

Militant

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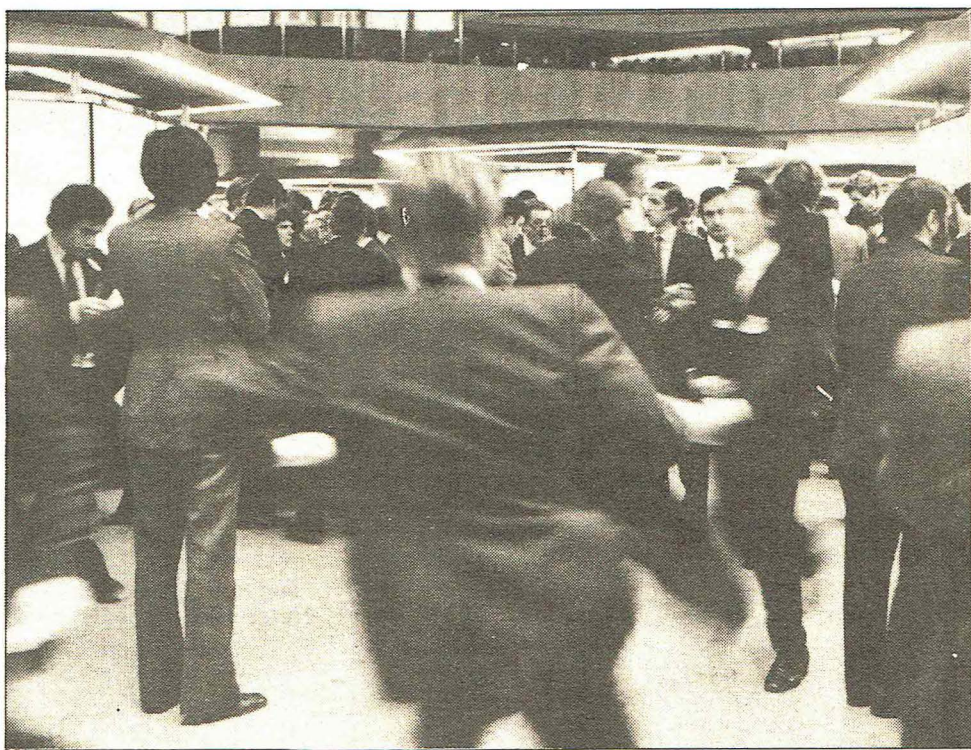
See page three for notice of regional rallies.

Thatcher's

boom

goes

bust



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ALL THATCHER'S carefully constructed propaganda about 'booming Britain', 'you've never had it so good', the share-owning democracy has crashed around her, as share prices collapsed in New York and London. The phoney, speculative, artificially created boom that helped her back to power has burst.

By Jeremy Birch

Shares on Wall Street plummeted 22.6 per cent in a day—twice the fall of 'Black Tuesday', 29 October 1929. The crash on the world's stock markets is merely the first storm clouds of a gathering hurricane that will sweep through the international economy.

Yet Thatcher and Reagan still brazenly proclaim that "the underlying economy remained sound". So why the crash? Is it all caused by computer error in the new high tech stock exchanges.

The Tories' rosy picture of the economy has been smashed. Who now will queue up for privatised shares, confident that there will be a guaranteed return? Any worker

thinking of buying a few BP shares, and then, as most do, selling them shortly after, should think again. They have been trading at least 30p below the Tories' selling price of 330p a share. Yet Lawson's economic sums are based upon the continued support for the sale of privatised assets.

As shares crash inevitably it will be the small investors who are hit worst. When house prices collapse next, it will be the ordinary home-owner who will lose out. Thousands of workers and middle class people, including those who voted Tory caught up by the illusion of permanent prosperity, will face the personal disaster of house repossessions and bankruptcies.

Recession coming

The Tory *London Standard* warns: "Losses in the City will lead to redundancies, to the forced selling of houses and to a collapse in the south east property market". So much for the so-called 'prosperous south'.

The coming recession will bring an even worse nightmare of fresh closures and redundancies. The true grim face of the bosses' system will be fully revealed. Workers' jobs, young people's hopes and

ordinary families, incomes will be destroyed. This is the real meaning of the Wall Street crash.

The Labour leaders should be exposing capitalism as a system of inbuilt crisis. But Kinnock and Gould were taken in by the Thatcher myth.

They even denied there would be a crisis. Only *Militant* continued to explain that financial and industrial collapse is part of the essence of the profit system, and it is always the working class that has to pay. What is left now of Gould's encouragement to workers to buy shares, or the appeal to those benefiting from the 'affluent society'? Where is that worker with 500 shares who could not be convinced of traditional socialism?

Rather than watering down Labour's economic programme to a pink version of Thatcherism, the share fall should provide them with the best possible argument for the need to end the mad chaos of capitalism once and for all.

A nationalised, planned and harmonious socialist economy could assure prosperity for all, free from the upheavals of slump and boom, and the permanent instability of capitalism.

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Militant

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A repeat of 1929?

LAST FRIDAY afternoon on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, there was pandemonium. Share traders were exchanging blows as they fought to sell shares before the day's trading ended. Wall Street had just experienced the largest drop in share prices in one day, more than ten per cent of share values were wiped out.

But that was nothing to what followed on Monday, when the downward plunge accelerated. Prices fell by over 22 per cent, easily surpassing the previous largest fall of nearly 13 per cent in that notorious day in 1929 which began the world slump in production and investment and the mass unemployment of the terrible 1930s.

But this time there was a chain reaction through the world's major investment centres, demonstrating how the world capitalist economy is now one inextricably linked unit. Share prices nosedived in the City of London, by over 10 per cent—a record £50bn fall in share values, and crashed in Tokyo, Hong Kong (where the market had to be closed) Paris and Frankfurt. Nobody escaped.

Is this 1987 share crash a repeat of 1929? Does it mean the beginning of a worldwide slump in production, trade and investment and all that means for living standards and jobs?

The truth is that the world's stock exchanges have been on a binge of buying for over five years, driving up prices way beyond the real value of the company profits and real assets in plant, machinery and stocks that they are supposed to represent. This is because, as Marx said, shares are not real assets but merely titles to ownership of assets.

Stocks and shares are 'fictitious capital', the prices of which can become almost totally divorced from the real values of profits and production in industry—in Japan prices had reached levels which it would take companies 150 years to match with real annual profits!

Eventually however, share prices, like a yo-yo on a string, must be pulled back to reality, as they have begun to be in this crash.

The world economy is not 'fundamentally sound'. What triggered off this crash were the August figures for US trade with the rest of the world which showed a deficit of over \$15bn. Unlike the boom of 1924 to '29, which was based on increased investment in production and construction, the boom of the 1980s has been artificially created by unproductive expenditure on arms.

This created an artificial demand for goods and services in the USA, which led to the huge deficit. It has only been possible to finance this deficit by attracting foreign investment with high interest rates. This meant that US manufacturers could not compete against cheaper European and Japanese goods both at home and abroad.

So in the last two years, Reagan allowed the dollar to fall by over 40 per cent to make US exports cheaper and foreign imports more expensive. But despite this, US trade remains in the red, alongside an equally huge budget deficit.

In order to pay for these deficits through borrowing, interest rates have risen to attract lenders. But rising world interest rates are squeezing profit rates that have already peaked, and threaten the recent boom in production and investment. Rising interest rates and the US trade deficit revealed a deepening crisis.

All the post-war recessions in production and investment have been preceded by a downturn in share prices by an average of nine months. Now that time lag could be telescoped. A major slump in production and trade is assured, perhaps even before the summer of 1988.

In 1929, investment and production was already turning downwards when the share crash occurred and it was compounded by a banking collapse, because the banks had lent to the share speculators who went to the wall in the crash. This time banks have not lent in the same way, although the mountain of credit used to buy up companies in mergers could come crashing down if the slump in prices continues.

What is clear from these events is that those who have been expecting a stable and steady expansion of production, profits, and wages under a shareholding capitalist democracy, are going to have to eat their words.

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Capitalist crisis

THE UNPRECEDENTED fall in share prices in all the major stock exchanges exposes the underlying crisis of the capitalist system of production. It is a barometer predicting the impending storm that will exceed anything experienced by capitalism in the post-war period, possibly even matching the great slump of the 1930s.

By Bob McKee

Yet Reagan has been predicting 60 months of growth in production, and Labour leaders like Bryan Gould are telling workers that no major crisis is in prospect and that they should take up employee share schemes.

The reality is that since the mid-1970s capitalism has been in a long period of stagnation and decline, where upturns in production are weak and limited, and downturns are deeper and more extensive.

Capitalism is a system of production and investment for profit, without which capitalists do not produce goods. That profit comes from the unpaid labour of the working class. Workers create more value for the capitalist in the commodities they produce, when they are sold in the market, than they receive in wages from the capitalists. That surplus value is the source of profit.

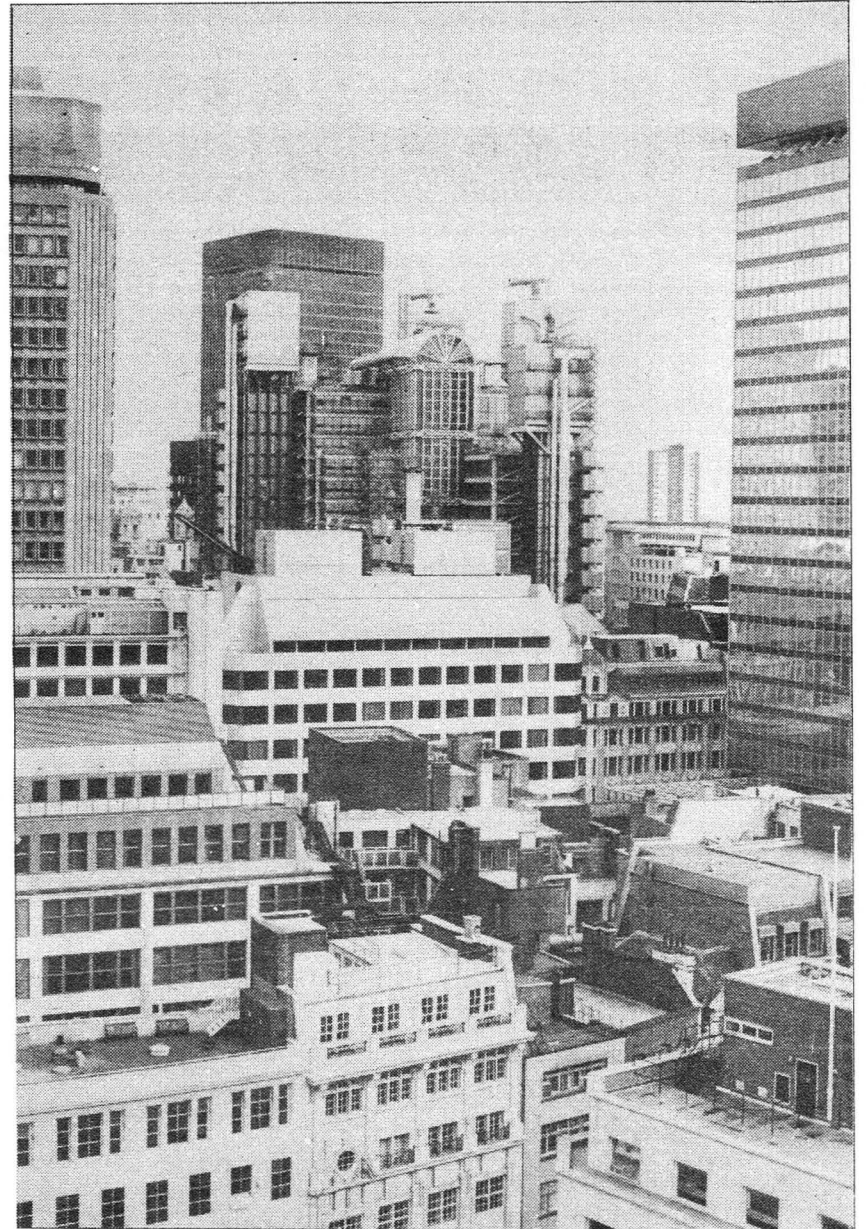
The period between 1949 and 1973 was one of unprecedented expansion in production, investment, trade and even wages. In Japan national output grew by 9 per cent per annum from 1964 to '73; in Europe by 4.5 per cent and in the United States by 3.7 per cent.

This post-war boom was based on rising profit rates which reached a peak in the mid-1960s. They then began to fall and a crisis in profitable investment culminated in a simultaneous world economic recession in 1974-5. Capitalism had reached its limits.

This began a new epoch of stagnation. A short boom between 1976 and '79 was followed by another and more extensive slump in production between 1979 and '81. Growth rates between 1973 and '79 for the major capitalist economic blocks were now much lower: 2.4 per cent in Europe per year, 2.6 per cent in the USA and 3.6 per cent in Japan. Profit rates had fallen to one third of their peak levels in the 1960s.

This latest boom from 1982 to '87 is the weakest yet, prompting capitalist economists to call the last five years a 'growth recession'. Japan has been growing by only 3.8 per cent per year, Europe by under 2 per cent and the USA at about 2 per cent. Profits have risen but they are still less than half the levels of the 1960s.

Investment in industry has remained sluggish. Without the pros-



The City of London, heart of British capitalism.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

pect of a worthwhile rate of return, the capitalists have piled into stock market speculation and mergermania, grossly inflating the value of share prices above the assets they are supposed to represent.

It was the realisation among investors and share speculators of the real situation of looming production and profits crisis that triggered the spectacular collapse in share prices.

New world slump

Capitalism has no way of avoiding a new world wide slump in production, investment and trade. If the capitalists attempt to restore profitability by cutting back on wages and public expenditure, they will reduce the market for their commodities.

On the other hand they can no longer continue with an artificially created market, because it has not raised profitability in the productive sectors of the economy, where investment is stagnating and soon produc-

tion will fall.

Western capitalism still has enormous resources of plant, technology and skilled labour, which could be used to mitigate the social consequences of a slump. But that would only be possible by increased taxation and governments using a proportion of the capitalists' profits to direct resources into the productive sectors of manufacturing and production.

This was the idea behind Roosevelt's 'new deal' in the 1930s. To resort to such a policy now would mean the complete reversal of Reaganism and Thatcherism.

The next slump will begin with unemployment already over 30 million in the western capitalist nations. A new bout of redundancies, wage and public expenditure cuts will enrage working people. Many will come to realise that capitalism, even in the 'prosperous' west, cannot meet the needs of the working class, and there will be a new and historic struggle to replace the system of production for profit with one based on need.

Put the system on trial

EVEN BEFORE the Stock Exchange crash, the tinsel glitter of Reagan and Thatcher's 'boom' had been tarnished by crises and scandals.

By Pat Craven

Some of the dealers in stocks and shares are themselves in trouble. Salomon Brothers have announced 800 redundancies, 12 per cent of their workforce. 150 of these work in London, where other City firms were already laying off staff before the share price collapse.

Even in the heart of the capitalist economy, there is no job security: "There will be a lot of blood in the street and second-hand Mercedes

in the showrooms" said a former Midland Bank executive.

But it will be the lower grades who suffer most, just as the small investors conned into share buying by the Tories will suffer most from the crash.

In the Guinness scandal, the ruling class have been forced to find ritual scapegoats to disguise the lack of any clear distinction between business and crime. Unless the illusion can be maintained, the capitalist system will be totally discredited.

One of those accused, Gerald Ronson, is the archetypal Thatcherite 'success' story. Son of an immigrant small businessman, he has built up the second biggest private company in Britain,

worth over a billion pounds.

Typical of his methods was a policy of docking the wages of any worker in his garages whose money was short: "If someone is taking £50 out of the till, he is taking £50 out of my pocket—and I'm not having that". This is the man now charged with stealing £5.8 million!

Appalling

But most significant is Ronson's amazement that his activities could possibly be against the law. In his letter to the new Guinness chairman, enclosing a cheque for the money he was repaying, he wrote:

"I did not focus on the legal implications of what

had occurred, nor did it cross my mind that City advisors and business people of such eminence would be asking us to join in doing something improper."

Similarly, Ernest Saunders, former chairman of Guinness, said he "found the mere idea of charges involving the word stealing, in the vernacular, putting my hand in the till to take Guinness money, absolutely appalling".

Ronson and Saunders are angry at being charged for activities which all businessmen regard as normal business practice. It is the whole capitalist system, which bases itself on theft and fraud, which should be in the dock.

Storm wreckage -who will pay?

LAST WEEK Southern England was hit by Britain's worst recorded storms. Within a couple of days Wales and the North-west were suffering torrential rain. Now the stricken areas are counting the cost.

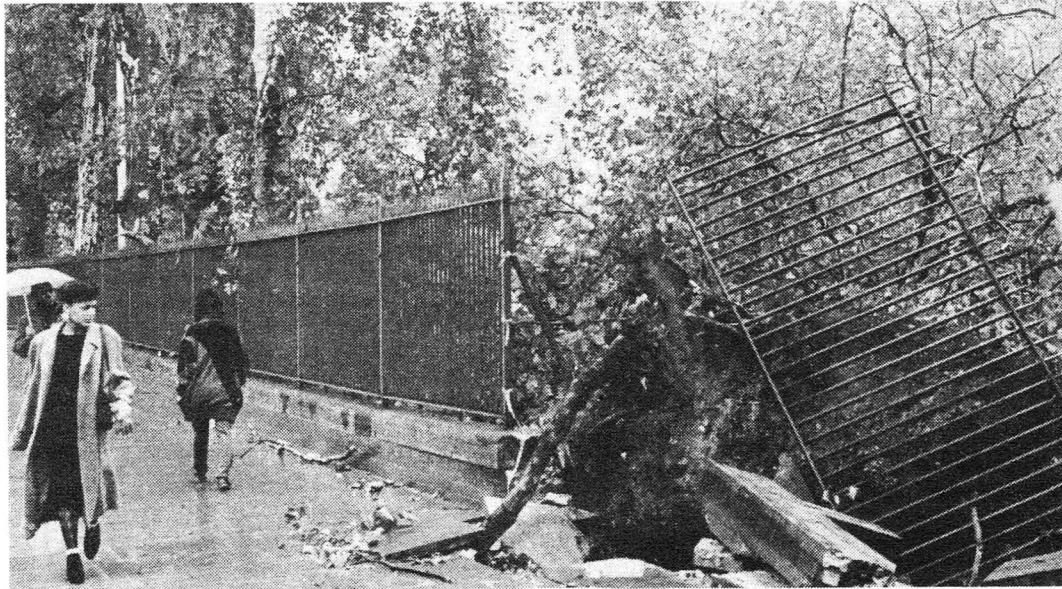
The Tory Government and their City slicker friends are doing their damndest to make sure working people foot the bill.

The huge bills faced by even Tory councils has forced the government to pay up something. But many local authorities will still have to find huge sums. Kent will have to find £7 million. The costs of the hurricane will cause further storms in local authority finances.

Public service workers, so often slandered by the Tories, battled heroically to help the injured and to pick up the pieces.

Council workers stayed at their posts day and night to make up for understaffing and other effects of Tory cuts. Ambulance workers crossed all obstacles, to do their jobs even though their employers say they are not worth an 8.2 per cent pay rise.

London firefighters answered 8,000 calls from candle-



lit fire stations and Welsh firefighters fought the floods even though West Glamorgan council had locked out their comrades only a week before.

"It sticks in my throat to hear Douglas Hurd praising the emergency services, when the Tories are trying to cut services in the inner cities," says tower block tenant, Steve Nally. "On occasions like this, it is clear that further Tory cuts will cost lives."

And Tim Halpin, a Hackney

council gardener, said: "It was the tree unit who did most of the work. Yet there are rumours that it will be closed down next year."

"In that case they would have had to bring contractors in who would charge an arm and a leg for the work we did as part of our working week. It shows the importance of having a council workforce which can be pulled out to do the work quickly and relatively cheaply."

There can be no doubt that local authorities would have dealt with the emergencies many times quicker and better were it not for the £20 billion the Tories have taken from them since 1979.

And now the Tories will carry on cutting, even though they will undermine the emergency services still further.

By Tony Cross

Are you Tower block terror insured?

CARS, HOMES and gardens have been wrecked in the storms. It's the sort of unhappy accident you take out insurance against.

But wait a minute! If you have got plain third party, fire and theft on your car, you will get nothing, even if it was written off by a fallen tree. Of course, even if you were covered and claim, you still end up paying because you lose your no claims bonus.

No sooner were the storms over than the insurance companies were working out ways to avoid paying up.

The cost of removing trees, anything from £80 to £250 a time, was "unlikely to be covered by your policy," they said. And they are likely to claim that damage was due to poor maintenance, say some experts.

Of course, they will still have to pay out millions of pounds. But you can be sure in the long run, they will recoup their losses by raising premiums.

After all, they can't let paying to fend off people's personal disasters get in the way of profits, can they? That would be bad business.

CBI slanders

A BOSSES' spokesman attacked workers for staying at home on the Friday after the storms.

But while low-paid public service workers turned out, it was City of London yuppies who stayed away from work.

Keith McDowall, deputy director general of the bosses' organisation, the CBI, called for a "blitz spirit" and even attacked the usually compliant police for telling people not to travel to work in the South.

Obviously little things like fallen trees, collapsed walls and blocked roads and railway lines mustn't get in the way of the bosses' profits!

Tower block terror

LONDON TENANT, Steve Nally, woke on Friday morning to find the block of flats he lives in being evacuated. A 13th floor flat had been blown out by the storm.

He describes his experiences:

"I don't think anyone slept at all on Thursday night. All the time I could hear screams, shouting and crashing as the block was literally rocked back and forwards by the wind.

"I was stuck in my flat, wondering if my fears were exaggerated. I really thought the block was going to fall. The windows actually moved a few inches as the wind hit them.

"As the morning came I fell asleep. I woke about 8am and realised the electricity was cut off. Suddenly, I heard dozens of sirens and a voice on a megaphone shouting at us to leave our flats.

"Everybody ran out of their flats half-dressed and legged it down the stairs. As we were running down, loads of firemen, ambulancemen, nurses, caretakers and police were going up the block.

"It was pitch black and I ended up in the basement. I couldn't get out. I was terrified I'd be trapped by fire. Eventually I got out and then it really hit me.

"I looked up and saw that a flat just a few floors above mine, had been blown out by the storm and many flats near it had had their windows blown in. Rubble and glass were strewn around the block. So were the possessions of the couple who had nearly been sucked out of their wrecked flat.

"For the next six hours it seemed that the only people who knew what was going on were journalists and police.



After the storm: Steve Nally's block

But the Lambeth services tried hard to look after confused and shocked people.

"There was anger and confusion at a meeting of residents. Many were shouting that the block should come down and everyone moved to safer flats. The Council's reply was that the block wouldn't fall down.

"But the borough surveyor let slip that the flats' walls seemed to be a badly built 'botched job'.

"In fact, it was only built 13 years ago. It is one of the last council tower blocks to be built, to a design which was introduced after the Ronan Point disaster and yet the walls can still be blown out.

"We were told we had to be evacuated over the weekend. Over half the residents had nowhere else to stay and so the council services worked into the night to find people accommodation. London's housing crisis means a real shortage of

accommodation in emergencies. What would have happened if it had affected 300 or 3,000 families?

"Living in a tower block is inhuman and degrading and we have to fight for decent housing. I have lived in the block for four years. But at the meeting there were people I had never seen. I'm sure that if I lived on a street I would have known everyone.

"Tower blocks were built because they were cheap and convenient, but no working class family chooses to live in one. Now we find they aren't even built properly!

"Many of us are frightened to move back in, but there's nowhere else to go. The problem is not freak storms, but a system which forces people to live in these rabbit hutches and then cuts the services that deal with the problems they face. Tory tears won't help us, only decent homes and decent services will."



Liverpool

Sunday 8 November, 11-5.30
Liverpool Empire. Speakers—Ted Grant, Peter Taaffe, Tony Mulhearn, Sue Haney, Tony Byrne. Chair—Felicity Dowling.

Glasgow

Saturday 7 November, 7.30-1.00
Winter Gardens, Peoples' Palace, Glasgow Green. Speakers—Tony Saunois, Nimrod Sejake. Plus Ian Saville (the Marxist Magician), bands.

Swindon

Saturday 7 November, 11-5.00 County Ground Hotel, County Road.
Speaker—Jeremy Birch.

Sheffield

Friday 13 November, 7.30 Sheffield City Hall.

Newcastle

Tuesday 10 November 7.00 Newcastle Guild Hall. Speaker—Peter Taaffe. Plus Ian Saville, Mike Elliot (comedian) and disco.

Nottingham

Sunday 8 November, 2.00-6.00
People's College, Maid Marian Way.
Speakers—John Pickard, Ray Apps.

Stevenage

Saturday 14 November, 11.00-5.00
Stevenage College, Monkswood Way.

Southampton

Saturday 14 November 11-5, Oaklands Theatre, Lordshill. Speakers—Jeremy Birch, and from SALEP and CSDC.

Birmingham

Saturday 7 November 11-4.30. MASU Centre, Gaywood Croft, Gregoe Street, Lea Bank. Speaker—Ted Grant.

Postmen back Liverpool 47

THE UCW National Executive has sent £2,300 to the Liverpool surcharged councillors defence fund! Let's hope this example will be followed by other unions.

Surcharged councillor and NCU member, Tony Rimmer, has spoken at four NCU branches, each of which has donated £100. Already, £25 a month is coming in from the Giro.

600 council workers are already donating on the check-off system. In the next few weeks, a series of site meetings should get the majority of manual workers on the check-off. And, Nalگو members are beginning to respond.

On a canvass in Nertherley, which got 22 homes committed to weekly subscriptions, one worker said: "Of course I'll give to them, they weren't like real politicians."

Has your Labour Party or union branch taken out a standing order yet?

Send donations and make cheques payable to Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, c/o NTCURC, Hardman St., Liverpool. Standing Orders to A/c no. 502 11195 at The Co-op Bank, Liverpool branch.

The crisis inside Britain's prisons

Life 'inside'

THE ARREST of those involved in the Guinness fraud scandal, has exposed another scandal—the class bias of the legal system.

These tycoons have been released on bail. Because they can raise huge sums of money, they can continue to live in comfort. It is very different for the majority who cannot get bail.

Thousands of the 47,593 prisoners crammed into jails in England and Wales—5,000 more than they have room for—are on remand, supposedly innocent until

proved guilty. 1,000 are held in appalling conditions in police cells because the prisons are full. Hundreds of these will be found not guilty.

Prison is a punishment for poverty. 20,000, nearly half the total convicted prisoners, are jailed for non-payment of fines. In Scotland it is more than half! RONNIE STEVENSON looks at prisons (right) and discusses how socialists should react to the present crisis, and (below) LIZ BROWN describes her own experience as a prisoner.

Hatred of Thatcher

I SPENT time first at Holloway, then moved to Borewood Hall, where a TV documentary team came to look at conditions. They are notorious. There was slopping out and no running water in the cells, unusual for a women's prison.

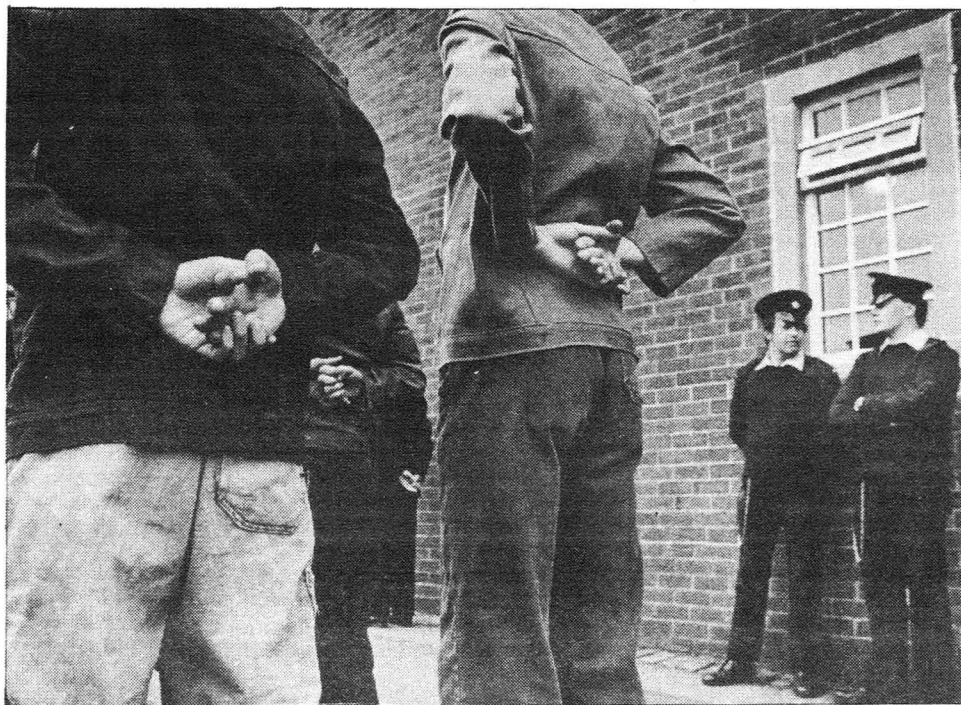
They are so short-staffed that some weeks you only get out of the cells one night a week. One officer was working a 70-hour week. If he hadn't been there we wouldn't have been let out at all. There is a lot of pressure to do overtime.

The cells only have room for a bed and the same again. You can get work during the day, in a factory on site where cardboard boxes are made, but this often didn't happen because of staff shortages. You get £2.10 a week with work and £1.47 without.

There was one bath and two showers between 35, but we couldn't always use them. Visits are every two weeks for two hours.

In the cell we listened to the radio and talked to each other through the windows, which is a reportable offence. If you are caught you could lose seven days remission and be locked in for 14 days, not even getting out for meals.

After meals you must al-



The Glenochil youth detention centre, Scotland.

Photo: Carlos Guarita (Reflex)

ways be back in your cell. If you are not, you get locked out. If you get locked out three times you go 'down the block' to the punishment wing. These cells have no furniture and the mattress is taken away during the day.

I spent three days 'in the block'. They said I was smuggling in cigarettes. Some girls seemed to spend most of their time there. They like to come down heavy on young offenders. They come at 7.30 am and take people 'down the block'. You lie there think-

ing "what have I done?" Many people are there for 'kiting' (cheque, credit card, social security fraud).

Deported

Others are there for drug offences, particularly cannabis smuggling. There were six Africans and two South Americans on our wing. They are offered amounts of money they have never seen to bring it in. After doing long sentences, they are deported.

The Home Office may take two months before

deportation is sorted out, meaning two months extra time. What happens then is anyone's idea. The airport where they were flying one woman deported from our wing was 150 miles from her village. With no money she would have to walk.

I found on the whole that most would have voted Labour. There was a 17 year old girl from Liverpool who had heard of *Militant* and had been on a couple of picket lines. People were upset about the election result. There was a lot of hatred of Thatcher.

Alternative to repression

THE PREDICTABLE Scottish Office reaction to the prison protests has been to intensify the repression in the regimes. This response has had some sympathy. But a civilised society must use its brains and not its guts to formulate social policy.

The leadership of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association have welcomed the moves. How short their memories are! The worst violence ever experienced by prison officers arose from the most repressive conditions ever used in the Scottish prison system in modern times—the notorious 'cages' at Inverness.

Violent crime

As one ex-con said: "There are some bad bastards in prison", but the majority of prisoners are not like that and would be better (and cheaper) dealt with through the many alternatives to prison.

Violent crime is an area which rightly concerns the working class, not least because they are the commonest victims. Socialists are not light-minded liberals. In times when working-class people have organised policing and justice in their own communities, punishment has been more direct and meaningful.

The point about prison is not that it is *for* punishment, but that it *is* punishment. At the end of a shift, prison officers go home, prisoners do not. That is the essential punishment and the worst part of prison life.

The regimes should be geared to helping prisoners to go out at the end of their sentence and realise their potential in socially acceptable ways. Many prison officers start work with this

ideal in mind, and the majority, given the training and decent staffing levels would be happy to try rehabilitative methods.

But we should not forget that the ex-con quoted earlier was referring to officers as well as prisoners. For the authorities and leaders of the POA to deny excessive brutality in prison, is ludicrous. All prisoners, ex-prisoners and officers will admit to excesses on both sides and it does no good their leaders publicly burying their heads in the sand.

Prison officers are not encouraged to be helpful. Too many of them feel that if a prisoner cons you, that is the ultimate humiliation. The point is that at the end of the shift, the prisoner goes to his cell and the officer goes home. Who is humiliated?

Facing up to the consequences of your action both for yourself and others is one of the most painful experiences for prisoners. It is not like the pain of those who have lost loved ones through brutal crime, but it is pain all the same. Prison officers should be able to help prisoners in this difficult area. Human solidarity has a role to play even between captives and captors.

These methods require money—better buildings, better training, better staffing levels. They will not solve all the problems. The small percentage of real 'nutters' can remain intractable. The pain caused to working-class people by crimes will not disappear. But no amount of repression will solve it either.

Dealing with these issues in a humanitarian way is the mark of a civilised society. The calls for repression, especially from this government which has created more misery for working-class people than all the prisoners put together, must be resisted.

Reagan's navy strikes at Iranian oil

ONE OF the causes of the New York stock-exchange crash, the American bombing of Iranian oil platforms, has also substantially increased the possibility of a major explosion in the Gulf.

The US armada was not sent to maintain 'freedom of the seas', because Iraq has been responsible for 70 per cent of attacks on Gulf shipping, including the attack on the USS Stark. Iran, the target of US attacks, has the most to gain from a Gulf cease-fire.

Nightmare

The American navy has been sent to protect the profits, prestige and strategic position of imperialism, by shoring up the Arab oil states bordering the Gulf.

An American Congressional report has confirmed that "Iraq can no longer win the war...but can lose it". The possibility of an Iraqi collapse after the Iranian autumn offensive is a nightmare to imperialism. The fall of Iraq's Saddam

Hussein could rapidly lead to upheavals in those states which have backed him, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

"An Iraqi defeat", the report goes on, "would be catastrophic for Western interests". It presents a future choice between "Iranian domination of the West's oil supply" or "direct US military intervention on behalf of the conservative Gulf states".

Egged on by Iraq and Kuwait, therefore, the USA has increased its naval presence with the intention of hitting Iran. Having embarked on a spiral of retaliatory strikes, the US may now find itself drawn inexorably into the Gulf War as events assume a logic and momentum of their own.

After the experience of Lebanon, when the US was forced to withdraw ground troops months after going in, America will not get involved on mainland Iran. But as this week's raids have shown, the US navy is capable of destroying or capturing platforms, or small islands used as bases by the Iranian Revolution-

ary Guards.

Further Iranian attacks on Kuwait maybe used as a pretext by the US to launch more devastating air attacks on Iranian shore bases, especially the Silk-worm missile sites.

The American navy has an awesome firepower, outgunning the Iranian navy and airforce ten times over. It could carry out crippling raids that would make the attack on Libya pale in comparison.

Explosives

But it was not lack of firepower that drove the US out of Lebanon—it was the killing of 241 marines by a suicide squad in a lorry packed with explosives. In an all-out confrontation, with Iran in a corner and with nothing to lose, it is possible that suicide squads in hundreds of speed-boats could do to the US navy what a lorry did to the marines.

The Americans know this, and their use of what they described as a 'measured response' to Iran, rather than a more



Iranian Revolutionary Guards demonstrating their missiles in Tehran.

devastating attack at this stage is an indication of some nervousness, compounded by the fear of political fall-out, not least the effects on Wall Street.

There must also be some misgivings now among the

strategists of imperialism. Perhaps, they may be thinking, the cure is worse than the disease. However great may have been the danger of destabilisation from an Iraqi defeat, it will almost certainly have been

intensified in the long run by the actions of the US navy.

By John Pickard



Drugs—LPYS say:

Don't despair ORGANISE

HEROIN STALKS the working class estates of the 1980s. Young people who are unemployed, in dead-end jobs, or even still at school, seek an escape from the boredom and hopelessness of Thatcher's Britain through drug abuse.

Only the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) can offer them a future; a socialist world that they will have to fight for.

In areas like Edinburgh, Liverpool and Bermondsey, they have campaigned on the estates the pushers are invading and offered youth an alternative to wasting their lives.

Their message to youth is: 'Don't despair, organise!'

Our Joe is dying

AS THICK as thieves, everyone used to call them. My brother, Joe, and his mates went everywhere, did everything together. Inseparable is what they were.

We knew they smoked hash every now and again and took a few pills. But who didn't? After five days hard grind at work everyone wants to get away from it all at the weekend, don't they? That was most young people's attitude in our area.

But after a while, it wasn't enough any more. Bill, a pal from school, joined in and brought heroin with him. Everyone else was banging up, hash was getting harder to buy and smack was cheaper. It was great fun for a while, but not for very long.

A bit of fun at the weekend soon turned into an obsession, and obsession soon turned into addiction. And it wrecked their lives.

My brother lost his job, with only nine months left of his apprenticeship. Bill was in and out of gaol. Another of the lads got borstal. Two more are dead, killed in tragic car crashes. One got in with another crowd—one night he was found stabbed to death outside a disco. And so it went on.

By now, all of Joe's mates are either dead, in gaol or junkies. But worse was to come—AIDS. My brother is dying.

"When will it all end?" Our mum asks again and again. I can easily tell her when it all began. Not very long ago—after 1979.

I want an end to the system that has done this to my brother and his friends.

By a Young Socialist.

The millionaire addicts

IT'S NOT just on run-down council estates and in inner city slums that you find drug abuse. In the last three years there has been a who's who of fatalities among the sons and daughters of the rich and famous.

Olivia Channon, daughter of Tory Transport Secretary, Paul Channon, Rachel Macmillan, granddaughter of Harold Macmillan, Lady Henrietta Guinness, heiress to the brewery fortune, Julian Ormsby-Gore, heir to the recently deceased Lord Harlech, Viscountess Gormaiston, and Princess Ines de Bourbon Palma, cousin to the Queen, have all died.

An industry has grown up to cater for rich addicts. The 69 bed Charter Nightingale Clinic offers six weeks in-patient treatment followed by a year's back-up therapy. But only if you can pay £7,500. As with everything else in Thatcher's Britain, the chance to break free from addiction is up for sale, only available if you, or your parents, have got the money.

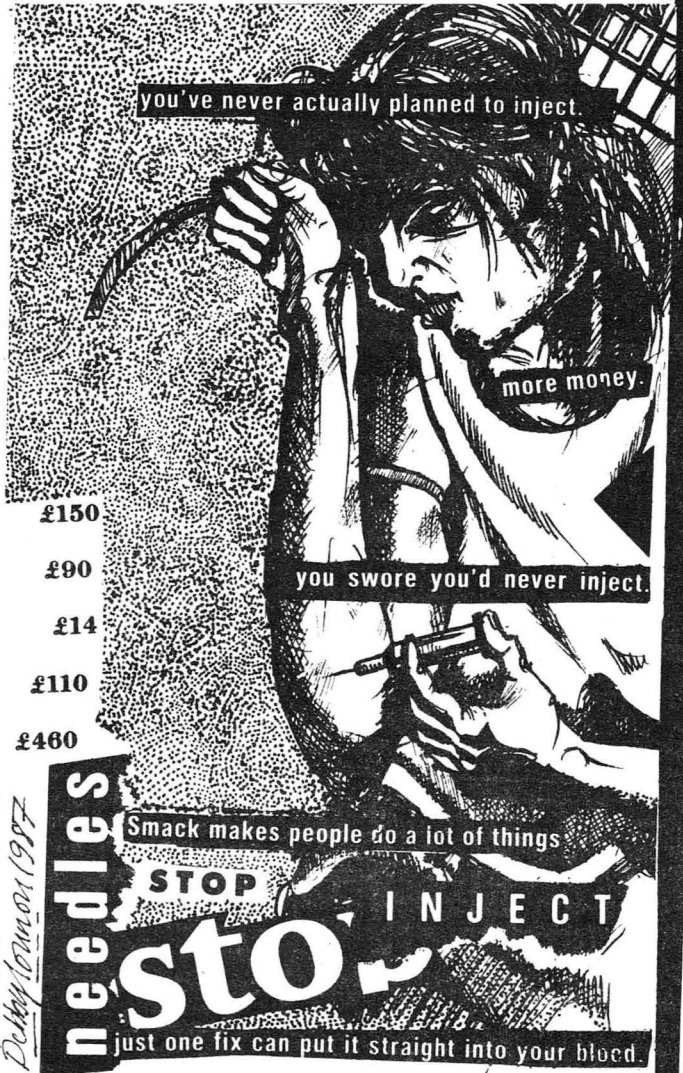
Cocaine, and heroin are favourite playthings for some of the upper class. The Marquis of Blandford, heir to £50 million, estimated that he spent £20,000 on cocaine in just four months!

Poverty isn't driving these people to drugs, so what is? The British ruling class has lost confidence in the future. They have no long term strategy for the survival of their system, and are only interested in short-term gains.

The parents go for the quickest killing on the Stock exchange, while the children go for the quickest thrills. In the years when the Russian revolution was brewing, the Tsar and Tsarina turned to mysticism and the mad monk Rasputin. This was a symptom of the degeneration of their semi-feudal system.

The rich turning to a drug-induced other world is a symptom of the decay of modern-day capitalism.

By Ed Waugh.



Deby Inman 1987

SPEED KILLS!

THE LABOUR Group on Liverpool City Council have barred the appointment of a drugs advisor who believes in encouraging 'harm-reduction' in drug-taking.

The council's main aim has been education against taking drugs and the provision of alternatives. But Alan Parry (the director of the Regional Drug Training and Information Centre) disagrees.

His ideas have been presented in a cartoon strip entitled Willy Whizz, in which a young lad is running around 'speeding'. Readers are advised that "speeding every day will burn you out—now and again

won't!" and "If you are going to speed about, keep to some speed limits!"

This has appeared in both the local and national press. Parry would like to see this cartoon strip used in schools, making children think that 'moderate' drug-taking is acceptable.

Members of West Derby Labour Party were horrified to hear of Parry's ideas. "Does he mean we are supposed to tell young addicts to jump off the twelfth floor rather than the fourteenth when they are drugged up to their eyeballs?" was one woman's reaction.

The party gave unanimous support to a resolution calling for the rejection of Alan Parry's membership of the council's drugs working party.

As socialists, Labour councillors should be opposed to all drug taking and fight to alleviate the conditions which turn young people towards drugs. Drug abuse is a class question. Young people take drugs because of boredom, no hope and no future. After a long debate, the Labour Group agreed by 24-12 to remove Parry from the working party.

By a Militant reporter

IUSY congress

An example to follow?

Support lobby



RIGHT WINGERS in the Labour Party who are attacking the LPYS say they want it to be more like other European socialist youth sections.

The LPYS are keen to learn from the experience of young socialists everywhere. A delegation from the LPYS went to the Congress of the International Union of Socialist Youth (Iusy) at the beginning of this month. But what they saw there did not inspire them with much confidence in the leaderships of several of these 'model' youth sections.

The LPYS delegation were by far the youngest at the Congress, which is ironic when you think that the very people who praise sections like the Swedish YS reduced the LPYS's age limit. The

'youth' in Iusy's leading positions are in their thirties at least and have greying hair!

There was very little political discussion, but plenty of time for giant meals in posh restaurants.

There were exhibitions of each section's work. Only the LPYS had photos of their work with youth in struggle. All the others had stalls with pens, key-rings and T-shirts on them.

The Danish Young Socialists had its election posters on show. One showed the Social Democratic Party leader as James Bond (see left) and another claimed that it rained less when their Party was in government. They proudly boasted that the Liberal party had "made fools of themselves" by spending 15 minutes of a

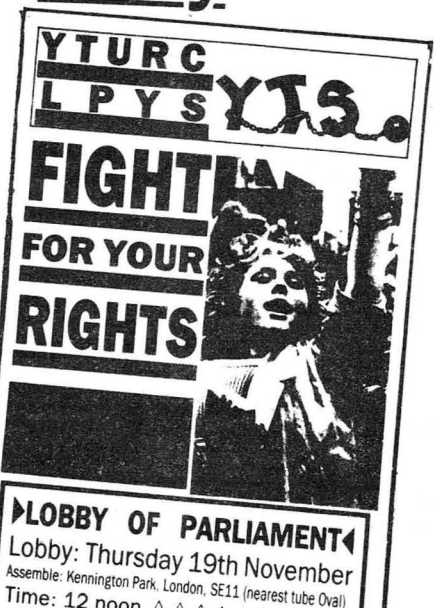
press conference trying to disprove this!

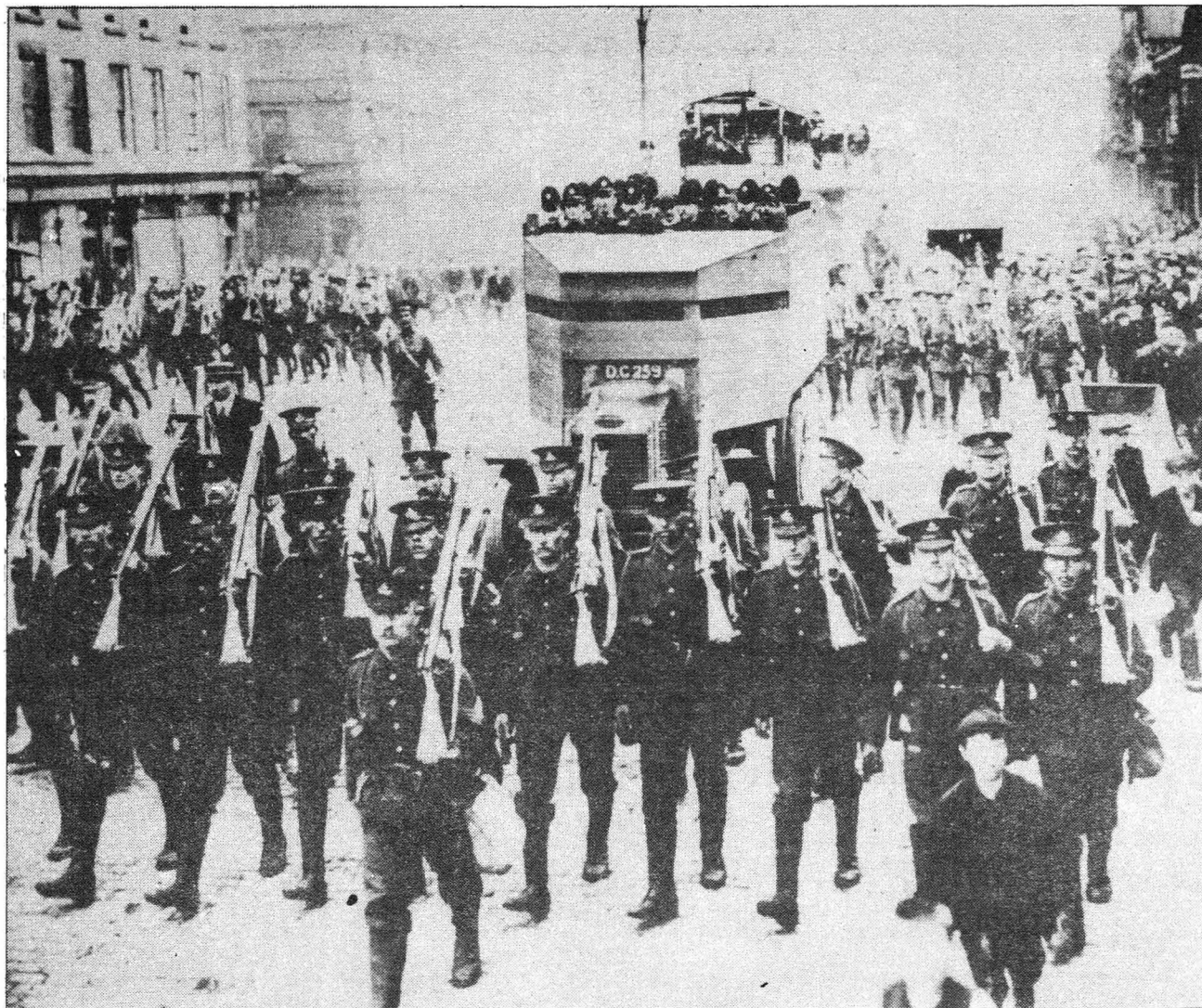
It was not clear to the LPYS delegates why this was more foolish than printing the poster in the first place. The Belgian YS had a poster of a bare backside blowing a trumpet!

On the last day, resolutions were voted on with no one moving them and no discussion. Most sections did not even know they could submit resolutions or nominate someone for the leadership.

The LPYS should not be run like this undemocratic Congress. We believe that many of our sister organisations will adopt a lot of our methods as they come into contact with the mass youth movements that are on the order of the day.

By a Young Socialist





The bosses mobilised to crush the threat of the 1926 general strike.

TV Britain's Review The peoples flag

two labour movements

A PROMISING new TV series on the story of the British labour movement, *The People's Flag*, begins on Monday night.

Active participants in the movement recall the stormy events since the first world war, which are illustrated with fascinating archive film.

The series aims to tell the story "from the point of view of the political tradition which believes that socialist politics is not about running capitalism more efficiently but about changing the nature of society."

The makers look at the role of the labour movement's leaders and contend that the prevailing ideas in the movement have been decisively influenced by Britain's role as an imperialist power.

Michael Foot did not take a class approach to the Falklands war; his position was little different from the Tories in his defence of capitalist interests. On the

By Andy Beadle

outbreak of world war one, Keir Hardie, one of the founders of the Labour Party, had similarly urged labour not to strike a "discordant note at home."

Patriotism

The first programme dealing with 1914 to 1931 takes in a great succession of events shaped by the catastrophe of the war and the inspiration of the Russian revolution.

Patriotism no longer made the lower ranks of the services take reactionary orders from upper class officers. 30,000 servicemen refused to sail from Dover to be used against the Red Army.

Finlay Hart recalled the

mood in the workplaces. "There was a great upsurge of feeling among my mates in the yard and there were great discussions. One feeling that came out of it was that the workers would take control and they could run the country."

A tacit theme is of two labour movements with the leadership virtually on a different planet. In 1926 for nine days, the general strike gathered momentum and workers had a growing sense of power. The day the TUC called it off, support was still growing.

The miners fought on alone for six months but were eventually starved back for lower pay and longer hours. A vast number became permanently unemployed. Yet TUC leader Walter Citrine reminisced: "...it ended very fairly and in a very British manner. I have never regarded it as a defeat."

The first programme

takes in the first two Labour governments and much besides. The other four hour long episodes bring the story right up to date.

Unique

This unique series promises well on the main issues. The 'mistakes' of the Communist Party are not explained enough in an international context.

But, this is a programme which will upset not only the Tories but most Labour leaders too for its frankness. See it and get your friends and workmates to watch too and learn more about the real history of 20th century Britain than most of us ever did at school.

The People's Flag starts on Monday 26 October at 11pm on Channel Four.

Fools and horses In search of the pink yuppie

TWO DAYS after Labour Party conference, still imbued with the spirit of new realism, I decided to put theory into practice and recruit some yuppies, share owning upwardly mobiles, to Labour.

By John Dunn (NUM)

The problem was where to find them, certainly not in my own town of Clay Cross (although my next door neighbour has an aunt who owns an apartment near Marbella).

But the local press were writing about the Chatsworth Horse Trials, probably the biggest gathering of wealth and privilege before Tory conference. I snatched up my Bryan Gould designer filofax and joined the queue of Jags and Range Rovers, hoping everyone would think Cortinas were the new status symbol.

When a talking tweed suit asked me for £8 just to park on the grass verge I realised this might be an expensive experiment. They let me make a u turn (obviously a candidate for Labour Party leadership) and leave.

Half an hour later after climbing fences and crossing fields I was rubbing shoulders with the rich. I looked for a Bryan Gould fringe meeting or John Edmonds with a GMB recruitment caravan but no luck. Whether Labour would ever get into government again was up to me!

I felt out of place. It wasn't just my jeans and trainers when the defenders of individual freedom were all wearing green waxed coats and green wellies. I didn't even have a shooting stick.

Where should I start? The refreshment tent was a good place for informal discussion. Looking at row

after row of dull eyes, receding chins and stiff upper lips I could see that centuries of inbreeding would put another obstacle in my way.

Then I heard a discussion on stocks and shares. I was in. Have you seen Bryan Gould's plans for wider share ownership?

Bryan Gould? Isn't he manager of Nottingham Forest? They were all for wider share ownership, they were always on the look out for more. They looked forward to the BP issue but that Keith Best had ruined things by being caught fiddling and making it harder for everyone else.

"Why bother?"

What about worker shareholders? No way. Striking, joining unions, they were idle, look how many are on the dole. Unions? Workers don't need them, we look after them, even let them gather timber in the woods.

The talk changed to how these events were going down with the nouveau riche in their BMWs. People ought to know their place. Had I been to Badminton? When I said I'd given it up because of a bad elbow they started moving away.

One final effort. What did they think of Labour's appeal to the better off. "Why bother, we've got the Tories to look after us?"

By now my enthusiasm for new realism was running out.

The last time I'd seen so many horses was at Orgreave. I shuddered and decided to leave. When I got back to my car, my filofax had been stolen. At least it wasn't stolen by a rank and file member of the Labour Party, that's for sure.

Getting Militant

THE MILITANT sales campaign in the West Midlands is worrying our enemies. The most recent Stafford Liberal newsletter reported "A massive surge of activity by Militant supporters"—and for once they are right.

63 copies were sold in one day at Warwick University. Sellers outside Birmingham Labour Party meetings have got new

regular readers. Two new sellers in Rugby sold 20 papers on an estate sale. In Coventry there was a race between supporters in different constituencies to see who could sell the most. They had a social afterwards with prizes but the best prize every Militant seller wants is to get the paper which fights the Tories into every household and every workplace.

Left and Right

Tips from the top

IF LIKE John Dunn (above) you are starting a 'yuppies for Labour' campaign, you'll need to look good. *Sunday* magazine recently gave upwardly aspiring ladies some tips on how to ape Princess Diana.

HRH so liked a navy suit from

designer Edina Ronay for £494 she bought another one in bottle green. The only trouble for lesser mortals is that her four different outfits for morning, lunchtime, afternoon and evening cost £4,955, and that's just one day; a Royal can't wear the same clobber two days running.

The only thing we can suggest is

to ask your union to put in a pay rise to keep you up with the Windsors, or to get a special grant from the DHSS.

Crippling democracy

THOSE EXPERTS on honesty, democracy and fair play in the City of London are now turning their attention to local politics. Residents and business people who run their own companies are allowed a vote in the City's Common Council.

A hundred employees of BP have recently leased their desks from their employers at a peppercorn rent, allowing them a vote in December's elections in Cripplegate ward.

The move does not break election laws. BP told a trusting council: "there is no question of BP flexing its corporate muscle to try and manipulate local voting." How long before Tory block votes are allowed in other authorities? One Rolls, one vote?

Defend abortion rights

Fight Alton's reactionary Bill

THE RIGHT to free abortion on the National Health Service for working class women was won after the introduction of the 1967 Abortion Act. 20 years on this right is under attack by David Alton, Liberal MP for Mossley Hill, who is introducing a Private Members' Bill on 27 October to reduce the time limit for legal abortions from 28 to 18 weeks.

By Ann Bannister

His actions are not for any concern over the morality of aborting a viable foetus. Alton is opposed to any right of women to abortion at all. Knowing he could not get Parliament to support its abolition altogether, he is cynically seeking to restrict that right. The anger this has evoked in many women is shown by the resignation of his secretary who has 'fundamental disagreements' with his actions.

Even before the '67 Act, the rich could buy 'therapeutic' abortions. In 1961 10,000 abortions were carried out in the private sector. But for most working-class women the only resort was to backstreet abortions.

In 1937 it was estimated that 110,000 to 150,000 illegal abortions had been carried out. As a consequence 411 women died and many more were maimed. Today early abortion is 20 times safer than pregnancy.

Criminals?

The propaganda against abortion at the moment concentrates on the rights and viability of the foetus. Although it's true that some foetuses may be viable at 27 or 28 weeks, in the Oxford student case, where a man attempted to force his ex-partner to continue with a pregnancy she had decided to terminate, the Court of Appeal ruled, after taking medical evidence, that a foetus at 18-21 weeks is not viable as its lungs would be unable to function.

If Alton was really concerned about the rights of children why didn't he submit a Bill to make funds available for all babies needing intensive care and for children needing cancer

treatment.

The real issue in David Alton's Bill however is not the viability of the foetus. No woman would choose to have an abortion after 18 weeks. In fact in 1986 less than 3.5 per cent were carried out after 18 weeks. 20 per cent of abortions after 20 weeks were for women who sought help before the 12th week of pregnancy.

Delay is most frequently caused by ignorance or fear amongst young women, inadequate NHS facilities, unsympathetic doctors and even wrong diagnosis.

The real question raised by Alton's Bill is; do we criminalise those women who usually through no fault of their own are compelled to seek a late abortion or do we demand that the facilities should be provided to make abortion as early as possible?

Socialists should demand free contraception and extensive youth advisory service, free immediate pregnancy testing, an extension of NHS facilities including day care, and better sex education in schools.

It's also important that doctors should not be allowed to continue to prevent or delay women having abortions because of their own personal opinions. Whilst women should seek medical and other advice, the decision to have an abortion should be the woman's.

Present technology should enable quick and early abortions to be available, such as a new 'abortion pill' RU486, presently on trial, which can trigger a miscarriage within seven weeks of conception.

A limit for abortions to 18 weeks would mean that



Women demonstrate against the Powell Bill which aimed to restrict research on embryos. Photo: Tom Picton (Reflex) II

women carrying an abnormal foetus, which is not usually detected until 20 weeks, would be denied the opportunity for abortion. In 1986 15 per cent of abortions after 20 weeks were for foetal abnormalities.

David Alton has set himself up as the champion of handicapped children, stating that "every child, however deformed, handicapped or impaired has a right to live" and that abortion on the basis of severe abnormalities discriminates against disabled people.

No choice

Why then is he not fighting for adequate disability benefits, more money for special education, adapted housing and respite care. Instead he chooses to impose the burden of bearing and bringing up of handicapped children on women, without their choice. At the

moment this means 24 hour care, 52 weeks of the year, for a lifetime, with practically no help from the state.

The most reactionary propaganda point used against late abortions is the number of women who come from abroad to private hospitals because they were unable to obtain an abortion in their own country. Apart from attempting to play the racist card, Alton also destroys his own argument.

Whatever limiting legislation is passed, wealthy women will be able to have late abortions by travelling to other countries where the laws are more liberal or pay high prices for illegal abortions. However, working class women will be driven back once again to backstreet abortions, putting their own health, and lives, at risk.

The right to abortion

must be defended by the labour and trade union movement. In 1980 the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party opposition to the Corrie Bill mobilised thousands onto national demonstrations and was decisive in its defeat. A similar and bigger campaign is needed today.

Opposition

Pressure must be put on Labour MPs to follow the Party's conference policy against the use of the 'conscience' vote and to follow a three-line-whip to vote against Alton's Bill. The Labour Party and TUC should call a national demonstration of opposition to Alton's Bill. An attack on abortion rights is an attack on the whole working class and it will be the united action of the working class that will de-

Fight Alton's Bill!

Lobby of Parliament 27 October. Central Hall, Westminster, 3pm.

Delayed by the system

What would Alton's reduction of the time limit for abortions to 18 weeks mean to women like these?

A woman, aged 28 from Staffordshire. Her husband deserted her, leaving her with huge debts, when he found she was pregnant for the third time. Her GP referred her to hospital, but she had to wait five weeks for an appointment and was then refused termination on the grounds that she was too late. She arrived at the pregnancy advisory service at 20 weeks gestation.

Six-week wait

A married woman with eight children and an alcoholic husband was referred to a London teaching hospital at 13 weeks pregnant and had to wait six weeks for an appointment. She too was refused termination and referred to the advisory service at 20 weeks.

feat this reactionary Bill.

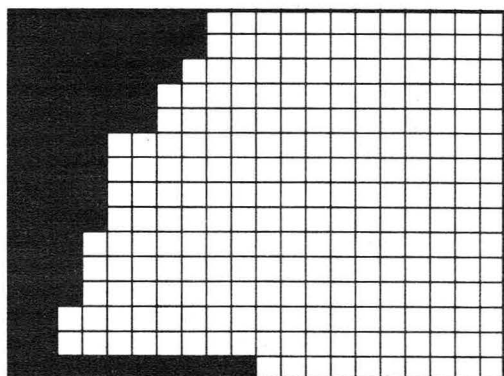
The real right of women to choose whether or not to have a child will only come when other pressures in society are removed. At the moment capitalist society promotes the ideal that women have to be good mothers, yet the reality is that many families face poverty and bad housing.

A massive house building programme, introduction of a minimum wage of £120 for a 35 hour week, good quality child care facilities, maternity and child care benefits that reflect the real material costs would go a long way to remove some of the economic reasons why women are forced into abortions. A socialist plan of production would ensure implementation of these demands and provide a society where children are truly wanted and have real rights.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
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1 London	3982
2 East Midlands	1276
3 Wales	1813
4 Eastern	907
5 South East	627
6 Scotland West	717
7 West Midlands	953
8 Scotland East	529
9 Southern	599
10 Yorkshire	1430
11 Northern	744
12 South West	297
13 Merseyside	867
14 Manchester/Lancs	421
15 National	3611



9400
3250
4850
3050
2250
3500
4850
2800
3100
8450
4600
1900
7500
4050
6950

Total	18,773	70,000
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Money for progress

WITH JUST over a week to go before the Fighting Fund deadline we need a massive injection of cash to reach the target.

Without the cash donations, from 'fivers' and 'tenners' to hundreds and even £1,000s, we will not be able to progress to a more regular Militant in the near future.

Yet the need for a more frequent Marxist paper campaigning against Tory attacks and for socialist policies in the labour and trade union movement has never been greater. Every week sees a new attack on the working class by the Tories and bosses; Kenneth Baker's Bill to privatise education; John Moore's attempt to abolish the Welfare State; the ax-

ing of yet more jobs from BREL, etc.

Militant alone is campaigning for the labour and trade union movement to fight-back against this onslaught. But to make our voice heard even louder than it is now, we need more resources.

Every supporter should aim to raise or donate a 'Tenner' this week. Pass around an appeal sheet amongst your workmates; ask regular readers for a large donation and don't forget to ask everyone who buys the paper for the Solidarity Price.

Organise a 'Day of Action' on the Fighting Fund using stickers, appeal sheets, rattling tins, organising a social or carboot sale. Send us the money

before the end of the quarter.

This week, supporters in Ogmere and Birmingham held public meetings and raised £50 and £35 respectively.

Supporters in W London raised £180 and in Hackney/Tower Hamlets £196. Sale of football cards netted us £6 in Blackburn as did a collection in Bermondsey.

Individual donations this week came from Dave Watts, Hull £12, Elliot Nathan, Leeds UCW £10, Domenico Hill, Bristol UCW £5, Kenny McCombes, and Charles Hegarty both Strathclyde NALGO £4 and £5. Special thanks to all our contributors this week.

South African revolution has begun

FOR THREE years almost uninterruptedly the youth and workers of South Africa have heroically battled against capitalism and the apartheid state. In strikes, school boycotts and revolts in the townships they have braved beatings and bullets from the state forces.

New organs of power, the township committees, emerged temporarily to challenge the authority of the official government. And in the recent miners' strike the largest dispute in its history struck South African industry.

If there is now a brief respite in the struggle, then activists in South Africa and around the world will want to consider the lessons for the next round. Also how to offer meaningful international

solidarity to organised workers and youth.

What the years since 1984 have confirmed is that capitalism in South Africa, that threatened to sack and deport the striking miners, and capitalism internationally, which twists and turns to avoid sanctions, will never extend democratic rights to the black majority. The youth and workers are learning that the fight for democracy and liberation, is the struggle to overthrow the white capitalist state, for a socialist South Africa.

On these pages activists within South Africa reflect on the current stage of the revolution, which began with the mass upheavals of 1984-86, and the road ahead.

Workers join the youth

An activist in the South African Youth Congress spoke to Militant

WE ARE struggling for liberation from white minority rule, against the miserable conditions of life under South African capitalism. During the 1984-86 upsurge we succeeded in wiping out state informers, and establishing democratic committees.

But the state could not tolerate this, and they sent the army and police into the townships, arresting and killing the youth. One figure I have seen is that we lost over 400 youth under the age of 18 during this time. Mass funerals became the order of the day, every weekend we had to bury our comrades.

We saw black on black violence encouraged by the state. The police armed black vigilantes to attack the youth. They used people like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi to try to smash the movement in the province of Natal.

How have the workers and youth responded?

The youth and workers have fought back against vigilantes. In Natal and also in some other areas, the youth have organised self defence committees. The problem is that these people are armed and we are not.

In some workplaces the workers have organised self-defence committees with night watches. When there have been attacks they have been prepared. Here we have seen the vigilantes and death squads driven out of the factories.

We have now learned that we have to be armed to organise effective workers' self-defence. The guerrilla wing of the African

National Congress has been completely unable to arm the youth for self-defence.

At one time many people believed that guerrilla struggle against the white state could overthrow racial domination. But we now see that mass armed insurrection is necessary to overthrow the state. Now many people question bombings and isolated attacks on the police.

Wage disputes

What is happening within the labour movement at the moment?

There are wage disputes throughout the country. Since the youth movement has been pushed back by the state, the youth have been looking to the workers to make a breakthrough.

In the minds of most of the workers and youth the recent miners' strike was a political movement because the strongest section of the workers' movement was battling with the state.

When the miners came out on strike everyone wanted to support them—municipal workers, the state oil corporation workers, metal workers, and the youth as well.

What has been the role of COSATU (the Congress of SA Trade Unions)?

The formation of COSATU in December 1985 marked a turning point in the industrial struggle. We have seen an explosion of strike action and mass unions have been built. For the first time since 1946 we now have a mass mine workers' union in the most important export industry in South Africa.

The workers see COSATU as more than a trade union—we see

it as a political movement. At the Second Congress the workers overwhelmingly voted for the Freedom Charter, the document of the African National Congress, as their programme.

We see the demands of the Freedom Charter—for housing, living wages, jobs, and the nationalisation of industry and the land—as a stepping stone towards socialism.

At the Congress there was a huge banner reading 'Socialism means Freedom' and the struggle for socialism was written into the resolutions.

COSATU has helped organise over 750,000 workers. In the past months we have seen about one million workers in disputes, but not one united movement. The mine strike ended in defeat, with many thousands victimised. The COSATU leaders now admit that the separate struggles of the workers should have been brought together.

We feel the opportunity was there for the leadership to have organised a general strike for a living wage. But they failed to do so. They feared leading a revolutionary movement.

How are the youth and workers organising at a political level?

The masses look to the ANC for political leadership. Every mass organisation of the youth and workers has 'Congress' in its name. The youth and workers want to build the ANC inside the country to lead our struggles. The task facing every activist is to build a mass ANC with firm foundations in the working class which is wanting socialism.

Obviously this is underground work. Socialists in the Congress movement are pioneering this work. We are explaining how the

national minimum wage campaign can be carried through to success. We have helped the workers and youth organise effective armed self-defence against the vigilantes. We have explained there can be no freedom if the capitalist monopolies direct the economy.

How can British workers and youth help in this struggle?

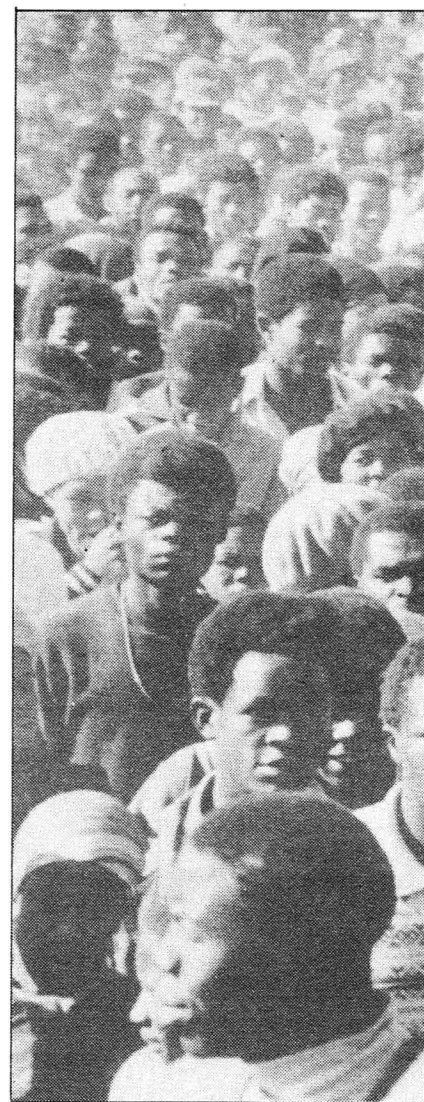
We appeal to the trade unions and youth organisations to make direct links where possible with their counterparts in South Africa. We call for workers' sanctions against the Botha regime as part of the campaigns to free detainees and defend the trade unions and youth organisations against attack.

The socialists in the Youth Congresses and COSATU need financial assistance. Eventually we will be asking for help in directly arming the South African youth and workers.

OVER £300 was raised for the Campaign for a Socialist South Africa in two days in Leicester. A Militant/Inqaba public meeting raised £158, including £10 raised by Remploy Sogat chapel.

The CPSA (DHSS section) Midlands regional committee donated £50, and collections were also held in the IRSF. A further £10.37 with a promise of more came from hard up school students at the Wyggstone sixth form college.

The campaign not only raised cash, but also the understanding of many youth and workers about the struggle in South Africa.



Funeral of four ANC youths in Duduz



MOSES MAYEKISO, South African Alexandra Action Committee, is on 19 October.

Send messages of support to: 2000. Send messages of pr Trafalgar Square, London.

Sarmcol

ONE THOUSAND workers at the British multinational BTR's Sarmcol factory in Natal, South Africa, have been on strike since May 1985 in support of their demand for trade union recognition. All have been dismissed, and four have been murdered by vigilantes belonging to Chief Buthelezi's murderous strike-breaking organisation, Inkatha.

The LPYS in Cumberland has recognised the need for solidarity with the Sarmcol workers and the building of direct worker to worker links. So we launched a local campaign by setting up a BTR support group.

We have approached the workers in the area. The Inland Revenue Staff Federation were the first to sponsor the campaign. Monthly collections were held outside the Inland Revenue where in the space of two or three hours an average of £80 was collected.

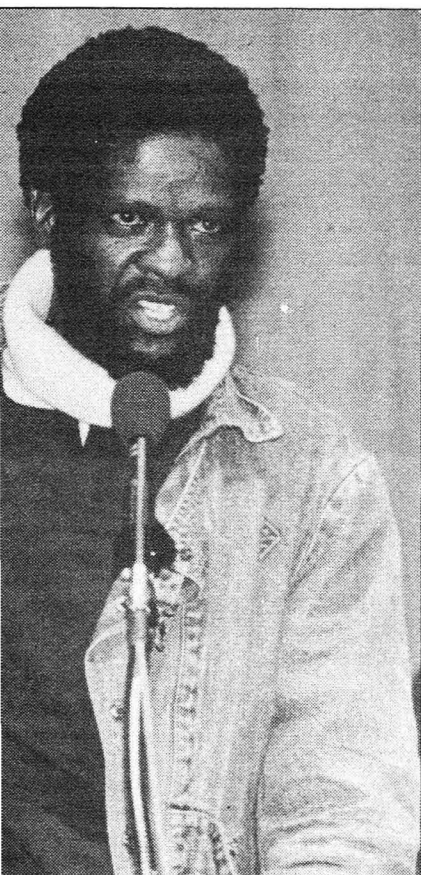
The total figure now stands in the region of £700 and the campaign has been officially sponsored by the



township.



Military patrol at Crossroads and KTC squatter camps.



Trade union leader and chair of the trial for his life. The case opens on

NUMSA, Box 9451, Johannesburg
 Post to: South African Embassy,

Solidarity

local Anti-Apartheid group and the Trades Council.

On hearing of the BTR Sarmcol workers' tour of Britain with their play about the strike (see *Militant* 866), the LPYS contacted the organisers to ask if the strikers would be able to visit Cumbernauld. On Thursday 15 October local workers had the privilege of seeing the strikers' excellent performance, to teach them about conditions facing workers in South Africa.

This is by no means the end of the campaign. While workers and youth are in struggle against the multinational BTR and the apartheid regime in South Africa, and while workers and youth in Britain are in struggle against the Tory bosses and their system, the YS will continue to build direct links as a step towards a socialist transformation of society both in Britain and internationally.

By Paula Cavan

'We just wrote slogans on the exam paper'

FOLLOWING THE heroic revolutionary struggles of 1984-86, the youth movement in the black working-class townships has temporarily been forced back. Many youth are now debating the lessons of the schools boycott and other campaigns.

With the launch earlier this year of the new youth organisation, SA Youth Congress (SAYCO) with over 700,000 members, youth activists are looking for a way to break out of the present stalemate by linking with the workers' movement.

A young coloured unemployed worker, who was actively involved in the 1985 schools boycott, speaks of his experience and the effect it has had on his understanding of the tasks.

The boycott lasted from the end of August 1985 until January 1986. The trouble really spread from the African townships into our area. We saw the first Casspir (armoured car) in our area and this made the youth even more militant.

There was a mass meeting of students at the local 'bush' university campus when Alan Boesak (United Democratic Front leader) was detained. We decided to march to Boesak's house. But we didn't march long before we were stopped. The students began to throw stones and erect barricades, and that's when things really got started.

Some looting took place from supply trucks at a local shop. The students at this stage were very angry and frustrated. The next day we planned how to continue the action. We decided to attack the rent office. It was attacked with stones.

The police came again. There was more tear gas and rubber bullets. Students scattered in all directions, away from the school. The few students left in the school were dismissed.

That was the trend for the whole week: there wasn't really much planning. While all this was happening the community supported the students—they left their doors open to let the students run through the houses when the police chased them. After the first violence things

died down a bit and there was less participation by the students. Most just stayed at home until the question of the end of year exams came up. We had an SRC (Student Representative Council) of about 30 students, with some four from every class above Standard 6.

The SRC took the position of boycotting the exams, although some parents, students, and teachers disagreed.

A mass meeting decided not to write exams. Some 'matric' (final year) students went elsewhere to write exams or part of them, mostly in three subjects. In the end there was only five or six who didn't write any, including me. But from standards six to nine the majority didn't write exams.

Police guard

Those who did were the same ones who didn't participate in our meetings or the 'alternative education programme' or the SRC. But even during the standard six to nine exams there were some who wrote the exams under a police guard. Others who sat in the classes in the exam rooms handed in blank papers—right under the noses of the police!

I can remember one incident when the police were behind the school, lying under the trees. Some students took the exam papers from some of those who wrote them, made a bonfire and sang and danced around them—all while the police dozed in the shade!

Sometimes students argued with the troopies, asking them what they were doing. "Don't you have brothers and sisters?"—especially the coloured troopies. They were very young—only 18 or 19. They were bombarded with questions. Some said they didn't want to be here, but they were sent here. They got very frustrated, but they were afraid of their officers.

In another incident, the troopies and police were again under the trees. About 30 students went up to them and teased them, going right up to them, making as if they were grabbing their rifles, or touching them. It made the soldiers very nervous, like psychological warfare!

During the exams there was one whole class who didn't write. They were just writing slogans on

their papers. The police came in. They drove two Casspirs right up outside the class and the whole class was detained, almost all of them—boys and girls—for 14 days. There were 48 of them.

When 1986 started there was a different atmosphere, but the students still preferred to stand under the authority of the SRC, rather than the teachers. The policy of the SRC was that everyone should be promoted to the next standard—not based on the June '85 exams.

The slogan was "an injury to one is an injury to all". We succeeded in getting all those who wanted promoted to the next standard.

Once the students were all promoted we couldn't continue the boycott. The students needed time to catch up on their work. So we decided to end the boycott.

The boycott did succeed in making the students and the community more aware of what was happening in this country. Our SRC wasn't particularly good, only two of them were Youth Congress members. Most were people without clear political understanding.

We were very inexperienced. I feel I have a lot more understanding now. Many students had their eyes opened. When the African students were under fire there

was a feeling of solidarity that wasn't there before. The racial barrier was crushed.

When the boycott ended the SRC eventually collapsed. Many were afraid of detentions. We had read about SRC members being detained. Throughout 1986 there were frequent visits to the schools by the police, and phone calls, to pressurise the staff to make sure everything was 'normal'.

New ideas

The position in the schools is now similar to before the boycott. There is more feeling about the academic work, and the teachers try to discourage any political activity.

To prevent new uprisings in the first week of school there was nothing but athletics, to keep the students in the schools, then the normal work started after that. There are a few new books in the schools now, but we were always better off than the African schools. We have about 40 to a class—the same as before.

I regret I'm not a school student any longer because I feel I have many ideas I could now carry out. If we'd had the ideas then that we have now, we could have done a much better job, especially in raising the question of unity with the workers. Next time!

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20th Anniversary of guerrilla leader's death

Che Guevara's last battle

Why he could not have won

TO COMMEMORATE the death 20 years ago of Che Guevara, revolutionary fighter and leading participant in the Cuban revolution, we reprint an edited version of an article written at the time by Militant editor, Peter Taaffe.

The murder of Che Guevara and the savage 30 year sentence meted out to his followers, by the rotten Bolivian regime has provoked a wave of protest throughout the world labour movement.

From the first unconfirmed reports of guerrilla movements in Bolivia, United States imperialism with the ruling elites of Latin America reacted with the viciousness of fear. This alone is testimony to the social explosions reverberating throughout the continent.

The whole of Latin America is today in revolt. It is a revolt against the torpor of centuries. Bound to the world capitalist system, in particular US imperialism, it is kept as a semi-colonial field of super-exploitation. Every country depends on the export of one or two products, either raw materials or agricultural products. With the fall of the prices of these products in the last 20 years, not only is the continent becoming relatively more impoverished but the poverty stricken masses sink ever lower in absolute terms.

The native landlord capitalist classes are tied in a thousand and one ways, particularly through bank capital, to the perpetuation of backward land relations. As with other tasks, a land reform can only be thoroughly carried out against their interests. Instead of the promised reforms, the ruling oligarchies have found temporary refuge from the danger that threatens them from the masses in a series of military dictatorships.

"Guevara did not see the working class as the main social force"

It is against this background that the recent events in Bolivia must be viewed. Guevara attempted to emulate the pattern of the Cuban revolution first of all in Bolivia and then throughout the whole of Latin America. Undoubtedly, he was a revolutionary who laid down his life for the down-trodden of the continent.

Nevertheless, we must seek to understand the lessons of the debacle of his attempts in Bolivia. These resulted from a false view of the main social forces involved in the Latin American revolution and from an attempt to artificially apply the example of the Cuban revolution to Bolivia.

In its eight short years, despite the blockade and embargoes, the Cuban revolution has justified itself in the impressive developments which have resulted from

nationalisation and planning, the main conquests of the revolution. Almost in the 'jaws' of US imperialism it has made gigantic steps forward in housing, health standards, the wiping out of impoverishment and illiteracy and in raising the general living standards of the majority of the people.

However, the forces involved in the revolution guaranteed from the beginning that the working class was elbowed out of the management and control of the economy, a basic pre-requisite for the movement towards socialism. In fact the Cuban revolution of 1956-59 was in the main a peasant war with the working class playing only a minor part with the general strike in Havana (when victory had already been assured).

Castro

Castro himself evolved from a typical middle class reformer, to a position whereby, basing himself on the workers and peasants, he was forced to carry through the expropriation of Cuban and foreign capital.

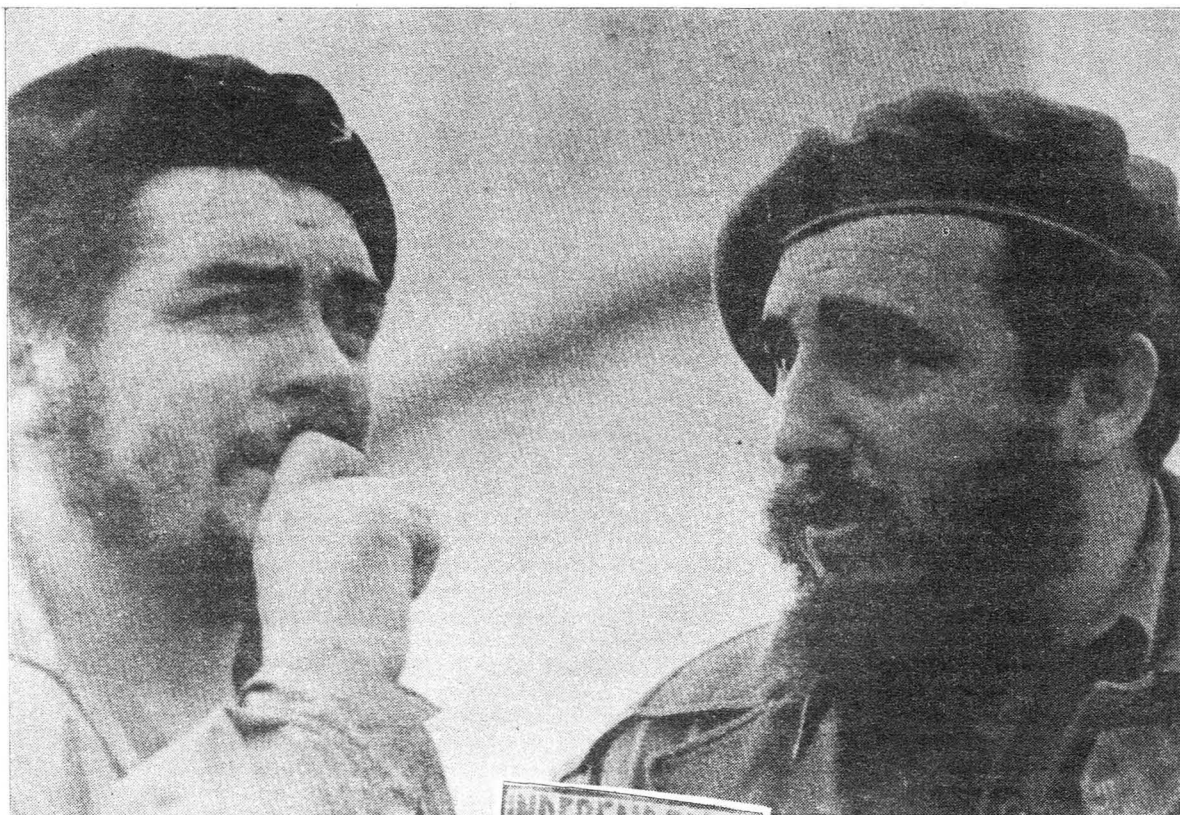
The process was rapid and not at all 'planned' by Castro or the elements who had led the guerrilla campaign. In March 1959 the United States government cut its import quota of Cuban sugar with the aim of blackmailing the Castro regime to postpone promised reforms. This was followed in April by the nationalisation of US retail stores, which in turn provoked the US into cutting aid June. Castro replied by taking over the US oil refineries.

In July the US government banned all imports of sugar and immediately Russia stepped in to offer to take Cuba's 700,000 cancelled tons. By the end of September almost all US and Cuban large scale industry was state owned.

This resulted from the enormous pressure of the masses, the complete rottenness of Cuban capitalism, which, through Batista, had managed to alienate practically the whole of the popular masses, the diplomatic bungling of US imperialism and the existence of a series of deformed workers' states in the East which acted both as a model and basis of support for the new regime.

Capitalism was crushed, but because the peasantry rather than the conscious movement of the workers had played the main role, workers' democracy never existed. And without the constant controls and checks by the masses themselves, together with the isolation of the revolution in a backward country, no real movement towards socialism is possible.

Instead the establishment of a one party state with the entrenchment and growing separation of a privileged bureaucratic elite has continued apace. True, massive rallies of half a million or more



Guerrilla leaders Che Guevara and Castro.



"Get the troops out of the mines!" 1970s miners' demonstration against military rule in Bolivia.

have been held in Havana and elsewhere. These undoubtedly indicate the popularity of the regime, but they do not in themselves constitute real workers' democracy.

Limitations

Where the peasantry plays the main role, as in Cuba and China, the revolution can only have national and bureaucratic limitations. But if there is one peasantry at the moment which proves least open to the kind of 'impulsion' of Debray's or Guevara's small band of guerrillas, it is the Bolivian peasantry.

If only temporarily, sections of the peasantry have benefited from the 1952 civil war and the half land reform carried out in its wake. Precisely because it has only gone half way it has become ensnared in capitalist relations and the landlords are beginning to creep back. However, for the moment the peasantry were impervious. At the same time the miners and the working class were not seen as the main social force by Guevara.

Yet it is precisely this section

which has been the backbone of the Bolivian revolution. Until recently the possession by the miners of their own radio stations and militia meant a period of dual power. This has meant that in a thinly veiled civil war, the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state, the army and police, has vied for supremacy with the armed miners.

In Latin America as a whole the ideas of Guevara and Debray crash against the reality of social relations. In Brazil, Argentina, Chile, amongst other countries, it is the working class which will play the main role. In Chile and Uruguay, in particular, recent months have revealed the ripeness for revolution. In the face of the rocketing cost of living the working class in Chile in October staged a 24 hour general strike.

Already a military dictatorship is installed in Brazil and Argentina. Now neighbouring Chile and Uruguay (which is a showpiece of 'democracy' on the South American continent) face a similar fate unless the workers can take power.

Taken as a whole it is the

working class which is the decisive force. This does not discount peasant wars, land occupations, and even in specific circumstances a revolutionary overturn similar to that in Cuba. Nor does it rule out the possibility even of a development similar to that in Syria, with a section of the lower middle class officer caste, seeing the bankruptcy of capitalism, basing themselves on the revolt of the masses and expropriating the present ruling elites.

Internationalism

But as was emphasised by the Russian Revolution, only a democratic socialist regime with the working class as the leading class can begin the international overturn of capitalism. The Bolsheviks never won the poor peasantry by abandoning their class base. Precisely the opposite: they first won over the majority of the workers and through them the peasantry.

Thus the theories of Guevara, Castro and their variants fail to answer the problems posed by the concrete conditions in Latin America. Nor do they stand the test of internationalism which is the cornerstone of Marxism. Not one word do they mention of the over-riding importance of the industrial countries of the continent. But if the powerful Brazilian or Argentine working class were to come to power, this would be an event of world-wide significance. It would have the same importance as the 1917 Russian Revolution.

From Bolivia to Peru, where the upsurge against landlordism and capitalism is compounded by a national revolt of the Indians, to the street battles and general strikes in the cities of the more developed countries and the land occupations and incipient peasant wars, no respite will be given to the ruling oligarchies.

If a real defeat is to be dealt not only to them but to world imperialism as a whole, through the mobilisation of the world working class, it is through the programme of Marxism and not Castroism that the labour movement must turn. With delays and temporary setbacks the working class and poor peasantry will find the road to victory to the UNITED SOCIALIST STATES OF LATIN AMERICA AS PART OF THE WORLD SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

Carnage in Jaffna

What now?

Editorial Board statement

OVER 20,000 Indian troops have been engaged in savage house to house fighting, in what the Gandhi regime hopes will result in a 'final solution' to the Tamil question in Sri Lanka. The Indians claim to have killed 500 Tamil Tiger fighters. With their own losses and civilian deaths, at least 1,000 must have died so far.

Three months ago the possibility of an Indian intervention was posed, to defend the Tamil population from the brutal assault of the Sri Lankan army. But as the stiff resistance to the Indians confirms, the Sri Lankan forces would not have been able to have taken Jaffna, where the civil administration had been replaced by the Tigers' own authority.

But what was beyond the power of the Sri Lankan forces, is now being savagely seen through by the superior strength of the Indian state.

Any thought that the Indian government would be the saviour of the Tamil people is being ruthlessly smashed. As *Militant* always explained there is nothing 'progressive' about the Indian capitalist regime as the Stalinists have pretended. Even the *Times* talks of India exerting "a form of sub-continental imperialism".

Gandhi was under pressure from the 50 million Tamils in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu to prevent the wholesale slaughter of Sri Lankan Tamils by the Jayawardene government. But also he feared the possible

establishment of an independent Tamil state in the north of Sri Lanka which would have encouraged all the national, separatist movements throughout the sub-continent.

However, he also recognised the danger that a separate Tamil state, which economically would be unviable and would only be established after years of struggle and bloodshed, could end up as a deformed workers' state. Capitalism would be abolished but a one party totalitarian state would be established. The Tigers had already destroyed the other Tamil guerrilla groups, and were well on the way to a one party embryo state already.

Stitched up

So it was the reactionary Gandhi government and the reactionary Jayawardene government of Sri Lanka that stitched up the agreement on the Tamil question on 29 July, over the heads of the Tamil masses of the north and the Sinhalese masses of the south. Under this, autonomy would be given to the north and east of Sri Lanka. A referendum would later be organised to determine whether the mixed Tamil/Sinhalese eastern population would like to remain under the autonomous authority.

The Tigers have since waged a merciless campaign to drive Sinhalese families out of the east to ensure a Tamil majority prior to the referendum. The carnage in Batticaloa and other eastern towns was inevitably enraging the Sinhalese masses, feeding the anti-autonomy groups



Indian paratroopers killed by Tamil Tigers displayed at a Buddhist temple in Jaffna. But the Indian forces are set to crush the Tigers' resistance at a terrible cost to civilians.

and putting in jeopardy the whole agreement. Then last week the Tigers declared they rejected the agreement.

Gandhi decided that to maintain the agreement, Indian forces should be committed to crush the Tigers as a military force and try to establish some new basis of support among more sympathetic sections of the Tamil population. Then by arming them and stabilising the north, Gandhi could consider withdrawal, but not before.

And it might be some time yet. After the battle for Jaffna and the wiping out of hundreds of Tigers, how many sympathetic Tamils will be available? Many Tamils may not have endorsed the Tigers' methods of guerrillism, but they will not support the

'state terrorism' of Gandhi and Jayawardene. They could look upon Tamil collaborators with any Indian backed administration as 'quislings'.

General strike

Gandhi must have felt the time was right to strike, when despite the public protestations of opposition politicians, the Tamil Nadu general strike call against the army's intervention in Sri Lanka went largely unheeded. But he knew it had to be a relatively quick affair. A drawn out campaign would have fed the opposition at home.

But the Tigers themselves, by their attacks in the east, or by the bombing outrage at Colombo bus station earlier this year, have created the climate

that has allowed Indian firepower to be turned on them. They have virtually severed any lifeline to the Sinhalese workers.

Indeed the *Financial Times* reports: "With Mr. Pant, the Indian defence minister, beside him, Mr. Jayawardene was frank about his motives. He wanted the Indian army to relieve his army in the north in order to redeploy it in the south, the scene of a rabidly nationalist incipient Sinhala youth insurgency".

With the return of thousands of disgruntled, homeless Sinhala refugees from the east and the national indignation felt by the entire Sinhalese people about the handing over of half the country to Indian suzerainty, he may need all those forces to deal with unrest in

the south.

The Indian solution is no final solution. North and south, new movements of opposition will develop. Jayawardene has lost much popularity in the south, while in the north, any initial sympathy for the arrival of the Indian forces has already evaporated in a haze of gun smoke.

The workers' movement of Sri Lanka must inscribe on its banner the demands: for the withdrawal of Indian troops; for Sinhalese and Tamil workers' unity; for a socialist Sri Lanka with full autonomy for the north, and for the east if so desired, within a unitary Sri Lanka; for the right to self determination up and to including separation for the Tamil people; and for a socialist federation of the Indian sub-continent.

For workers' sanctions now!

THATCHER HAS again proved that the government is the biggest supporter of South Africa's vicious apartheid regime.

At the Commonwealth conference she once more refused to commit her government to any action against apartheid.

More than that, she repeated all the arguments of the Botha regime that greater investment in South Africa was the way to "reform" apartheid. The friend of the bloody Pretoria dictatorship also attacked the African National Congress as "terrorist."

Astonishingly the African leaders retreated before this brazen defence of apartheid. President Kaunda of Zambia even dropped the word "sanctions" from his speeches.

Thatcher defends apartheid to defend the interests of British capitalism throughout southern Africa. The leaders of the Labour Party and the Anti-Apartheid movement unfortunately try to appeal to Thatcher to reject apartheid on moral grounds.

Militant has always argued that this was doomed to failure—British capitalists would never



South African youth. 25,000 children have been arrested in the last three years.

agree to effective action against the main defender of their interests in Africa.

The moral appeal approach is now in ruins. The labour movement now has the responsibility to support fully the workers and youth in struggle against the most brutal regime in the world, which is determined to crush the non racial trade unions and youth movement.

The 12 storey headquarters of the COSATU union federation was smashed by the biggest bomb

ever to explode in South Africa on election day 6 May. Murders of trade union leaders and youth by death squads are common.

Torture

In the past three years, South African security forces have killed 400 children. Around 25,000 children have been arrested on political charges. In prison they have been subjected to unspeakable torture, beaten with fists, whips or rifle butts, throttled and hoods

placed over their heads.

Recently a 16 year old reported of his arrest: "I was forced into a rubber suit at Tembisa police station. A cap was put on my head, it had electric wires in it. Then they put a dummy in my mouth. They switched on the plug and I felt like my mind was dead and my blood no longer with me. I felt numb, my muscles pumping but I could not scream because of the dummy in my mouth."

Janey Buchan MP told the last Labour Party conference that

Thatcher was also a mother and would respond to the brutality unleashed against black children. But the Commonwealth conference shows she is a cold blooded representative of her class who does not bat an eyelid at such atrocities.

Her arrogance is a challenge to the labour movement and all those who support effective action against apartheid.

Let us step up the work of making direct links with the COSATU unions and Youth Congresses, to give direct support for those battling with slender resources against a formidable enemy.

Let us take action in the councils to stop giving contracts to companies like ARC and Shell which support apartheid with their investments. If the Tories say this is illegal, let the Labour leadership give support to councils prepared to take action.

Let us build the campaign for the only effective action which will be undertaken against apartheid—sanctions by the labour movement to break the links with the Botha regime in the factories, airports and docks.

Record Review



Ballad of a spycatcher

LEON ROSSELSON, with Billy Bragg and the Oyster Band, has brought out another single, *Ballad of a Spycatcher*. As the title suggests, it is taking the mickey out of Peter Wright, MI5 and the government's attempts at censorship. The words and music are in the best Rosselson tradition: original, often hilarious, always to the point. The song highlights some of MI5's dirty tricks down the years, including the plot in the 1960s "to save us from the clutches of a Labour

government". But as it concludes: "Nanny—God bless Nanny—thought it wouldn't do for you to know about the naughty things that spycatchers do." On the other side is another Rosselson classic, *Song of the Free Press*. Order the record from: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. Phone 01 437 2795. Price: £2 plus 50p postage.

Shutting up the 'extremists'

Dear Comrades, A delegate to Tory Party Conference suggested that 'hard left' 'extremist' teachers should not be allowed to teach children, reflecting stories in the gutter press about this. In the whole of my school career, from junior school to Further Education college, all the openly political teachers I had were Tory or Welsh Nationalist. A teacher I had when I was nine tried to instill into us a hate for the English, saying that "all English people are stupid", "talk in snooty accents" etc, and would bring up the subject for the slightest reason. My

sister had an Evangelical teacher who tried to put the 'fear of God' into the class by giving a 'fire and brimstone' lecture, saying "Don't worry about nuclear war; believe in God and everything will be alright." These are not isolated examples, I could give many more from my own experience. The things these people have said, in my eyes, discredited them and whatever they were trying to defend, but they could affect many young children who are easily influenced. G Jones, Plymouth.

Wales' answer to Kinnock

Dear Comrades, During Labour Party Conference week, when Neil Kinnock was tied up trying to persuade rank and file members that the only way forward for Labour is to appeal to the so-called "Yuppie vote", the following figures appeared in our local paper. In West Glamorgan more than 60,000 households have less than £80 income per week (under £4,000 per annum). A further 33,888 households have a gross income be-

tween £4,000-£8,000 per year. These figures show that almost half the households in the county are living on the breadline. One of the local MPs, Donald Anderson, stated that "It shows that those stuck in their Whitehall bunkers know nothing about the levels of poverty in Wales when they talk about economic recovery." Amanda Moss, Swansea, West Glamorgan.

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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



Hospital closures mean waiting lists get longer, and longer... Photo: Dave Sinclair.



Nicholas Ridley.

Out of action

Dear Comrades, Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley has issued a consultation paper which further extends the government's privatisation plans.

The paper proposes putting out to tender sports centres, swimming pools, tennis courts, athletics tracks, football and cricket pitches etc.

Swimming pools would have to invite tenders for lifeguards and swimming instructors! Charges would rocket. The unemployed who in many cases have concessionary rates, would be excluded if they cannot pay the 'market rate'.

As a work colleague said to me "where will it all end?". It will end when the trades unions get their act together and launch a massive joint national campaign to defeat privatisation. Alan Shadforth, GMBATU shop steward, Hull.

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 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 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% p&p.
- Andrew and Sigbritt Herbert wish to announce that a new class fighter called Anika was born on 17 September.
- Wanted NUM branch/strike badges in exchange for Kent badges, or to buy. Contact Peter Jaconeilli, 13 Dryden Rd, Dover, Kent.

□ 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 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB.

Militant meetings

- Isle of Wight Wednesday 28 October 7.30pm. St Johns Church Hall, Ryde.
- Oxford Thursday 29 October 7.30pm. Oxford Town Hall. "Labour must fight the cuts!". Speakers include: Tony Mulhearn plus city council and Austin Rover workers.
- Yorkshire Militant Women's 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.

SALEP publications

- Sifuna Konke Marxist study guide (3 sections)..... £1+p&p
- Isolate the South African Bosses SALEP broadsheet..... 20p+p&p
- SALEP's socialist education work—why does the Labour Party NEC want to ban it?..... 40p+p&p
- ASINAMALI pamphlet exposing the bosses' arguments for paying poverty wages..... 30p+p&p

Videos

All videos for hire £10 LPYS and Women's sections. £20 LP's and trade unions. The launch of COSATU 1985 launch of the Congress Of South African Trade Unions. South African Workers Struggle! Film of chemical workers' struggle against the relocation of their factory to a cheap labour bantustan by a major multinational; NUM education caucus and the 1987 NUM Congress. Women fight apartheid and capitalism! Footage of women in struggle in the 1950's and of strike action in 1986. Mayfair Working class whites in a suburb of Johannesburg struggle against government plans to relocate them under the Group Areas Act. Goldfields Super-exploitation of SA miners by a major multinational. We Live Like Dogs The life and conditions of a black South African mineworker. Please return videos immediately after use. Post and Packing rates: 50p and under..... 20p £1..... 40p Each subsequent £1..... 20p Over £10..... Free. All cheques payable to SALEP, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB. Tel 01 241 0434.

Consultants fare well

Dear Comrades, Len, a retired miner in Stoke-on-Trent has developed cataracts on both eyes and is now blind. He has been given the option of remaining blind until next June or going for the simple operation next week! The catch is he has to pay £1,000 of his redundancy money in return for his sight. The last time he went to the doctor's (before this happened) was in 1970 with a broken leg, and before that he can't remember when he went. "I haven't

cost the health service much money" he said. Yet he's paid a lifetime of contributions. In January he went to the opticians with bad eyes and was referred to the doctor who diagnosed cataracts. The doctor told him to come back in three months because they were not ready to operate on. When he returned he was told to come back in another five months. During all that time his name was not put on a waiting list, although it was known he'd need the operation.

After months of struggling partially blinded then blind, he went back. His doctor had left. The new doctor told him if he paid for the operation it would get done a lot quicker, but in any case he must see the specialist and that costs £40! Len, who lives on his own, has seen yet again who's 'welfare' is looked after by the 'welfare state'. Sue Wilkie, Stoke-on-Trent.

Language too complex?

Dear Comrade, In reply to Ray Duffill's letter (Militant 867), I think a debate is well overdue on the role and contents of a workers' paper. For two years now I have debated with other sellers that the paper goes over workers' heads. They want a paper they can understand in a language they can understand. True the paper is aimed at the labour and union activists, but how are we to reach the layers of future activists when our paper is worded in scientific terms? Surely the Militant International Review is adequate to cover this and go into greater depth covering the events that affect the working class nationally and internationally. Let's have a workers' paper written in the language workers can understand. The more papers sold, the more our ideas are spread. A Davison, Scarborough

MILITANT WELCOMES letters from its readers questioning its style, and the type of articles. It is only our readers who can tell us of the response of new workers and young people to the paper, and whether it is helping to win new readers. A workers' paper should be written as simply as possible, to attract the first time reader just awakening to political interest. But it also has to satisfy its regular and committed supporters, who want to know the Marxist stance on the more complicated international and theoretical questions. The complexity of an article, including the use of longer words, has to depend on the complexity of the issue being explained. They want to know immediately the answers to these thorny problems, and notwithstanding the excellent coverage in the MIR, the weekly (and even a daily) Militant will continue to

strive to achieve that balance between the more straightforward, easily read articles, and other necessary material which perhaps takes more thinking about. We rely on our readers like Comrade Davison, to tell us whether the balance is correct. Unlike the Tory gutter press we do not hold in contempt the ability of workers to grasp sometimes difficult issues. We hope that through reading the paper we lead new workers from the basic articles to the more demanding, and thereby help to widen their political understanding and knowledge. But we always want more articles about workers' lives, written in workers' language, and the best people to supply them are our ordinary readers themselves. So think about Militant's contents and tell us of your criticisms. But also write for Militant, it is your workers' paper.

London labour movement conference

Organising to stop Tory cuts

Don't cut your throat

THE LONDON Broad Left Organising Committee conference will be the biggest and most representative London labour movement meeting since the general election.

Delegates from unions, Labour Parties and tenants associations have the task of working out a clear programme and strategy to organise to defend jobs and services.

London councils, including the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) are in the sights of the trigger-happy Tory government. One job in five is threatened by privatisation of council services and the break up of ILEA.

Workers living in inner London will suffer most of all from the poll tax. In Lambeth current rates per household are £539; this would go up to £640 per person when the new poll tax comes in.

Tory rent deregulation

plans will force council rents up massively, to put them on par with the private sector. This crazy free market logic will put rents in Hackney up 160 per cent. Privatisation will also lead to the best estates being sold off, lengthening housing waiting lists and creating homelessness.

Next March, 11 London Labour councils will be ratecapped. Between them they will have a total budget deficit of £400 to £500 million!

Anne Matthews, the leader of Southwark council has argued that for her authority to set a legal budget would mean "savings" of £45 million next April and another £32 million the next year. In Lambeth Linda Bellos rec-

ently said they had to make cuts worth £60 million next year. "We have got no choice," she claimed.

Besieged

Local authority workers and tenants are dismayed at London's Labour council leaders. Instead of following the example of the surcharged Liverpool and Lambeth councillors in leading the fight against the Tories, most councillors are intent on carrying out Tory cuts in jobs and services.

In the last month, trade unionists, tenants and community groups have besieged London's town halls with protests at cuts and rent rises. These are just the first tremors of mass opposition.

Eddie Mc Parland, one of the "no cuts" councillors on Greenwich Labour group told Militant last week: "If the ex-left leaders think that the struggle finished on 11 June, for local authority trade unionists and tenants, the struggle is just beginning."

The BLOC conference must link up the fight now starting in the local councils to other struggles across the capital and in other parts of the country.

There is no shortage of determination. Already this year there has been an all out strike of telecomms workers. London Buses have seen three successful one day strikes and there have been at least 64 unofficial strikes in the Post

Office in London since April.

Many workers have shown their resolve to fight for jobs, wages and conditions. The doubts are about the leadership.

But John Macreadie was elected deputy general secretary of the biggest civil service union, the CPSA. Both the CPSA and the telecomms union NCU have elected Broad Left national executives. These victories show the appeal of a leadership prepared to match the rank and file's determination and lead a fight against the Tories.

Thousands of workers dismayed by the right wing policies on offer from the TUC and Labour leaders will be looking for an alternative. The BLOC London labour movement conference must begin to build that alternative in the capital.

By Willie Griffin

Building a broad left

LYNN KELLY, Southwark council Nalogo shop steward and member of the steering committee of the newly formed Southwark Broad Left, told Militant why they had set up the organisation.

"What sparked it off was our Nalogo branch's vote to accept the leadership's position of negotiating redundancies.

"I resigned from staff side (negotiating body) in protest together with one other steward. From then on I was committed to the idea of the broad left.

"We drew up a list of anyone we thought might be interested. We talked to anybody who wanted to fight the cuts. Then we drew up our aims. No cuts in jobs or services; no rent or rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts; the need to fight privatisation and defend the health and education services."

United

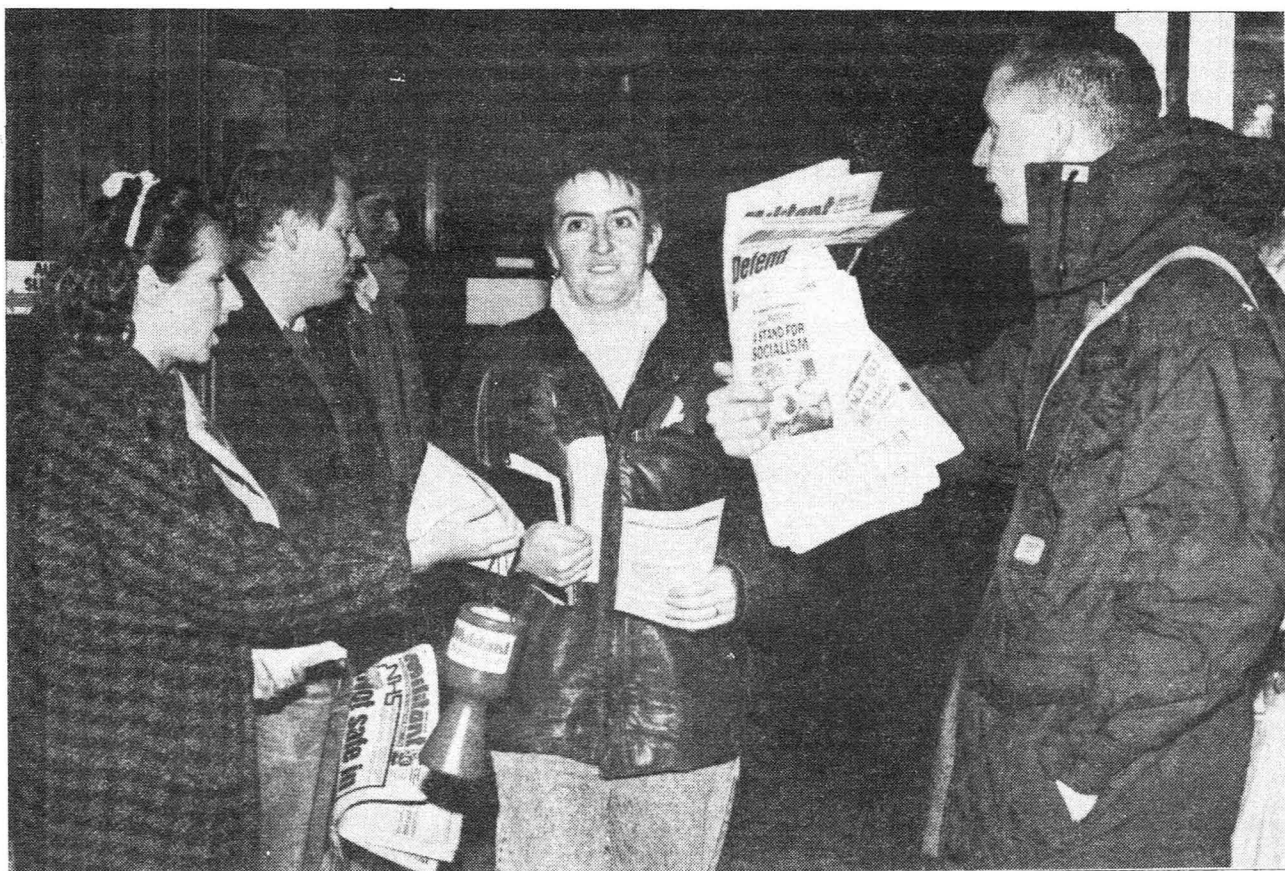
Militant: What made you decide to broaden it out to other public services?

"We needed the support of the people who used council services. Then we realised that the users were under attack in their own industries—health workers, teachers, London Transport workers. You can't fight on your own. You need one united battle.

"So the Broad Left became an umbrella for all the campaigns in the borough against the Tories. Once we had collected the names, we organised an inaugural meeting to set up the Broad Left.

"We leafleted and sent out invitations. The first meeting was very successful, with eight unions represented, and mothers from the campaign against nursery closures in Bermondsey.

"Since that meeting on



Southwark's labour council leader, Anne Matthews, lobbied by Broad Left after proposing a £2 rent increase.

30 September we have had two lobbies of the council against rent increases and recruitment freezes, and a public meeting attended by fifty trade unionists and tenants. We now have 100 people on the books, and all in just three weeks.

"I was frustrated before because our union leaders said that there was no mood to fight. But now I can see the support the Broad Left is getting and I knew I was right. Now things are moving. There are people there ready to fight. We aren't isolated any more."

Militant: How do you see the Broad Left developing?

"We will develop broad lefts in all the Southwark council unions, and tenants will be supporting the workers to protect the services.

"Now we need to consolidate the people who are interested so that they can set up broad lefts in their workplaces. Over the next few months we will be leading the struggle against the cuts.

"In the longer run we aim to replace the council with people who are going to fight, with real socialist councillors who aren't going to posture and pose.

"The Broad Left will grow from the grass roots throughout all the public services, the main employers in Southwark. It will be linked to broad lefts in other areas and start a major fightback against the Tory government, and at the same time put pressure on the labour and trade union leaders who at present are letting Thatcher walk all over us."

BLOC

10.30-5.30
24 October
York Hall
Bethnal Grn
London E2

Crisis in local authorities
Fightback against privatisation

Speakers include:
Tony Mulhearn (surcharged Liverpool councillor).
Tony O'Brien (London Bridge)
Ian Driver (NUPE NEC member)
John Macreadie (CPSA)
All in a personal capacity

Sell-off

If they wanted cash to resolve their crisis, they would have to reduce rates, sell off more council homes and comply with privatisation plans. There was no money for the councils to tackle urban regeneration.

Ridley's idea of "good" Labour councils were authorities like Salford who "worked with the government", who in other words cut their own jobs, their own services and their own throats.

Chopping logic

THE DAY before the hurricane struck, the ex-left leader of Southwark council, Anne Matthews, told two Labour Party ward meetings that council workers were lazy and provided a sloppy service!

At a full council meeting the next day, called to put up the rents by £2, she was lambasted by councillor Brian Kelly.

"It ill-behoves the leadership of this council to attack the workforce at Labour Party meetings, by describing them as idle and lacking in commitment when they have just been working round the clock to maintain the borough's services."

Anne Matthews rationalised the £2 increase by saying that the old Labour administration followed the same course and Labour's vote zoomed up! Some logic!

By Ben Eastop

Industrial reports

Snowdown branch officers' statement

ON THURSDAY 15 October British Coal gave their decision on our appeal against the proposed closure of Snowdown. At our branch meeting we decided to reaffirm our decision to oppose closure and go to the Independent Review Board (IRB).

The following meeting of the Kent Area Council unanimously supported Snowdown's branch decision and a general meeting was called for 18 October. The meeting was attended by approximately 120 members who were given the facts. The branch and Area recommendation was read out and after a fraternal debate the vote was taken.

Battling

The recommendation was defeated by 44 votes to 76. That decision means that we do not follow through the IRB and that we have to inform the National Union that we no longer wish to stay in the review procedure.

We need to make it clear that it isn't the members at Snowdown who have closed the pit but British Coal who since 1981 have said they wanted it closed. We have been fighting and battling ever since, including the 12 month strike. More recently they have dropped our grade rates, bonuses and overtime which has generally demoralised people. That's the general strategy of the Board.

By Kevin Garrety, Snowdown NUM branch delegate to Kent Area Council, and Phil Sutcliffe, Snowdown NUM branch chair.

Opencast miners demand strike

STRIKE ACTION is looming amongst opencast miners over the issues of job security and improved working conditions.

By a TGWU member

A national delegate conference of opencast coal mining workers has been convened by Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) Building Trade national secretary George Henderson, who said, "All over the country where we have opencast members there have been signs of the unrest that has erupted in Wales and is likely to erupt elsewhere".

He was referring to the one day strike in August

involving over 1,000 workers on six sites in South Wales and the subsequent loss of 6000 tonnes in production.

The opencast industry has been the subject of discussions between government ministers and civil engineering contractors as far back as January this year, it is claimed. The opencast sector made £343 million profit in 1985/86 and is rumoured to be 'high up on the agenda' for privatisation.

"There have been secret meetings involving high level contractors, chairmen

of companies and so on and people from the government....it's about privatisation of profits which will go to rapacious employers and people in the city" said Mr Henderson.

Privatisation

Although denying knowledge of 'secret meetings', the Federation of Civil Engineering Employers (FCEC) did argue for privatisation in a submission to the House of Commons Energy Select Committee last year, proposing first the separation

of the opencast Executive from British Coal.

British Coal do not employ opencast workers directly but grant a fixed term licence to contractors like Taylor Woodrow, Wimpey and Costain to mine so many tonnes of coal. It is the contractors who employ the men. One British Coal director is reported as saying it owes 'no allegiance' to opencast workers.

The FCEC claim that they would 'like to see continuous employment for the contractor. If we had that we'd be able to offer some

kind of continuity of employment for the workers'.

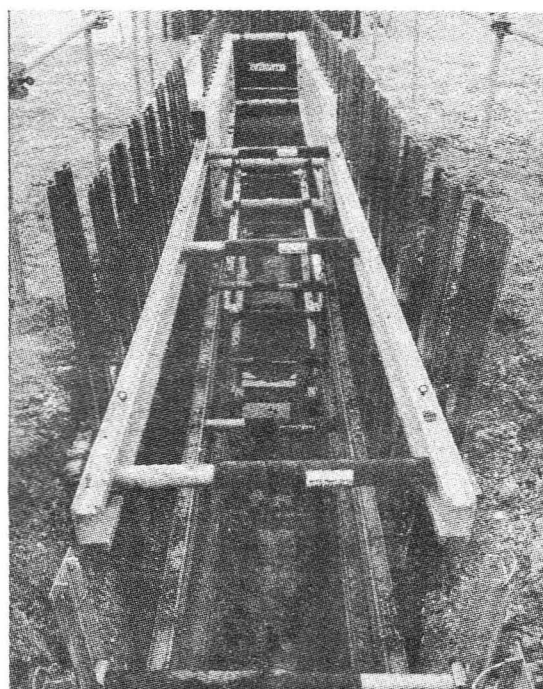
Scottish opencast miners had threatened to follow the South Wales action with a strike this month, only holding back on the promise of the forthcoming delegate conference.

According to Gwyn Davies, secretary of the Opencast Coalmining of Wales Committee, "The lads have been forced into this action by circumstances beyond our control. They're not looking to strike all the time, they're just looking for a fair deal".

Every picture tells a story



The offending site.



What it should look like.

"A TYPICAL ductile installation" was how the April edition of the British Standards Institution (BSI) News described this picture.

In fact there are two breaches of health and safety legislation plus three equally dangerous practices. The chain attached to the pipe is knotted and extremely weakened as a result, the trench is not supported, the soil heap is too close to the trench, the excavator is using a 'spanner' as a holding pin for the bucket and no-one seems to be wearing helmets.

"Horrendous" was how David Tivey, deputy superintending inspector of the Health and Safety Executive (construction section) described the picture. A spokesman for the BSI said that the magazine's "normal rigorous checking procedures were bypassed".

Post Office bosses provoke disputes

LIVERPOOL POSTAL workers are preparing for strike action to defend full time jobs against management attempts to introduce part-time labour.

Management are attempting to introduce the notorious Revised Revision Procedure (RRP). This job-cutting exercise was rejected by the workers' union, the Union of Communications Workers (UCW) at their 1987 conference.

Agreement was close on new duties when management broke off negotiations and threatened to introduce new duties without agreement on October 16.

A ballot in Liverpool produced a two to one majority for strike action. Faced with this opposition, management have moved the date to October 26 but,

many workers believe this is only to prepare for a strike.

If RRP is introduced in Liverpool, 22 full time duties would be lost in the mechanised letter office. RRP follows hard on the heels of other job-cutting drives such as Improved Working Methods and Business Efficiency—both accepted by the UCW national leadership.

Determined

Liverpool postal workers are determined to go out and win. They are demanding that the Executive Council give them full backing. In 1985 a strike lasted ten days before Christmas and management were forced to retreat.

Meanwhile at Hounslow Delivery Office in London

two postman drivers were suspended from duty for refusing to work a voluntary reserve duty, guarding and delivering monies to local post offices. One of the postmen who refused to go out has been attacked twice so far this year, the last time only five or six weeks ago.

In response, everyone in the depot walked out. Management are testing the water and directly provoking the stronger sections of the union. A walk-out has also taken place at the Hampton Postal Delivery Office in protest at no electricity supply in the office. This is the 66th dispute of the year in the capital.

By Richard Knights and a London postal worker

Liverpool council staff vote for action

MEMBERS OF the council staffs' union Nalگو in the Careers section of Liverpool Education department have voted overwhelmingly to ballot for industrial action over a regrading claim.

The new Labour council have allowed management to ride roughshod over the rights and conditions of workers within the local authority.

Management plan to upgrade careers service staff, but the regrading will remain within the existing budget. To pay for this, six posts on the lowest grades will be re-deployed to other council departments.

It is ironic that the careers service, whose prime aim is to secure employment training for young people is considering destroying jobs within the service. As one Nalگو member said, "These jobs are not for destruction, but for school leavers".

More sinister however are the plans to scrap the position of the YTS monitoring officer, whose task it is to ensure that yts schemes fall within the already low standards set by the Manpower Services Commission.

Even careers service staff earning £11,000 or £12,000 per year are up in arms

at the attitude of management and the lack of action by councillors to resolve the dispute. This is despite the fact they stand to earn more money from the regrading. They understand that they will be forced to do extra work for a relatively low pay increase, and realise the dangers of the possible introduction of compulsory YTS.

The ballot on industrial action will almost certainly be overwhelmingly in favour. The union leadership and the new council should use this dispute and other disputes within the council as a launching pad to build up a campaign directed against the Tory government, to get them to give more money to the city.

Nalگو must rejoin the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, to form a united campaign with the other council unions in order to defend the jobs and services of the local authority workforce and the working class of the city as a whole.

By Emy Onnora, Liverpool Nalگو, Education department careers service, personal capacity.

Industrial reports

Vauxhall: "The first step"

IN AN IMPORTANT development which puts the lie to those who have argued that workers, especially those in the private sector, are no longer prepared to defend their living standards, 3,500 members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) at Vauxhall, Luton, have taken strike action.

Vauxhall management have blatantly broken an agreement on bonuses. When Bedford Vans was sold off, management agreed a separate bonus scheme for each

factory, but Vauxhall management have excluded van production from the bonus, although they recognise the hours worked on vans, calling them 'ghost hours'!

'Ghost hours'

On management's own calculations this means £10-12 per week is being deducted from the bonus.

If the bonus had covered the van production as well, which was part of the original agreement, this would have cost the company

£250,000 over the last eight weeks. The strike is costing them £3million a day, according to union estimates.

Management are staying put because they don't want their 'right to manage' threatened. However, there is now the prospect of production at the Ellesmere Port and Dunstable plants being stopped, as the strike at Luton is solid. No-one has crossed the picket line. Members of the electricians' union, the EETPU, being balloted at present, are also refusing to cross.

Contrary to management

denials, the issue of wages is linked. They themselves have said there will be no pay talks until this dispute is resolved. However it is no secret that they are after job flexibility and increased productivity, in their own peculiar language 'integrated self-financing'.

Conditions

It is quite possible that management could offer the bonus back in return for these conditions. In effect this would mean no pay rise, but increased productiv-

ity.

This is clearly understood by the workforce. Although the bonus is the main issue for the workforce the question of pay and general conditions is seen to be as important. The ball is now firmly in management's court with no more meetings planned.

In the words of one union convenor, "This is only the first step. If we win it'll be wages next".

Brian Gray (TGWU) and Mick Longley (AEU convenor) spoke to *Militant*



Health workers march in Newcastle during the 1982 dispute.

Without Brel Crewe will be a ghost town

MILITANT SPOKE to Pete Wollaston, a redundant BREL worker and his girlfriend, Mary.

"Six of us were told by the union reps that we were to be made redundant this Friday, the 16th. They gave us a letter at ten to four on Thursday 8 October. The foundry manager had sat on the notices for a week.

"The first 19 were transferred out of the foundry to jobs around the factory. There is work all over the place. I've finished now, yet my last two days there I was asked to stand in for someone who was off sick; they even made me change my shift.

"The Works Committee don't seem bothered. We asked if there was any chance of a reprieve. 'If there is then we'll let you know,' they said. Yet work is being sent out to Lutterworth that we could be doing.

"I think it is wrong. I was on a six month probationary period but despite good time keeping and a good work standard I am redundant after only three months.

"There doesn't seem to be much movement by the union. The workers saw what happened to the miners. British Rail are



using divide and conquer tactics in BR and Brel". According to Mary:

"My boyfriend, my dad and my two brothers work for BR. Crewe will become a ghost town. We've got to fight for jobs. My brother asked for voluntary redundancy because he knows the place is going to be closed in two years anyway. He loves his job and if he knew there was a way of fighting, he would".

Broad Left supporter elected

SHONA GILL, a supporter of the Cohse Broad Left, was recently elected to the union's National Executive Committee in an individual members' ballot. A previous election he'd in January, based on a branch block vote was ruled out of order following complaints to the Certification Officer.

The election of Shona marks a

significant shift to the left in a previously right wing stronghold and was only the second time a left candidate had stood for this position. Even more significantly the defeated candidate stood on an anti-left programme and stated in his election address that 'There are people who follow the line of *Militant* in this union. It is not always clear who is pulling their

strings'.

Clearly it is not rank and file Cohse members who are puppets. They have refused to be manipulated by the rantings of the right. Shona has pledged to campaign on issues relevant to ordinary union members and fully supports the ideas and policies of the Cohse Broad Left.

Cohse back Moat House strikers

THE CONFEDERATION of Health Service Employees (Cohse) northern regional council has passed a resolution calling for the boycott of Newcastle Moat House.

The decision was no thanks, however, to the union's regional secretary who spoke against. He attempted to scare the delegates by claiming a boycott would result in redundancies.

A letter from the regional secretary of the General Municipal and Boilermakers' union (GMB) even claimed that the dispute in Liverpool was in no way connected with the Newcastle Moat House and that solidarity support from Cohse would damage the GMB's good working relationship with Moat House management.

Cohse northern region were due to hold a number of weekend schools at the Moat House and have used the venue regularly in the past. Rank and file members of the union have shown their support for workers in struggle rather than give in to requests for an easy life for full time officials.

By John Malcolm, Cohse steward

Royal Edinburgh hospital campaign

A FIVE week campaign in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital by the nursing staff looks set to escalate in a campaign which has seen unprecedented unity between the nursing unions.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN), previously seen as a bosses' union is being transformed in the area as nurses see no way forward but to struggle in an effort to have their demands met.

The hospital, the biggest psychiatric unit in Edinburgh, is massively understaffed and under-resourced. It has been in the past one of the more militant hospitals in the area, but this recent outbreak of discontent has taken the hospital authorities by surprise.

They have so far refused

to seriously discuss the problems. The unions are asking for another 100 nurses, but the Health Board has only offered ten, all of whom would be financed from the existing mental health budget—in other words by stealing resources from elsewhere.

The frustration of the workforce has been demonstrated by the call for a 'day of action' this week which will include a four hour strike. So far the RCN rep has been quiet over their involvement but the rank and file will be sure to participate. This is seen as a first step in the campaign which looks set to escalate over the next few weeks.

By Russell Taylor

British Rail rip-off

RAILWAY WORKERS will be angry to hear that £250 million of their pension fund is to be used by British Rail in order to reduce the state subsidy, the Public Service Obligation, which has already been cut 25 per cent over the past three years. The Tories now want it cut another 25 per cent by 1990.

But the reduction in the Public Service Obligation is being paid for not by British Rail management but by rail workers who have not received a decent pay rise for years and who have been squeezed for more productivity.

Staff levels have dropped 21,333 since 1983.

To top that, railway workers' pension money that had been invested and has made a profit, is now to be used so that the railways look more profitable, preparing the ground for privatisation.

If this money was divided amongst the railway workers themselves, rather than being used to subsidise government cuts, it would mean an average of about £1500 each, or almost £30 per week.

Liverpool bins

LIVERPOOL CITY Council bin workers have won a victory. After the new 'more moderate' Labour council's managers had sacked workers on scanty evidence, binmen at Smithdown went on strike.

Now at an Appeals Committee, two sacked workers have been reinstated. This is undoubtedly due to the strength of the bin workers' campaign and the pressure put on councillors by the rest of the movement.

Militant

CREWE

Our town fights back

“WITH THE present high standards of equipment, engineering and production, Crewe works can indeed look to the 1980s and beyond into the future with the utmost confidence.”

That is the last paragraph of the Crewe council promotional leaflet on the history of British Rail Engineering Limited. (BREL). What is the reality in the “1980s and beyond”? In 1970, the total employed was around 6,500. With the latest loss of jobs, the workforce on 1 April 1988 will be 1,530.

Crewe was built on the growth of BREL although it has seen a steady decline in the workforce over the last 20 years or so.

The cuts in jobs would take the total employed below the level in 1861. This was out of a total population of 8,000. Today the population is 90,000 and unemployment is running at 13 per cent in the town.

One worker at the site said: “The bosses want to close this place and sell it off to the Manpower Services Commission to take on YTS trainees. In order to fiddle the dole figures they create more unemployment. The foundry is all but closed, management are not bothered about our jobs.”

Even some of the works committee are inquiring about voluntary redundancies. Action is needed now to save jobs, not only the jobs now but for the thousands of young school leavers who will be looking towards BREL for a future. 18 to 25 year olds have an unemployment level of 35 per cent locally.

By Dave Highland

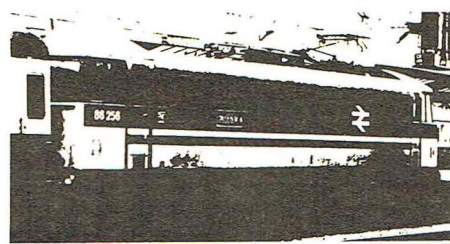
(Chair Joint Union C'tee, Crewe Health Authority, personal capacity)

“CREWE WILL take up the challenge and defend itself.” The Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) public meeting on Monday 19 October gave this message to the Tories.

The 70 people at the meeting knew they had to stand up and fight; if BREL closes it would be the death of the town.

The strength of feeling could be seen in the audience. Nurses facing the prospect of massive NHS cuts in the area had marched on the district health authority the Friday before; they wanted to keep the fight going. So did BREL workers and shop stewards from Rolls Royce.

Bob Jones, shop steward at Rolls Royce said that his employers had asked BREL to



accept sub contract work in order to save jobs but management had said they had to ask the British Rail Board's permission before they could accept.

The meeting unanimously agreed a statement of intent including: no cuts, ward closures or bed reductions in the NHS and

no redundancies or closure of BREL in Crewe.

The local labour and trade union movement must organise a town wide campaign involving tenants' associations, community groups etc., linking in the saving of BREL with the fight against the health cuts and the threat of privatisation of council services.

This campaign will start with a demonstration and rally on 31 October.

Defend Crewe!
No redundancies in BREL!
No cuts in the NHS!
For a town action committee to lead the campaign.

Smash Botha regime

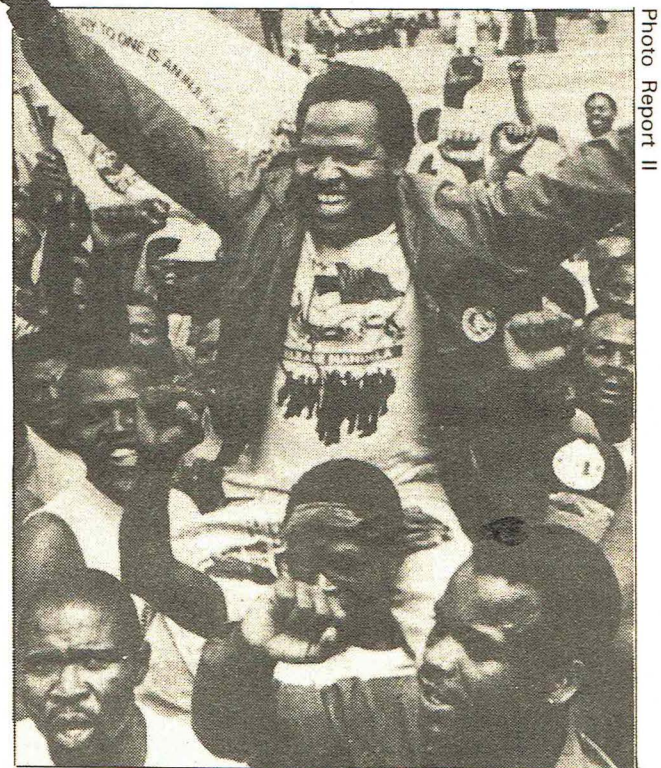


Photo Report II

James Motlatsi, South African NUM president

The national anti-apartheid demonstration on Saturday will start from the Embankment in London at 12 noon. From there it will march to a rally in Hyde Park. Copies of *Militant* for sale can be obtained from outside Embankment tube from 11.30am.

South African revolution has begun See Pages 8-9

Workers' sanctions now
See Page 11

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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.