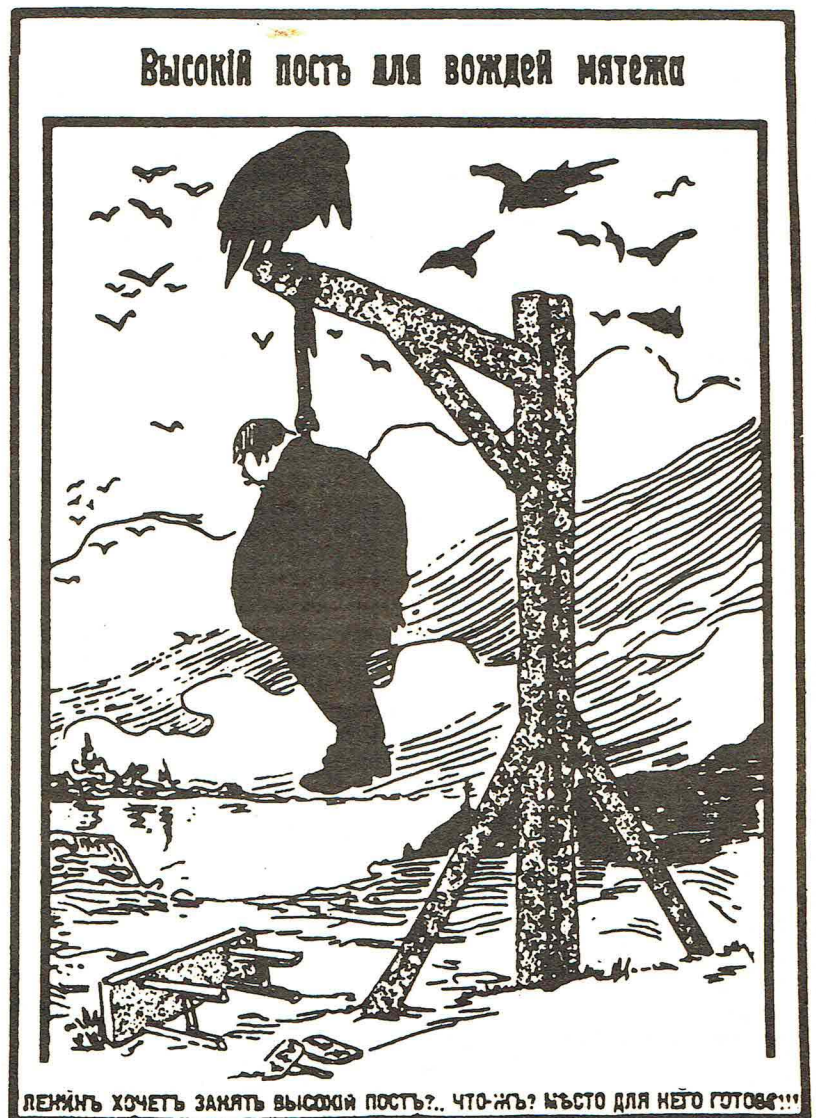
**6 July—Offensive collapses.**

**21 July—Lenin, Zinoviev charged with state treason.**

**23 July—Trotsky, Kamenev, Lunarcharsky arrested. Pravda offices raided and wrecked.**



Kerensky, who stood at the head of the Provisional Government.



ЛЕНИНЪ ХОЧЕТЪ ЗАНЯТЬ ВЫСОКИЙ ПОСТЬ?... ЧТО-ЖЪ? МЪСТО ДЛЯ НЕГО ГОТОВО!!!

Cartoon from capitalist paper in July. Caption reads: "Lenin wants a high post?... Well, a position is ready for him."

## Canadian Tories on the run

"AT AN appropriate time the anti-trade, anti-American, anti-NATO, anti-business policies of the NDP will be examined by the Canadian people," blustered Canada's Tory prime minister Mulroney shortly before the three crucial by-elections fought on 20 July.

A Conservative election circular claimed that the New Democratic Party would establish a "Soviet-style" government.

But despite—or because of—an all-out Tory campaign fought on anti-left lines, all three seats went to the NDP. In St Johns East, Newfoundland, a Tory majority of 25,000 was turned into an NDP majority of 4,000. In the distant northwest another Tory stronghold, the Yukon, fell to the NDP.



Canadian premier Mulroney and wife.

Opinion polls confirm an unprecedented swing to the NDP the party of Canadian labour, previously seen as the no-hope number three party. The latest poll shows 41 per cent support for the NDP nationally (twice its present strength in parliament), 35 per cent for the Liberals and 23 per cent for the ruling conservatives.

These figures reflect a massive rejection of the government's Thatcherite economic policies. But above all they reflect the militancy building up among the working class on the crest of the continuing industrial strike wave.

The NDP is traditionally associated with radical policies such as nationalisation, withdrawal from NATO and strong sanctions against South Africa. They are pledged to halt US Cruise missile tests in Canada and to halt US takeovers of Canadian industries.

Yet now the NDP leaders are concluding that more 'moderation' is needed. They would like to scrap the policies which mark them off from the discredited capitalist parties, and move towards the 'centre'

—while the tide of the working class is flowing to the left!

The rightward shift by the NDP leaders, if continued, will lead to bitter disappointment among workers and youth and dissipate the present magnificent support.

We reprint (in edited form) an article which first appeared in the June issue of the US socialist paper, *Labor Militant*, explaining the background to the dramatic by-election results. Since the article was written the post office letter carriers have achieved what was seen as a significant victory over the government, and concessions have been made to railway workers, as the government prepares to take on the post office inside workers.

# Strike wave sweeps NDP to the top



Pickets outside Gainers meat packing factory, Edmonton. Top: Police with riot sticks patrol strikers.

ON JUNE the *Toronto Star* reported: "Corporate Canada is so robust that investors are knocking down doors to press record quantities of new money upon it."

By Steve Pybus

Bricklayers Union, Toronto

Translated, this means the employers are making so much profit that money is flowing into investments in their companies from all directions.

Profits are soaring because the employers have used all their laws, the police and the threat of unemployment to force cuts in wages. In province after province welfare benefits and the social services are being cut.

These attacks are accompanied by an onslaught on workers' rights to organise. Recently the Supreme Court of Canada upheld federal and provincial laws that deprived workers of their right to strike, arbitrarily set their wages, and forced them into compulsory arbitration.

In Quebec a recent four week transit (transport) strike was legislated back to work. In British Columbia, the newly-passed Bill 19 and Bill 20 ban the closed shop, allow scabs to vote on a new contract and give dictatorial powers to a government-appointed commissioner of industrial relations.

Employers and the federal government have been preparing to cut \$132 million (£1 = C\$2.14) off post office spending by attacking workers' living standards. To pre-

pare the postal services for privatisation, they aim to cut 8,700 jobs and introduce a two tier wage system.

The government and post office management are intent on provoking a strike. They see the postal workers as the most militant union force nationally. In every city, scabs are being trained at secret locations.

Throughout 1986, in an attempt to intimidate the labour movement, over 1,000 workers were arrested for picketing. In 1987 this trend has continued. A worker on a picket line in Quebec has been killed by police. Union offices have been raided. In New Brunswick, striking woodcutters have been gassed and clubbed.

Far from intimidating the movement, these attacks have been answered with powerful and determined resistance.

In 1985, 100,000 new members joined the unions, and wages rose above inflation for the first time in five years. The *Wall Street Journal* commented that labour militancy was on the rise in Canada, in contrast to other industrial countries.

In British Columbia, lumber workers were on strike for over four months in 1986. On 1 June a 24-hour general strike to oppose Bill 19 and Bill 20 was supported by over 90 per cent of organised labour.

Last year, public sector workers in Newfoundland came out in what amounted to a partial general strike. The strike by the Gainer meatpackers in Alberta received overwhelming support

throughout Canada. The attempt to bust their union was defeated.

In Saskatchewan, throughout April and May, mass demonstrations took place outside the provincial legislature. In Quebec transit workers and hotel workers have been on strike, and miners have occupied their mine.

In Toronto, post office cleaners stayed on the picket line for up to six months. In New Brunswick, striking woodcutters have been blocking the roads to plants. Police are on strike in four small towns in New Brunswick, and police in New Westminster, British Columbia, have also threatened strike action.

**In 1986, over 1,000 workers were arrested for picketing but these attacks have met determined resistance.**

It is not only on the industrial plane that the fight is being taken to the employers. The New Democratic Party, based on the trade unions, has gone from 19 per cent support in the 1984 elections to the top of recent opinion polls.

The developing confrontation between employers and labour will escalate in the months ahead. The British Columbia pro-big business government has threatened to use its new laws to jail trade unionists. The mood of the postal workers is angry and

defiant.

Canadian labour has very militant traditions. In 1972, an indefinite general strike in Quebec led to a confrontation with the government, in the course of which workers took over and ran a radio station for several hours. In October 1976 over one million took part in the first all-Canada general strike to protest wage controls.

A return to these traditions lies ahead in the coming months and years.

The Canadian economy faces a serious crisis. Prices of grain, oil, gas, minerals and lumber, which western and prairie provinces depend on, have fallen. Manufacturing growth will collapse with the slowing down of the US economy and the rise in protectionism.

Support for the federal government of the so-called Progressive Conservatives, led by "Lying Brian" Mulroney, has slumped. Its response has been to step up its attacks on labour.

Defence spending is to be increased by up to five per cent in real terms. Strengthened armed forces and new laws will be available to use against labour.

Splits are opening up among big business and its political parties as the economic prospects worsen and the labour movement increasingly uses its strength to defend living standards.

Unprecedented opportunities exist for labour and its political voice, the NDP. Unfortunately the NDP leaders do not understand that the reason why the

party's support has gone up so dramatically is the class polarisation in society and the increasing struggles by organised labour.

Instead of putting forward a socialist programme to defend wages, conditions and benefits, and provide full employment, the NDP leaders distance themselves from the strike movement.

The leaders seek to water down the party programme. The NDP is committed to pulling Canada out of NATO. Yet the defence spokesperson recently entered parliament carrying a briefcase with the NATO symbol stamped on it!

The NDP leaders should learn the lessons of Europe. Abandoning socialist policies brought no success to the labour and Socialist parties of Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, France and Greece.

The NDP should link openly and proudly with organised labour. It should put forward a socialist alternative to the parties of big business, including the nationalisation of the top 200 corporations under workers' control and management. It should seek to build links with US labour, and assist in the building of a labour party there.

Only socialist policies can solve the problems now mounting in front of Canadian workers and youth. Fighting on these policies, an NDP government can be elected. A socialist Canada can be established, opening the road to socialist change in the USA and a socialist federation of North America.



Exclusive picture from Seoul: student injured in demonstrations.

# South Korea

## Workers' action grows in wake of student movement

**THE REVOLUTIONARY** turbulence set in motion by the South Korean students' movement is deepening with the working class moving into activity.

From a correspondent in Seoul

There were over 100 strikes during the first weeks of July (about six a day), compared with 10 to 20 a month previously. Clothing workers and taxi drivers are among the most militant.

The mood is spreading to

Korean workers abroad. Seventeen seamen have been locked up on a Korean ship docked in the USA following a strike.

Unions are being revitalised and the authorities are being forced to allow them to organise.

In one incident the Chong Yii Garment Workers' Union was told it could start operating openly. But when workers arrived at the union headquarters on 7 July they found it surrounded by hundreds of police.

Only after fighting and bloodshed did the workers

regain possession of their headquarters.

There is widespread mistrust of the military regime's promises of reforms. Slogans on the walls of Seoul read: "For a revolutionary constituent assembly!" "Kill Roh Tae Woo!"

(Roh is the ruling DJP's candidate in the coming presidential election, who is trying to claim personal credit for the retreats by dictator Chun.)

Families of political prisoners are insisting that opposition leader Kim Young Sam should stop talking to

the government until all detainees have been released.

South Korea's capitalist system, even on the basis of free elections, cannot accommodate the demands for radical change that have been unleashed by the movement from below.

Among the youth, even at this early stage, it is reported that the works of Trotsky are being read. The search for Marxist ideas is the clearest indication of their determination to end capitalism and establish genuine democracy.

## International notes

### Sudan

ANOTHER EPISODE in the unstable history of Sudan is being written. Faced with all the problems of an underdeveloped African economy—huge debts to the West, food shortages and corruption, all exacerbated by civil war in the south—the masses are once again putting their imprint on events.

The government of Prime Minister Sadiq-al-Mahdi is in arrears to the International Monetary Fund to the tune of \$600 million and has been told: "no more loans." Last year Sudan's total income from exports was only \$250 million—not even enough to service the interest!

In 1985 the dictatorship of US-backed President Numeiri was brought down by a massive movement of workers and peasants demanding an end to economic crisis, price rises, shortages and the effects of the Sharia (Islamic Law), introduced as a means of further repression.

Since then there has been a year of military rule, elections, and little over a year of civilian government. This has changed absolutely nothing for the vast bulk of the population.

Against this background there has again been a wave of demonstrations and strikes against the government.

A public sector general strike in the capital, Khartoum, a regional general strike in Bahr al Ghazal province, and rioting in Khartoum were met not with reforms but with a state of emergency. Strikes are banned.

The crisis in the economy, and the struggle for national rights by southern, mainly Christian population, are nightmares which won't go away under capitalism, whether under military dictatorship or civilian "democracy."

By Tim Harris

### Israel

ON 12 July 450,000 Israeli state and local authority employees mounted a 24-hour strike, shutting down TV, radio, town halls and government offices. Hospitals were run on an emergency cover basis. Strike meetings took place all over Israel.

The main reason for the strike was the low pay of government employees. Most earn between £160 and £280 per month.

The Histadruth (trade union federation) is demanding across the board pay increases as well as a reduction in the working week to five days. Further action is threatened if the government does not make con-

cessions.

A Histadruth official is quoted as saying that "the union's leadership was already under pressure from the rank and file to continue industrial action. The longer negotiations continue without results ... the harder it would be to restrain these workers." (Jerusalem Post, 14 July)



Israeli workers' cartoon shows a banker, speculator and merchant on a worker's back.

# Chirac faces new upsurge

**AFTER THE defeat of the left in France in 1986 and the election setback for the Communist Party in Italy this year, Thatcher's victory has been hailed in the international press as yet more 'proof' of the rejection of socialism by working people.**

However, developments in France in the recent period have shown the real relationship between the labour movement and the forces of capitalism.

Like Thatcher, France's right-wing Prime Minister Chirac radiated confidence and self-satisfaction when he took office last year. Now he would show the workers who was in charge!

Strikes fell to the lowest level since 1947. The apparent passivity of the labour movement, and the compliance and 'moderation' of its leaders, only served to reinforce the arrogance of the new government.

Charles Pasqua, organiser of the deadly Service d'Action Civique—a paramilitary organisation which specialised in political

assassination, corruption of officials, strike-breaking, drugs and arms dealing—was appointed Minister of the Interior. This was a clear warning to the labour movement that any attempt to resist the government's reactionary policies would be met by force.

A bombing campaign by pro-Iranian terrorists enabled Chirac and Pasqua to justify giving special powers to the police. All the cards seemed to be in the government's hands.

### Transformed

And yet, within months, the whole situation was completely transformed.

The government's attempt to remodel the education system triggered off a massive explosion of discontent among the youth. On 4 December 1986 a million young people demonstrated against the government. It did not know which way to turn.

Pasqua, terrified of the mass movement spreading to the workers' organisations, threw the vicious CRS riot police against the youth, the death of a student, and the maiming of many others,

sent shock waves through the whole of French society.

The youth appealed for trade union support. Under massive pressure from the rank and file workers the day was set for a general strike.

The trade union leadership, alarmed by the scale of the movement, spelled out the gravity of the situation to Chirac. Unless he withdrew the education bill, thereby giving them a pretext for calling off the strike, France could be heading towards a revolutionary crisis as in 1968.

Chirac feared that concessions would encourage the workers and youth. But Andre Bergeron, 'moderate' leader of the Force Ouvriere union, drove the point home in language that even Chirac could understand: if a one-day general strike goes ahead, he said, then "I cannot guarantee that the workers will return to the factories the following day".

Chirac capitulated and allowed the labour leaders to defuse a situation which, a matter of days later, could have been beyond their control.

Since the beginning of the year, strikes have broken out across the country as workers resisted the

government's austerity measures. On 22 March, the CGT trade union confederation mobilised 400,000 workers on a demonstration in defence of the social security system.

Chirac, having learned where the real power in society lies, has completely withdrawn many government projects and seriously modified others. At any moment a new upsurge could develop. Pasqua has kept his ministry, but is now seen as a 'bad risk' and has been withdrawn from the limelight.

### Right-wing split

These events show how quickly the mood of the working class can change in a period of crisis.

In the capitalist parties, the main personalities have been at loggerheads in a series of internal feuds, rivalries and bitter recriminations. The only serious advantage of the governing RPR and UDF, and the extreme right Front National, lies in the political bankruptcy of the Socialist and Communist leaders.

Socialist leader Jospin, like Kinnock, has no credible solution to the crisis. The Socialist leader-

ship supports wage restraint, and is not in favour of renationalising companies privatised by the right.

The Communist Party, which has an important industrial base, has moved to the right and no longer supports nationalisations.

The setbacks for the workers' parties in France, Britain, Italy and Spain all show, not that the workers and youth are 'conservative', but that they are not convinced that the leaders' 'moderate', pro-capitalist policies can really change their lot.

Only socialism can offer a way out. The present leaders of the left parties will be tested in the course of the great struggles that lie ahead. Chirac and Thatcher are determined to serve the interests of their class. We need leaders on our side with this same quality.

Then, given the tremendous potential for struggle shown by the French workers over the recent period, the socialist transformation of society will become an immediate possibility.

From our Paris correspondent

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□ **Out now,** no.15 of L'Avance Socialiste, French Marxist paper. Articles on May 1968, the Chirac government's arms programme, the French nuclear industry, need for Socialist/Communist unity, Spain, South Africa. Subscription rates: £5 for 5 issues (inc. postage), £10 for 12 issues. Cheques to: L'Avance Socialiste, BP no. 705, 75531 Paris, Cedex 11.

□ **Cassette tape debate.** Richard Venton (Merseyside Militant spokesman) and John Blevin (features editor Morning Star). 'Way forward after the election' (10 July). £1.75 (inc. p&p) from M Cock, 309 High St, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1VU.

□ **East Lewisham LPYS Disco.** Saturday 15 August 7-12pm. Labour club, Limes Grove, Lewisham SE13. Tickets—waged £2, unwaged £1.

## Militant meetings

□ **Chorlton** every Thursday, The Southern Hotel, Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton. 8.30pm.

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

□ **Blackburn** every Wednesday. The Trades Club, 8.30pm.



## TROTSKY MEMORIAL MEETING

"Trotsky's role in the Russian Revolution". Speaker: Ted Grant. Tuesday 25 August 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Admission 50p. Creche.

# The crazy world of Thatcher

**Dear Comrades**  
Labour leaders say elections are won in four years not four weeks. It might help if they stopped listening to recycled 1950s sociological claptrap about the death of the working class and started causing a few problems for the Tories on important issues.

**Take transport:** British Rail are putting up fares to discourage passengers from travelling by train. Last week London Transport followed suit! It's barmy.

It seems too many people use public transport and cause overcrowding, trains don't get cleaned, staff shortages cause delays etc.

**New staff and investment** are out for Thatcherism so the 'sensible' thing is to drive them away. Brilliant! Can you imagine Tesco closing their top ten supermarkets because they were selling too many baked beans?

Labour should put the government on the spot over the increased car traffic, environmental pollution, and waste of energy and their refusal to support the public sector causes.

Yours fraternally  
Gordon Bennett

**Right: too many rail passengers?** British Rail's answer is to put up the fares.



## HMS Sycophant

**Dear comrades**  
Thatcher's claim that America is the "flagship of freedom" is a sick joke after the Irangate revelations that government gangsters like North and Poindexter have been involved in financing the murderous contras.

Thatcher probably sees Britain as a pint sized "inflatable dinghy of democracy". But that too has been punctured by the Spycatcher exposure of MI5 plots to overthrow the Wilson Labour government of the '70s. Better names might be "destroyers of democracy" or the "hoovers of hypocrisy."

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Williamson  
Edinburgh

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## No to nuclear power

**Dear comrades**  
On 10 July there was yet another leak from Hartlepool nuclear power station. Radioactive water from the base of one of the station's reactors seeped into the atmosphere.

Officials assured the public and workforce that there was no danger but it took over a week for the accident to be made public. On 17 March the number two reactor was shut down following a motor burn out

(Militant 841). The reactor has been closed down ever since.

Another reactor came on stream on 12 July but was shut down due to 'operational difficulties' after four days.

It costs the CEBG £100,000 for every day they are closed. Something like £14 million has been lost with not a whimper from the Tories. Such waste and secrecy only underline workers' fears about a form

of energy which is potentially deadly.

The labour movement must campaign for phasing out of nuclear power with new jobs and alternative sources of energy. The main reason these places are kept open is to build nuclear weapons—scrap metal, of no use to society.

Yours fraternally  
Andy Walker  
Redcar LPYS

## New technology, clapped-out capitalism

**Dear comrades**  
The electronics giant GEC is complaining that it is currently short of 1,750 professional computing and electronics staff and they expect the shortage to double by the 1990s. Former Tory cabinet minister and now GEC chairman James Prior said they were 'desperate' for more staff.

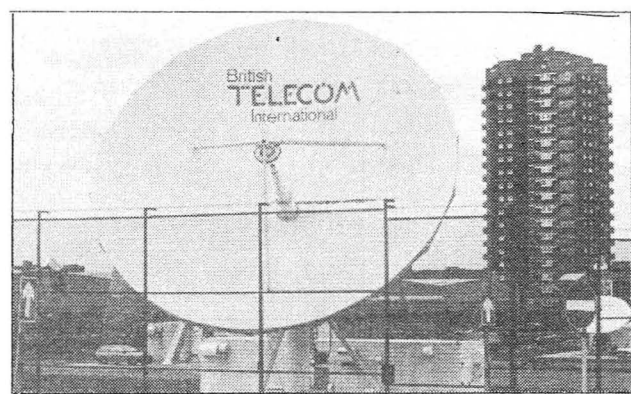
The blame lies largely with companies like GEC for not spending enough on training. The anarchy of capitalism is such that the industry is afraid that trainees will be poached by the competition.

Meanwhile at supposedly forward looking newly pri-

vatised British Telecom they also have a "critical" shortfall of technical staff. As the profit hunting management have been obsessed with slashing staffing levels as quickly as possible this is hardly surprising. There are hardly any apprenticeships and no forward planning.

Senior BT management say that universities are not training enough people for technical jobs. But these examples really show the bankruptcy of British capitalism.

Big business want to use new technology to increase unemployment and push up profits. But they are too tight fisted to train people



**High-tech, low staffing BTs international earth satellite station at North Woolwich.**

to use it, despite the Tories gearing universities more and more towards big business needs.

New technology could abolish dangerous and boring jobs and allow unemployment to be cut by reducing the working week.

But that can only come when it is under the control of the working class not the GECs and BTs.

Yours fraternally  
Clive Walder  
Brighton Kemptown  
Labour Party

## Total rip-off in Chatham

**FRED RUSSEL**, the boss of Total Staff employment agency in Chatham, Kent, complained to the local press that he had recently held a two day recruitment drive, but that not enough people turned up to fulfil the contracts he had.

He accused the people of the Medway towns of not wanting to work. Lloyd Marden explains the real reason why so few people turned up.

THESE 'wonderful' employment agencies only exist in deprived areas

because they have a pool of cheap labour to draw on.

I know from previous experience that in order to get a day's work with Total Staff means getting to their office in Chatham for 6.30 in the morning and having to wait for an hour or more in the hope that work is available for that day.

I worked for them for one day and that was enough. I rose at 5am and having no money, I walked from my home in Twydall to Chatham. When I arrived at their office I waited an hour

and a half before I was allocated a day's work. Some people are sent home with no work at all.

I was driven some 25 or 30 miles into the countryside to a chicken products factory where I spent all day shovelling a sort of chicken mash into a huge hopper. At 4.30pm I was driven back to Chatham from where I walked arriving home for 7pm.

For that extremely hard work I received £10. Mr Russell claims the rates of pay are reasonable, not so

in my case. He also claims that people are picked up from the end of their road. That is a figment of his imagination as far as I, and the people waiting at the office, are concerned.

On that basis I'm surprised anyone turned up for Mr Russell's recruitment drive. I've no doubt that Mr Russell would give up his profits and/or his position to endure the same pay and conditions in a dead end job.

Lloyd Marden  
Gillingham Labour Party

## Tired Tebbit

**Dear Comrades**  
You will be sorry to hear that the Tories are suffering at work. According to the *Financial Times*, Norman Tebbit is "a little concerned at the workload, with one of the heaviest legislative workloads for many years."

Apparently it's also tiring work "encouraging people to use their rights." Never mind, his £80 a week pay rise should ease the burden.

Tebbit and friends might be interested to know that many other people are concerned about their own heavy workload and won't need much encouragement to exercise their rights in the years ahead.

Yours fraternally  
Ruskin Gammon  
North Hull LPYS

## Cuts kill

**Dear comrades**  
A recent "Emergency 999" TV programme looked at West Midlands ambulance service. You might think an emergency ambulance service could be relied on to come within ten minutes or so in an urban area.

But the Walsall coroner is now investigating why a woman in Brownhills died from an asthma attack waiting for an ambulance. The ambulance's oxygen equipment could have saved her life but there was no vehicle available until 27 minutes after the doctor phoned.

Cuts have reduced Aldridge ambulance station from two emergency crews to one and Walsall from 3 to 2. And that has to cover the M5/M6 junction as well as Walsall. Non emergency ambulance use is discouraged with a quota for each GP practice. Above that quota the practice pays a fee.

If all this had been caused by industrial action for one day, the press front pages would have screamed murder. But the TV programme ignored the permanent cutbacks of Thatcher's Britain and tried to con us into believing everything was rosy.

Yours fraternally  
Nigel Wheatley  
Walsall

# New Tory privatisation offensive

## Government prepares legislation which threatens council jobs

THE TORY government's Local Government Bill has received its second reading in the House of Commons. This event went by almost unnoticed and without comment from the labour and trade union leaders. Yet this proposed piece of legislation represents perhaps the most vicious attack yet waged by the Tories on local government.

By Nick Toms

The Bill contains the Tories' plans to force local authorities to put a wide range of services out to competitive tender with the private sector.

The services to go out to tender under this legislation are refuse collection, cleaning of buildings, other cleaning, catering for the purposes of schools and welfare, other catering, ground maintenance and the repair and maintenance of buildings. In addition to this list the Secretary of State simply by Statutory Order may include any other services for competitive tendering as he sees fit.

An indication of the scope of potential job losses from this new legislation can be seen where services have been voluntarily privatised already by Tory authorities. In Kent County Council, for example, when school cleaning was privatised the number of jobs was cut by fifty per cent from 3,000 to 1,500.

The privatisation of street cleaning in Wirral, Bath and Merton has seen job reductions of 44.3 per cent, 44 per cent and 46 per cent respectively. In every instance, without exception, where services have been privatised then jobs have gone.

### Deathly silence

On top of this, workers employed by private contractors have found themselves invariably subject to wages and conditions of employment inferior to local authorities.

It also goes, almost without saying, that wherever privatisation has been introduced it has resulted in a major deterioration of services with contractors trying to perform the same work with less staff and often inferior equipment.

It is quite clear that if the Tories' Local Government Bill is implemented then the jobs, wages and conditions of virtually all manual workers (and some white collar workers) will be under threat. But what will alarm many local authority workers still further is the almost deathly silence from their leaders on this issue.

The Tories' plans for compulsory tendering are not new. They

had intended to introduce them last year but then decided to postpone their implementation in view of the pending election. Some trade union leaders attempted to portray this as a victory and a major climbdown by the Tories.

Certainly this represented a step forward at the time, but when the GMBATU Journal proclaimed that: "This climbdown is a marvellous victory for the campaign against privatisation launched by unions and local councils and community organisations" they were kidding no-one but themselves.

The election of the Tories for a third time has seen the privatisation plans put back on the agenda with a vengeance. But, unfortunately, the local authority trade union leaders are not now acting with the urgency needed to defend the jobs and services of their members.

### Even fair wages clauses, a standard part of even private sector contracting, are now outlawed.

Worse still, some trade union leaders are even deluding their members that the legislation can be stopped through both parliamentary opposition and the use of "contract compliance" by local authorities.

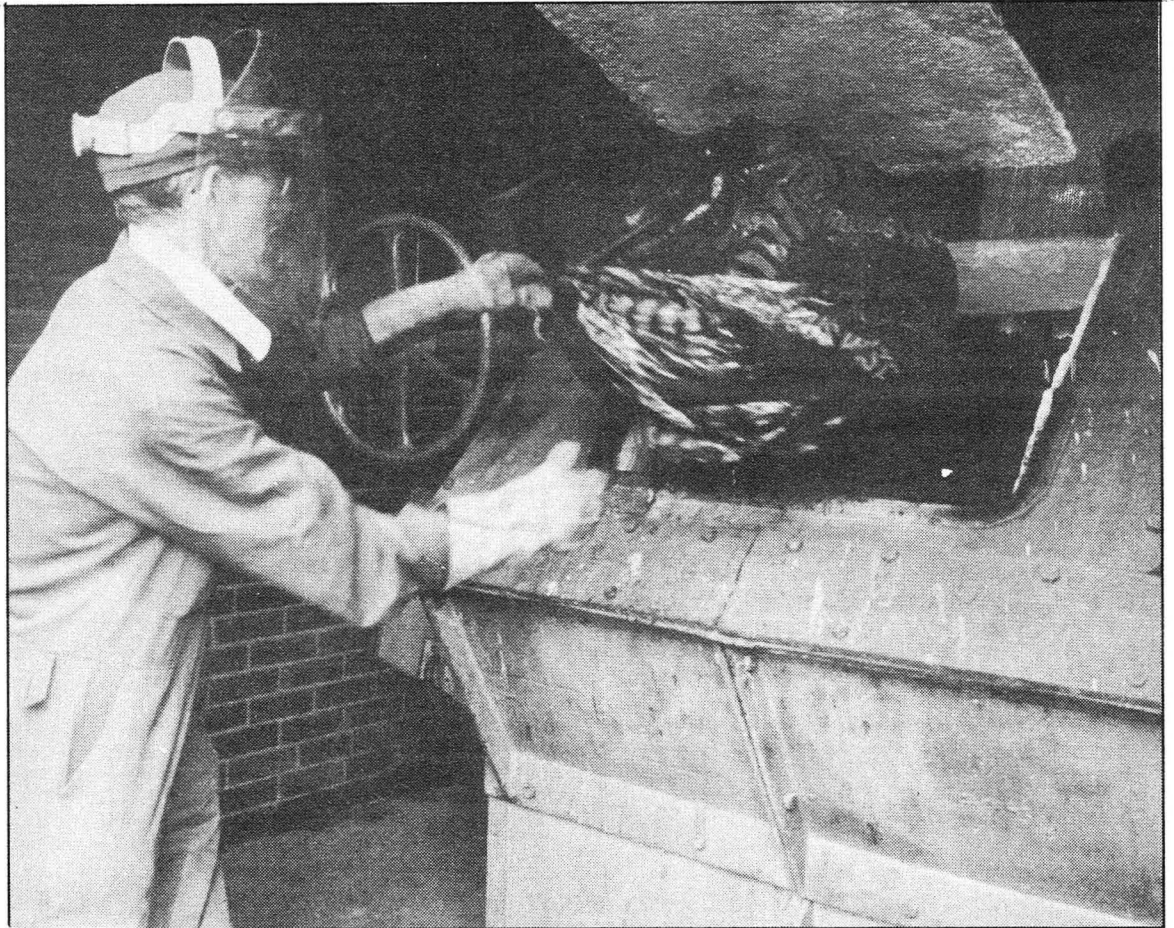
The Tories' huge majority in the House of Commons makes a nonsense of any idea of the legislation being blocked, despite the best efforts of Labour MPs. "Contract compliance" is not an option either in the fight against the Tories' new plans.

"Contract compliance" is the method which has been adopted by a number of local authorities to protect existing Direct Labour Organisations (DLOs) which since the 1980 Land and Planning Act have been compelled to put out all contracts of over £50,000 (and most over £10,000, competitive tender.

By refusing to allow contractors who, for example, employ lump labour or casual and agency staff, or who do not follow certain codes of practice for industrial disputes, or who do not pay union rates etc, many contracts have been won by DLOs that otherwise would not have.

This, however, is ruled out under the new Tory legislation. Local authorities who wish to tender for the work themselves (ie. submit an in-house tender) may not do anything "having the effect or intended or likely to have the effect of restricting, distorting or preventing competition."

This legislation is retrospective



Local authority jobs like this will be put out to tender.

to an unspecified date. If it is not complied with, the right to carry out the service or tender for it will be removed from a local authority. The Secretary of State can also impose a model specification for the work if he believes the one published by a local authority is uncompetitive. Even Fair Wages clauses, a standard part of even private sector contracting, are now outlawed.

Many trade union officials are also advocating the idea that privatisation can be fought through local authorities competing with the private sector through in-house tenders. But the point of all the above restrictions on specifications is to make local authority DLOs no different from contractors.

In order to win contracts local authorities will have to put in lower tenders than contractors. This means that if a Council's own workforce want to tender for their own jobs then their costs (ie. wages and conditions of the workforce) will have to be lower and worse than those offered by contractors.

The job losses and conditions of employment, outlined above, of workers employed by private contractors shows clearly what local authority workers would have to endure to have any hope of competing with the cowboy employers in the private sector. The experience of privatisation in the National Health Service has also demonstrated that the price of collaboration with in-house tenders has been to agree to self-inflicted cuts.

Whilst an overwhelming majority of contracts in the NHS were won by in-house tenders this was only achieved through often quite draconian cuts. In Birmingham City Childrens Hospital, for example, domestics took a £20 a week pay cut to keep the service

## Cut-offability of gas

WHAT'S THE beauty of gas? Apparently these days it's cut-off-ability!

In the first three months since privatisation disconnections rose by 43 per cent, according to the Right to Fuel Campaign. During the first quarter of 1987, the number of disconnections was doubled in the northern and southern regions.

This is a very rapid confirmation that once privatised, whatever "safe-

guards" may be introduced, industries and services are run as big business. The needs of the consumer are only secondary.

The Labour Party must be firmly committed to the re-nationalisation of all those industries the Tories have privatised and the trade union movement must mobilise for a fight to defend those which are now under threat.

in-house. In Wirral, domestics' weekly wages were cut by 50 per cent (up to £30 a week).

In Nottingham, a 30 per cent reduction in the cleaning budget was achieved by reducing hours from 15 to 12 and a half, scrapping overtime pay and by setting performance levels 20 per cent higher.

The DHSS recently announced that by the end of 1986 annual "savings" had reached £86 million from competitive tendering in NHS domestic, catering and laundry services. Of the total, £60.3m had come from "savings" on 936 contracts won by in-house tenders.

### In order for a campaign to be successful it must be organised on a national basis.

Despite all this, Alistair Macrae (Nupe national local government officer) told the Local Government Chronicle in May 1985 that Nupe: "campaigns vigorously against it (privatisation) and we won despite all the government's pressure."

The blunt fact is that whilst work may have been kept in-house the wages and conditions of the workers have been driven down. The only way jobs and services can be defended and privatisation defeated is through a determined campaign of resistance to the Tories' reactionary legislation.

The experience of fighting privatisation in the National Health Service has shown that in order for such a campaign to be successful it must be organised on a national basis.

Health workers at Barking and Addenbrookes hospitals, for example, mounted heroic

struggles in defence of jobs and to keep private contractors out. But they were defeated because they were isolated and could be picked off one at a time. A united national campaign by local authority workers is essential if the Tories are to be defeated.

This year's Nupe conference passed a motion which clearly lays the basis for such a campaign. The conference called on Labour council's to give a clear commitment to refuse to implement the legislation and for Labour's leadership to coordinate this resistance nationally.

It also called on Nupe's leadership to instigate a united national campaign against privatisation involving the following:

- ★ The production of national material for a major publicity campaign against privatisation;
- ★ Special conferences of stewards to plan the campaign and strengthen stewards' organisations;
- ★ Special workplace and depot meetings linked to local rallies;
- ★ Full preparation for both local and national industrial action as may be necessary to stop privatisation.

The ideas contained in this motion should be taken up and fought for in every local authority trade union. Time is of the essence. Full preparations must be made now if the Tories are to be defeated.

Some leading Labour figures like Margaret Hodge may believe that struggle has been "discredited" but for local authority workers there is little choice. Either accept the prospect of mass redundancies coupled with attacks on wages and conditions or stand and fight. A determined national campaign against privatisation is the only way local government workers can guarantee themselves a future.

# Industrial Reports

# Bus workers take action

## London strike vote

SIXTEEN THOUSAND London bus drivers and conductors have voted by three to one in favour of strike action. They have voted to support fellow workers at Norbiton faced with the horrific effects of tendering.

The strategy of London Buses Limited is to split up the network, garage by garage, with each garage tendering for the services. Just as in the health service and local authorities this will mean attacks on pay and conditions for those affected. Services will suffer as well.

London Bus claim that they tendered: "to preserve jobs, the routes and the garage at Norbiton." In fact, bus workers who have only recently won a 38 hour week are now facing the prospect of working 45 hours and for up to £30 per week less.

### New shifts

But that is not the end of the story. Management want less engineering staff, with greater flexibility and de-skilling. At Harrow, as a result of tendering, two new shifts have been introduced—6am to 3pm and 3pm to midnight. In addition 13 London Regional Transport (LRT) building workers have recently been sacked. LRT also plan to sell Chiswick Bus Works where 500 jobs hang in the

By Pat Atkinson

balance.

On August 9th a meeting of LRT stewards and activists takes place in County Hall. This meeting should be used as the opportunity to map out a strategy to fight back.

If all the attacks are to be defeated it is essential that united, organised action is organised by the London Transport Trade Union Committee. There are some crucial steps which need to be taken:

- ★ Organise an LRT shop stewards/ reps conference to draw up the strategy of opposition to privatisation and tendering.
- ★ Raise the profile of the tripartite garage committees, and link them with the underground depots.
- ★ Co-ordinate the garage campaigns London-wide.
- ★ Call a Labour and Trade Union conference in London on the future of transport, to highlight the threat to 35,000 jobs of privatisation and tendering.
- ★ Prepare for a London-wide transport strike.

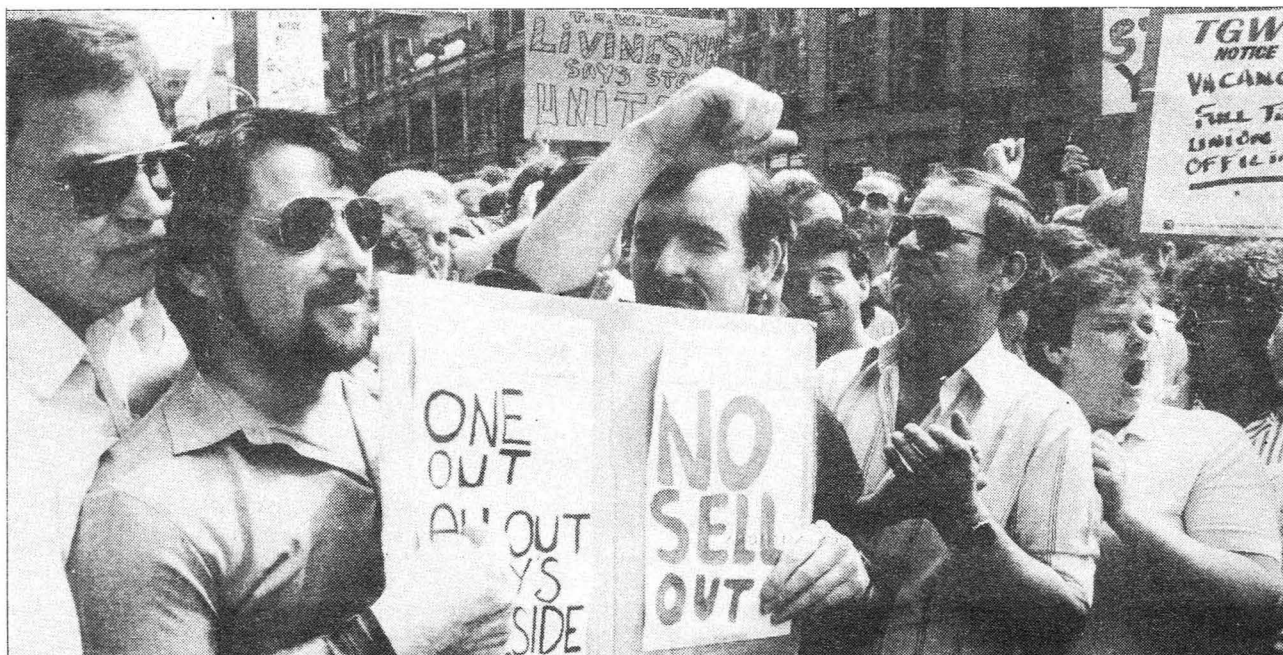


PHOTO Above Scottish bus workers victory. Picture shows part of the lobby of striking employees of the Scottish Bus Group who have won a victory over management. More details in next issue.

TORY DE-REGULATION of passenger transport was supposed to have meant good, cheap, competitive buses. In the West Midlands it has created chaos.

It has meant that two publicly-owned bus companies, West Midlands Travel (WMT), still nominally controlled by Labour councillors, and Midland Red North, are in competition.

Less than a year ago, Chaserider minibuses were sent into Walsall by Midland Red, taking advantage of de-regulation. At the time this was welcomed by local Labour councillors as an improvement in services.

Tom Dawson (T&GWU convenor, Chaserider Walsall) explains what happened: "Most of us were recruited off the dole, and taken on at £2.50

an hour. We were promised a rise to £3 an hour after 12 months if we made a success of it!

"The conditions of work have been abysmal. One third of the drivers are women but we started with no separate women's toilets. The "depot" is in fact a portakabin in a lorry yard! Taking proper rest periods means standing around in the elements because there's no spare bus to sit in—or travelling half a mile into Walsall town centre in search of a cuppa and a quiet sit down."

Now the 45 Chaserider workers face redundancy in September with the closure of their three routes. On hearing the news they took 24-hour strike action.

## Civil servants strike against YTS

TWENTY CPSA members have been on strike since 27 May as part of the union's campaign to stop the introduction of YTS in the civil service.

By Amanda Lane

This dispute is embarrassing management when the Tories are squandering £2 million to try and improve the image of this cheap labour scheme.

Worse still from their point of view, the civil servants on strike come from an MSC office (Bolton SETS group area office) which actually administer the YTS. Management had hoped that MSC employees would accept YTS, because of their official links with the scheme.

### Focal point

But the workers at Bolton have proved them wrong and their 11 week strike has become the focal point for the union's opposition to YTS. CPSA understand the inadequacies of the scheme and the true motives behind it.

Civil servants know only too well that this government has no interest in providing genuine training and job opportunities—they have seen it close 27 skill centres, discredit the MSC by introducing dreadful schemes such as the new JTS and slash 140,000 civil service jobs.

They are cynical when the Tories claim they want to help young people to find work. CPSA knows why management are so keen to introduce YTS into the civil service. Firstly with more cuts in the offing, they would like youth trainees to cover work at present done by employees, such as administrative assistant. Secondly since they have

no intention of topping up YTS allowances, they would use YTS to depress wage rates still further. Also there would be no guaranteed job for trainees at the end of the scheme, so they would be treated like casual employees and used to undermine union organisation.

They would be encouraged to work extra hard and not to complain in the vain hope that management might eventually condescend to take them on full time.

CPSA is determined to resist this scheme in the interests of the youngsters who would be exploited by it and of the members who would find their jobs at work undermined by it.

Management, egged on by the Tories, are not prepared to let the matter drop. But they want to avoid escalating the dispute by only imposing trainees in offices where they feel they can get away with it. In several cases they have backed down when it seems they would provoke another strike.

Management are worried about union opposition. CPSA fully intends to exploit this fear and if possible go on to the offensive. Broad Left members in the Department of Employment have already suggested ways of doing this.

At a recent section executive committee meeting they proposed that all branches be encouraged to hold meetings on the subject and that offices facing introduction of trainees should be balloted and brought out on strike as soon as possible.

The National Executive Committee has also taken up the campaign and is preparing members throughout the union to resist any attempt to impose YTS.

# Moat House—four months on

Andy Wilcock, TGWU shop steward at Moat House hotel, Liverpool, spoke to a Militant reporter about their dispute.

WE HAVE BEEN out since 2 April when 62 workers were sacked on the spot because we had organised a union. We had had many attacks on our rights since Queens Moat House took over this hotel from Holiday Inn in 1986.

We lost our bonus system. Sick pay entitlement was all to be at the manager's discretion even if a medical certificate was handed in. A memo was sent to all employees crying about the cost of time off sick. It was obvious profits came before employees' health.

### Victimised

Then one worker had her hours cut from 40 to 24. Holiday entitlement was attacked. So we joined the TGWU; none of us had any experience of unions or politics. When management refused to recognise the union we set up a picket line. It was then that the manager and personnel manager gave us our P45s.

53 people are still out despite victimisation from the bosses, from scabs they've brought in and from the police. People who've come down to help us have been beaten up.

But we've kept on thanks to help from our families and from other workers. We've stopped deliveries of supplies like beer.

We went to Labour Party Young Socialists conference and raised over £250 for the strike fund and made useful contacts all over the country. The FBU and the seaman's union have also been very helpful.

So far Region 6 TUC have agreed to blacklist Moat House. Rotherham NALGO have cancelled a conference which was supposed to be held in a Moat House hotel. Other union branches have given help; the T&G in Guernsey have sent us £100 but we know other branches have not even heard of our dispute.

We want to change that. One way would be for readers in any of the areas below to approach the local labour movement and ensure that every Moat House is blacked by the unions like the one in Rotherham and also put pressure on Labour councils to boycott the chain.



Andy Wilcock (right) at LPYS conference.

## Boycott these hotels

BEDFORD MOAT House (MH). Cambridge MH, Bar Hill. Peterborough MH. Brentwood MH. Stifford MH, Grays. Harlow MH. Shepperton MH. Elstree MH, Boreham Wood. Airport MH, Southend. Harpenden MH. Hemel MH. Hertford MH, Markyate. Stevenage MH. Dover MH. Tollgate MH, Gravesend. Drury Lane MH, London. Woodford MH. Orwell MH Felixstowe. Ipswich MH. Newmarket MH. Gatwick MH. "Gatwick Concorde". "Lamb", Ely. "George" Colchester. The Heybridge, Ingatstone. The Grampian, Stevenage. "Caledonian", Watford. The Slattress, Canterbury. "The Star", Great Yarmouth. "The Maids Head" Norwich. Bournemouth MH. Southampton MH. New Forest MH, So'ton. "Rose and Crown" Salisbury. Exeter

MH. Hereford MH. "Mount Olympus" Kidderminster. "Chase" Ross on Wye. Leicester Forest MH. Leicester MH. Northampton MH, The Angel and Westone MH (all Northampton). "The Hind" Wellingborough. The Royal Nottingham. Banbury MH Oxford MH. Telford Country House. Kenilworth MH. Moat House International and "Falcon" both Stratford on Avon. "Grand" Birmingham. "Country" Walsall. Bromwich MH, West Brom. Brom. Bramhall MH, Blackburn MH. Bucksburn MH, Aberdeen. Forth Bridge MH Queensferry. "Lorne" Glasgow. "Dean Park" Renfrew. Blackwell Grange Darlington. Newcastle MH. Harrogate International. "Viking" York. Rotherham MH and Ardsley House, Barnsley.

# Industrial Reports

# Stop the tyrant's charter

**ALL MINEWORKERS should study closely British Coal's annual report for 1986/7. This glossy package inadvertently shows the social cost of Thatcherism in the mining communities.**

Beneath the boasts of 'record productivity' and the distorted safety figures you can see the scale of our industry's decimation.

Two years of "dramatic restructuring" as Haslam quaintly puts it, has led to the closure of 59 pits and the loss of 80,000 jobs. A massive and ruthless drive for profit at any cost is underway. This report shows the effects of their nightmare strategy; the 'Wheeler plan' is being pursued with a vengeance.

The introduction of heavy duty face equipment has gone hand in hand with the reduction in the average number of coal faces per colliery—from four to three. A third of existing faces are now heavy duty equipped but there are a third fewer production faces than in 1983. Shield supports have afforded an average daily output over 60 per cent higher than faces using conventional supports.

At Selby, north Yorkshire, capital will amount to almost 60 per cent of overall costs and labour only 10 per cent. Before the 1984/85 dispute labour took 45 per cent and capital only 12 per cent of overall costs. The industry is becoming more capital intensive.

Over the past year, £568 million was spent on "mines, surface works and plant and machinery." But this will not lead to shorter hours, more holidays, increased pay and a healthier working environment for the mineworker.

## "Flexibility"

Over 30,000 jobs were axed in 1986/87. Automation is being used to wipe out even more mining jobs while information technology will destroy office and supervisory posts. Monitors will increase pressure on the workers and place safety in the hands of the control room.

Worse still is the demand for so called "flexible working time". The high cost of capital investment and new technology is to be paid for by the sweat and blood of the miner.

The report says "...many and possibly all of the Corporation's potential investments will be economically viable only if there is fuller utilisation of the capacity than is at present possible. This requires flexible working..." That means six day and eventually seven day production, not just at Margam or Asfordby but throughout the industry.

Yet British Coal declare an operating profit of £369 million over the year—equivalent to a rate of return of 6.6% on average capital employed. Deep mining operating costs fell to £1.60 per gigajoule compared with £1.78 last year, a reduction in real terms of 13 per cent—only 7 per cent short of the target for 1989/90 which according to the objectives laid down by the Energy Secretary would bring British Coal in to the realm of overall profitability, ripe for privatisation.

Productivity increased by 21 per cent with every area achieving new record levels. Nationally new weekly productivity records were set no less than 15 times culminating in an overall output per man-shift record of 3.76 tonnes.

What has been the mine-workers' reward? Management claim that fatalities have fallen and that lung disease is in decline.

By Chris Herriot

But this report shows that serious accidents and major injuries have dramatically increased. Safety is sacrificed for profit. (See figures below).

No doubt the trend towards piece rate slavery has had its effect. "Introducing new incentive schemes at local level and focusing increased rewards on those directly able to influence production is an important part of wages strategy.

"By the end of the year approximately one third of the industry was operating local arrangements other than the scheme introduced nationally in 1977/88."

In other words, despite record productivity in all areas, British Coal have sought to undermine the unity of miners in terms of wages. The Doncaster option and other divisive schemes aim to set miner against miner, area against area, pit against pit.

However the miners have not succumbed to these pressures. A sense of solidarity, militancy and fighting spirit prevails. Management have now resorted to a barbaric, tyrannical disciplinary

code to try to break this "culture of militancy."

"The number of strikes per person employed in the coal industry is thirty five times the average number in the economy as a whole.....The average mineworker loses eight times as many hours through strikes as the UK average." moans the report.

## Struggle

It will take more than any shameful tyrants' charter to curb this fighting spirit. Miners only strike when all else proves inadequate.

Our members have suffered much since our great strike was defeated. We have watched Haslam and Macgregor before him, boast about the industry's achievements. This year's annual report speaks of an operating profit of £369 million wiped out by interest charges of £386 million. No miner can understand why the banks and finance houses should be the ones to benefit from our sweat and blood.

There can be no acceptance of longer shifts, six day working, de-regulation of safety, and privatisation in this industry. British Coal's actions and boasts are developing our consciousness, preparing us for the next great struggle we will inevitably have to undergo.

## Accident rate (per 100,000 manshifts)

	Fatal	Major injury
1981/82	0.07	1.69
1982/83	0.09	1.69
1983/84	0.05	1.82
1984/85	0.09	1.43
1985/86	0.06	1.94
1986/87	0.05	3.06



Every area will be at risk from British Coal's plans.

## Stillingfleet

THE "TYRANTS' charter" introduced by British Coal is claiming more victims. Last Friday management confirmed the sacking of Ted Scott, the National Union of Mineworkers' branch secretary at Stillingfleet colliery in the Selby coalfield.

To give their punitive action a more moderate look they offered Ted Scott an alternative job—but with strings.

They said he could transfer to Wheldale pit outside the Selby complex. Rumour has it that British Coal want to close Wheldale next spring. But he has only been offered this job provided he takes no part in union activities!

British Coal see trade unionists as criminals. Ted Scott and two other branch committee members were suspended after the union refused to allow coal to be cut in overtime. Their refusal was in line with the NUM and management's Yorkshire agreement but that did not stop British Coal who withdrew their threat to the other two committee members but sacked Ted Scott.

A Stillingfleet miner told *Militant*: "No one's accepting this decision. First we wanted an immediate stoppage. But now we're going ahead with the ballot to get total unity."

The employers have stepped up their offensive against the NUM. The union must respond with a strategy for rolling back the attacks.



Notts miners march at Yorkshire miners' gala.

## Sherwood

BRITISH COAL have suspended all four NUM officials at Sherwood colliery in Notts. Their 'crime' was the alleged distribution of an NUM newsletter.

The infamous code of conduct/disciplinary procedure where mineworkers can be sacked for conduct considered detrimental to British Coal outside their premises effectively means that miners can be sacked for any union activity.

The Sherwood NUM leaflet was critical of the UDM leadership and British Coal chairman Haslam. That was enough for the vicious disciplinary procedure to be invoked. Sherwood colliery was attacked because it has the highest percentage in the NUM in the British Coal Notts Area (excluding Bolsover which is outside Notts as far as British Coal is concerned.)

At Sherwood over 300 out of 650 are in the NUM, even by British Coal figures. The NUM believe they are now only single figures away from a majority. If the local miners' rescue station were included, where 13 out of 14 are in the NUM and which has traditionally been seen as part of the Sherwood NUM, then a majority has probably already been achieved.

In Notts as a whole, recruitment to the NUM has been averaging over 100 a week for the past period, one week reaching as high as 300. NUM membership stands at between 25 and 30 per cent of the workforce.

British Coal's attack is part of their continued attempt to keep the crumbling UDM alive by intimidating NUM activists. They will not succeed. The UDM has accepted the disciplinary procedure even though a UDM official has been one of its victims. Miners know they have to fight.

By Paul Shawcroft

## Fighting council cuts

HULL CITY council Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) executive, representing over 3000 workers has recommended the council takes the Liverpool road of fighting government attacks.

Alan Shadforth who moved the resolution told *Militant*: "We called on the Labour group to implement policies of no rate or rent increases to compensate for Tory cuts and to that end we called on the group to operate a deficit budget.

"The JSSC is pledged to oppose any cuts in jobs and services by whatever means necessary. We will be starting a campaign of education and explanation on the issue of compulsory competitive tendering from the latest pay deal.

"The Labour group say they have rejected the Liverpool option but say there will be no compulsory redundancies. But cutbacks are likely. We are giving notice that our jobs and services will not be lost without a real fight."

A LONDON labour movement conference is being organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) for 24 October on: "The crisis in public services and the fight against privatisation."

Sponsors are needed from union branches, shop stewards' committees and individuals. Write to BLOC c/o 106 Draper House, Walworth Road, London SE1.

# Militant

**inside**

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**Privatisation threat to council jobs** —page 13

## Engineers' national deal

# 35 hours ..and no strings!

**THE DEAL** signed between engineering and shipbuilding workers' leaders and the Engineering Employers Federation is a major setback for workers.

In return for small decreases in hours, the clock will be turned back on conditions that have been bitterly fought for for years. The employers get a charter which will allow them to deploy workers as they see fit and even lay off when work is slack.

Parts of the agreement will be in operation by 1988/9. They will mean fewer tea breaks and make unpaid tea breaks and washing times possible.

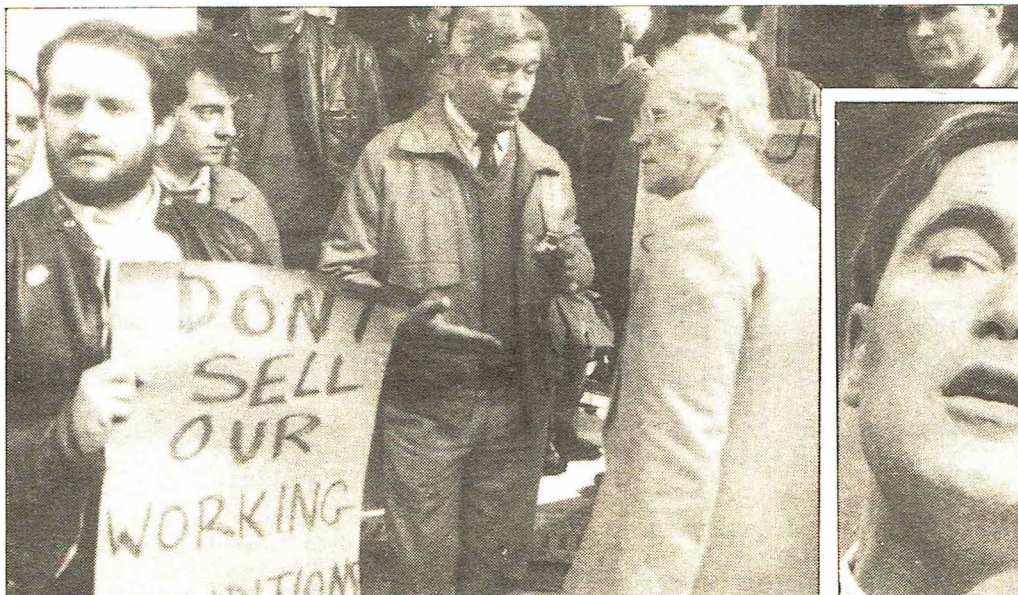
**PATRICK KENNY** is an AEU shop steward. Last year the union signed a deal just like the national one at his workplace. The workers' experience there is a warning of what engineers can expect from the national deal:

### Flexibility

"In 1986 the union claimed a major victory at Reed Corrugated Cases. They negotiated a reduction in the working week from 40 hours to 37.5 hours, in exchange for some flexible working practises.

The union thought the reduction of the working week would save jobs. In the last four years there have been over 250 redundancies within RCC.

This year the company has proposed changes in the working week with an introduction of a Sunday night shift which will increase the working week back to an average



Engineers lobby against the leadership's deal. Bill Jordan (right) and other Confed leaders ignored rank and file opposition

of forty hours again. This is in line with reduction in wages and a further range of flexibility.

While we welcomed the reduction of the working week, we have learnt through experience that agreement on flexibility means job losses.

### Job losses

The Confed (of engineering unions) which is now dealing with the EEF on a reduction of the working week shouldn't bargain established working practise in exchange for it. Profits made from our labour allow the company to buy new, more productive machinery and we have a right to the

benefits these new machines can bring.

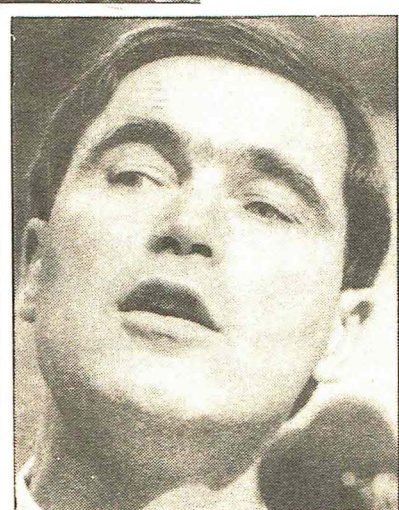
The Confed should negotiate for a 35-hour week with no conditions attached."

This agreement is a bosses' charter and a disgrace to the AEU leadership. Far from creating jobs as the shorter working week should do, it will lead to redundancies.

It strengthens the bosses against workers. It must be fought at all costs.

The AEU leadership must be replaced by a socialist one which will reject such deals and fight their implications.

(Patrick Kenny writes in a personal capacity).



### A fighting programme for engineering workers:

- Scrap the CSEU/EEF proposals;
- Defend shop floor rights and conditions;
- For a 35-hour week with no strings attached;
- £120 per week national minimum time rate;
- National support for members fighting job losses;
- For a leadership committed to socialist policies.

## TUC agenda Stop no-strike deals

**SWEETHEART** contracts of the sort the AEU and EEUPTU leaders go in for are opposed by two resolutions to be put to this year's Trades Union Congress.

They have tried to keep their unions' membership up by signing away the right to strike in return for excluding other unions from a workplace.

The TGWU calls for the TUC to ban this shady practise and for a fight against compulsory arbitration and no-strike clauses.

The AEU and EEUPTU leaders' 'business unionism' means collaboration with the bosses in stripping away workers' rights and conditions.

The civil servants' union, CPSA, calls for total opposition to no-strike deals. Its resolution would commit the TUC to solidarity with all trade unionists under attack.

It spells out the programme necessary to fight the Tories' onslaught on union rights and calls for co-ordinated industrial action against them.

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## What we stand for

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