

Labour Conference '87

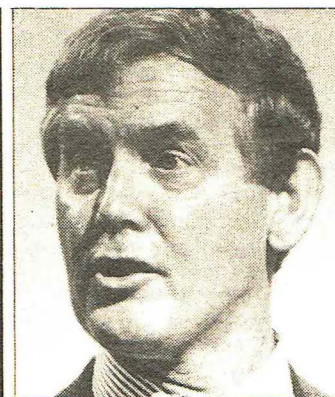
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Tory

Rich government minister Moore thinks handouts to the poor are corrupting but handouts to the rich are an incentive.



John Moore

Scroungers

plan to hit poor and weak

JOHN MOORE, Tory Social Services Secretary, thinks the unemployed, the old, the sick, and parents are getting things too easy. He thinks an all-embracing social security system is corrupting, creating dependence on benefits.

By Roger Shriver

Moore would like to re-introduce means tests for benefits, and move towards the American Workfare scheme where claimants work for their paltry benefits.

Next week's Tory Party jamboree, when the richest most corrupt, most dependent, section of British society, the capitalist class plots our future, will love his attacks. Moore himself is an investment banker, stockbroker and company director.

If anyone is being "corrupted" it is these parasites. The same day as he announced his new purge, the Inland Revenue announced that the bosses had made so much fuss about a clamp down on business perks that such necessities as hospitality trips to Ascot or Wimbledon would still be tax deductible!

Tax dodges lose untold millions a year from the wealthy. But the Tories give the rich more money as an 'incentive to succeed'. Moore's 'incentive' to the poor is to give them less. The £44 billion social security spending gets in the way of their profits.

But the main reason for



this enormous spending is the colossal rise in unemployment since 1979. The millions on the dole queues do not need an 'incentive' to get a job. Dole money poverty and despair give that. The unemployed need real jobs to go to! And what incentive will a pension cut give to the old or the ill or a child benefit cut give to single parents?

The 'new realists' at Labour Party conference claimed that ideas like socialism and class unity are outdated in 1987,

hangovers from the days of Tolpuddle. But Moore's ideas are trying to bring back the Poor Law regulations of 1834, the year the Tolpuddle Martyrs were exiled!

Fight back

The idea is to make social security so atrocious and degrading that workers will jump at any job however bad the pay or conditions. That is a threat to all workers. If Moore tries to carry

out his plans, he will meet resistance. In Moore's own constituency in Croydon last weekend the Labour Party Young Socialists held a successful demonstration and rally against the slave labour schemes, building support from trade unions.

Labour should follow this lead nationally to warn workers in work and on the dole, low paid and better paid, just what the Tory plans mean and how to fight them.

'Defend socialism' — Eric Heffer speaks to Militant

I DON'T regret standing out for Liverpool. I'd regret it if I'd adapted my policies and failed to take a clear line of support for what is right.

I'm not pessimistic about the long-term future of the

Continued page 3

Eric Heffer spoke to Tony Cross



Eric Heffer.

Build your paper

THE MILITANT sales drive is having a great effect, winning more new readers than ever before. At Labour Party conference a magnificent £2000 was raised for the fighting fund at the Militant meeting.

Keep up the momentum on new sales and help us raise another £57,000 in the next four weeks. Send us your donation now.

Militant

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Socialism can win

ERIC HEFFER urged Labour's conference to make a concrete analysis of why the Party did well in some areas and badly in others at the general election. But this is exactly what the leadership are refusing to do.

The right could not answer why in Liverpool, Coventry and other seats where a traditional socialist and class programme was campaigned upon, Labour dramatically boosted its support. Nor why in Fulham, for example, the unfortunate Nick Raynsford, 'modern Labour man', with a conscious appeal to the slightly better off, lost his seat.

The Party leaders refuse to recognise the irrefutable evidence of the successes for the left and for Marxism, because it does not fit in with their drive to transform Labour into a tame, completely moderated Party. Not surprisingly the capitalists, through their press monopoly, are cheering the Labour leaders on from their editorial desks.

Kinnock and Gould are trying to create a party that will supposedly be attractive to 'yuppies', the middle class and the assumed prejudices of Tory workers. But in so doing they would in fact be ensuring Labour's appeal to the ruling class and its desire for a 'safe' opposition, for the time when Thatcherism is exposed.

The Labour leaders have been taken in by Tory propaganda, and are blind to the real facts about 11 June. They have accepted the 'affluence' for some of 'booming Britain' as permanent. They have accepted that shares and mortgages have fundamentally altered working class attitudes.

Gould has gone further, trying to give share ownership a socialist gloss. He would give every worker, not just those in privatised industries, the right to own shares in their own company. "We know," he told *Newsnight*, "from American experience it produces better company performance". Nigel Lawson supports profit-sharing for the same reason—to instill the false idea that workers and bosses have a common interest!

But Tory ideology has not become deeply embedded in popular opinion, as the Labour leadership believes. Thatcher's share of the vote continued to decline from the 1979 level. The most recent report on British social attitudes found support for further privatisation down from 50 to 33 per cent since 1983. Only 31 favoured less state ownership, and only 27 per cent disagreed that employees need strong unions.

Labour should concentrate not on insubstantial changes among its supporters, but on the failure of its campaign to motivate them. And it was a campaign already dominated by the policies of the right, who are now trying to push the Party further right still.

The latest opinion polls put Labour at 35 per cent, but a further 21 per cent admitted to basically considering themselves Labour. Apparently many of them did not vote Labour because of its defence policy. But it was the leadership that was incapable of explaining that whatever weaponry Britain could afford would never be a deterrent compared with the super-powers' arsenals. Yet they still insisted on wasting the money saved from Trident on conventional arms.

These voters were apparently worried about extremism and Labour disunity. Yet even in that best known TV election broadcast, the campaign organisers chose to repeat the leader's conference attack on Liverpool councillors, hardly designed to demonstrate unity. Yet it was the 'extremists', explaining the benefits of real socialism, who got the best results.

Now 42 per cent of these potential Labour voters consider a guarantee that the Party could "maintain my living standards and those of my family," as the most important factor in winning their support. So they certainly do not want the right's suicidal election commitment to increase taxes.

Why do the Labour leaders never explain that under capitalism, a system of economic crisis, living standards for the overwhelming majority could never be guaranteed? Even in the relatively short term, these voters' jobs and incomes will be under threat from a widely predicted new international recession. What protection could Labour offer them other than its fundamental socialist aims, to replace capitalist chaos, with a publicly owned and democratically planned economy?

Let the Party conduct a real review of policy and the election defeat in this light, and rather than throw over the only programme that can meet the needs of all workers, consider how best to explain and campaign around full socialism.

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Labour conference '87

Right wing ignore election lessons

THE LABOUR leadership had quite clearly packed the most contentious debates they most wanted to railroad through, into the first day. Again and again in reviewing the election the right wing used the spurious argument that they won the campaign, but lost the poll. If they could claim this, then the left could certainly say it won the debate on campaigns but lost the vote.

Despite the massive press campaign in favour of Kinnock-style modernisation, and the defection of the so-called soft left, the sympathy of rank and file delegates was clearly with those who argued for socialist policies.

Speaking for the National Executive Committee, Tom Sawyer of NUPE took another decisive step in his rapid journey to the right. When he brazenly denied that there were purges in the Party, he was met with a groan of disbelief. When he claimed that the NEC's paper *Moving Ahead*, was not about burying socialism, he only won applause from Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley.

But the majority of speakers from the floor opposed the NEC's proposals to review the Party's entire programme in the light of the defeat, and really to push Labour firmly to the right. Several delegates reminded Conference of the victories on socialist policies in Bradford, Coventry and especially Liverpool.

Pete McNally, moving a fighting socialist resolution from Coventry South East, told delegates that anyone who believed that the will of the working class to change society had been bought off with a few shares, was sadly mistaken. The majority of voters in his constituency were owner-occupiers, and many worked at privatised Rolls Royce and owned a few shares. Yet Labour has won outstandingly with a socialist campaign.

Martin Smith, Brighton Kemp-town, agreed that of course Labour had to win the votes of home owners, but asked how. "We should have warned those in work, with mortgages, that their security was threatened with the looming economic crisis... All we offered those in work was tax rises. No wonder we lost their support".

Confidence

From the National Womens' Committee, Anne Bannister answered the arguments about how to win the unorganised, women workers and the service sector. Women civil servants and women in catering did not vote Tory, they voted Labour. They had learnt from their own conditions and from struggle. "That confidence that we have the right ideas," she said "does not come from media images, but from a commitment over years to support workers in struggle".

Eric Heffer, introducing himself as an MP with a 23,000 majority in what

was a Tory seat in 1964, also attacked the new theories of share ownership and moderation. Former Tory voters, "quite a few of them yuppies", came straight over to Labour in Liverpool. "We can win the next general election if we do what we did in Liverpool," he went on. "We built 5,000 houses, sports centres and put 10,000 workers into employment. That's the way to beat the Tories".

Not one speaker from the platform or from the floor tried to answer the lessons of Liverpool or Coventry. No-one from the new right could explain away the victories for real socialism.

The very first speech of this debate, from John Edmunds the General and Municipal's leader was in stark contrast to the optimism and fighting spirit of the left. "When I came into the hall today I saw a banner declaring '10 years of success'. I think it was referring to the conference centre, because it sure as hell did not mean us."

He used his union's resolution as a means to attack the left by innuendo, backed with a veiled threat: "The GMB has a little leverage, this time we won't hesitate to use it." The NEC recommendations against Coventry SE and Wallasey and for the GMB and their own statement, were passed, but many if not most constituency Labour Party delegates voted against these recommendations, showing ordinary Party members' reservations about the leadership's reversal of socialist policies.

LPYS will fight on

THE NATIONAL Executive proposals attacking the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) were only passed by manipulation of the union block votes undemocratically railroaded through the union delegations.

The decision means that the upper age limit of the LPYS is reduced to 22 and the LPYS regions are abolished.

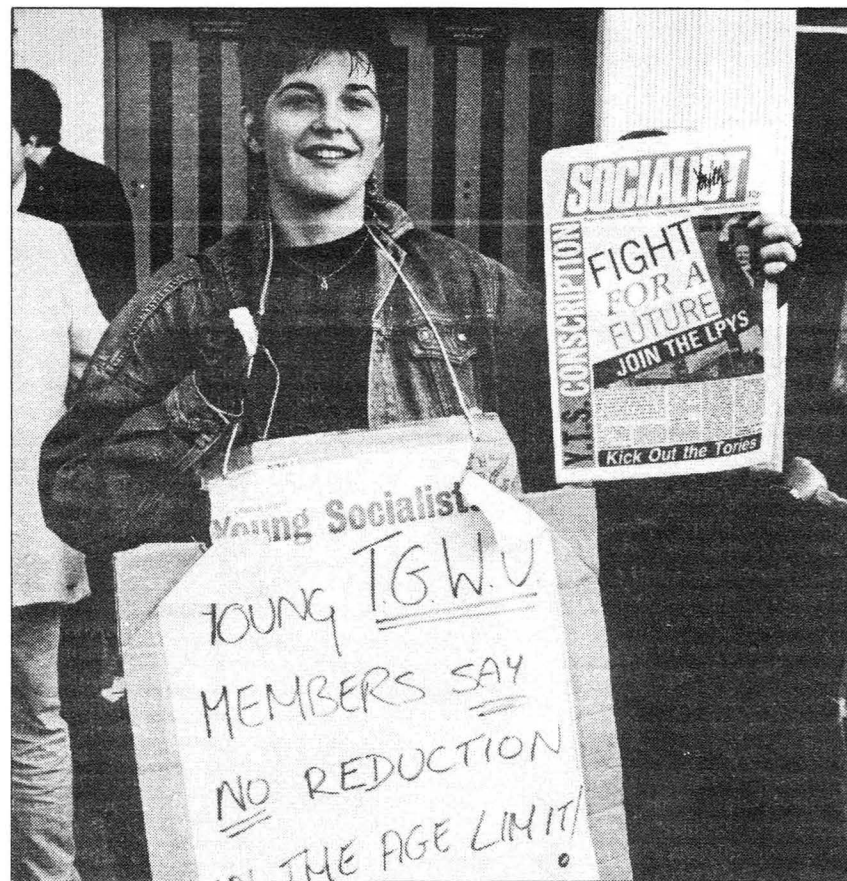
The main resolution backing the NEC's proposals, was from the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS). But even the seconder of this resolution had to speak out against intolerance towards the Party's youth and point out that "militancy can be a fundamental attribute of a socialist". He saw lack of resources as the main reason for any weaknesses in the Party's youth.

Speaker after speaker reminded Larry Whitty of his promise last year that if the consultation showed a majority didn't want the changes they were suggesting, they would be dropped. Only one of 420 organisations replying supported abolition of the LPYS regions. 85 per cent rejected reducing the age limit! But the proposals were being steamrollered through.

The LPYS's opponents showed their ignorance. One speaker didn't even know that 15 year olds could join the Young Socialists.

All Diane Jeuda, summing up for the NEC could say, apart from commenting on the hard work of the LPYS was to make snide comments about "Twopenny halfpenny revolutionary slogans".

Shareen Blackall (Southwark Bermondsey Labour Party) answered the attacks by showing how LPYS members campaigned during the election and at other times to recruit



LPYS member selling the threatened Young Socialist paper *Socialist Youth* at the Brighton conference.

young people condemned to YTS and similar schemes to the labour movement.

She compared that to the way the leadership had abandoned positive attractive policies on a guaranteed job and a £25 grant for over 16s during the election.

John Ennis a TGWU shop steward at Cowley explained how cutting the age limit would stop many trade unionists getting involved in politics.

He called on the unions to flood the LPYS with young trade unionists of all ideas to ensure a thriving lively movement.

The proposals were designed to hinder rather than build the LPYS. But the right wing would be mistaken if they think that petty minded organisational attacks will stop the LPYS campaigning for socialist policies and building in the workplaces, slave labour schemes, schools and colleges.

Felicity Dowling

Reports by Tony Cross and Ted Grant

Labour conference '87

SURCHARGED LIVERPOOL councillor, Felicity Dowling, lost her appeal against expulsion by 5 million to 750,000 votes. But virtually all the constituencies voted for her.

She challenged Kinnock "to debate our differences in front of the workers of Liverpool, and if they vote for my expulsion only then will I accept it".

Afterwards Eric Heffer went up to embrace her in front of the whole conference. He was followed by delegates lining up to shake her hand. No wonder the Party leaders ensured this was a closed session away from the eyes of workers at home.



One block one vote

THE DISCREETLY named 'Party Franchise' debate covered the leadership's successful attempt to change the method of reselection of Labour MPs, and weaken the real accountability held over them by local Labour workers.

John Lowe from Barnsley, moving the resolution to retain the present method of selection by democratically elected local Party general committees, pointed out that even the present qualification for members participating to have attended at least one meeting in the previous 12 months was being ditched.

It was also explained during the debate that the local electoral college, allowing the unions to retain their present specific weight in

each constituency, despite one member, one vote, would allow the organisation of union branch votes to be conducted by secretaries who may not even be Labour Party members.

Temporary

The open right wing, like Bill Jordan of the AEU, made it clear that they considered the electoral college unworkable and regarded it as only a temporary stage towards the Tory press' favoured option—of one member, one vote. With this result under their belt they intend to come back

for more. Extreme right failed Labour candidate, John Spellar of the EETPU, made clear that widening the franchise was really all to "temper the political complexion of the Parliamentary Labour Party".

Unfortunately union leaders like Ron Todd came to the leadership's aid, by swinging their block votes behind the electoral college. But on the first show of hands on the principle of reforming the system, the votes were equal. The constituency delegates have been splitting about two thirds to one third in favour of the left. The right wing dominated NEC is not going to get it all their own way over the next few months and longer.

Neil Kinnock and the affluent society

NEIL KINNOCK'S speech confirmed that nothing would be left out of Labour's policy review, but he maintained that this was merely bringing Party principles into line with a new, changed reality. He even made the obligatory Conference reference to Aneurin Bevan to back him up.

While there was still poverty for some, home ownership and share ownership, even if they did not change anything fundamental, did change voters' perception of themselves, and the Party had to address itself to these new attitudes. They were not yuppies but working class ex-Labour voters.

Kinnock asked how Labour was to win back the £400 per week dockers, who apparently owns a house, car, micro-wave and a flat in Marbella. He spoke of the 1959 defeat and the talk then of the "affluent society".

What was absolutely lacking was any appreciation of the fundamental difference between the economy in the fifties and the late eighties. There was no



Neil Kinnock outside the Ramada hotel where his suite normally costs £700 a night, while workers take home under £100 a week.

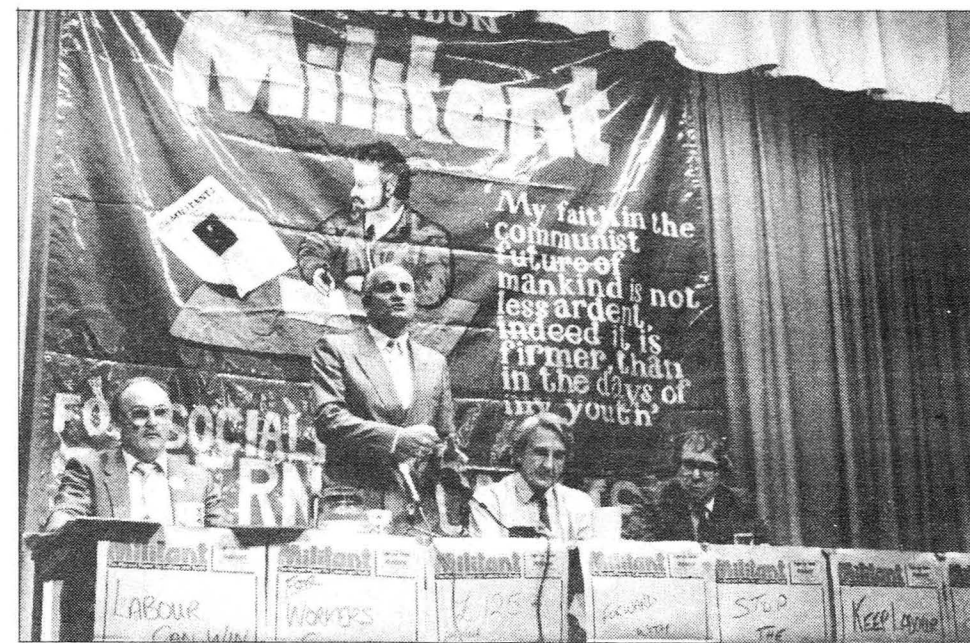
mention of how fragile was the "relative security and relative affluence," of that dockers. (And how many workers' life styles actually fit Kinnock's description?)

The International Monetary Fund talks of world growth being at risk, when it is already at historically low levels. It also warns of British growth rates sinking to their lowest position for years. Yet listening to the leader of the Labour Party one could be forgiven for thinking that whatever temporary 'prosperity' Thatcher has

been able to offer is permanent. And Labour's traditional socialist aims are to be tailored to this.

So the principles of socialism in the speech were reduced to vague generalisations about freedom, justice and individual security, with which no-one could disagree. There was not one clear commitment given. And if workers with shares were not attracted by the right wing manifesto in the election, why should they be convinced by a still more right programme with even less attachment to socialist economics?

Militant sets the tone



Expelled Liverpool councillor, Tony Mulhearn, addresses the Militant meeting.

"IT'S JUST when capitalism has reached its limits that Kinnock comes forward and says we've got affluence and we want share-holding socialism," Ted Grant told a packed Militant public meeting at the conference.

With him on the platform were Keith Dickinson and Peter Taaffe. They had all been expelled and bundled down the stairs by Party officials last time they were in Brighton.

An unannounced speaker was a leading LPYS member, forced to appear in a mask, for fear of also being expelled.

But the meeting was confident and enthusiastic. "No amount of expulsions, no amount of bureaucratic intrigues or distortion of our ideas will separate us from the labour movement," said Peter Taaffe.

THE 47 surcharged Liverpool councillors held a well attended fringe meeting on Monday lunchtime. They were appealing to the movement to find the money to pay off the punitive fines imposed on them, by the District Auditor.

"This is not the 47's debt," said Merseyside Euro MP, Ken Stewart. "This is our debt comrades, their debt to the Conference. This is the debt of this movement. And it is about time it was bloody paid."

In the audience was David Skinner, a surcharged councillor from Clay Cross, the Derbyshire village that stood out against the Tories in the 1970s. "They could have given the money they spent expelling people to these lads and Lambeth, and had it all over with by now," he said.

Continued from page 1 Eric Heffer

movement, but I am very unhappy about the way things are moving in the Labour Party at the moment.

Neil Kinnock raised a number of Aunt Sallies, for example the question of affluence. He said that some old socialist had pointed out that we were not against affluence, especially for the whole of society.

What we are against is affluence for a few at the expense of the mass. But we never opposed workers getting a car, a holiday and so on. That's why shop stewards argued for decent pay rises and so on in the factories. So to argue against socialists by saying that we need misery—I have never heard that argument in my life!

Then he said that the

market alone cannot do all the things that are necessary. But the market cannot do any of the things that he said. That is the nature of capitalism. So we should argue for ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Fight Tories

Neil said he had been campaigning for years and not weeks. But that is precisely what Liverpool Labour Party was doing. It was doing things for people over the years. That is why the Liverpool people supported it. Unfortunately while it was doing these things, some people were opposing it.

I have always agreed with unity and self-discipline. But that goes for the whole movement, including the leadership. They should not indulge in attacking socialists, whatever paper they read. They

should end the witch-hunt and get on with fighting the Tories.

Organisationally things are moving in the direction of power to the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Shadow Cabinet, and away from the NEC and the membership. That is what happened with one member, one vote, and the attacks on the Young Socialists are part of the same drift.

I've got nothing against a review of policy, but if they use it to weaken basic socialist ideas, they must be opposed.

I am in favour of modernising if it means updating our basic socialist ideas to the modern world, and especially mobilising the mass of organised workers and organising unorganised workers. That is the key task that faces the movement, to organise and mobilise those people around our basic socialist principles.

How to really sell socialism

REPORTS COMING in show massive successes so far, for *Militant's* Labour Conference sales campaign. By Monday 105 papers had been sold in Chesterfield. At Stirling University 50 were sold in just one day. 43 were sold in Leicester city centre and 25 in the centre of Cardiff, 7 for the £1 solidarity price. 20 were sold in Ammanford shopping centre.

Reading sellers tell us they are experiencing their best sales since 1980, knocking

door-to-door. While in Stevenage our sellers were thrown off the Lister hospital complex so they went round the nurses homes and sold there instead! They even organised a creche so that parents could sell!

East London sellers sold 34 papers and 14 supplements at two showings of the film, *Business as Usual*. They also showed some real initiative and sold in the railway carriage between Stratford and Hackney Wick. Sellers at

Fords, Dagenham spotted a car with an anti-Murdoch sticker in the window. They managed to catch up with the car at the traffic lights and sold the driver a paper.

Write to us

With our campaign well under way we have been able to spread our policies to a massive layer of new readers who last week brought *Militant* for the first time. If you

are a first-time reader why not write and tell us what you think of our paper, how it can be improved or perhaps you would like to write an article or letter for publication.

If you would like to help in our sales campaign why not give us a ring on 01-533-3311, ask for the circulation department.

A call we received from one long-standing reader, showed just how much a real socialist

paper is appreciated.

He has been active in the labour movement for a long time, but now unfortunately is losing his sight and rang our office to enquire about obtaining *Militant* on tape. He explained how he depended on the paper to keep him in touch with what's going on in the Party and in politics in general. "I really miss the editorial support of *Militant*", he said.

Left must oppose all wage curbs

LABOUR'S RIGHT has swallowed whole all the phoney arguments about the fundamental weakening of the working class. Clearly the hard left Campaign Group has not been so taken in. John Kelly's pamphlet, *Labour and the Unions*, is to be a major focus of discussion at the Group's coming 'Socialist Conference'.

By Jeremy Birch

He confirms that: "Unions have weathered the recession remarkably well...workplace organisation and collective bargaining have remained largely intact".

Implicit in the programme of Labour's right is a rerun of the ill-fated 1975-8 social contract. Neil Kinnock and the TUC's pre-election talk of a 'national economic assessment', represented a similar trade-off—social reforms from the Labour government in return for wage restraint by the unions.

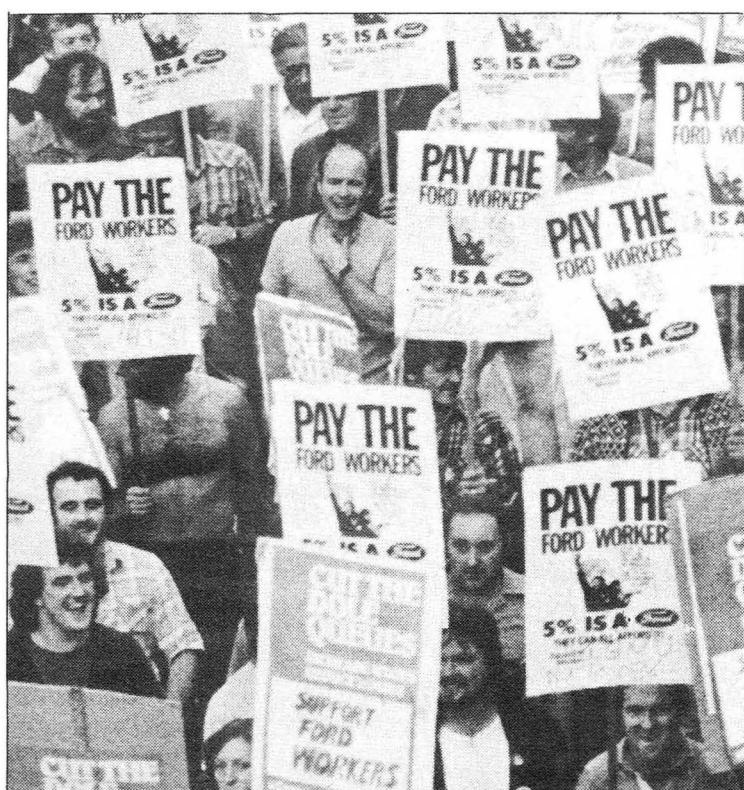
But, the pamphlet contends, if the Labour leaders believe that because of the 'demise of trade unionism', they can successfully get away with offering as little as under the social contract, they are gravely mistaken. Kelly recalls that during the contract "living standards, even for those in work, fell between 1975 and 1977 more than at any time in post-war Britain", and so it ended in the unions' 'Winter of discontent' against the government.

Unfortunately the pamphlet falls well short of a fighting working class stance to match its confident analysis about union strength.

John Kelly sketches out two scenarios. Either, a Labour government enters into an acceptable partnership with the unions on terms considerably more radical than the social contract. Or, any accord with the unions is untenable, and the left must wholeheartedly back industrial struggles against the government which can act as a countervailing force to the pressures of big business, and compel Labour to accept the 'radical' partnership with organised workers that Kelly demands.

Stripped of the many qualifications and conditions, the pamphlet seems to endorse a left wing version of incomes' policy. Exactly the mistake of union leaders like Jack Jones, who believed the initial social contract was such a left partnership.

Within a fully nationalised and socialist planned economy, workers would accept sacrifices, if they knew they would be for the common good. But Kelly recognises that "as things stand presently, the immediate beneficiary



Striking Ford workers demonstrate against the 5 per cent wage limit of the last Labour government.

of wage restraint by manufacturing workers would be their employers and their profits. A socially conscious and rational worker would not support pay restraint in the interests of the low paid unless he/she could see some mechanism for translating their restraint to the benefit of low paid workers".

No form of wage restraint can represent the interests of working people within a capitalist economy.

Under capitalism, where profits and wages are in direct conflict, there never could be such a mechanism, even if Labour implemented to the letter Kelly's terms for his 'radical' agreement. His 'hard left' programme leaves capitalism intact.

As well as repeal of anti-union laws, he calls for higher welfare spending and commitment to some undefined form of industrial democracy. But his economic demands are limited to taxes on "excess profits", exchange controls, "directed investment into regions of high unemployment", redundancies to be kept to an absolute minimum", and "tough price controls".

Yet the author admits "effective price controls are extremely difficult to operate...employers will try to devise countless ways of getting round them". He consoles himself with the hope that price controls "would at least

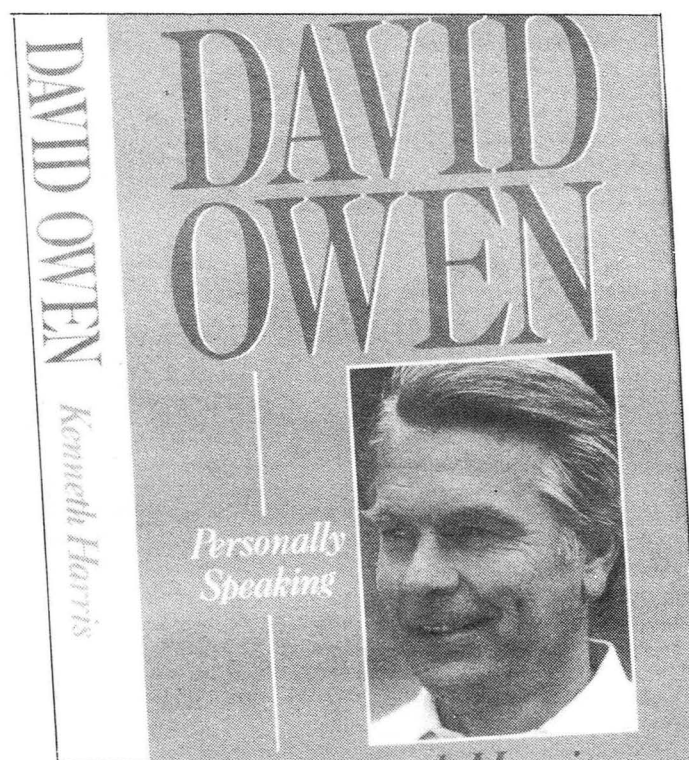
establish a climate of opinion that was hostile to unwarranted price rises and this might have a deterrent effect on firms".

A thousand and one loopholes would similarly be found to evade exchange controls. "Steep taxes" on profits would result in a wholesale and damaging cutback in investment. The whole programme is sufficient to annoy capitalism, provoking at the least a strike of capital. But it is hopelessly insufficient to satisfy the needs of workers who are being asked to sacrifice their earnings. Although not cuts, Kelly only expects a lower rate of wage rises to be accepted.

When a new world recession is brewing and when the Tories' credit boom can only be short-lived, nothing less than a socialist planned economy could lift the burdens imposed on working people. With the immediate nationalisation of the 200 major monopolies, banks and finance companies, a Labour government could begin to rationally organise the economy, over-riding the laws of capitalist crisis.

This pamphlet spreads confusion about the left's response to wage controls. It fails to rigorously expose the right's fundamentally false outlook about some unity of interest between capital and labour, and that somehow workers and their wage demands bear some responsibility for economic crisis.

No form of wage restraint can represent the interests of working people within a capitalist economy. The task of the left is to point them unreservedly towards the complete socialist transformation of society.



David Owen—always a Tory

DAVID OWEN's new independent SDP is just a convenient waiting area before he completes his journey to Toryism. In a speech last week he made it clear: "Thatcherism" should not be made a term of abuse; the Tories' "popular economic achievements" should be supported; the SDP should back a wages' level so that the "present incentive for some individuals not to work is totally removed". In other words the unemployed are idle scroungers.

Kevin Parslow has been reading *David Owen Personally Speaking* to Kenneth Harris.

"FOR MY part I was a Social Democrat when I joined the party Hugh Gaitskill led in 1959, I was a Social Democrat when I helped found the Social Democratic Party in 1981 and I intend to remain a Social Democrat."

With these words Owen confirms that the real infiltration of the Labour Party was by those holding non-socialist views, mainly from the middle class, as *Militant* has often explained.

"I thought he (Gaitskill) was correct in 1959...to call for the removal of Clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution (which called for the common ownership of means of production, distribution and exchange...it seemed to me doctrinaire and hopelessly out of date. His analysis that it contributed to the Labour defeat seemed to be obvious... I believe that in 1959 the Labour Party should have faced up to what Gaitskill was saying. He put his finger on a fundamental problem of the Party."

There seem to be a majority in today's Shadow Cabinet who consider socialist principles old fashioned. Would they happily scrap Clause 4, if they thought the membership would let them?

Owen's account of his career shows how easy it was for middle class carpetbaggers to become Labour representatives in the 1960s, when rank and file participation in the Party was at an all-time low. He became a prospective parliamentary candidate after just three years' membership, and an MP after seven. He became a junior minister in the 1974 Labour Government, and James Callaghan promoted him to Foreign Secretary in 1977.

Backed Shah

Foreign policy was as far removed from socialist principles as was domestic policies: "If they knew that any policy I put up had been agreed by the US, the Cabinet virtually rubber-stamped it." Owen justifies his infamous support for the Shah of Iran in the teeth of strikes and demonstrations, and reveals he sent the Shah CS gas without even reference to the Cabinet! Owen the 'democrat', the 'liberal', backed a brutal capitalist dictator.

With the shift to the left in the Labour Party after the 1979 election defeat, Owen and others found themselves unable to reconcile their pro-capitalist ideas with the Party membership. Egged on by big business backers, they formed the SDP as a halfway house to prevent disillusioned Tories voting Labour.

As Labour's leaders contemplate the review of Party policy, they would do well to remember the SDP's fate, and ponder the successes of Dr. Owen's 'moderation'.

Fiji back under the jackboot

FIJI HAS been plunged into turmoil by Colonel Rabuka's second coup and his declaration of a republic.

By George Collins

Rabuka is acting under pressure from the hardline Melanesian nationalists, organised in the reactionary Taukei Movement, including many traditional chiefs, who see this as the only way of keeping their grip on power.

The indigenous Melanesians are now slightly outnumbered by the Indian community, originally imported as plantation labour under British rule in the last century. Today the Indian middle class dominate business, while the Melanesian establishment controls the army, the judiciary and civil service.

Then, last May, the whole status quo was threatened when the opposition Labour Party, with support

from the Indian community, won the election. Rabuka's first coup, for which there was evidence of US backing, was to prevent Labour taking office.

The crisis was papered over when Labour leader Bavadra capitulated and agreed to form a caretaker government with ex-Prime Minister Mara pending a return to democracy.

But new elections would have given Labour an increased majority. To prevent this, the hardliner leaders of the coup are prepared to impose a new, apartheid-style constitution that will give the Melanesian minority permanent control of the state.

This is a recipe for deepening conflict. Even the

Melanesian upper layers are split between the hardliners and the 'respectable' element headed by the ex-Governor General, Sir Penina Ganilau.

The real nature of state power

He and the 'moderates' would like to preserve the status quo, but without disrupting their traditional links with British imperialism and the Commonwealth. Rabuka is said to hope that the British Queen will remain Queen of a Republic of Fiji; but should this arrangement be unworkable, he is prepared to break with the Commonwealth.

The coup has demonstrated very clearly the real nature of state power, summed up by Frederick Engels a century ago as "armed bodies of men". Clearly, parliamentary democracy could no longer guarantee the privileges of Fiji's traditional elite. So Rabuka swept aside the trappings of democracy, and openly asserted the power of the capitalist state.

The coup marks an irrevocable break with the past. Rabuka has split with Ganilau, who is also his tribal chief. The regime faces international sanctions, and widespread opposition in Fiji. Dictatorship, a regime of crisis, is now the only basis of capitalist rule.

Disabled workers sacked

AFTER YEARS of mistreatment, four volunteers at Canterbury Disabled Information and Advice Line (Dial Kent) presented their grievances to the management committee.

Their complaints covered health and safety at work and access to management decisions. A kangaroo court, disguised as an emergency management committee, chaired by Molly de Courcy, a Tory member of Kent County Council social services committee, then expelled the four from Dial, in effect preventing them from working. There is now no competent cover for disabled people needing advice from Dial Kent.

The implications of this case are enormous, as with the Tory attacks on social services there is an increasing shift to the voluntary sector.

The campaign to defeat these attacks has already started. There has been a picket of the Dial Kent offices and the sacked workers have joined the TGWU. The union is now giving them backing.

By Mick Gadd and Darren Summers

Wapping 'no' to the EETPU

WORKERS REJECT UNION! — a Sun headline maybe? — no, the Sun's own workers rejecting the EETPU. In a ballot, 321 of the workers brought in to work for News International at its Wapping plant have voted to seek another union to represent them.

By Peter Jarvis (NGA member)

Only 140 voted to stay with the EETPU, the union whose leaders recruited strike-breakers for Rupert Murdoch, when he moved the printing of his papers to Wapping and sacked 5,000 print workers.

The vote is a crushing refutation of the argument that traditional trade unionism has lost its relevance to workers in modern high-tech industry. Even the workers who scabbed against the print workers during the year-long dispute at

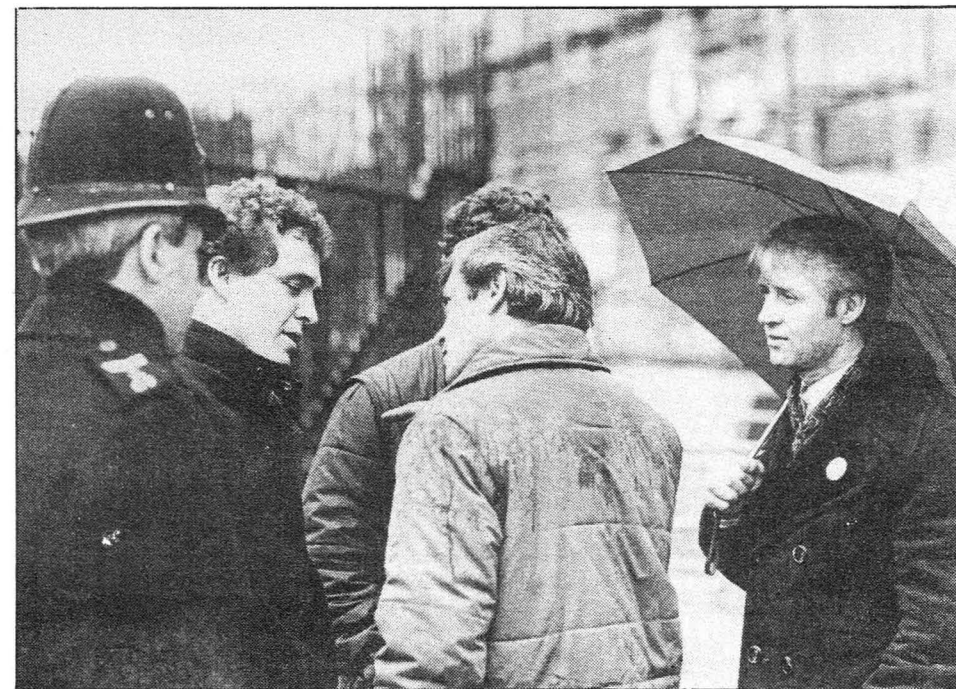
Wapping have seen through the 'company unionism', which was heralded as the way forward for unions in the age of 'new realism'.

It will be a bitter blow to EETPU leader Eric Hammond, the chief architect of single-union deals, who claims that workers are demanding to forfeit their right to strike.

The type of deals pursued by the EETPU inevitably lead to low morale, as Murdoch-style managements keep the upper hand and the genuine grievances of the workers cannot be solved.

Censure

In other places where the EETPU has negotiated such agreements, union membership remains low and workers are demanding that other unions be given the right to represent them.



Pickets outside Wapping try to persuade two scabs not to work for Murdoch.

At the TUC the section of the General Council's report on the News International dispute was referred back, but it is unlikely that the General Council will act on this latest censure.

The issue of no-strike deals was referred to a special committee. The print unions must insist that this committee meets speedily and outlaws such agreements and keep up the pressure

to ensure that EETPU, with its present leaders and policies, occupies its rightful place, and that is outside the TUC.

Witch hunt stopped

THE LABOUR Party in Crewe, constituency of veteran witch-hunter Gwyneth Dunwoody, has been forced to drop an attempt to expel supporters of Militant.

Two party members were summoned to appear before a panel set up to investigate complaints of Militant being sold outside general committee meetings.

But this was abandoned after a magnificent campaign in which hundreds signed a petition opposing expulsions, 200 extra copies of Militant were sold on the streets and estates, many to people who have become regular readers and there was front-page coverage in the local press.

By Andy Bentley

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 East Midlands	974		3250
2 Wales	1206		4850
3 Eastern	600		3050
4 London	1856		9400
5 South East	385		2250
6 Northern	600		4600
7 Yorkshire	899		8450
8 West Midlands	497		4850
9 Scotland East	245		2800
10 Scotland West	329		3500
11 Southern	289		3100
12 South West	160		1900
13 Manchester/Lancs	251		4050
14 Merseyside	427		7500
15 National	2189		6950
Total	10,906		70,000

Invest in Militant

THE MASTERMIND of Labour's election defeat, Bryan Gould, who has a London flat and a £200,000 country house with a swimming pool, has been echoing the Tory call for a 'share-owning democracy'.

Selling shares will do nothing for the people he represents in Dagenham, which has the lowest entry into higher education in the country, or for the hospitals where children are dying unnecessarily of cancer because of cash cuts.

Militant in contrast has stood firm for socialist policies. Our sales campaign is taking that message to as many people as possible. But we don't just want you to buy the paper

— we want to invest your money, not in British Airways or BP shares, but in a more frequent Militant. We need your cash to fight for a socialist future.

A Derby NUPE member has got the message; he sent us a marvellous £300 from his industrial compensation. We are not suggesting you 'break a leg for Militant', but to make a comparable donation.

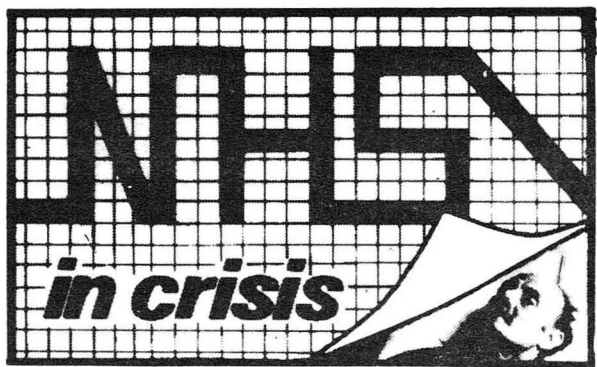
We have had tremendous examples this week of sellers matching their increased sales with rattling tins full of extras and sales at the solidarity price of £1.

£48 was raised in Lea Valley; £26 in NW Glasgow; £21 in the Black Country; £68 in East Anglia; £28 in Central Lon-

don; £31 in Cheshire; £31 in Harlow; £59 in Humberside; £19 in Southampton; £16 in Hackney and £12 in Liverpool Broadgreen. Can sellers in your area do better than that in the coming week?

Glasgow have raised £45 from a disco and £18 from a Chill night in Maryhill. Close behind are Edinburgh with £33 from a social and £12 from a sponsored diet! Come on the rest of the country! Show the Scots that you too can enjoy yourself and make money for the fighting fund.

Only four weeks to go until the end of the quarter! Rush the cash in.



REMEMBER THATCHER'S promise that "The National Health Service is safe with us"? It has now been revealed that under the Tories children are condemned to death because there are not enough resources to fund treatment which can cure their cancer. The underfunding of the health service is inflicting suffering and even death on thousands of those least able to fight back—the young, the old and the disabled.

Below are three stories which illustrate the desperate crisis of the health service under the Tories.

Despair in cancer ward

"GIVING A child with cancer a year of life costs £1,000... For little more than £25 million, ministers could set up a complete national service... At least 60 per cent of the 1,200 children who develop cancer or leukaemia in Britain every year can be cured and go on to lead normal, productive lives." according to the UK Children's Cancer Study Group.

Last week's *World in Action* programme about the treatment of child cancer followed the case of a five-year-old girl with a serious kidney tumour.

Cash cuts

She was being treated in a child cancer unit, which provides the best conditions to treat these children successfully. There have been dramatic improvements in this treatment. Six out of ten survive now, compared to one in ten thirty years ago.

But child cancer specialists produced a report six months ago which drew the

grim conclusion that children who would otherwise live, will die because of cash cuts. They are still waiting for a reply from the government.

On one day there were 26 children on the ward, 19 of them cancer patients. Of these, one was within an hour of dying and four were paralysed from the waist down. The doctor said six children were in need of intensive care, requiring, in theory, a staff nurse each. Yet there were just four qualified staff nurses on duty for the whole ward.

As a mother myself it made my blood boil to see the heartbreak of parents watching their daughter suffer with the additional worry about whether there would be enough cash for future treatment or charity-bought machines to save her life. The programme finished by describing the mood in the child cancer units as one of 'near despair'.

By Maggie McGinley

Not safe with the Tories



Demonstration in May to keep Whitley open.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Keep this hospital open

THE FUTURE of Coventry's Whitley hospital hangs in the balance. The Regional Health Authority on 14 October will decide whether to endorse the District Health Authority's decision to close it.

Whitley cares for frail, elderly patients, many needing constant medical attention. The authority plan to sell it to the Coventry Churches Housing Association to turn it into a 'retirement community'.

To become residents, former Whitley patients will have to pay a charge. Many will have to claim supplementary benefit. Pensions will be counted as income when benefit is being calculated. Those with over £3,000 capital will have to pay for themselves.

Whitley and Gulson

hospital workers have formed an action group to oppose the closure. Supported by Dave Nellist MP, they marched through Coventry, and, helped by Cheylsmore LPYS, got 30,000 signatures to a petition.

"They want staff to transfer to the housing association to keep their jobs," an action group member told Militant. "Workers are very suspicious of this. They started work in the NHS and want to continue in the NHS, not a housing association."

"The association has been to see us about working for them, but has not mentioned anything about pay and conditions. None of their staff are unionised and we don't know what their attitude is towards unions."

"Apart from this, all the moving around would affect the patients. None of them or their families have been fully consulted about the changes or the amount people in the retirement community would be charged."

Privatisation

"If the plans go ahead, Whitley will become the pilot scheme for future closures around the country, opening the way for more health authorities to discharge their commitment to provide care for the elderly."

It is privatisation by stealth. The association claim they can provide better facilities such as single rooms, but that is no excuse for making former patients pay for a service

that is currently free.

At a public meeting to explain the plans, 200 people unanimously opposed the plans, despite a lot of smooth talk and a slide show. But the authority claimed that this unanimous vote was not representative of the people of Coventry. They have forgotten that 30,000 people voted to keep Whitley when they signed the petition.

To fight these cuts, action committees should be formed in the unions and the communities hospitals serve. If strikes and occupations are the only way to fight, they should be given full support by the labour movement. Every job, bed and service should be defended.

By Robert Windsor

Handicapped are denied support

MY SON Lee is a six year old quadriplegic cerebral palsied child. He attends a school for special needs run by West Glamorgan education authority.

The authority is controlled mainly by right-wing Labour councillors who readily implement the uncaring Tory government's cutbacks by closing special schools, cutting back on facilities and teaching staff and expecting children and adults with a handicap to integrate into the community with little support or training.

The authority ignore all deve-

lopments in treatment of conditions and education of children suffering from cerebral palsy. They are played down and criticised so they don't financially commit them or the government.

If parents want to get more specialised treatment such as that at the charity run Bobath centre in West London, they are expected to finance the visits themselves.

Paediatricians, teachers and psychologists are encouraged not to make any recommendations or referrals for treatment or educa-

tion facilities which are not available within the county.

The 1981 Education Act is frequently abused in spirit if not in the letter of the law. If the professional workers prepare statements of a child's educational needs which are too explicit in their demands, they are returned for alteration.

No training

The physiotherapist who attended Lee's school for two mornings a week began work there with absolutely no training

tensive training they undergo both in finance and in job satisfaction.

tending it, almost every one needing intensive specialised physio and speech therapy to function independently.

The therapists and teachers identify the children's individual problems, but they are frustrated in their attempts to rectify them by lack of proper training and lack of time with each child. The individual case loads of the speech therapists are the highest in the country, so the therapists are poorly rewarded for the in-

or experience in how to handle children with cerebral palsy. The school has about 40 children at-

In Hungary the system of conductive education as used in the Peto institute means that every motor-disordered child in that country is given the best possible chance to lead a normal active life. Despite the problems of Stalinism, education for all children regardless of handicap, is given a much higher priority than in this so called welfare state.

By Denyse Thomas

Left and Right

For rich for poorer

THE GAP between workers and bosses is widening. In the top 24 British companies, salaries of the highest-paid directors have risen by an average of 28.5 per cent, compared to 17.6 per cent last year, while their workers' wages rose by 5.5 per cent compared to 7.2 per cent last year.

The highest-paid directors at Woolworth's and Allied Lyons have had their salaries doubled, to £288,000 and £293,000 respectively, while their workers had to make do with rises between 5.5 and 7.2 per cent.

Royal billions

THOSE DIRECTORS are small fry compared to the Queen, however.

She is estimated to be earning £18 million a year from her overseas investments alone. Fortune magazine reckons she is worth £4,500 million.

Yet, symbolising the decline of British imperialism, she has fallen to being only the fifth richest person in the world, well behind the Sultan of Brunei with his £15,000 million and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia with £12,000 million.

'Mediocre' democracy

ACCORDING TO a survey of

young Chinese, there is widespread discontent with the society they live in. 40 per cent of under-25s described the degree of democracy in policy making as 'mediocre' and 56 per cent said there was a need for improvement. Two thirds were dissatisfied with government efficiency and the conduct of officials

To counter any public expression of such views, the bureaucracy is vetting applicants for university places more thoroughly and teaching law students to "to restrain their own speech".

Labour councils retreat - now the axe falls

"DEFIANCE TODAY would be hopeless. We would never manage to extract any concessions out of the government and it would result in the government taking control of local services."

By Tim Harris

With these words, Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington Council and the Association of London Authorities, sums up the now prevailing attitude of 'new realism' in the 'left' Labour councils.

As if this wasn't bad enough she continues with some incredible and very worrying statements. For example, "In London there have been impossibilist demands put up by activists, often from people who work for the council..." and she speaks of the need for "changes in working practices that mean people will have to be more flexible, such as two people doing the job that three did previously".

Government policies aim to reduce local authority spending by a third and cut 700,000 jobs over five years, according to Howard Davies, controller of the Audit Commission. This would spell disaster for working people dependent on local authorities for employment and services. In many boroughs, the council is the biggest employer. Millions will suffer increased hardship as a result of services going.

Compulsory tendering for services will lead to privatisation. Education services are expected to account for half the spending reduction and the majority of the job cuts. Housing taken over by Housing Action Trusts will further deplete council resources.

The Tories declared war on local authorities and their workforces in 1979. They have stolen hundreds of millions in rate support grant from local councils.

The 'realistic' and 'reasonable' attitude of Margaret Hodge and other Labour council leaders is

Camden crippled

ACCORDING TO Tony Dykes, Labour Leader of Camden Council, "There is no alternative whatsoever to making cuts. We must retain control of the council. We'll make the cuts as small as possible," whilst his Chief Whip, Alan Woods said, "All roads lead to cuts. This is the best road."

Ironically, 19 councillors are still under threat of surcharge from the 1985 campaign when setting a rate was delayed. The scale of the local government crisis is well illustrated in Camden where for example £10 million was allocated for bed and breakfast for the homeless and £20 million is needed.

A staggering 35.1 per cent of Camden's budget goes on debt and interest repayments.

900 vacant posts have been frozen since July, and 300 temporary jobs cut. Voluntary redundancy and early retirement will reduce the workforce by a massive 2000.

Officers of the council are proposing three possible options to councillors for housing spending: either stop bed and breakfast for the homeless by December; raise rents by £13 per week; or create 500 redundancies.



Islington workers demonstrate in favour of jobs and services in 1985—now the threat is even greater.

only emboldening the Tories. Mrs Hodge may "no longer know what the word (campaign-ed) means," but thousands of local authority workers, tenants and council service users are being forced to take up the fight, unfortunately against and not side-by-side with Labour councillors.

Three years ago Liverpool City Council won big concessions from the Tories because they waged a genuine campaign, mobilising tens of thousands at meetings, demonstrations and with industrial action. Not just workers in the local authority or even public sector were involved—the whole of the city's working class was affected.

A year later, Labour councils across the country agreed to unite in opposition to the Tories' rate-

capping plans. Seeing a lead being given, local authority workers responded with strike action, marches and lobbies. The potential existed not just to defeat this legislation, but to force the Tories into an early general election.

Two choices

However, once the Tories threatened these councils with legal action, with the exception of Liverpool and Lambeth, they ran for cover.

The price for that retreat is now being paid. There are no more soft options left. There are only two choices now—either to make brutal attacks on working class living standards ...or to fight. The argument has been advanced that it is preferable for Labour

councils to stay in office and carry out the cuts.

Militant supporters will fight harder than anyone to keep councils Labour, but if they make cuts what will the verdict of the voters be in 1990 in London or next year in the districts?

We have already seen the disastrous effects electorally of councils not fighting. Despite rate rises of over 60 per cent in Waltham Forest, this authority is still heading for a £29 million budget gap next year.

On this page we look at the crisis facing the London Labour councils. On pages eight and nine we examine the full scale of attacks being launched by the Tories and also the socialist strategy to defend the local authorities.

Redetermination for ILEA?

THE INNER London Education authority Labour Group, meeting on 21 September, discussed the implications of the Tories' attacks on education, including plans to enable Inner London boroughs to opt out of the ILEA, the national curriculum, privatisation and there was an item on the 1988/89 Authority budget.

The chair of the Finance Committee gave a report which included a recommendation that the ILEA apply to the Department of the Environment for a 'redetermination' of its budget for the coming year. By this, it proposes to ask for a reconsideration of the D of E's rate-capping limits to attempt to secure more money. Any authority which applies for redetermination however, runs the risk of having its budget actually cut, since it means placing its budget in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Since the Tories' election win in 1979, there have been regular pronouncements that the ILEA is the most profligate authority in the country. What prospects can there be that the D of E will treat them sympathetically?

The prevailing mood at the

group seemed to be that since the authority now has so little control over its budget anyway, what is to be lost by redetermination, even if the budget is cut? One point of view, shared by many on the group, was that the Department of the Environment might give the ILEA fair treatment, since they will be able to prove that they have been firm with their expenditure over the past year.

The government's plans to allow boroughs to opt out of the ILEA will cripple London's education

Their handling of the teachers, it was suggested, by introducing compulsory redeployment would surely prove to the government that they were a 'responsible' authority. The Labour group's decision to increase the price of school meals twice over the next four months would be proof to the government of the ILEA's preparedness to take unpalatable decisions.

No final decision was taken by the group on this matter. They have decided to consult their constituency parties first and take a decision on 12 October on whether to apply for redetermination.

The ILEA Labour Group seems quite mesmerised by the government's measures against them. The government's plans to allow boroughs to opt out of the ILEA, and the fact that Tory controlled Wandsworth, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, together with Liberal controlled Tower Hamlets (which is the biggest net beneficiary from the ILEA) will cripple education in inner London.

The Labour Party in inner London must act quickly to prevent the Labour group from capitulating to the government over its budget by applying for redetermination. It is true that the government now controls much of the financial resources of the authority, but to apply for redetermination is to throw in the towel.

By George Williamson
(London Regional Labour Party Executive)

Haringey

ANGER ERUPTED in Haringey as a package of £15m cuts was voted through by the Labour council, despite the opposition of 12 Labour councillors. The Tories wanted even deeper cuts. The decision will mean rent increases of £4 per week, 250 teaching posts going and the scrapping of a £39,000 grant to Broadwater Farm. There is talk of bigger cuts to come next year.

Greenwich

THERE IS already a 27 per cent vacancy rate in Greenwich social services department, but now a selective freeze on the filling of posts has been introduced. Overtime has been banned in the Directorate of Works. 43 painters' jobs went over the summer. There is a shortfall of £2.3 million in the housing main budget. Proposals include £6.50 on the rents, and an additional five per cent saving on staff cuts. A £35 million budget gap is forecast for next year.

Hackney

"WE ARE advocating a retreat and it is well not to hide this. We cannot beat the Government in a head-on fight." These less than fighting words from the Hackney Council leadership underscore plans to cut spending by £43 million. A £2 rent increase now, followed by another in April, a complete freeze on the filling of vacancies, and the sale of valuable land and property are some of the proposals.

Brent

ONE HUNDRED and fifty teaching posts dropped, a £2 increase in rents and five pence on school meals will be just some of the results of £5 million cuts voted by Brent Council last week. There is also to be a recruitment freeze.

Stand firm and fight back

HOW CAN we beat the government's plans for local councils? Wouldn't it be possible to talk the Tories out of their ideas? The eight years of Tory rule give the clear answer 'No'.

The government will not listen to the voice of sweet reason even within the Tory Party. Some 'dissident' Tories do not welcome the break up of local government; they don't share Thatcher's blind faith in the all-healing power of private profit.

But the Tories can only be defeated by the organisations of the working class moving into action with a strategy and alternative policy.

The Tory 'wet' view is based on self-preservation. Sections of the ruling class see the dangers of the inner cities in particular creating what they call an 'underclass'. They are afraid that the most deprived section of the working class, threatened by joblessness and now by homelessness, at times turning towards crime, could spearhead a class explosion.

The 'liberal' Tory Bow Group wants the Prime Minister to abandon her "bourgeois triumphalism" and look more sympathetically at the problems of the inner cities.

They criticise giving schools the right to opt out of local authority control on the grounds that the type of schools likely to go it alone would be the ones where there are no major problems, leaving underfunded local authorities to manage the rest.

Class campaign

They also object that: "a well run estate with houseproud tenants is unlikely to have much reason to change its landlord, yet it is only such idyllic properties that a responsible private landlord will be interested in taking on." They also point out that neither the building societies nor the housing associations are ready to take on the burden.

The Bow Group fear that the upshot of all this might be a new radicalism. One of their more amazing statements is that: "the genius of 20th century British politics has been to accommodate without violence the aspirations and the political power of the working class within a bourgeois parliamentary democracy."

They are worried that opposition might take the very democratic but very un-bourgeois form of a class campaign. The Bow Group point out: "It is clearly not enough to hope that individual local authorities can be brought to heel by allowing them to edge into bankruptcy one at a time."

"They might just choose to go into crisis together. It is doubtful whether the fabled 'commissio-

ners' (government appointees who the Tories threatened to send in to run Liverpool in 1985—eds) could run even one large town in the face of obstructionist local government unions."

Precisely. If all the councils threatened by ratecapping and other attacks had stood firm in 1985 as Liverpool and Lambeth did, they could have built a formidable mass movement not just 'in one large town' but nationwide of councils, unions, tenants' groups and ratepayers to get more government resources for the most hard hit areas of the country.

Action

It will need a massive campaign to get results this time. The Tories will not listen to the logical arguments of their own Bow Group. But if we ensure that the Bow Group's worst fears are made real, all the Tories' plans could still be overturned.

But the majority of Labour councillors are showing their fear of struggle. The task now falls mainly on the council unions to link up the struggles of council workers, tenants, parents, teachers and community groups through the unions, tenants' associations, parent teacher associations, community groups and private sector union branches.

The campaign must be geared towards action, including well planned industrial action. The first step must be to build up a genuine shop stewards' organisation in all councils, and linking them up across the country. The recent meeting of 150 London local authority shop stewards from 19 authorities in the London Bridge organisation shows the potential.

The council workers must be convinced of the need for action. There must be regular bulletins explaining the nature of the attacks, and the widest possible number of workers should be involved in the union campaign.

Councils are the biggest employers in many areas (30 out of 32 London boroughs for a start!) The council unions would have a great effect on a local area if they wrote to tenants' associations and other sections of the local community explaining what the Tories planned to do and what local people could do to oppose the cuts.

There is no alternative to a campaign of action. The Tories have removed all stopgaps and soft options. We can win using the strength of the unions, fighting alongside tenants and the local community. Our most urgent task is to convince people that we can win and then to build the forces needed for the fight.

- ★ Oppose all cuts in jobs and services.
- ★ Fight privatisation
- ★ No to rent and rate increases to cover up for Tory cuts
- ★ Fight for a level of services based on need
- ★ Organise the fight back

No 'soft options' as Tory noose tightens

MOST LABOUR local authorities had only one strategy against Tory cuts after they left Liverpool and Lambeth isolated in 1985—a silent prayer that Labour would win the general election.

In the meantime, they tried to overcome their immediate problems of huge budget gaps with 'creative accountancy' measures.

These sophisticated legal twists and turns around government restrictions involve heavy borrowing from merchant banks on deals outside the scope of the Public Works Loans Board, the usual Whitehall agency for local government borrowing.

The Tories hypocritically look outraged at these deals. Their supporters of course spend millions on creative accountancy to save themselves and their firms tax. The

Tories have put pressure on merchant banks to withhold loans from local authorities.

New laws

Just after the Queen's speech, Thatcher warned that local authorities which "plunged recklessly into debt" despite high rates should realise that the government had "never stood behind the debts of local authorities and would not do so now." This statement was designed to scare off both councils and banks.

New legislation to stop creative accountancy is likely in October. As the plans were announced in April, some councils have rushed through last minute deals. But the Tories are tightening the noose around council finances.

Another twist to the knot will come from Poll Tax legislation

which will let the government raise business rates and spread the load across the country. Many councils, particularly in London depend on high business rate and will lose revenue.

Councils are increasingly forced to decide. Do we fight the government or give into every demand? More and more councils are rate capped. Government rate support grant has been ground down year on year from nearly two thirds of council income in 1977 to below 40 per cent.

The grant for the current year 1987/88 was up. But Santa Claus was not a Tory minister, this was a private election bribe to keep local government comparatively quiet.

The 1988/89 figures don't have to make any electoral considerations. Five new councils are added to the ratecapping list and the rate support grant is £1.5 billion below



No money for building, no money for repairs, that is the prospect for council housing unless there is a fightback

Tories Council

COUNCIL HOUSING word for the Tories. They get shot of the £2billion government to support private housing. They want private landlords to fill the gap.

The government say they are encouraging "choice" of council, private, housing. But to make the choice a way, they are forcing councils up so that the private "compete" with it!

New legislation due to be passed in November will certainly recommend councils subsidising council housing from the rates. Most Labour councils at present do this.

The new laws can enforce council housing to develop can "illustrate the ability of the property in a more economical manner than housing authority." They are creating four new housing trusts which plan to invest money into public housing—for a profit.

The Tory housing minister given legal powers to transfer all of a council's housing to these trusts if in the opinion, a local authority managing the property 'is not likely'.

The government are to announce shortly new private rent controls to move private rents up. Housing costs are to disappear which will force council rents up further. Many councils have already raised rents.

Housing benefits are to be cut from the DHSS to the D of E budget will be cut in benefit or money from other spending such as the Corporation or housing which would force rents

Increase (%)	Housing
30-50	Housing
50-70	Housing
100-125	Towers
150	
160	
220	

Militant
LONDON COUNCIL WORKER
Issue no. 1 Sept. 1987

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★ B.L.O.C. CONFERENCE

20p

PREPARE TO FIGHT THE TORIES

Militant London Council Worker. Issue number one out now. Available price 20p plus 15p post and package from Militant, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

ons' left round councils

the figure that councils say is needed just to keep services as they are now and to pay wage increases already agreed.

As the Tories claim councils spend too much on wage claims, they will undoubtedly attack the pay and conditions of local authority workers.

Strategy

Councils have tried capitalisation, i.e. the transfer of capital spending like new building, and money from the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), the main government funding for public sector housing, to balance the day to day revenue budget. This is at the expense of new housing. Sheffield's building capacity is only 15 per cent of its 1977 figure.

But there will be less HIP in future anyway due to government

Feature by London Council workers

cuts and plans to transfer spending to urban development corporations. And authorities which capitalised last year are being punished by withdrawal of housing subsidy this year.

The Houdini-like escape routes are being closed down one by one. The strategy of waiting for a Labour government is in ruins. Yet Jeff Rooker, Labour spokesman on local government says that the party has nothing for him to be a spokesman on. "We haven't got a policy, that's the actual truth" he told a meeting of local authorities.

If the national Labour leadership have nothing to offer, then councils, unions and tenants will have to draw up a strategy for fighting the government.

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there could be a further cut in housing investment.

The main weapon the Tories have is the lack of fightback against the Tories' own attacks which has left many inner city council estates in ill repair.

It would cost £5 billion to get existing stock up to standard, let alone start new building. Over 30 per cent of council budgets goes to repay debts on housing. Most Inner London authorities owe £600 million or so.

But the Tory proposals will only force council rents up and set the scene for council housing being privatised, mainly in the inner cities for sale to wealthy people wanting urban bases.

On average council rents would go up by 20 to 30 per cent to make it fit for consumption by the private sharks. Liverpool rents would have to rise 20 to 30 per cent according to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting.

Other increases are even worse. Some are shown in the table below.

What will be the result? Homelessness is already at epidemic proportions. Last week's papers highlighted the Westminster school where the majority of the pupils are children of homeless families.

If the plans to let council estates opt out of local council management go through, housing departments and direct labour repair and maintenance would lose thousands of jobs. Services would get worse. Private landlords will not employ many present council workers, and co-operatives will not be able to afford to.

With a genuine campaign demanding a solution to the housing crisis through a new housebuilding programme, the council unions and tenants' associations would get massive support.

Authorities affected

Waltham Forest, Greenwich
Newham, Hammersmith, Haringey
Islington, City of London,
Lewisham
Lambeth
Hackney
Camden



Liverpool built a mass movement against Tory threats in 1984 and 1985. A nationwide class campaign can stop the Tories today.



Council services like refuse collection are up for grabs by private firms, threatening jobs and services.



Trade unionists and local people demonstrate against the Tories' abolition of the Metropolitan counties who were obstructing Tory policies. The government now threaten local councils who don't co-operate that their services or areas under their control could be taken over by unelected Urban Development Corporations like the LDDC in London docklands.



Keep out the sharks

THATCHER'S GOVERNMENT believes the nonsense that market forces can solve all problems. Local services would be better done, they claim, if some entrepreneur makes a quick buck out of it.

Even Tory councils have found that privatisation ruins services. Council workers' wages and conditions get worse to provide easy pickings for the Tories' "enterprising" friends.

The new Local Government Bill aims to force tendering on every council in refuse collection, cleaning services, catering for schools and building maintenance. The Tories can add to the list as they see fit.

Some councils think they can overcome these difficulties without a fight. But the Tories have made sure that councils who compete for the tender themselves (in-house tendering) can not legally restrict competition even by actions taken before the Act is passed.

If local authorities reorganise departments or services to make private tendering complicated or unattractive to private competitors, the government can remove the council's right to tender!

Private firms get advantages over council departments. Councils will have to put in lower bids than contractors; they have to justify keeping contracts more than private firms have to justify gaining them.

Positive

Councils can not legally concoct rules for the contract that might make it unpalatable to a private shark. No qualms about South African links for instance, no insistence on trade union rights or rates of pay, no banning of lump labour. All 'contract compliance' is out say the Tories.

The Tories' first aim is to hive off profitable services to their friends. But they have no objection to in-house tendering where the unions voluntarily put on their chains of low pay and bad conditions. In some cases, in house deals have the worst conditions of all.

Many tenants and other users of council services have seen the Tory cuts over the last few years and may believe that services can get no worse or might even improve after privatisation.

Council workers and tenants can be won to a positive campaign which explains what the Tories have been doing to local government, and what the real intentions of privatisation are.

We need a campaign like Liverpool's in 1984 and 1985 which puts forward a plan for the level of services needed and leads a fight for the resources from the government to carry them out.

* Hackney NALGO have produced an excellent guide to Tory attacks and how to fight them.

"Building the fight" is available from Secretary, Hackney NALGO, 245/247 Mare Street, London E8.

Hungary: austerity plan imposed

Workers' anger grows

THE HUNGARIAN regime's "stabilisation programme", explained in this article by an Eastern European correspondent, has now been formally enacted.

Prime minister Grosz admits that many Hungarians need two or three jobs to keep their heads above water! Yet the regime intends to cut domestic consumption by 6 to 8 per cent in the next three years, and increase consumer prices by 14 to 18 per cent next year.

Hungary's economic crisis is a crushing condemnation of bureaucratic rule. An external debt of \$9 billion has been built up, the highest per capita in Eastern Europe—higher even than Poland's, which lay at the root of the revolutionary movement of 1980-81.

Thirty per cent of state spending

goes to subsidising loss-making enterprises. The regime's solution is to let these go to the wall.

Massive anger is building up among the working class. Already, the tremors of approaching revolutionary storms are beginning to shake the 'tops of the trees'—the more disgruntled sections of intellectuals and bureaucrats.

An "Open Letter" signed by 100 intellectual critics of the regime—including some dissidents and party officials—was sent to the Hungarian 'parliament' during the economic debate two weeks ago.

It called for a number of democratic reforms, including freedom of the press, personal freedom, parliamentary control over the government, and for alternative economic plans by non-government economists to be con-

sidered. It also called for "market control" over economic activity, and "equal rights" for the private sector.

Political revolution

Every demand for democratic rights will find a powerful echo among the working class, who will instinctively treat it as an element of political revolution. But more 'free enterprise'—a system which is decaying in the West, and dead and buried in the East—within the straitjacket of Stalinist rule could solve none of the fundamental problems.

Likewise, with 'parliament' a creature of the bureaucracy, the idea of parliamentary control over the government is meaningless. In spite of its divisions, for example,

the present parliament voted unanimously for Grosz's economic programme.

The road forward can only lie through wresting power from the bureaucratic elite, and establishing full democracy on the basis of the planned economy.

The Hungarian working class, in 1956, showed the world a "dress rehearsal" of the political revolution. The regime's present turn brings the next revolutionary upsurge nearer.

Workers' democracy could not survive in a small country like Hungary under the guns of the Russian bureaucracy. The Hungarian workers need to appeal to the working class internationally to carry the political revolution to every country of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union.

WHILE THE Western media coo over Stalinism's new glossy veneer provided by Mikhail Gorbachev, deepening economic and political crisis is unfolding in all the Stalinist states—even Hungary, where the bureaucracy resorted to economic reform well before the Gorbachev era.

The Hungarian workers' revolution of 1956 had been drowned in blood. The bureaucracy, fearing new uprisings, took measures to increase the amount of consumer goods in the shops. It carried through the type of economic decentralisation—giving factories the right to invest their own 'profits', etc.—that Gorbachev is now advocating.

Unemployment

But the 'Hungarian model' is breaking down. Workers face steadily rising unemployment and massive price rises in basics such as bread, electricity and petrol. The price of meat has risen between 18 and 22 per cent.

April saw lightning strikes among the workers of Csepel (a large industrial island in the Danube at Budapest) against the price rises. As a result, implementation of the increases was kept back until the situation had cooled.

Leading bureaucrats—including Party leader Kadar himself—have been touring industrial areas, attempting to inspire confidence in the regime. In July a visit by new Prime Minister Karoly Grosz to Norgrad, where a number of pits have closed in recent years, was reported. He was faced with workers demanding to know what would be done about the faltering economy.

Workers everywhere demanded higher wages, not only to cope with present hardships, but also to keep up with government plans for a personal income tax (now introduced).

A few days later, in a Budapest car factory, Kadar told workers it was no use waiting for a "miracle" to solve Hungary's problems. He urged them to work harder to fulfill the production plan rather than "over-fulfilling" the con-



Top: armed workers and youth in control during the 1956 revolution. Above: price rises of 14-18 per cent planned for the next year, will provoke new opposition.

sumption plan, which he claimed they were guilty of.

It is little wonder that this man's popularity is now declining so rapidly. His arrogant whip-cracking will put the backs up of workers who are facing redundancy in towns such as Ozd, where the steel industry has been heavily hit by the so called economic restructuring, and no alternative employment is offered.

Unemployment benefit is only available for those workers made redundant in terms of the official redundancy procedures, which only apply to groups of ten or more workers dismissed at the same time. State money can be 'saved' if workers are sacked here and there in smaller

groups.

Last October's anniversary of the 1956 revolution will have recalled in the minds of older workers the treachery of Kadar and his associates, who in the early stages of the revolution supported many of the workers' demands, only to enter into secret negotiations with the bureaucrats in Moscow, and reappear in Budapest behind the Russian tanks.

Attacks

Grosz, appointed as Prime Minister to carry out the vicious attacks on living standards which the bureaucracy are preparing for, has declared that "massive" wage increases and "negligible" rises in

productivity will not be tolerated. His predecessor, Lazar, is blamed for falsely raising living standards by borrowing money and running up a massive foreign debt.

Statistics for 1986 show a staggering budget deficit of 46,915 million forints—more than double the planned deficit of 22,965 million forints! (£1 = 78 forints) Total expenditure was 21,160 million forints higher than planned.

Such news has sent new waves of panic through the ruling caste. In parliament there are increasing signs of discontent as large numbers of members abstain on plans for more attacks.

Similarly, in February last year, the Trade Union National Congress formally

approved the 1986-1990 plan, but only after these carefully selected little bureaucrats had loudly protested against the falling living standards. Twenty one delegates had even voted against the plan—a significant event at an official Stalinist congress.

Other voices within the bureaucracy are saying that recent measures to let certain declining industries go bankrupt are still not harsh enough. The serious economic journals in Hungary are full of articles by different bureaucrats arguing about where they go from here.

Many suggest different marketing strategies for Hungary's exports and 'restructuring' the economy. Others waffle about

"weaknesses in ethical values", "lax civic behaviour", etc.

But the different bureaucratic factions are absolutely united when it comes to resisting the aspirations of the workers.

The rumblings of discontent among Hungarian workers are becoming felt. The new austerity measures and the crisis created by the bureaucracy will ensure that in the future this discontent will spill over into unofficial movements.

Privileges

The rash of small businesses, the fancy shops in the highly expensive centre of Budapest and all the other privileges of the bureaucratic elite must stick in the throats of workers who are struggling to make ends meet. Gorbachev, during his visit earlier this year, praised these affluent areas and turned a blind eye to the bleakness elsewhere.

The years ahead will leave open only the road of political revolution to the working class—the struggle for full democratic control of the economy, the rebuilding of the workers' councils, and the overthrow of the bureaucracy, which would open the way to the development of the planned economy for the benefit of all.

The newly-discovered 'openness' of the regime will not extend to tolerating movements of workers' opposition. In May it was reported that the Politbureau of the ruling 'Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party' had plans to crack down on opposition groups.

Even if this cannot be implemented at the present stage, there can be no doubt that a clampdown will be prepared for the future, when the bureaucracy find their rule under serious threat from the working class.

This time, will they succeed? The Hungarian workers of the 1980s are a hundred times stronger and more confident than in 1956. They have the capacity to smash the bureaucracy, and open the way to political revolution throughout Eastern Europe.

US social chasm deepens Labour challenges 'robber barons'

SIX AND a half years of Reaganism have resulted in the biggest shift of wealth from working people to the rich in the history of our nation.

From Betty Traun
in New York

The top two per cent of US families now own 54 per cent of all financial assets. The bottom 55 per cent have zero or negative net worth. Real wages are lower today than in 1962.

"What we are dealing with is a new generation of robber barons", comments Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America.

But the robber barons of the last century were penny-ante crooks compared to the ones confronting the American people today. They own transnational corporations who count their small change in million dollar bills. Their tentacles extend around the world.

But while the rich are getting fantastically richer and the poor are sinking deeper into poverty and debt, workers are getting

angrier and more determined, with a clearer picture of who their enemy is, and richer in experience of how to fight back.

Earlier this year the largest AFL-CIO (the American TUC) unions, supported by churches, civil rights and women's organisations and others, announced a national campaign for "Jobs With Justice".

Militant workers

That brought 10,000 militant workers to a rally in Miami, Florida, on 29 July to protest Eastern Airlines' new management and its inhuman practices towards its workers.

Miami's bus drivers face mass lay-offs as their county government seeks to privatise the bus lines. They also face abominable working conditions. They are not allowed to eat lunch, and eating on the bus is cause for dismissal.

One driver with a bleeding ulcer, aggravated by going without food all day, began spitting blood. The bus dispatcher refused him "permission" to be relieved.

He was finally carried off and hospitalised in a critical condition.

A second "Jobs With Justice" rally took place at the beginning of September in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, site of a four month strike by meatpackers against the John Morrell Co.

Endorsed by more than 450 local unions and four AFL-CIO state federations, the rally was a militant display of solidarity by thousands of trade unionists, farmers and others. The organisers declared:

"We see corporate America systematically destroying the wages, benefits and working conditions of this nation's working men and women."

Mass rallies aimed directly at the transnational corporations and banks are becoming more and more common. A militant, organised and committed fight against the 'new generation' of robber barons, led by the labour movement, is growing.

Mobilised to the full, armed with clear policies, this is the force that can stop "corporate profiteering".



Anti-US demo in Iran 1979. Despite the monstrous Khomeini dictatorship, the US and the Gulf rulers fear that the fervour of the Iranian revolution would spread throughout the region if Iraq collapses.

Gulf war

WITH THE UN's unsuccessful mediation efforts apparently out of the way, the superpowers are set to increase pressure on Iran for an end to the Gulf War. Western warship deployments in the Gulf make the biggest concentration of naval firepower since the Second World War, directly entirely against Iran.

By John Pickard.

The Iraqi regime is better armed than its bigger neighbour and, since all its oil exports go by overland pipeline, it does not rely on tanker exports from the Gulf. But during the last two years, Iran's greater size has brought about a fundamental shift, with Iran recovering the territory seized in the early weeks of the war and threatening to break through to Iraq's second city, Basra.

There now seems little chance of an Iraqi outright victory, and the best president Saddam Hussein can now achieve is a 'draw'—a settlement that loses as little face as possible, and leaves his regime in one piece.

The danger for Iraq and its backers, the oil-rich Gulf states like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, lies in the possibility of a collapse of the Iraqi army, leading to a defeat and an inevitable revolutionary movement. The worst scenario contemplated by all the Gulf states is the possible 'spread of the war', meaning the spread of the Iranian revolution to the Gulf.

It is for this reason that Kuwait in particular has co-operated with Iraq to 'internationalise' the war, by re-flagging tankers and bring-

ing in the US Navy. Although barely hanging on in the land war, Iraq has total air superiority and can attack Iranian cities, Gulf shipping and oil terminals.

Iran, heavily dependent on oil exports by sea, has made it clear that if it cannot use the Gulf, then it will make sure that no-one else (ie Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) can.

The intensified Iraqi air raids in the last few weeks are therefore intended to provoke Iranian retaliation against Gulf shipping and bring in the US Navy. Saddam Hussein is calculating that the presence of the Western navies, especially if there were a serious military clash leading to US bombing of the Iranian mainland, will force a change in the regime in Tehran, or at least a willingness to accept a cease-fire.

Threat

The danger of an Iraqi defeat is just as serious a threat for imperialism as for Saddam Hussein himself. Notwithstanding the present world oil surplus, the Gulf is a strategically vital area of the world, holding about 60 per cent of known Western oil reserves.

But the destabilisation brought about by this long and bloody war is not so easily overcome. Even if a peace agreement were signed, there may still be enormous upheavals as the war-weary and long-suffering workers of Iran and Iraq have their say on the seven-year slaughter.

The social antagonisms that first brought about the Iranian revolution and the war are still present in Iran and in all the other Gulf states... but now more acutely than ever before.



Job-hunting US style: desperate job-seekers grab at application forms being thrown out by a company official.

Industrial tremors in Mexico

FORTY THOUSAND people demonstrated in Mexico City last week, demanding homes for the victims of the 1985 earthquake. After two years, and large amounts of foreign aid, many have still not been rehoused.

The outlook for Mexican workers is bleak. Purchasing power has been halved over the past nine years. Inflation is

now running at 134 per cent.

The combativity of the working class has been shown in the two-month strike by 10,000 Volkswagen workers during July and August. Management demanded a 15 per cent pay cut and 700 redundancies. The workers won a 78 per cent pay rise, and the threat of redundancies has been withdrawn for the moment.

Now political tensions are beginning to surface in the run-up to next year's presidential election. Under the authoritarian traditions of the ruling PRI ('Institutional Revolutionary Party'), in power since 1929, the incumbent president in effect chooses his own successor.

This time a public challenge has been mounted by the "Democratic Current", on the left within the PRI. They are demanding increased food subsidies, social welfare and suspension or reduction of foreign debt repayments as their platform for the nomination contest.

The ruling clique's answer has been to exclude the DC from the contest. This will heighten tensions inside the PRI, and could benefit the newly-formed Socialist Party (PMS), a fusion of the Communist-led United Socialist Party, the Workers' Party and three other left groups.

Three hundred thousand votes were cast in a country-wide ballot this month to select the PMS candidate.

Unrest in Israel

LAST WEEK'S four-day strike by Israel's 150,000 civil servants, in support of demands for higher pay and a shorter working week, is the latest explosion in the country's deep-rooted economic and political crisis.

Earlier, furious workers at Israel Aircraft Industries blocked a highway and closed down Ben Gurion International Air-

port for a time in protest against the announcement of 6,000 redundancies out of a 20,000-strong workforce.

The reason was the decision by the coalition government of Labour and the right-wing Likud party to cancel the prestigious Lavi fighter-bomber project. The government could not afford to pour more money into it.

Israel's deficit on foreign trade rose by 50 per cent in the first half of the year, compared with the first half of 1986.

There is growing disillusionment among workers and youth with Israel's permanent war footing, resulting from its

suppression of the national rights of the Palestinian people. This has forced even sections of the Likud to seek contact with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in the hope of finding a settlement.

Any plans for a Palestinian homeland will be torpedoed by the vested interests of the Israeli ruling class as well as the Arab regimes in the region.

But the demand for peace, combined with Israel's chronic economic and industrial turmoil, show the need for socialist policies to unite the working people, Arab and Israeli, and transform the region.

Battle of the Giants

HOW WOULD you like William "The Refrigerator" Perry of the Chicago Bears or Lawrence Taylor of the New York Giants on your picket line? Well, since last week they're manning their own picket lines in the strike of the US National Football League Players' Association.

The last NFL strike ran for 57 days in 1982, when the average player's salary went up from \$90,000 to \$230,000 as a result of their victory.

This time the players' union is trying to break the NFL's con-

tract monopoly under which stars are prevented from switching teams. They also demand full pay if they are dropped in mid-season, and better pensions.

Players' spokesmen point out that the average player only lasts four years before the pounding they receive forces them into retirement.

The NFL has just received \$1.4 billion for the next three years' TV contract. Team owners are preparing for a showdown.

By Richard Knights

Seller of the week

Dear Comrades,
An advertisement on TV about the Youth Training Scheme said "the best advert for YTS is those who are on it". Well I know that isn't true, otherwise why are the Tories making it compulsory?
The other day while I was talking to a regular reader of *Militant*, a bloke a few doors down was cleaning his car. The bloke I was

talking to shouted to him to buy a copy of *Militant*, saying it was a good paper that fought for working people and that he supported it all the way.

The bloke cleaning his car said "well, if you say it's good I'll buy it" he is now a regular reader. So you could say that the best advert for *Militant* is the people who read it.

Yours fraternally
David Mitchell
Cleethorpes

Massive drop in jobless!

Dear Comrades,
A little snippet in *The Independent* last week caught my eye. It stated that out of 44,000 long-term jobless who had been called to interviews on Merseyside, 31,384 actually turned up.
The interviews were under the government's Restart scheme, and...

(wait for it) jobs were found for 104 of the 31,384 interviewed. In other words, 31,280 remain long-term unemployed. So much for the ballyhoo on the TV adverts about what is being done for the unemployed.

Yours fraternally
Stan Natrass
Littlehampton

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Write to us

Dear Comrades,
Undoubtedly, our paper is the best in the entire labour movement, with unparalleled coverage of workers' struggles worldwide. However, we should now open up a debate amongst our readers about the role and contents of a workers' paper.

I believe that the paper still has to undergo major improvements in its contents and presentation in order to really develop as a workers' paper with a mass base of support amongst the working class.

One of the major faults of the paper is that it suffers from a gross lack of contributions, letters, and articles from ordinary workers. Every reader of *Militant* should consider the paper their property and understand that they have a responsibility to regularly contribute to the paper.

Every reader has experiences that they could report on; political meetings, conferences, trade union proceedings, strikes, protests, etc.

The letters page needs more criticism about the ideas and contents of the paper. We need to know what workers really think about the paper. Their suggestions would go a long way to improve the contents of the paper.

Yours fraternally
Ray Duffill
Hull



Photo: Mick Carroll

Cuts in local government finances mean working class people have to fight to keep nurseries open, like those currently under threat in Southwark.

Care for the rich

Dear Comrades,
I'm a single parent trying to get work because the £35.75 supplementary benefit plus child benefit is a pittance. However, I'm unable to get my son in a council day nursery because we're not a 'problem family'. Nursery education has been so underfunded that in my area only women at their wits' end can get their children in

these nurseries.
I've contacted various child minders and private nurseries only to find that the cost of caring for my son was £33 to £35 per week. Out of an expected wage of £70 to £80 it doesn't leave much.
Secondly, my grandmother who is 78 and very ill, is waiting to go into a residential council home. The wait, however, will be

a long one it seems. Until she goes into a home my mother, who is in her late 50's has to care for her for most of the week.
Life is rosy for the rich who don't have to wait or worry, for those who can afford child care, private medicine and private nursing homes.
Yours fraternally
Ann Wheeldon
Derby

Classified ads

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

Militant meetings

- Gloucester, Wednesday 7 October, 8pm. Golden Heart, High Street, Tredworth. "The future for the labour and trade union movement" speaker: Robin Clapp.
- Cinderford, Thursday 8 October, 7.30pm. Miners Welfare Hall. "What we stand for" speaker: Robin Clapp.
- Ashington, Thursday 8 October, 7.30pm. Premier club. "After Labour Party conference; keep Labour socialist". Speaker: John Cunningham.
- Gateshead, Tuesday 6 October 7.30pm. Half Moon Inn, Wrekenton.
- Yorkshire *Militant* Womens Weekend School. 21-22 November. Residential school concentrating on trade union issues, particularly privatisation. Also world economics and women in the labour movement. All meals included £7.50, deposits needed. Limited places, contact Iris Barrow, 44 Windyhouse Lane, Manor, Sheffield. Tel 640095.

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

□ London Disco Saturday 3 October, 8.30pm-11. Kensington Tavern, Russell Gardens W14. Between Goldhawk Road and Shepherds Bush tube station. 49 Bus.

□ "Militant for Labour and Youth" enamel stud badges now available £1 each. Red plastic fighting fund collecting tins £1 each. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg, 50p each. Stickers available in rolls of 250; 'Kick out the Tories', 'No slave labour on YTS', £2.50 per roll. All available from fighting fund dept, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% p&p.

○ Fighting privatisation one day conference. Organised by Hull city council joint shop stewards committee. Saturday 10 October 9am-5pm at YPI, George Street, Hull. Speakers include Pat Wall and John Prescott MPs. For details contact Conference Organiser Alan Shadforth, 1LB Avenue, Clyde Street, Hull. Tel 572692.

○ Walthamstow. "Pakistan - why every city is becoming Beirut". Saturday 10 October 6pm. Ross Wyld Hall. Speakers Farooq Tariq Qayyum Butt (Ex-MP Pakistan Peoples Party) Linda Douglas (member Labour Party NEC) and Asian songs and music. Organised by *The Struggle* and the Labour Party Young Socialists. For info ring: 01 729-2690 or 01 551 2324.

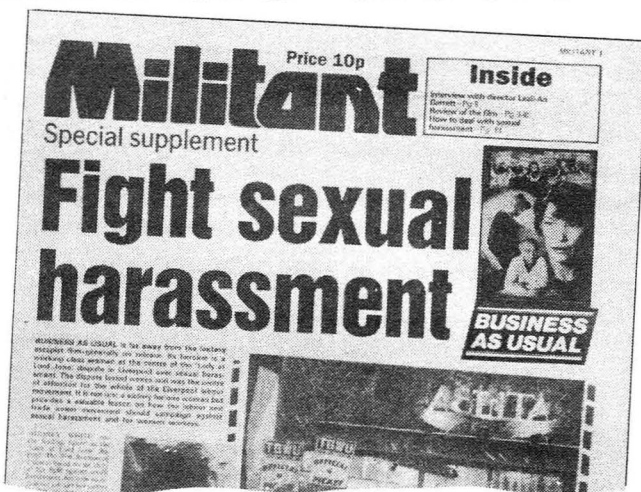
□ Wanted co-op and green shield stamps. Loose, part or full books. All proceeds to the fighting fund. Send c/o Militant circulation, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

September edition of Militant Irish Monthly out now.

Articles on Socialist candidates standing in Belfast city council by-elections. A preview of this month's Southern Irish Labour Party Conference. The latest situation in the North and South and lots more.
Cost 25p or £1 solidarity price. Get your copy from your local *Militant* seller or from *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

Brilliant as usual

Dear Comrades,
I really enjoyed reading and selling the issue with the review of *Business as Usual*. It is a fine example of what *Militant* stands for and what we can achieve when Marxist theory and practise come together.
I looked at some of the feminist press to compare reviews and found both *Spare Rib* and *Everywoman* devoting less than a column to the film, not commenting on the issue itself and how to fight it. *Everywoman* concentrates on Glenda Jackson's acting ability and *Spare Rib* is not 100 per cent happy with the film's message and not quite sure why.
In contrast, *Militant's* review is top class journalism in its own right, and top class politics as well. Keep it



Militant's supplement on sexual harassment, available from Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

up and congratulations to all comrades that made it happen.
Just one little criticism: was it not overkill to raise the slogan for the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies twice on the back page of the supplement?

Yours fraternally
Pauline Maniscalco
Leicester

BBC's tragic hero - the murderous Mussolini

Dear Comrades,
Having viewed as much as I could stand of the BBC's portrayal of Mussolini as a tragic hero, I heartily welcomed your review giving the true background to the fascist coup. (*Militant* 865)
I was a young Communist of twenty at the time of Mussolini's 'march on Rome'. This heroic venture was followed by among other atrocities, the murder of Matteotti, the socialist member of the Italian legis-

lature who was his chief opponent there—a grim warning to all opposition.
Shortly after this murder, the prominent Tory, Austen Chamberlain, visited Mussolini and shook him warmly by the hand for "saving Italy from Bolshevism". The 'Duce' was praised anew by the British capitalist press after this visit.
All reports agreed that Mussolini did not meet his death with the admirable

calm and composure portrayed in the BBC film, but was obviously terrified by the prospect of his death at the hands of the furious, disillusioned Italians.
What a pity one does not always think of keeping papers and cuttings at such times. Perhaps we shall have the heroic, tragic story of Hitler, as portrayed by the BBC in the near future?
Yours fraternally
Kathleen Jones
Shropshire

50 states but no welfare state

Dear Comrades,
I sustained a freak accident one night when I fell backwards from a raised platform onto the stone floor below.
The doctor said bones were not broken but there were multiple contusions, so this was not going to be a quick recovery. I live independently in Brooklyn with no relative in New York or its surroundings.

If I was not to starve to death I would need outside help. We are always being told what a great country this is with its 'meals on wheels' programme for the poor and those shut-in. No one would believe that an 81 year old woman, a cancer patient, would be denied aid.

As I began exhausting social agencies I found that my income, derived solely from a social security check which places me just about \$200 over the 'poverty' line each month was disqualifying me from home health care and 'meals on wheels'. I would have to pay well for any service I would get.

When I pointed out that cancer pills cost \$1,300 a year and \$600 for arthritis pills (the pharmaceutical companies are the robber barons of the elderly) and that these costs put me well below the poverty level, I was given a deaf ear.
Yours fraternally
Betty Traun
New York

'Hire' education

"IT SEEMS that the unbelievable is about to happen and that within the next few months the government will have put in place machinery for dismantling the whole system of higher education in this country." (Times Higher Education Supplement 18/9/87)

By John Jennings

In April this year, the Tories released the white paper for Higher Education announcing their plans to completely restructure Higher Education. In August they outlined similar plans for the Further Education sector.

The immediate effect of these plans will be to end local authority control over 29 polytechnics and 28 higher education colleges. The local authorities will lose all influence in allocation of funds. They will also be deprived of buildings and land without compensation.

Privatisation

This will mean a greater centralisation of Higher Education funding and planning. The university sector will also be restructured to strengthen governmental control. These moves represent a significant step towards the privatisation of Higher Education.

The government's aims were clear in the white paper: "It is the intention in making this change to encourage institutions to be enterprising in attracting contracts from the private sector and thereby lessen their present degree of dependence on public funding."

In the old system institutions received block grants for allocation to courses and student numbers. Instead institutions will enter into contracts for funding of courses and graduates with the newly-created government planning and funding councils. The allocation of contracts will de-



National Union of Students demonstration in Liverpool earlier this year.

pend on financial performances—ie, meeting government targets for productivity.

These plans will further encourage the trend of the last few years. In 1984/85 it was estimated that on average polytechnics already earned more than £820,000 through externally-funded research contracts.

The government has claimed it will create an extra 33,000 full time places in education. But since 1979 there has been a 20 per cent cut in government grants to universities and this is expected to fall by another 4 per cent by 1990. Over 25,000 potential students have been excluded from university education.

In the public sector, although the number of students has increased from 196,000 in 1979 to 273,000 in 1985, the amount spent per student has fallen by £550. The amount spent per student in public sector, £3280 in 1985, compares unfavourably with the £6,234 spent per university student.

The so-called 'new places' created by the govern-

ment will receive no extra funding so the amount spent per student will fall even more. In addition, the creation of these places will be dependent on "the achievement of the necessary shift towards science, engineering and vocational courses to produce the balance of skills which the nation requires."

The government's real plan is to create a three-tier system with a greatly reduced university sector committed to basic research, a polytechnic sector to meet the immediate requirements of local industry and big business and a further education sector to act as a training ground for cheap labour.

Mergers

Despite government claims to the contrary the education reform will mean rationalisation, course closures and job losses. The government is already planning a series of mergers in Higher Education. Cardiff University is to merge with the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology

with up to 180 job losses and a number of course closures.

These attacks require a united campaign by both students and workers to defend education. The NUS must encourage every one of its 850 affiliated organisations to convene special general meetings to discuss the proposals for Further Education.

Meetings must be immediately organised with the college trade unions to discuss joint action with college workers during the NUS weeks of action from 9-19 November. Links must also be forged with the NUT and other unions in the schools to defeat the proposals in the Education Bill to enable schools to opt out of local authority control.

Unfortunately the NUS executive is looking to abandon its planned lobby of parliament with the TUC before the Education Bill comes to parliament. Student unions must demand that NUS carries out its conference mandate for a demonstration in the first term and this must be linked to the education trade unions.

YTS swindle

WHILST CAMPAIGNING to set up a Labour Club at Gateshead Tech, this week the Vice Principal said that since 1979 there has been a ten per cent drop in the intake of apprentices from manufacturing industry.

The Tories' only answer to unemployment which has resulted from Britain's economic decline is the Youth Training and Job Train-

ing Schemes.

One young woman who we asked to join the Labour Club told us she only came to enrol for evening classes, but because she had just started on a JTS she was classed as being 'employed' and therefore had to pay her own fees —over £300!

By John Killen



School students on strike.

Photo: Mark Salmon

Huddersfield Tory haters

HUDDERSFIELD SCHOOL students were horrified when the local paper started putting round rumours (as yet unconfirmed) that their school was to be taken out of the state sector.

Some students at Henley High School contemplated taking strike action, remembering the successful school strike of 1985.

Another indication of how bitter and angry young people are about Tory attacks was found by Halifax Labour Party Young Socialist members when they did a survey of school students.

They interviewed 100 school students. 98 per cent hated Thatcher and saw Youth Training Schemes as nothing but

cheap labour. They were 100 per cent opposed to YTS conscription. Even the two Tories saw the need for a school students' union.

Enthusiasm

When asked if they would support a national school students' strike, they answered yes, depending on what issue. There was enthusiastic agreement with a strike against YTS conscription.

These youth are not 'strike-happy', but think about what action to take very maturely. But above all, the survey showed the radicalisation of youth.

By Ian Brooke

College campaign for free nursery

THE POLYTECHNIC of North London Students Union is campaigning for free on-site nursery provision. The campaign began as a result of the growing anger of staff and students at the lack of child care facilities at the polytechnic.

By Julie Frost

The poly has over 5,000 students and hundreds of staff yet provides only one nursery with 30 places. At the moment, because of staff shortages, only 25 children have places and the waiting list can be as

long as two years (this discourages many parents from even applying).

The fees are a disgrace. A student can be expected to pay up to £30 a week and a staff member much more. In the last seven years the level of the grant has fallen 20 per cent and yet the fees increase every year! Last year parents threatened a fee 'boycott' in protest.

Last year the Students Union linked with the nursery workers, the Joint Union Committee, parents and even sections of the governors,

to demand that the management provide free on-site childcare facilities.

Victory

A victory was achieved in that management were obliged to make some concessions —money was found to fund a Student Union initiative, the half-term creche for school age children. However they fell short of meeting the major demand of free on-site nursery facilities (now supported by the Board of Governors).

This is a basic require-

ment to enable equal opportunities for all, particularly working class women. Parents must not be financially penalised and forced to reconsider further education because of their children.

The polytechnic must demand an increase in resources from the Inner London Education Authority in order to provide the necessary funds. The Students Union and the polytechnic trades unions must continue and step up the campaign.

Strathclyde SALEP ban is a failure

LAST WEEK *Militant* reported the decision of Charles Gray, right wing leader of Strathclyde region, Britain's largest Labour Authority, to ban Labour club meetings to be addressed by a supporter of SALEP in the region's FE colleges. The ban failed miserably as in a brilliant show of defiance the meetings went ahead. At Cardonald 120 students attended and at Langside 110. Over the entire week over 400 youth attended meetings and £330 was raised for the Campaign for a Socialist South Africa.

In memory of Jim Wilson

MILITANT SUPPORTERS in Scotland were shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden death of Jim Wilson from Perth of a heart attack. As one of *Militant's* oldest supporters at 60, Jim belied his age and was one of the most energetic and enthusiastic campaigners for socialist ideas.

Jim gave his life to the fight for a better just society. He was a member of the Communist Party in his native Glasgow in the '50s and

'60s before following in son Colin and daughter Eileen's footsteps and supporting *Militant*. His enthusiastic pleasant manner will be sorely missed by all.

Not only have we lost a real battler; we have lost a terrific person. He will serve as an inspiration in our fight for a socialist society. We send our condolences to his wife and family, Agnes, Kirsty, Colin, Eileen and Joan.

By Eddie Donaghy and Willie Campbell

Industrial Reports

Ancoats: victory but the fight continues

AFTER EIGHT months of sit-in by members of the Ancoats Action Committee the District Health Authority in Manchester has decided to reverse the planned complete closure of Ancoats hospital casualty unit. This represents a victory although the unit is not opening as a 24 hour service but as a daytime community health unit.

Pat Mason from the Action Committee spoke to Jane Briars: "Although we didn't get fully what we wanted, we have got the department re-opened. The campaign will now continue for a 24 hour casualty service. The Action Committee will continue to meet weekly. We have gained a victory and have also shown that things can be done if you are prepared to fight and work hard enough."

"We had never fought for anything before but this has given us courage to fight over any other cuts. We will always be available to help and advise other people."

Support for the casualty to be kept open was very strong locally. Warren Bates from the Hyde Road bus depot said, "Now in



Ancoats workers marching to save the casualty unit.

Photo: Alison Dixon.

Manchester three casualty units have closed in the last three years. Ancoats is particularly important because it's close to the city centre."

Because closing Ancoats would mean that Crumpsall hospital was the nearest

casualty, the DHA had approached bus companies to provide a service only to be refused because of 'market forces'. The DHA showed how out of touch they were by suggesting people could always get a taxi.

The final word goes to another member of the action committee who observed, "Labour reps should sit on authorities to represent the people and warn them so that a fight can be got off the ground before it's too late". Maybe

Manchester City Council should also take this advice.

The Ancoats Action Committee can be contacted for advice at 6 Finishing Walk, Ancoats, Manchester 4.

NUPE member suspended

THE RIGHT of Broad Left supporters to distribute leaflets to fellow members of the National Union of Public Employees has been thrown into question by the union's Yorkshire and Humberside Division. A disciplinary hearing has resulted in Leeds shop steward, Lionel Wright, being suspended from holding office for six months.

The Leeds Nupe Broad Left have produced a series of well received leaflets opposing the use of in-house tenders to 'fight' privatisation and calling instead for a campaign to be waged along the lines agreed at this year's national Nupe conference. Unable to answer these points effectively, Nupe's leaders in Leeds have sought to silence rank and file opposition through organisational means using the disciplinary procedure.

Threat

Unfortunately, this attempt to stifle criticism has now been upheld by the divisional council. Incredibly, they accepted claims by the local full-time official that union members 'mistook' clearly identified Broad Left material for official union literature.

This decision is a potential threat to rank and file activists in the union generally. All unofficial publications could come under attack. At the same time, the decision could also mean that Nupe shop stewards (who are automatically members of district committees) are now bound by 'collective responsibility' for the majority position outside district committee meetings. If this ruling was applied throughout Nupe it would seriously undermine democratic discussion amongst Nupe members.

Nupe members are facing serious attacks from the Tories and the employers through privatisation, local authority cuts etc. The last thing they need at the present is witch-hunts and internal purges. Nupe members must vigorously oppose this attempt to trample on the democracy of our union.

Nupe members are urged to protest to Head Office at 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF.

Back du Ponts' workers

ON 14 September 19 workers, members of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (ATGWU) were suspended by the management at du Pont's Maydown plant, Derry. More than 100 ATGWU members walked out immediately. At a mass meeting the next day all 450 production workers joined the strike.

Du Ponts, the chemical multinational, established the plant 28 years ago to produce man-made fibres. The 19 were suspended for refusing retraining for a new unit to produce Kevlar, a new fibre claimed to be five times stronger than steel. Du Ponts and the government are investing £45 million in this project.

When it was announced two years ago, the company claimed 350 new jobs would be created. Now the management are trying to run the new unit by introducing a new Advanced Working System (AWS), involving total flexibility for all workers in it. This is just the first step to total flexibility throughout the whole plant.

Official

The ATGWU members refused retraining and were suspended. At a mass meeting a week later they reaffirmed their strike decision, refusing to negotiate on training until all 19 had been unconditionally reinstated without loss of pay. The strike has now been made official.

This is the first major dispute in the plant's history. On 16 September, 150 technicians and clerical workers unfortunately voted to continue working normally. At the time of writing it is unclear whether the 200 fitters, members of the AEU, will join the strike.

The ATGWU members are picketing on a 24 hour basis, with both entrances covered. The union is digging in for a protracted struggle. The mood of the pickets is determined. One said: "The strike is 28 years overdue." They all agreed that it has been "all give and no take" by the workforce.

With Derry an unemployment black spot, another striker said, "We know we're lucky enough

to have jobs. In the past the company have used this to blackmail us into accepting conditions in their interests not ours."

Scab

Over recent years more militant shop stewards have been elected, reflecting the hardening of attitudes among the workers to this giant multinational. Maydown is the only plant in the du Pont empire which has effective trade union organisation. The AWS, if accepted, would effectively destroy trade union rights at the plant.

Production is being maintained at two units in the plant by supervisors. As was told to us the supervisors are already demoralised by the increase in

hours they have to work in order to scab on the striking production workers. The Maydown workers have a long tradition of supporting others in struggle, most notably taking part in the half day general strike in support of the health workers in 1982, and holding regular collections for the miners during their strike.

It is vital that the trade union movement locally and nationally support the stand of these workers. Messages of support and donations should be sent to ATGWU District Office, Carlisle Road, Derry, Northern Ireland.

By Aiden Campbell,
Derry YS and
Bill Webster,
GMBATU 238 branch.

Metalastik victory

500 WORKERS on strike at Metalastik (Dunlops) in Leicester have now gone back. With only two workers crossing Transport and General Workers Union picket lines, one of whom was the managing director's daughter, management were forced to negotiate.

The strike began over the selection procedure for who works on new machinery brought into the factory. Management originally wanted a foreman to select people on a number of criteria including 'general attitude'. The workers saw this as an attack on the union and also felt that racial discrimi-

nation may have become a factor in selection.

After a mass meeting which overwhelmingly agreed the negotiator's proposals, George Lucas (TGWU convenor) said: "The union has got what it wanted, a fair and reasonable agreement. There will now be no selection by foremen alone, and manning of new equipment has to be mutually agreed with the union".

By Steve Score.

Labour leader plans lock-out of fire fighters

FOLLOWING THE national demo of 18 September in Swansea the Labour controlled West Glamorgan County Council hardened its position towards the proposed cuts and redundancies in its fire service.

In response to the Fire Brigades Union's 80 per cent ballot in favour of industrial action the County Council announced it had already prepared for the introduction of the infamous and in-

adequate 'Green Goddesses'.

With up to 45 jobs at stake and the closure of three fire stations Labour councillor Frank Evans has stated that "If the proposed one hour stoppages and walkouts take place then the firefighters can stay put". In other words this former AEU district official and now Oxfam organiser is threatening a lock-out. A Tory councillor hypocritically responded "Is that the voice of socialism and trade

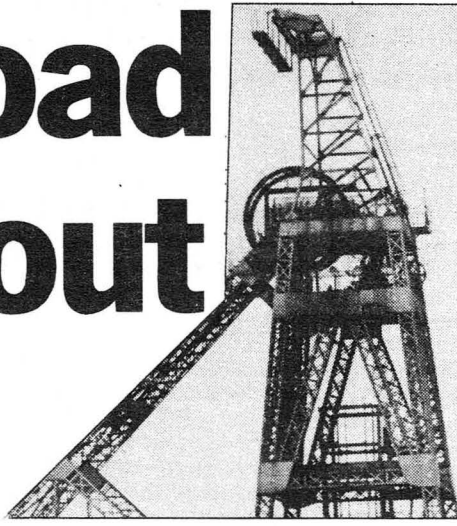
unionism?"

In the wake of these latest developments Mid Glamorgan FBU have already agreed supportive action and other Welsh brigades are likely to follow suit with the possibility of a national fire service strike in the near future.

By Gary Baker,
YTURC, Neath.

Industrial Reports

Miners' Broad Left spells out its strategy



RANK AND file miners are dismayed by the decision of the national executive of the Mineworkers' Union to stick by the 'softly, softly' overtime ban. Ted Scott, Paul Whetton, Mick McGinty and others sacked at the whim of British Coal are only a warning of what is to come if management are allowed to establish their vile disciplinary code.

NUM annual conference declared itself in favour of one-day strikes in support of miners victimised in the course of the 84/85 dispute. Yet, the union executive seems unwilling to rise fully to the defence of 40 years of rights and conditions.

Morale

Against this background the National Miners' Broad Left held its conference on 26 September. Events were dominated by the question of the effectiveness or otherwise of the overtime ban. The dispute at Frickley, involving the whole of South Yorkshire in industrial action, had raised morale throughout the coalfields.

But the implementation of such a paltry ban, amounting to 'business as usual' in certain coalfields such as Yorkshire, had caused widespread confusion and threatened to allow the mood to dissipate.



Frickley pickets at Kilnhurst pit this summer.

It is now a matter of extreme urgency that Broad Left activists and rank and file miners take up the demand to escalate the action. The refusal of the executive, meeting at Labour Party conference, to step up the ban is a disappointing setback.

Haslam and his cronies will take heart from the NUM's apparent weakness. More sackings and disciplinary acts may follow. The loss of 60,000 tonnes, three per cent of production, and £2.5 million in the first week of the action may not appear a great deal.

Nevertheless, British Coal may still attempt to break the ban by threatening disciplinary action.

No union activist, no union member will be safe from victimisation unless this code is defeated. Therefore, the Broad Left are calling on all miners to take up the following demands within their branches:

- ★ Motions for escalation of the action to be put through the branches and Areas.
- ★ A motion to be demanded from the executive on the issue of 'flexible working' and the need for strike action. Bring forward

the ballot agreed by annual conference!

★ A national delegate conference with representation from every branch, pit or workplace be demanded to oversee the campaign and to propose wider action as the need arises.

★ A commitment to all-out industrial action from the union if more sackings are carried out under the code.

By Chris Herriot
Sacked Monktonhall miner

Step up the overtime ban

THE MINERS' overtime ban, in its present form, is proving very unpopular. It is nowhere near strong enough. So far it has only achieved utter confusion.

Facement and development workers are at a loss as to what can and what can't be done during overtime. The manager at Golborne has sought to take advantage of this situation by posting up a notice giving his interpretation of what we can and can't do.

Militant

But our pit has been described as the most militant in Lancashire by Jack Evans, the area director, because facemen are refusing to start at 6am instead of 7am. Now the possibility of a dispute has flared up because of the actions of a face overman.

By misinforming the

machine driver and ordering the console operator to run the belts to transport timber down to the face-line, the overman attempted to cut coal during the 'snap-time'. The console operator immediately stopped the belts as the first coal appeared. The overman has now threatened to take him off the job. If this occurs, there will be a walk-out of the outside workers in this section.

This is a reflection of the anger of miners throughout the coalfield at the Board's intransigence over the code, and an example of the growing frustration at the inadequacy of the overtime ban. The general feeling is that either the ban should be taken off, or we go the whole hog with a real, effective overtime ban.

By Gary Knowles
Golborne NUM
(Personal capacity)

Durham area

THE FOLLOWING is a motion passed by the Durham Area NUM:

'The Durham Area request that the NEC be reconvened to discuss the following resolution: "We call on the NEC to implement the following form of industrial action in the

present dispute with British Coal in regard to their intention to impose their new Disciplinary Code.

"We call for the implementation of the overtime ban, cessation of holiday working and a limitation of week-end working"

Stop Press

150 MEN attended special NUM meeting at Bilston Glen on Saturday. Sent telegram to executive calling for stepping-up of overtime ban.

24 hour strike at Monktonhall in protest at private contractor, Amco, employing redundant mineworkers, rather than victimised men. Call for special Scottish delegates conference to discuss issue.

British Rail Engineering

"WE HAVE been betrayed by Thatcher and the rail board" was the comment of one worker after hearing the news of almost 3,000 redundancies at British Rail Engineering (BREL) workshops in Crewe, Derby and York. In Crewe, the famous rail town, where 1,020 jobs are threatened this is shattering news which will mean 12 per cent unemployment in the area.

Campaign

Local Tory leaders are to plead with Thatcher for a reprieve whilst Labour spokesmen have called for 'an inquiry'. These measures are welcome but few workers will put any faith in achieving results from these actions. Some workers in the area have raised the need for industrial action. This will only be taken if the workforce feels it can win.

The local trade union leadership should immediately call mass meetings to explain

the situation and also that a victory can be achieved. A strike committee should be set up with representatives from all sections of the works to plan a strategy for victory.

A mass leafletting campaign of every house in Crewe would win tremendous support. If the jobs go, local shopkeepers and small businesses will also be threatened. Public meetings would give an opportunity to mount a mass campaign of opposition with solidarity action being won from nearby Rolls Royce and other British Rail workers.

All sections of railworkers have suffered attacks in recent years—one man operation, flexible rostering and so on. In Crewe itself in 1970 BREL employed 6,500, yet if the latest redundancies went through only 1,800 would still work here.

Given the uncompromising attitude of management, pushed by the Thatcher government, the response of the rail unions should be

national action. With anger growing amongst the miners and the prospect of an escalation of action in the pits, the Tories would be loath to take on the railwayworkers.

'My life'

One local shopkeeper, a former branch officer of the National Union of Railwaymen, commented that "Working on BR was not just a job, it was my life". He had left the railway because although it was nationalised he was sick of the dictates of the lords and ladies who still control it.

However there will be no scope now for 1,020 sacked workers to open shops or businesses in Crewe. Who will buy the goods?

The workforce should spell it out loud and clear to British Rail and Thatcher—"Enough is enough. No more redundancies."

By Andy Bentley

London BLOC conference

THE THREAT of privatisation now hangs over the water industry. Sewage and water supply are due to be privatised. The Thames Water Authority (TWA) has withdrawn from national pay and conditions negotiations.

From 2 April 1988 all employees will no longer have the protection of nationally agreed pay scales, bonus and annual rises, pensions, hours of work, overtime, standby and callout, vehicle allowances, sick leave, maternity leave, periods of notice, trade union membership and so on.

Opportunity

Various sections within the TWA have already been made into 'profit centres' and employees subjected to harassment, Manual, craft and staff unions all rejected the last pay offer by ballot—yet the leadership provided no fight. 'Campaigns' against

privatisation have included ludicrous ideas to 'ballot' the public. Appeals to democracy didn't save the GLC. There was no leadership provided in any fight against the loss of national pay and conditions.

More than ever now waterworkers must build links with others in the public sector who face privatisation. A united movement of public sector workers against the common threat could stop the Tories in their tracks.

The London Broad Left Organising Committee conference provides a brilliant opportunity for vital links to be made between water workers and other public sector workers and a joint strategy can be thrashed out to take back to the workplace in defence of jobs, services and conditions.

By Ian Rowe

London Labour Movement Conference

Broad Left Organising Committee

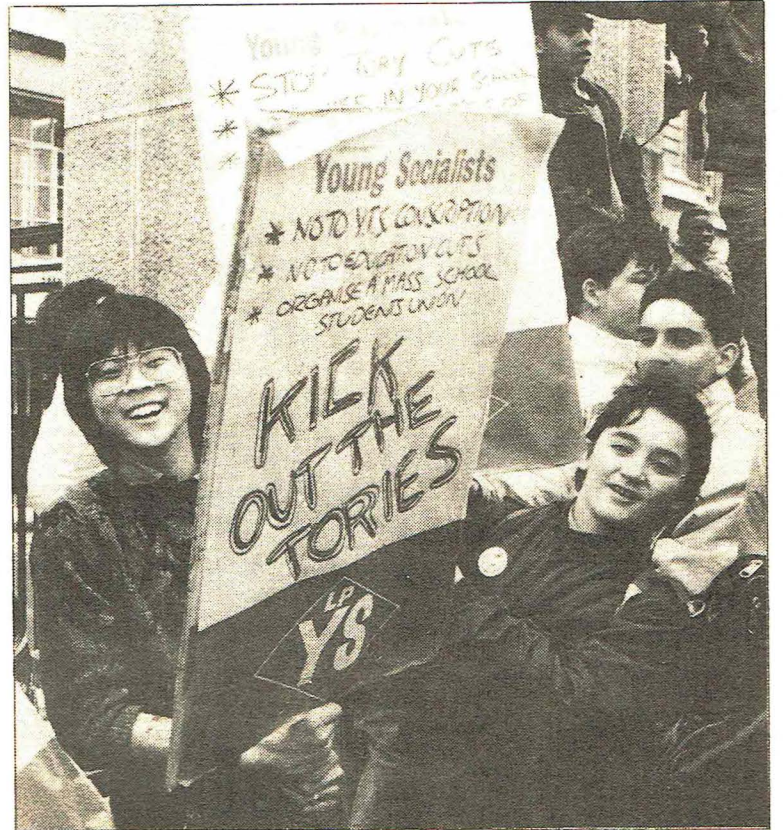
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Militant

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YTS OR STARVE



London school students demonstrating against YTS conscription.

YTS OR STARVE is Thatcher's choice for youth. The Tories are getting ready to force through their YTS conscription plans.

By a Glasgow YTURC supporter

But the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) aim to stop them, as the school students' strikes did in 1985.

That's why YTURC have organised a rally in Glasgow on 3 October to oppose the Tories' forced labour, work-for-your-dole Job Training Scheme (JTS).

The Tories have the cheek to claim that they are offering wonderful choices to working class youth: a job, a college place or YTS and JTS.

Hasn't anybody told them that there are 1.5 million under 25s on the dole?

says Thatcher

Their attacks on education mean fewer and fewer college and university places available for working class youth. And the prospects for a full time job for school-leavers are not only slim but grim, with youth wages sinking to Victorian slave-labour rates and health and safety being swept under the carpet.

So the real Tory choice for the majority of working class youth boils down to the dole or YTS.

YTS means working 40 hours a week for £28.50. It means working in conditions 30 per cent more dangerous than the rest of industry (according to the government's own figures). Thousands have been injured losing fingers, arms and legs and up to 40 young trainees have now died.

What the Tory plans are really all about is slashing the unemployment figures by forcing 18-25 year olds

onto the scheme under threat of losing their social security money altogether.

And the horror story the Tories are writing youth into doesn't end there. From 1 October they will have changed the criteria for going on to the Community Programme (CP).

Now you will have to be unemployed for 12 months, not six like before, to get on it. And the wages are to be slashed. The rate for the

No to YTS or JTS slave labour! No to YTS conscription

job is to be replaced with the supplementary benefit level plus an unspecified premium. In other words, work for your dole!

No way!

YTURC and the Labour Party Young Socialists say: 'No way!'. We demand they drop their conscription plan. We demand a minimum wage for all trainees of £55 for the first year and £65 for the second. We

demand trade union monitoring of training and safety on schemes. And we demand guaranteed jobs and proper qualifications at the end of a scheme.

Come to our rally in Strathclyde University Students' Union, John Street, Glasgow 1pm. Speakers: Ron Brown MP; Joe Owens, NUM; a YTS trainee; and bands.

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What we stand for

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

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