

# Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

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Inside...

Don't miss the bus feature — pages 14 & 15



## Militant Fighting Fund

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MERVIN CALFE from Wokingham was so enthused by the Youth March, he has promised to double the £50 week's income he has already paid.

A reader from Southampton has sent in £250 while Mike Singleton from Brighton has donated another £100 on top of his £100 week's income. See page 7.

# Thatcher's casino economy

THE CITY of London will be awash with champagne on Monday, when deregulation opens the way to even bigger fortunes for speculators. The 'Big Bang' brings the London money markets into the computer age. Huge sums will be moved instantaneously round the world at the touch of a computer keyboard. Finance capital is now international. The sums which change hands are staggering. On foreign exchange markets alone, \$150 billion is traded every day. Since world trade only totals \$7 billion a day, that means that for every one dollar's worth of goods that actually cross frontiers more than twenty dollars' worth of currency is traded, at a fat profit for those involved.



Labour MP Dennis Skinner who has just co-written a book on the 'Big Bang' spoke to *Militant* about the two separate economies which exist in Britain.

The industrial economy, which produces goods and services, has been subjected to the philosophy of market forces. If it cannot 'stand on its own feet' and make a profit, then it goes under.

The casino economy of the banks and financial institutions operates under different rules. It is supposed to be subject to the free market, but is subsidised by the taxpayer. The Johnson Matthey Bank was rescued in the middle of the pit strike. They said they had no money and

no reserves. If it had been a pit, they would have shut it, but Johnson Matthey was rescued because it is part of the casino economy.

The industrial economy has been hammered continuously for seven years, while the banking system has continued to make money—with interest rates never in single figures, you can't fail. What is the point in investing in an engineering factory when you can make more money out of money?

The 'Big Bang' is connected with the way money

is invested abroad. £85 billion has been exported since exchange controls were lifted. Some of this has come back in the form of 'invisible earnings', but there is still a massive trade deficit.

Deregulation means a new system of gambling in the City of London, but whatever system they use, it will always be to assist the capitalist economy to thrive and make money for those who operate in it. They do not operate 'do or die' in the Casino economy. Trade unions are told they have to

have ballots, but there are no state controls in the City gambling dens. They are allowed self-regulation in Lloyd's, where they gamble on how many people will die in air crashes.

The Big Bang means that the City is keeping up with new technology. US and Japanese firms are going to make big advances, but the main purpose of loosening the regulations is to ensure that the City makes even more money.



Labour's youth on the march through London on Saturday.

Militant



MASS RALLY

ROYAL ALBERT HALL  
London SW7 Sunday 16 November

Three weeks to go

See page 4.

# Militant

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## Lawson's fairyland economics

IN HIS SPEECH to the City of London last Thursday, Nigel Lawson, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, continued to paint a rosy picture of the British economy in the face of all evidence to the contrary.

He ludicrously spoke to the bankers of "a Britain with her head held high not a Britain with her hand held out", trotting out once again the argument that the Conservative government has a tight monetary and expenditure policy and borrows nothing from abroad. Yet the latest figures for growth in the money supply show this to be blatantly untrue.

Lawson blithely referred to "the underlying strength of the British economy", but after five years of 'recovery' since the last world recession, British capitalism has still not achieved the level of industrial output achieved in 1979. Manufacturing industry is still 5.3 per cent below 1979 levels and nearly 10 per cent below 1973 levels, the peak of the boom before the oil crisis.

Unemployment is now three times as high as it was when the Tories came into office in 1979. Industrial employment has been cut by 2 million jobs. The British economy has only been able to avoid the consequences of these stark facts by relying on oil production and the export-demand created by the world boom of 1982-5 led by the USA.

Now both these factors are working against British capitalism. Oil revenues have slumped and the US and world economies are moving into another recession.

The fall in oil prices means that in 1986 the value of oil revenues to the British economy will be halved compared to 1985. Non-oil exports are totally inadequate to cover the cost of imports, which are rising at three times the rate of exports. There is also a decline in the revenues from 'invisible' earnings made by the very City institutions that Lawson was trying to convince on Thursday.

Consequently, the UK is heading for a huge balance of payments deficit by the likely time of a general election in 1987—from a surplus of £3bn in 1985 to a deficit of £6bn next year. The deficit in non-oil goods will be as high as £12bn this year.

While Lawson piously talks about the need for British workers to take less in wage increases or preferably none at all, the government is borrowing £4bn from international reserve funds to fuel a consumer boom in property and consumer goods purchases.

Company profit rates are at their highest for over 10 years, but they have risen on the backs of the millions made jobless. Wage bills have been cut through redundancies so raising profit rates. But profits have not been ploughed back into manufacturing investment. A report prepared by the National Economic Development Office, and subsequently suppressed by Nigel Lawson, shows that manufacturing investment in 1985 was below the previous peak of 1979 which in turn was lower than 1970. "Net investment has been negative since 1980, although close to zero last year."

All these factors explain the collapse of the pound—and its devaluation by over 10 per cent in only a few weeks. Lawson has been forced to raise interest rates to their highest real level (allowing for inflation) ever recorded, in an attempt to halt the slide.

But the already high interest rates, which only further weaken investment and production in British industry, will probably have to be raised further if the run on the pound is to be staved off.

It is for these reasons some economic strategists are advocating that Britain join the European Monetary System (EMS). That would tie sterling to the German Mark. If that happened then the British capitalists would be forced to maintain a steady pound by obeying the demands of the German bankers in return for their support in the international money markets—it would no longer be a handout from the IMF but control by the German Bundesbank—the gnomes of Frankfurt.

So far Thatcher has resisted this because she wants Britain to 'hold her head high'. But the amazing irony is that the Labour leaders are actually proposing it as a solution to Britain's currency crisis as a part of their acceptance of the capitalist Common Market.

Every economic indicator points to a major currency and trade crisis next summer to coincide with an election. Any government which based itself on the rotten foundations of British capitalism would face enormous pressure to cut back on public expenditure, raise taxes and go cap in hand to the IMF or the German bankers for more funds. The only alternative to this would be a policy based on public ownership of the monopolies and democratic socialist planning of industry and trade. Marxists in the Labour Party will continue the fight for this alternative as the only way of avoiding an economic disaster under a Labour government.

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# Botha's hypocrisy over death of Machel



THE NEWS of the death of President Samora Machel of Mozambique has aroused understandable suspicions of South African government involvement.

Botha's regime has been active in the economic and military destabilisation of Mozambique and his hypocritical "tributes" to Machel will disgust workers throughout southern Africa.

The regime in Mozambique was born out of the long guerilla war conducted by Frelimo, the revolution in Portugal (1974) and the collapse of the Portuguese colonial government.

Despite crushing poverty left by the Portuguese, the establishment of the Frelimo government represented a huge stride forward for the working masses of the whole of southern Africa.

### State ownership

As in Angola, the other former Portuguese colony in southern Africa, there was no basis for capitalist development and a regime was established in the image of Moscow: with state ownership and planning of the economy, but without the workers' democracy and internationalism of genuine socialism.

But the collapse of Portuguese colonialism was a huge blow to Pretoria, inspiring the struggles of youth and workers in South Africa itself. As a result, the Botha government has conducted a relentless war, operating through "proxy" guerilla armies, to undermine the MPLA in Angola and the Frelimo government in Mozambique.

Pretoria has armed and financed the Mozambique National Resistance

(MNR), which, without any genuine support within the population, has brought chaos and dislocation to the Mozambique economy.

Enormous economic damage has been done. Mozambican exports have fallen from \$250 million in 1981 to less than \$90 million last year. Attacks on roads and railways have made it difficult to move crucial exports like tea and coal. According to government figures, the war has cost Mozambique 100,000 lives and over \$5 billion.

South Africa's imperialist policy in relation to Mozambique is designed to make the latter economy dependent on South Africa. The power and profits of the giant South African capitalist economy rest upon apartheid at home and the complete economic subjection of all nominally "independent" near neighbours in southern Africa.

The dislocation of rail transport in Mozambique is particularly important in forcing the Zimbabwean and Zambian economies to depend on transshipment of trade through South Africa.

As a result of the economic and military weakness of the Mozambican government, Machel was forced in 1984 to sign the Nkomati Accord with South Africa, by which Pretoria agreed to cease its sponsorship of the MNR, and Mozambique agreed to close local bases of the African National Congress.

But this accord made no fundamental difference to South African support for the MNR. In recent months the guerillas managed to capture large areas of Mozambique, including a number of sizeable towns.

Last month, in response to a land mine explosion in South Africa, near the border with Mozambique, the Pretoria regime announced the expulsion of 60,000 Mozambican miners, whose remittances made up a third of foreign earnings—so adding to the economic and military pressure on Machel.

### Decisive factor

It is not surprising, therefore, that workers see South Africa behind the death of Machel. Despite this, it is not certain that there was South African involvement, given the fact that they cannot install their own puppet in Maputo.

Whatever may be South Africa's actual intentions it is unlikely that the MNR, without support in the Mozambican population, can take power in Mozambique. But the country may face a period of increased instability, and this may temporarily strengthen Botha's position in South Africa.

The situation in Mozambique demonstrates that there is no solution to its social and economic problems within its own borders alone. No outside powers, including the Stalinist states, are prepared to underwrite the Mozambique economy.

The decisive factor in the whole of southern Africa, which is unchanged by this event, but which in the long run will spell the end of apartheid and capitalism, is the increasing organisation, strength and combativity of the enormous South African working class.

By John Pickard

## Left candidate replaces Don Concannon

MANSFIELD LABOUR Party has selected Alan Meale as prospective parliamentary candidate, confirming the leftward shift of the party after the miners' strike.

The party's right-wing MP, Don Concannon, forced a selection contest by announcing that he would not be standing at the next general election.

Bryan Davis secretary of the Parliamentary Labour

Party was the main right candidate, pushing out the leading local candidate Jim Hawkins.

After the close of nominations, Davis had three nominations, Alan Meale had 19 out of a total of 35.

Five candidates were placed on the short list and at the selection Meale won on the second ballot.

The next day Concannon attacked Alan Meale in the *Nottingham Evening Post* (a

paper that was until recently, blacked by the labour and trade union movement).

Also on the same day, Roy Link, general secretary of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, condemned the selection of Alan Meale and raised the possibility of the UDM standing a candidate against him.

Alan Meale has said throughout the campaign that ideas and not personalities win elections. The

attacks on him should be answered by showing what this government has done to workers in Mansfield.

Now a campaign must be launched to build a mass socialist Labour Party in Mansfield and a socialist MP will be elected at the next election.

By K Cocker  
(Secretary Mansfield NUR  
No 2 branch, personal capacity)

# Hundreds suffer racist visa law

WHATEVER THE Thatcher government's motives for the brutal new visa requirements for visitors from the Indian sub-continent, thanks to the inflammatory headlines in the Tory press its net result was a provocation to racialism.

An Asian newsagent's shop in Hackney was attacked last week, and the words "three thousand more" daubed on it.

But it is no wonder Asian visitors were worried about the visa requirement date. As Faruque Ahmed from Essex, waiting at Heathrow for his brother-in-law, told me:

"These new visa regulations will mean hell for people from the Indian sub-continent who wish to visit their families here.

"There is only one office in Dhaka where they can apply for entry. This would mean several days travel for a lot of people to answer stupid questions in a two year queue."

Asian visitors (including children) and their relatives were innocent victims. Harassed and fearful, they were imprisoned for days in an overcrowded airport lounge. Relatives told horror stories of 60 to 70 people kept in a small room with insufficient food and water.

For three days there was only



Asian families stranded at Heathrow. Our photographer was threatened by some of the visitors, until he proved who he was. They thought he was from Fleet Street.

enough space to sleep in a crouched position. They had certainly not seen Fleet Street's 'luxury hotels'.

"Some officials from the Bangladeshi High Commission eventually produced a list", said relative Ahad Miah, "which showed that my cousin had arrived and was still in the airport. Immediately I rang up my wife to give her the news, but she told me that my cousin had just rang her from Dhaka.

"The immigration authorities at Heathrow told him that he would be given entry and he was being taken with 45 other visitors from Bangladesh to the arrival hall by bus. Instead the bus drove on to the tarmac where the immigration and

police officers forcibly put them on to an aircraft bound for Dhaka."

The Chairman of the Bangladeshi Sylhet Community Centre has been involved with the cases of hundreds of the relatives. "The immigration officials," he complained, "refused to issue reference numbers for the visitors in order to prevent intervention by their MPs. We know that many have been sent back without their sponsors or guarantors knowing.

"As for the relatives, many of us have travelled from all parts of the country and have been continually harassed by the police in the arrival hall. They arrested four of us for sleeping on the floor. Many white

people were also sleeping on the floor, but they didn't tell them anything. Our communities will fight these laws to the very end."

Faruque Ahmed summed up the depth of feeling at Heathrow: "The press and the Tories have criminalised our people. They are trying to stir up race hatred in this country, by giving the impression that we are taking all the jobs and at the same time that we have come here to scrounge off the dole. They are using us as scapegoats for the problems in Britain they have created."

By Colin de Freitas

## Councillors' fury over Labour's ultimatum

MEMBERS OF Liverpool council Labour Group are increasingly incensed and indignant after the Labour Party's ultimatum that they should stop recognising Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn.

All members of the Group were sent letters by general secretary Larry Whitty in an attempt to divide those who backed the group and its elected officers from a minority who would be prepared to concede to the NEC's demands.

Whitty threatened that "the NEC will undoubtedly have to consider disciplinary action in relation to the Group and to individuals. We need to make absolutely sure that no member of the Group is implicated who wishes to abide by the constitution of the Party."

### Letter

Tony Mulhearn said that both he and Derek Hatton are "absolutely overwhelmed by the support from the majority of the Labour Group, but the best way that they can serve the labour movement and to fight for our reinstatement is to stay in the Party.

"I would be opposed to any action which would give the right-wing an excuse to take disciplinary action against Liverpool councillors which could result in their expulsion.

"I support every councillor giving a commitment to the NEC that they should observe the constitution of the Party.

"This is in spite of the fact

that many councillors, out of loyalty to myself and Derek Hatton, were prepared to defy the NEC.

"It is an indication of the bitter opposition that exists towards the insane witch-hunt that is being carried out by the NEC."

Whitty's letter demands that Group members "be prepared to attend only meetings of the Group which are called and conducted in accordance with the constitution of the Party."

But, according to councillor John Linden "it was not our intention to disobey the rules. But we have a problem which needs to be resolved in regard to the expulsions. By walking out of the Labour Group meeting Whitty has prevented us resolving the situation."

A delegation from the Labour Group is still seeking a meeting with Party officials to come to an agreement.

Reports in *The Guardian* (Monday 20 October) implying that finance chair, Tony Byrne, would be prepared to risk expulsion from the Party in supporting expelled members were taken out of context.

Tony Byrne told *Militant* "the vast majority of Party members and councillors are appalled by what has happened in Liverpool with regard to the expulsions and attacks on the City Council. Virtually every member of the Group is affronted by the NEC's actions.

"We want the NEC to take account of the very strong feeling of the Group."

By Ben Eastop

## BBC gives in to Tories

TORY LEADERS repeatedly make the ludicrous claim that the BBC is "left-wing" biased.

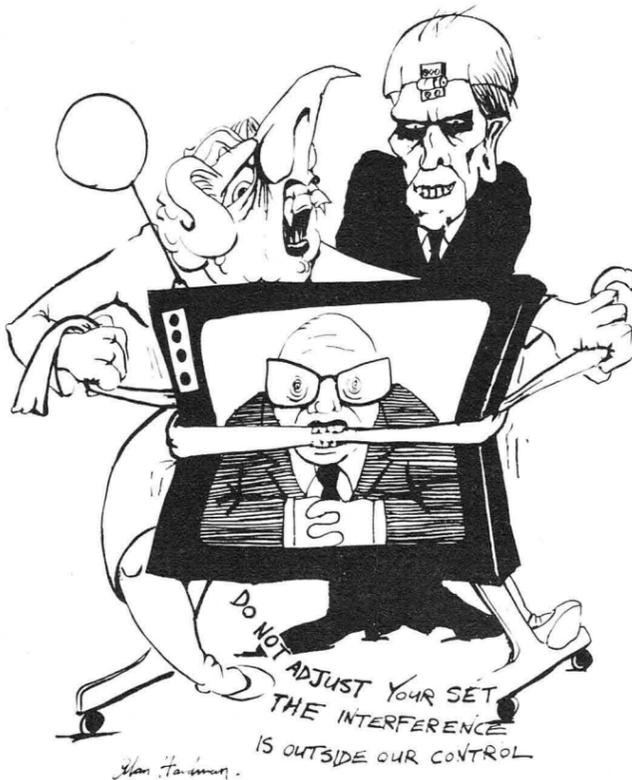
Trade unionists in struggle know how false that is. In its coverage of the Orgrave events during the miners' strike the BBC gave the impression that when the police charged on horseback they responding to attacks from miners, when in fact the police acted first and then the miners reacted.

Now, the Tory appointed governors of the BBC are perpetrating an attack on what little freedom its reporters have to present the truth, by ordering an out-of-court settlement of a libel case against the BBC by two Tory MPs.

The case arose from a Panorama programme in January 1984, 'Maggie's Militant Tendency', based on a report by former chairman of the Young Conservatives, Phil Pedley, which alleged that Tory MPs were involved with right-wing, racist and anti-semitic groups. (see *Militant* 685, 686 and 687). Two MPs, Neil Hamilton and Gerald Howarth, sued both Pedley and the BBC for libel. The case was contested and finally came to court last week.

The Board of Governors, headed temporarily by its acting chairman, Labour peer Lord Barnett, demanded that the BBC management abandon the case after only three days, even before their own evidence had been presented, and pay damages of between £20,000 and £25,000 and costs of £500,000 and broadcast an apology to the MPs in next week's *Panorama*.

Labour MP James Lammont has asked a question



in Parliament about allegations that Norman Tebbit "has been leaning heavily on Conservative MPs in an attempt to prevent them from giving evidence in the case."

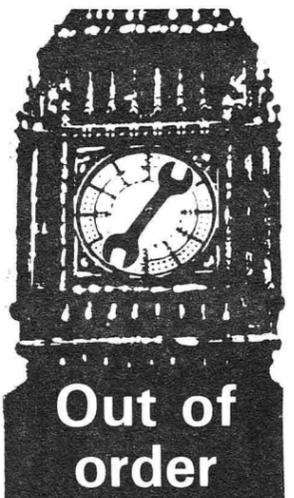
This settlement will make serious investigative reporting almost impossible. It will have set a precedent that the governors will not back up any reporter whose evidence is politically damaging to the Tory Party.

This government, through the governors, is not prepared to see the BBC attacking even some of the far-right fringes of the Tory Party. Through its latest political appointment of Marmaduke Hussey as chairman, it is determined to

turn the BBC into a propaganda machine for the Tory Party.

They are passing a new law designed to protect 'free speech' for right-wing racist MPs in universities, yet are collaborating in a move to bridle the BBC even more strictly than it has been until now.

This episode strengthens the case for democratic workers' control and management of the media, so that its facilities can be thrown open to all political and minority viewpoints, without fear of being crippled by libel actions which make any damaging allegations too costly to make.



## Out of order

"ASIAN flood swamps Airport" . . . "airport under siege (by) a mass invasion of illegal immigrants" . . . (*Daily Express*, 15 October 1986).

"A flood of immigrants (are) trying to beat a government crackdown on entry" . . . (*Daily Mail* 14 October 1986).

The Tory press took their cue from the government's racist decision to impose a visa requirement on visitors to the UK from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana.

Who are these visitors? Why do they wish to visit Britain? My own cases of fighting Home Office decisions in the last three years include mothers wanting to stay with daughters about to give birth, and sons travelling to attend the funerals of fathers.

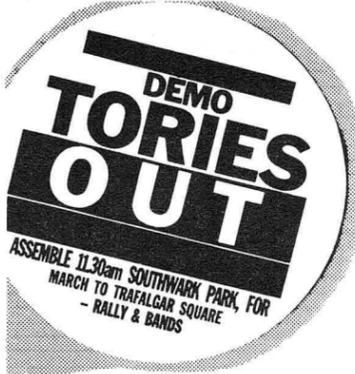
In the Commons on 21 October, Douglas Hurd announced that in line with the visa requirement, he planned to abolish except in "exceptional circumstances" (?) the right of MPs to secure temporary entry for visitors refused admission, pending appeal. If the decision to refuse a visa is made thousands of miles away in Delhi or Dhaka, I will have no opportunity of consulting with my constituent's relative.

Those restrictions are precisely what the government and the right-wing, breakaway, Immigration Service Union want—Apartheid in tourism.

The days of chaos, misery and squalid treatment at Heathrow in the week of the visa introduction brought heartbreak to dozens of families in Coventry. For several, I was the only possible channel of information as to the safety and well being of their relative.

Now the Tories intend to remove that lifeline. Labour's leadership has promised to end the visa requirement and put an end to the "Catch 22" rules, the trick questions and insulting interviews directed against black visitors. That can best be effected by the abolition of the 1971 Immigration and 1981 Nationality Acts in their entirety—and by paying of compensation for the travel and lost earnings of recent weeks, and for the distress of the divided families of recent years.

Dave Nellist MP spoke to Jeremy Birch



# We can't w

AROUND 10,000 people joined the national Labour Party Young Socialists "Tories out" demonstration last Saturday.

The mood was summed up by one young marcher, Gina aged 15 from Whitehawk estate, Brighton: "The march was very impressive. Everybody I know hates Thatcher, even my little brother who's four. Every time she comes on television he sticks two fingers up at her!"

Twenty thousand fingers and twenty thousand feet were raised on Saturday against the Tories. The LPYS will make sure the Tories don't last until 1988.

## Put Thatcher on the dole

SOUTHWARK PARK, where the march started began to fill up early. Groups of local young people joined the Young Socialists listening to the groups playing.

Members of Swindon LPYS unfurled their banner proudly: "There are 15 of us down. We've got about 20 to 25 members and we only started up about three months ago."

An LPYS member from Yorkshire showed the sacrifices made by out of work or low paid workers. "I'm really a delegate," he joked, "all my family are on the dole, but they've all given me money to help me get down here."

As the march moved off, thousands started chanting and singing: "Everywhere we

go. People ask us. Who we are. And we tell them. We're the YS, L. . P. . Y. . S. And if you don't hear us. We'll shout a little louder!"

People in the shopping centres were amazed as hundreds of *Socialist Youth and Militants* exchanged hands. "I've seen all the posters but I didn't expect this many" said one old lady "We haven't seen things like this since before the war."

### Local support

An Asian shopkeeper clapped the march. "Thatcher treats Asians like dirt, she treats the unemployed like dirt."

Even people who didn't buy *Militant* and agreed with expulsions of Marxists "to win the election" said they

thought the march was good. And everybody wanted Labour to do something about jobs, housing and health in particular.

When the march left the working class areas and passed Whitehall and Downing Street a chorus of boos went up from the LPYS. But Elizabeth Killoran from Bedford LPYS thought the best bit was marching through Bermondsey. "I'm sure it made people think and realise that people are fighting."

"There are about 50 of us from Bedfordshire. It's good to bring everyone together. I moved down from Northumberland looking for a job and I thought Bedford was all Tory till I came across the YS. We need more events like this."



LPYS on the march. Speakers at Southwark Park and Trafalgar Square included Tony Benn, Southwark council leaders, a Welsh student leader and LPYS members.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

IN THREE weeks' time *Militant* will stage its biggest show of strength ever. The fourth national rally will fill the Royal Albert Hall to its 5000 plus capacity.

The rally will show the witch-hunters that nothing can destroy Marxist ideas; we are still confident of the struggle for socialism.

Speakers will include the class fighters expelled from the Labour Party, Tony Mulhearn, Derek Hatton, Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe. Their message to Labour activists will be "stay in and fight for socialist policies." In the next few years there will be a massive shift to the left in the Party which will exonerate the expelled.

The election re-run in the civil service union CPSSA will be followed by every activist. Doreen Purvis, vice president of CPSSA will speak at the rally on the importance for the left of John Macreadie's success.

Internationalism has always been a vital issue for Marxists. We extend warm greetings to two international speakers. Nimrod Sejake, an ANC member is a former leader of the iron and steel workers in Transvaal. Vasudeva Nannayyakara from Sri Lanka is president of the Federation of Labour and leader of the NSSP (New Socialist Party).

We have a great line up of entertainment including Skint Video and performers from the Ragged Trousered Cabaret. There are also films on the *Year of Militant* and the Moscow Trials—there will also be many surprises in store.

Don't delay in arranging transport from your area. Sell tickets to every reader, sympathiser and to everybody on last Saturday's youth demo. Don't miss it!



Outside last year's Albert Hall rally.

## Speakers include:

- Derek Hatton.
- Tony Mulhearn.
- Ted Grant.
- Peter Taaffe.
- Nimrod Sejake.
- Vasudeva Nannayyakara.
- Doreen Purvis

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

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Organisation . . . . .

Address . . . . .

CRËCHE (please book now)

We will be bringing the following children

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# ait until '88



## On the platform

John Bryan PPC for Bermondsey told the marchers as they assembled in Southwark Park: "Bermondsey is an area of fighters. We've got a world champion now called Lloyd Honeghan. He knocked out a boxer called Don Currie. I am trying to arrange his next bout, to knock out Edwina Currie."

Terry Fields MP:

"I regret that the NEC Youth Committee cannot find it in their calendars to be here. You cannot sit down and drink with capitalists. You cannot find a consensus with them. Our consensus is between the labour and trade union movement, working out how we are going to nationalise the economy."

Kevin Mullins: presidential candidate, health union COHSE:

"Take a walk down to Charing Cross, to the Embankment, and you can see old people living on the streets. That's the level of care under Thatcher."

"She told us the cure for smoking is to bite your nails. I hope she doesn't come up with a cure for haemorrhoids."



Waiting for the march to start.

## An honorary Young Socialist

DOUGLAS WOOD lives in Whitechapel, but he has been coming over daily to help prepare posters in Bermondsey Labour rooms. "I'm 67 now and I joined the Labour Party 30 years ago. I'm a socialist because I'm a Christian."

"I saw the demonstration advertised and went over to Labour Party HQ at Walworth Road, they said they had nothing to do with it, that the YS were 'too militant', and that people aren't ready for it."

"Some people think you can't do anything about what is going on, they won't do anything about nuclear weapons until one of their friends gets killed by one. But it'll be too late then. I'm really pleased to be here today."



The 'Red Train' arrives at Kings Cross at 8 in the morning.

## The red 'Tartan Army' in London

BLEARY-EYED travellers through Kings Cross station early on Saturday morning looked amazed. Was there an England v Scotland football match going on? 450 young Scottish voices were chanting and singing, and large flags were waved along the platform.

But why were these Londoners, many dressed in red caps and jackets cheering and singing them in? Was it a MacDonalds advert?

In fact the train had come in from Glasgow via Edinburgh and was filled with Young Socialists from many parts of Scotland. The red coats belonged to the Round London jobs marchers, welcoming the Scottish contingent to the LPYS national demonstration.

Alistair Black from Dunfermline was one of about a dozen from his part of Fife in Labour youth's tartan army. "We've had a

good campaign. There's a real mood against the Tories. Getting folk all the way to London is a bit more difficult. But we collected £50 in one short day of action in Glenrothes, and loads of people signed our petition.

"If the march is all like this we'll get a message through to Thatcher. And to Neil Kinnock, too. We want a Labour government. And we want socialism!"

## Provocative arrests anger LPYS members

ON THE MARCH there was nothing but youthful exuberance, singing, chanting and calling to passers-by to join in. But some of the heavy police battalions felt they must have something to show for their day's "work".

Like a bolt from the blue, just before Tower Bridge, one overzealous PC picked on a black youth from Colchester LPYS, walking alongside the demo, and told him to get in the road.

"What's wrong with the pavement?" "You're nicked!" and Erone Brown was bundled off. When a senior officer asked what had happened, PC Stewart claimed he'd been punched in the chest!

### 'Insulting' songs?

A senior officer asked for someone to talk to Erone and Mark Searle, chair of Colchester LPYS, who went to help was himself arrested!

Marchers were outraged at the police's provocative action.

Then, along New Kent Road, with the Southern contingent having a good old shout and singsong, two young girls from Andover YS Jo and Caroline were yanked out and arrested. (Jo had such bad bruises on her arm that she had to be seen by a doctor at the police station.) For singing an anti-

Thatcher song they were accused of using "abusive or insulting words"!

Two lads, Pete from Andover and John Holt from Portsmouth, who tried to protest at these unnecessary arrests, were also arrested.

Jo who is 16, was held for over six hours. Then, after a member of her family had been brought all the way from Andover, no charge was made against her!

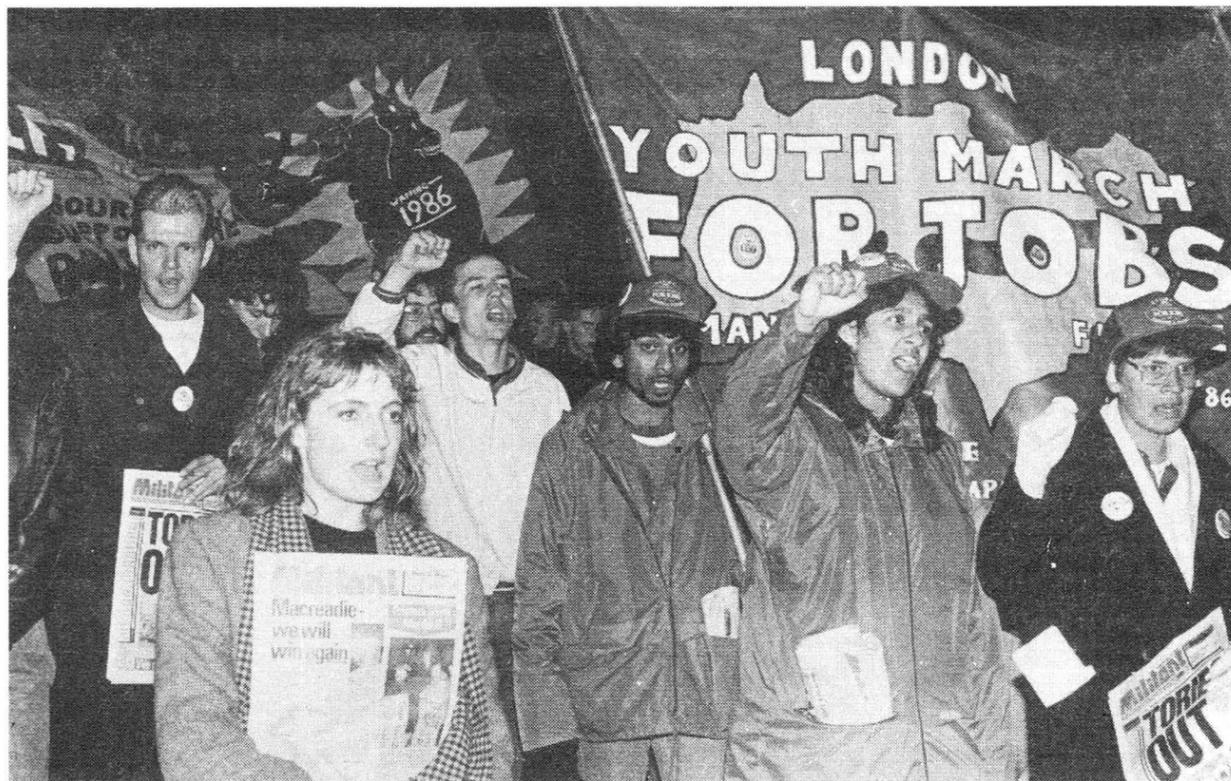
The six arrested were particularly grateful to Terry Fields and the YS members who went to Rochester Row Police Station demanding their release, the London marchers arriving in their red anoraks and their van blasting out "Colonel Bogey."

It was not until 9 o'clock that all six LPYS members had been released and ordered to appear at Tower Bridge magistrates on Monday morning.

They are all pleading "not guilty" and their legal defence is being organised. Any witnesses to the events surrounding the arrests should contact Linda Douglas, c/o LPYS, 150 Walworth Road London SE17 (phone 01 703 2139).

Appeals are being launched in Colchester and Andover to help the fight back. Donations will be forwarded to them.

By Clare Doyle



The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign round London marchers at the forefront as the LPYS head Saturday's Wapping demo

## Round London for jobs—Marchers' diary, part three

LONDON LPYS members had been on the march for a fortnight before Saturday's demo, 120 miles around London fighting for jobs.

**Monday 13 October.** Marched to Hammersmith, met the LPYS then a free swim and free food from Hammersmith council who also gave the town hall for a meeting and disco.

**Tuesday 14**

Lunchtime reception with stewards at Charing Cross hospital in Fulham then to

Battersea where we met 120 sacked workers from Hangars, a subsidiary of BTR. They and 30 others marched with us to Wandsworth Bus Garage where stewards gave us a meal.

**Wednesday 15**

Marched to Lambeth, met by a band, bus and local trade unionists. On our way to Brixton met by a banner from the local unemployed centre. Meeting on the town hall steps addressed by Linda Bellos, council leader and John McKay NUPE shop

steward.

**Thursday 16**

March to Blackfriars bridge, joined by boys from London Nautical School. Met by over 300 printers who marched to the old Times building in Grays Inn Road where Bob Billson, sacked printer and one of the marchers spoke of the need for solidarity, their struggle with Murdoch was to defend jobs for youth.

Then marched to Mount Pleasant post office where stewards gave us £100 dona-

tion. Walked into Camden picking up £50 from BT workers and £20 from a local fire station. Rally at Camden unemployed centre.

**Friday 17**

March to Hackney, met and fed by council workers then down to Wapping via Cable Street. On our way we were met by Bethnal Green hospital workers. Now for the big day, Saturday!

By Susan Khan  
(Harrow LPYS)

# AIDS the killer virus

Government's callous complacency

THE GOVERNMENT is to distribute 22 million leaflets to every household in the country to alert people to the danger of the killer virus AIDS. Health secretary Norman Fowler has taken this belated and minimal step to counter a virus which gives a new dimension to illness, exposing the body to a range of life-threatening diseases.

By Jeremy Birch

With no known cure at present, the disease has exposed both the inadequacy of health care provision and the narrow-minded, callous complacency of many government leaders.

The AIDS virus destroys the body's natural immunities, leaving the sufferer defenceless against diseases of the lung (like pneumonia), skin, intestines and brain. Nearly half those contracting AIDS die within a year, most within four.

There are thought to be 10 million infected by the virus internationally. Up to two million Americans could be contaminated, of whom 20-30 per cent will develop AIDS fully over the next five years. Currently there are 22,500 sufferers in the USA. This is expected to increase tenfold within five years. At that rate by 1991 it will be one of America's top causes of death, ahead of car accidents and suicides.

In Britain, where reporting of cases began in 1983, 30,000 are infected and potential carriers. In the first five months of this year, 184 deaths and 362 new cases fully contracting AIDS were reported. This was more than the government's Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre predicted for the year as a whole. The British Medical Association has warned of 400 deaths per month within five or six years, with a million infected, if its spread cannot be brought under control.

AIDS is passed on through body fluids, especially through sexual relations and particularly in anal intercourse and also by drug ad-



AIDS sufferers march through San Francisco in protest demonstration.

dicts sharing hypodermic needles. One Edinburgh general practice recorded 50 per cent of its known drug addicts infected.

Homosexuals are particularly, though not exclusively liable to the danger of AIDS. This has led to a barrage of moralistic abuse of gays, with all the usual prejudices intensified by the horror of AIDS. In the US this has even produced calls for draconian restrictions, including the 'sanitary internment' of gays, a measure which has more in common with nazi persecution than preventive medicine.

The Scottish Health Minister, John MacKay complained: "We are going to be asked to spend a lot of money on a disease which could easily be prevented by people changing their life styles." He made the disgusting suggestion that if local health authorities could not manage to deal with AIDS within their existing budgets, "The only other way round is for people to pay themselves." And this is for what medical sources describe as an 'epidemic'.

This recalls the sermons of his 19th century predecessors—the factory bosses who blamed the poor for the spread of cholera and opposed expenditure on better hous-

ing and public health as an unnecessary overhead.

Gays have complained about the unwillingness of insurance companies to give them life assurance. The Association of British Insurers has talked of putting an exemption clause in all new life policies, that they will not pay out for anyone dying through AIDS. Profit must come before families and dependents.

The US Justice Department, however, has taken victimisation a stage further. It ruled in June that employers can dismiss AIDS sufferers on the grounds that they could spread the disease. Yet there is firm medical evidence that it cannot be passed on through casual contact—shaking hands or sharing crockery etc.

The Tory right wing were not slow to seize an opportunity to beat the racialist drum. They have demanded health certificates and checks on anyone coming into the country from Africa from where it is thought AIDS could have originated. AIDS in fact spread to Britain from America. They do not suggest screening white American visitors. But the real issues demanding action are the search for a cure and the attention given to AIDS

sufferers.

But can this research be left to the drug companies? They are motivated not by the welfare of the sick, but the healthy balance sheet they can gain out of it. The first company to come up with a cure for a terminal 'epidemic' would literally make a killing. Shares in Burroughs-Wellcome are expected to zoom up now its drug AZT has been given a seal of approval by US health officials. "From the investment point of view," writes *The Observer*, "it matters little that the drug is seen as a palliative rather than a cure, nor that doctors cannot explain how it works."

A British firm, Porton International, has been given exclusive rights in this country by the Department of Health to market another drug, which potentially could earn them millions.

But while companies like these invest in the race for a cure, with the prospect of making a fortune, the National Health Service is facing up to the full cost of AIDS. Caring for an AIDS patient from the time of diagnosis to death costs on average £6,800. With the prospect of 9,000 deaths in the next 5-6 years, that would total £61 million.

Before the latest mail shot, the Tories spent £2.5 millions on an

advertising campaign warning of what activities enhance the threat of AIDS, out of a total budget of £5.8 million. The Health Education Council feels this is pitifully inadequate. It is demanding £60 million in the next financial year, with half to go on national publicity.

But how can this be squared with Thatcher's determination to cut public spending? Medical opinion has urged the supply of free condoms as some protection in sexual activity and new needles on a one-for-one basis with used ones returned, not as an encouragement to drug taking, but to curb the sharing of syringes.

There is urgent need for substantial public funds for research and the care of patients, not at the expense of other areas of health expenditure, but as part of a necessary massive overall increase.

AIDS highlights the inadequacy of the NHS and the scandalously limited resources devoted to medical research. More fundamentally—and most frightening of all—it exposes the inability of government agencies dominated by the psychology and methods of big business to take the social measures needed to deal with the threat posed by AIDS.



## Currie's Sauce

JUNIOR HEALTH minister Edwina Currie has been given special responsibility for women's health. But then she has always shown a special interest in such matters. Only last week she was speaking on cervical cancer screening: "Universal screening is neither desirable nor necessary."

"We spend a fortune screening all those millions of women. But are we actually saving lives?" When

you are treating a killer disease, you have to count the pennies!

Edwina is well aware of the problems of ordinary mothers. Both her children are at boarding school, but when they were younger and she was a mere Birmingham councillor she had to struggle like any working mum to bring up the family, with the help of the housekeeper, the nanny, the gardener...

## Left and Right

### Profitable tips

TWO COMPANY directors have just made a profit of £4,425,000 each from selling shares. Share tipster Nigel Wray and David Green each sold 500,000 of their shares in Carlton Communications, a company which bought out Wray's share-tipping publication, *Fleet Street Newsletter*, three years ago in exchange for shares and a directorship. Wray still owns a million Carlton shares, now worth £9,100,000, and Green has a further three million, worth £27,300,000, but both have generously agreed not to sell any more for at least two years. Their £4 million profit should just about tide them over until then.

### 'Socialist' shares

IT IS not only in capitalist Britain that

public enterprises are being privatised. In 'socialist' China, after 37 years the Shanghai stock exchange has been reopened to sell shares in more than 1,400 "socialist joint-stock companies." The *People's Daily* has claimed that stock issuing companies are precisely the form of common ownership envisaged by Karl Marx!

The Shanghai Yanzhong Business Company, which offers lottery tickets as an inducement to investors, now has 18,000 'shareholders', but only 300 were invited to participate in electing the board of directors. These 300 are described as 'technical advisers to the company' and 'social notables'. In other words, the state bureaucracy has made sure that it still dominates the company, while using the shareholders to raise capital. It is not a return to capitalism, but it is even more certainly not a move towards workers' democracy.

# 'Karl Marx' sells Militant

BOLTON SUPPORTERS report a surprising success from a paper sale outside the local tech. The first buyer was a very smartly dressed man whom the sellers thought was a lecturer. When he was asked to pay the solidarity price, he replied that that would be insincere as he was the local Tory MP. "Oh yeah" said our supporter, "And I'm Karl Marx." But a passer-by assured the sellers that it was indeed Peter Thurnham trying to find out what's really going on inside the Labour Party. Well done Karl and keep selling!

THERE WERE many new sales on Saturday as well as the hundreds sold on the LPYS demonstration.

Motorway service stations became impromptu sales pitches as the coachloads of demonstrators who stopped off for refreshment sold *Militant*.

Six copies were sold on the 9.45 train from Borehamwood to Moorgate, as Lynn Manley found an easy way to pass the time discussing with fellow passengers.

When the march arrived at Trafalgar square there was keen interest from foreign tourists from Italy, S.



Selling the paper on Saturday's demonstration.

Africa, the USA, Germany and Japan.

The demo brought the ideas of socialism back to the streets. Building the sales of *Militant* will help to kick out the Tories and build a socialist alternative.

In Liverpool you can measure the attitude to the council's struggle by the success of sales of *Militant* in the streets. After last week's

heartening reports from Broadgreen of extra sales on all the regular pitches, we have been told so far of 144 sales, and the returns are not yet all in. At the pitch outside QuickSave in Kensington 26 were sold in a short time and in Tuebrook street sales were doubled.

By Gerry Lerner

# Teachers refuse to work with racist

**Ill health and social insecurity**

**AFTER THE removal of Honeyford, the Bradford headmaster who made racist remarks, a similar dispute is brewing in Bristol.**

Jonathan Savery, employed ironically at the local Multi-Cultural Education Centre (MEC), wrote, like Honeyford, for the reactionary *Salisbury Review*.

An article 'Anti-racism as witchcraft' poured scorn on anti-racist efforts, lamenting "the tragic case of Raymond Honeyford," which had shown "how a good professional reputation can be all but assassinated." Savery was booked to speak at a meeting with Honeyford and *Salisbury Review* editor, Roger Scruton, at Bristol University.

## New Tory council

Teachers at MEC are seconded to different schools for two year periods, but work part time at the Centre and meet together there for training days.

When knowledge of Savery's article spread, last November, National Union of Teachers (NUT) members refused to sit in an MEC secondary meeting with him, but not before he had expanded on what was in the article, claiming that black children had only their

home background to blame for under achievement at school.

Avon County Council started disciplinary procedures against Savery, on the basis of written complaints from the MEC NUT group about his comments in the secondary meeting, as well as the article. He was instructed not to attend any further training days, but was allowed to continue teaching at Merrywood Boys' School.

By 16 May when the hearing was held, the Tories and Alliance had recaptured control of the County. The panel on the day comprised two Tories, one Labour, one Alliance and one church representative, and the majority found in Savery's favour.

Since then the NUT group has said that it will walk out of any meeting he attends. He was absent from the first training day of the new term, but he still could turn up at any time.

Savery has been advised by the County not to take his allotted half day a week at the Centre.

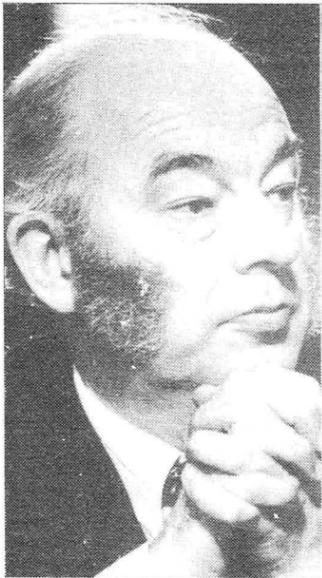
The NUT group is adamant that they will not work with him and are demanding action from Avon County.

By Nina Westlake  
MEC NUT rep (personal capacity)



Asian children in Bradford in protest picket against Honeyford last year.

# 'Morality' in the Mirror's distorted image



Rhodes Boyson blames single parent families for the ills of society.

RECENTLY the *Sunday Mirror* asked for comments on Neil Kinnock's description of himself as a "reactionary" where the permissive society was concerned. Margaret Crear wrote the following letter. It was not published: "AS A LABOUR Party member I disagree with the strange implication by a Labour leader that only reactionaries, which I take to mean the Tories and their friends, are concerned about the effects of drugs, violence and crime.

"As a socialist with a 12 year old daughter, I share the anxiety of the vast majority of parents about the society their children are growing up in and their future.

"However, I don't subscribe to your idea that the social problems we face today are the responsibility of the previous generation.

"Parents are among the 4 million on the dole through no fault of their own. We did not cut the staff at Customs points so that drugs could be more easily brought in. Nor did parents consign millions of youth to a future completely without hope. That role was played by the Tory government and big business.

"You devote two pages to the decline of morality amongst the youth yet you don't comment on official brutality and callousness. I would not condone for one minute the mugging of old people but last winter 7,000 of them died of hypothermia when there was enough food to feed them and fuel to keep them warm. It's just

that their pensions weren't enough to pay for it.

"Do we assume that the reason for this is that Margaret Thatcher's and Norman Tebbit's parents were 'hippies'?"

"I hold 'reactionaries' responsible for the social problems parents and children alike face. They run and control our society. They take decisions which affect every aspect of our lives. Those of us involved in the labour movement oppose the poverty and inequality capitalism breeds. We fight for a socialist society because it's the only hope for ourselves and our children.

"I took particular exception to the hypocrisy of your article considering that pages 14 and 15 of the same paper carried a double page feature on 'modelling' which was an excuse for printing 'pin ups'.

"Women are 40 per cent of the workforce in this country and contribute enormously to the economy and to the welfare of the working class through their work in the public sector. They still do the vast majority of housework and struggle to bring up children in increasingly difficult conditions.

"Your paper trivialises and misrepresents women and contributes to the social problems you pretend to be concerned about."

Yours sincerely,  
Margaret Crear  
(National Committee Labour Women personal capacity)

## Get the cash rolling in! £250 000 Fighting Fund

NO PAPER but *Militant* could ask its readers to donate at least a week's income to its Fighting Fund and be confident of results.

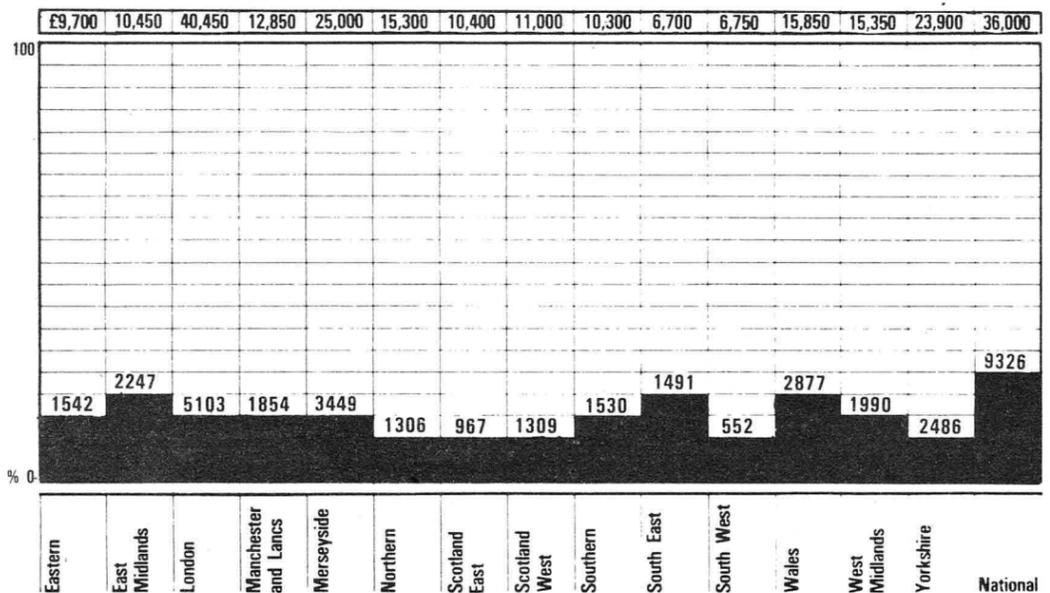
The response to our appeal, launched only two weeks ago, has been as good as expected. A further £9207 was sent last week taking our total to £38030. Greg Vincent, a shop steward at Brixton Recreation Centre, has donated £200—two weeks' wages! Mike Davies, an unemployed AEU branch secretary in Cardiff, has sent £142! We have even had replies to our special Appeal Letter from abroad. M Foley, in Canada, sent £15; J Hopes and Tim Forster, in France sent £30 and £10 respectively; E F Bonifacio, Gibraltar, sent £5.

The campaign is being enthusiastically received. But we need to see the cash rolling in now to make sure of reaching the quarter of a million pounds target. If you have not yet made your contribu-

tion to the campaign, rush it in straight away. We need the money to develop our resources in the run-up to the general election.

Once you have paid, go and ask your mates to do the same. Keep up all the other fund raising activities like jumble sales, sponsored events and parties. Some areas have already organised Halloween 'witch finding' parties or Bonfire Night parties with various effigies to go on the top!

Donations this week include: A Wilson Halifax £5. C Allom Ryde £1.80. J Galaney Preston £33.39. Mick Wells Stafford £10. Will Wareham Stafford £25. Mr Singh Corby ISTC £1. Connie Thorpe Birmingham £10. C Rice Fife £20. J Clarke Berkshire £8. Ray Sandison Coventry £5. C Mason Coventry £5. Martha McCartney Glasgow £5. Charles Hogarty Strathclyde NALGO £4. Don Slater Southampton £9.70. N Smith Hull UCW £26. Mrs C Cawley Bridgend £20. Mrs Saunders Ironville £1.



# Hungary 1956

## The battle for workers democracy

**THIRTY YEARS** ago the valiant Hungarian working class rose up and threw off the Stalinist bureaucratic elite of Gero and Rakosi. They bravely defied the overwhelming might of an armed Russian intervention. In the space of just three weeks they organised two insurrections and two general strikes. Like the Paris Communards eighty years before they attempted to storm heaven.

All their accumulated hatred of the privileged caste of officials, managers and their secret police henchmen, and their burning sense of indignity at Russian Stalinist domination, bubbled over in the revolutionary struggle of 1956.

In addition the death of Stalin in 1953, Khrushchev's secret speech to the twentieth party congress admitting many of the crimes of the Russian bureaucracy (while laying the blame for all the excesses on Stalin as an individual) had begun to undermine the confidence of the regimes of Eastern Europe.

By May 1956, 800 were attending the meetings of the intellectual opposition grouping, the Petofi Circle, founded by the Hungarian Young Communists and the Writers' Union. In June this had risen to 6,000, calling for political freedoms.

In Poland too the workers were taking action, with strikes in June 1956. Many leaders were arrested and their trials took place in early October.

The Petofi Circle called for a demonstration on 23 October in support of the Polish workers. As the 23rd approached, the bureaucracy flinched. First they granted permission for the demonstration, then they cancelled, but matters were no longer in their hands. Students had produced leaflets and visited factories calling on the workers to join the demonstration. Party officials were bypassed in the factories and reduced to mere onlookers as the youth addressed the workers directly.

The Students and Writers' Union demanded:

- ★ Workers to run the factories;
- ★ Peasants to decide their own fate;
- ★ For socialist democracy. The removal of Rakosi's clique and the reinstatement of Nagy as Prime Minister.

Imre Nagy, a 'liberal' bureaucrat, was a former Prime Minister, who had been ousted by the hardline Stalinists, and so attracted a wide following initially.

By 6pm on the 23rd between 200,000 and 300,000 people had converged on Parliament Square. They were unsure what was going to happen. They started to chant for Nagy. At 9pm, Nagy who had refused to partake in the demonstration, now appeared to try to disperse this mass movement that had passed way beyond his limited intentions. "Good people", he appealed, "be patient, the Central Committee will take care of everything". His speech was met in silence. Then word spread that the hated secret police, the AVO, were shooting demonstrators at the radio buildings.

First Secretary Gero had made a speech on radio denouncing the people's demands. At this a section of the crowd had moved from

By Ed Waugh

Parliament Square to the radio buildings insisting that their demands be broadcast.

There 500 heavily armed AVO were on hand to meet them. The authorities agreed to allow in a delegation to negotiate with the director. Their demands were turned down point blank. An hour and a half passed and still there was no sign of the delegation. Rumours abounded that they had been arrested. The thousands at the back began pushing and forcing their way forward. Those at the front were projected onto AVO lines. Tear gas was thrown at the crowd followed by a volley of police machine gun fire. Up to this point the people of Budapest were attempting to appeal to the authorities, not overthrow them, but the gunning down of unarmed people set into motion the Hungarian political revolution.

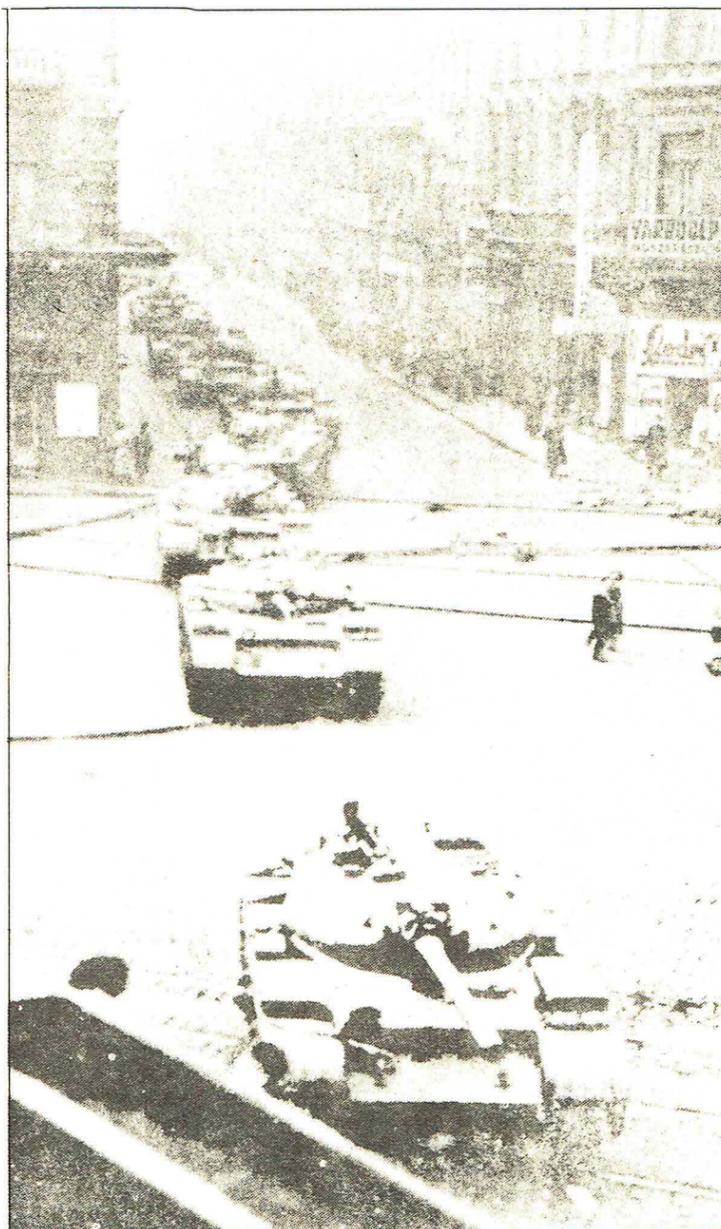
### Barricades

Word of the massacre spread like wildfire around the city. Sports clubs were raided and guns taken. The workers instinctively armed themselves. Barricades were thrown up and by 1am the workers had control of the main streets and squares of Budapest. The important radio building fell to the insurgents after an initial stand by the AVO, but the seizure of the party paper's offices, the district police stations and CP headquarters was relatively easier, in some cases being taken without a fight.

The state apparatus was collapsing. In desperation Nagy was again made Prime Minister. A day later Gero was dismissed and Janos Kadar, a leader of the party in the 1940s who had suffered torture and imprisonment at the hands of Rakosi, accepted the position of First Secretary. But time was slipping away from the bureaucracy. At 8am on 24 October, the new government introduced a curfew and martial law. Russian tanks, stationed in Hungary under the Warsaw Pact, had been 'invited' into Budapest to restore order and defend "socialism and the people's democracy against a fascist uprising."

As the tanks flooded in they were met by the determination of the masses. Molotov cocktails, home made petrol bombs and hand guns were pitted against the mighty tanks of the Red Army.

But the most effective weapon of the Hungarian workers was the class appeal. Not one Hungarian unit fought against the revolution. Colonel Pal Maleter took the soldiers of the Killian Barracks over to the side of the revolution. The same applied to Colonel San-



Russian tanks roll into Budapest.

dor Kopacsi, Chief of the Budapest Police, who, after noticing arrested "fascists" were ordinary working people as he had once been, ordered the police on to the side of the revolution.

But the Russian troops were also affected. Men, women and children approached the invaders asking why the armed incursion into a strange country. In Debrecen in East Hungary, Russian soldiers withdrew after the meeting with workers' representatives.

There had been no major strike movement in Hungary for 25 years, but by the 25th strikes started in Budapest against the Russian invasion, within two days a general strike gripped the country. As in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the workers instinctively established organs of their new found power.

The first workers' council was set up in the United Lamp Factory in Budapest on the 24th. By the 26th they had mushroomed throughout the whole of Hungary, based on factories, mines, hospitals, government buildings, state farms, the armed forces and colleges. The old apparatus relinquished its grip on

the running of factories, the distribution of food and the publication of newspapers.

Millions of workers were directly represented by these committees and immediately set about formulating demands. The Budapest Lamp factory issued a ten point declaration calling for an end to bureaucratic mismanagement and for the establishment of workers' councils at every level, led by a factory workers' committee which would direct the entire enterprise. The demands ended with the appeal to workers to "show that we can manage things better than our blind and former bosses".

### Workers' councils

A worker described the council at his factory. "We elected a workers' council consisting of approximately 25 members and immediately resolved to strike because, owing to the confused decrees it issued, we refused to recognise the Imre Nagy government... each shop elected two or three delegates onto the council and so did the administrative departments. As a result 19 or 20 of the



Armed defiance of the Hungarian workers.

25 council members were workers".

On 26 October, the National Council of Trade Unions issued a joint economic and political programme which brought together the demands of the councils nationally. Effectively, these demands were the programme of the political revolution, as anticipated by Leon Trotsky in his fight against Stalinist degeneration in Russia.

Apart from the basic demands of the revolution: increased pensions, family allowance, house building etc, the main demands were as follows:

- ★ "That a broad government comprising representatives of trade unions and youth, be constituted with Imre Nagy as its President.

★ That to maintain order, the police and army be reinforced by a national guard composed of workers and young people."

(On 31 October, 250 rebel army officers met to elect a Revolutionary National Defence Committee. This incorporated the Hungarian Peoples Army Revolutionary Committee, a national guard comprising the armed peoples militias.)

56

eracy



kers.

★ "That the new government start immediate negotiations for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Hungarian territory." The Revolutionary National Defence Committee was to restore order after the Russian withdrawal.

★ "Constitution of workers' councils in all the factories to establish A) Workers' management, and B) a radical transformation of the system of central planning and direction of the economy by the state".

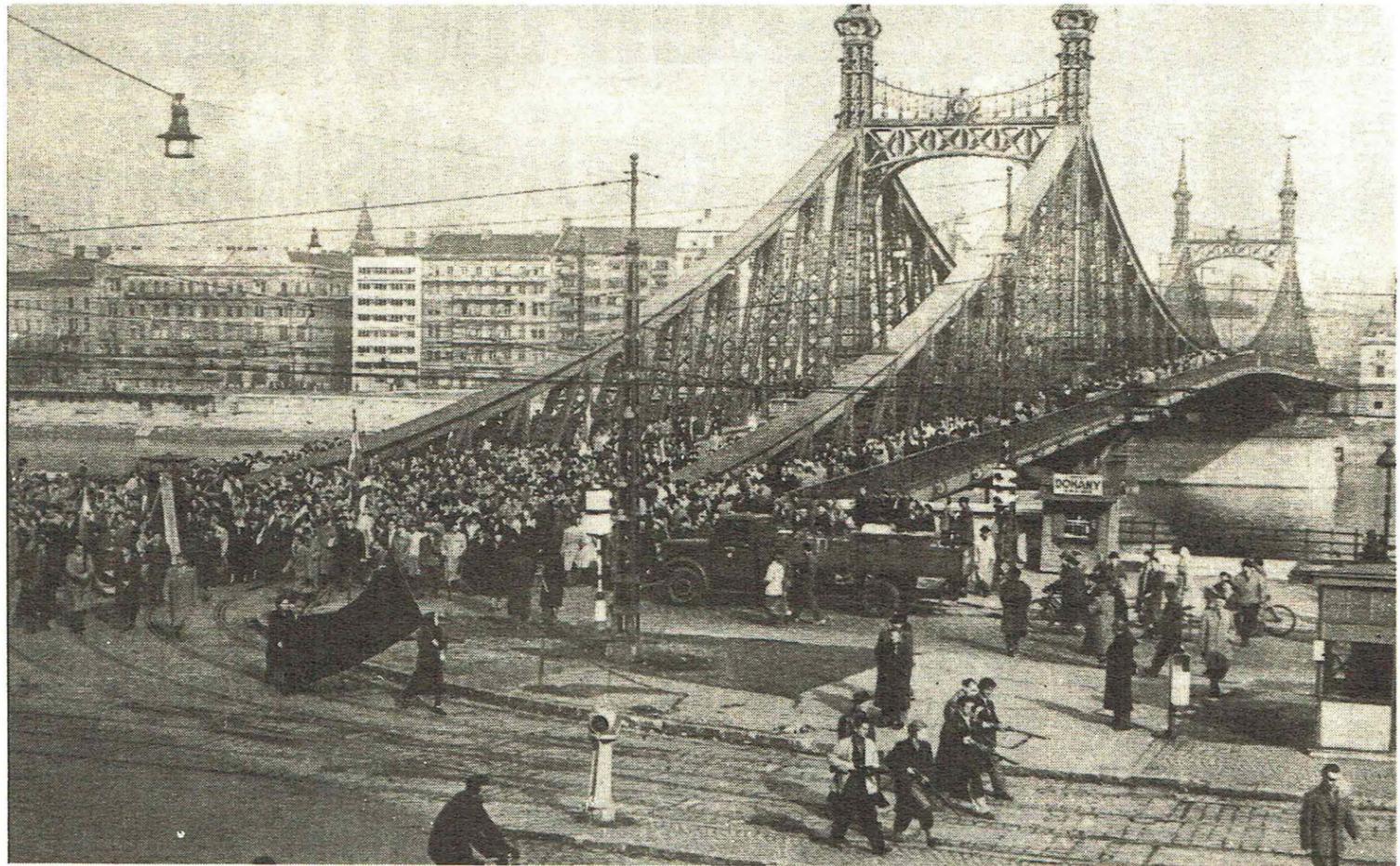
The councils were adamant in their opposition to a one party totalitarian state and included in their lists of demands, freedom for all political parties to exist which accepted a workers' state.

The Budapest Council formulated nine points which included:

★ "The factory belongs to the workers and is to be controlled by the democratically elected workers' councils.

★ The director is to be elected by the workers' councils and is answerable to that body in every matter concerning the factory".

Real power now rested with the workers. The CP in fact ceased to



Political revolution in action.

exist. A party that five days earlier boasted 800,000 members disintegrated. The lower ranks sided with the revolution.

As Trotsky predicted, in the political revolution, once the workers overcome their sense of helplessness in the face of the apparently all-powerful regime, once they move into action and become confident in their own strength, the lower levels of the bureaucracy and the ordinary soldiers can be drawn behind them, leaving the pampered top bureaucrats suspended in mid-air, with no social support outside of the brutalised secret police.

### Hunting down

Many workers wreaked vengeance on the AVO for the crimes they had committed. They were hunted down, thrown from windows, hung from lamp-posts, shot and beaten to death by irate crowds.

In the face of this mass revolutionary pressure Nagy disbanded the AVO and promised free elections for all political parties. Negotiations were underway for the complete withdrawal of Russian troops. But workers were uneasy. New Russian troop movements into the country were being reported to the workers' councils.

Workers' fears were well founded. On Sunday 4 November, Budapest was awoken by the sound of artillery fire on the city outskirts. Minutes later Russian tanks flooded into the main streets, taking the insurgents' strongpoints and indiscriminately levelling buildings. The Nagy government collapsed immediately but popular resistance did not. Nagy was replaced by Kadar who boasted that he had called in Russian tanks to "fight the counter-revolutionary danger" and defeat "fascism and reaction".

But there was no question of pro-capitalist reaction. The Budapest Council declared, "We shall defend our factories and our fatherland from feudal and capitalist restoration, if necessary at the cost of our lives".

Heroically, the working people fought this second wave of Russian troops and tanks. The workers of the main industrial complexes led the resistance, Ujpest, Kobanya, Soroksar, and Csepel Island continued the fight until 11 November. In Csepel, posters mocking Moscow's lies appeared: "The forty thousand aristocrats and fascists of the Csepel works strike on".

But whole areas were laid waste and reduced to rubble by 600 Soviet tanks. 20,000 Hungarians died before "order" was restored.

As in all revolutionary struggles, it was the youth who proved to be the most fearless class fighters. Young workers, apprentices, students and school students rushed to take up arms. 80-90 per cent of those treated for injury in hospitals were young workers.

The Soviet troops involved in the second invasion were different to those withdrawn after the first wave. They were mainly from Mongolia, many were illiterate and had been told they were in Berlin fighting Nazis. Hand to hand combat was completely avoided for fear of fraternisation as witnessed in the first wave a week earlier. Hence the brutal utilisation of sealed tanks.

The workers may have lost the battle for the streets in the face of Russian military superiority but they still had their traditional class weapon, the strike. There followed the most united and total general strike. Initially spontaneous, it was rapidly consolidated into a centrally controlled strike, organised by the workers' councils at every level, of the factory, district, city and eventually country wide.

Despite attempts by Kadar to undermine the workers' councils by arresting the leaders, the movement continued.

500 delegates from the workers' councils in Budapest met on 13 and 14 November to establish the Greater Budapest Workers' Council. Half of the delegates were aged between 23 and 28. The President was a 23 year old toolmaker, Sandor Racz. The energy and dynamism of youth was added to the experience of older workers. Each delegate had to spend the working day on the factory floor, had to report back after every session and was subject to recall at any time.

The demands formulated by this body included:

★ "The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest and the whole country.

★ Free elections in a multiparty system.

★ Socialist ownership of the industries.

★ The maintenance of workers' councils and the restoration of free trade unions.

★ The right to strike and to assembly, freedom of the press and religion, etc.."

The delegates to the Greater Budapest Workers' Council (Central Workers' Council) saw as their next step the necessity of establishing a National Workers' Council. On 21 November a conference of delegates from workers' councils nationally took place with the aim of establishing a "Parliament of workers' councils". Here in this national organisation of workers' representatives was the framework for a healthy workers' state.

A 48 hour general strike was called to support the National Workers' Council and against Soviet repression.

How could the one party totalitarian state tolerate the continued existence of a rival authority, in the shape of the workers' councils. And the bureaucracy had behind it the armed might of the Russian forces.

It responded with increased repression. It decreed that all councils above factory level were illegal and wholesale arrests of militant leaders took place. On 11 December 1956, 30 days after its formation the Central Workers' Council of Greater Budapest, was arrested en masse, in an attempt by the government to thwart the proposed general strike for 11 and 12 December. But the strike went ahead as arranged, and even continued in some areas as a protest at the arrests.

A state of emergency was declared. All meetings and demonstrations were banned, detention without trial for up to six weeks was introduced and 'special' courts were established. Despite intimidation workers organised occupations. Sporadic strikes and demonstrations continued, but faced with increased terror and overwhelming military might, the workers' courageous resistance began to fade.

Councils dissolved

The government had succeeded in breaking the backs of the workers' councils. It had attempted to subvert the councils and turn them into government institutions. Rather than allow the councils to be used against them the leading workers dissolved their councils and announced their resignations.

But sporadic strikes continued throughout 1957. It was not until November of that year that the government finally dissolved the other remaining workers' councils and thereby crushed for the foreseeable future, independent and autonomous organisations of the working class.

However, it was not able to assert its authority by repression alone. It was forced to grant concessions. Many workers were paid for the period of the general strike. By January 1957 overall wages were 22 per cent higher than the previous year; production norms were suspended and 10,000 new

homes were built for miners.

But Imre Nagy and Pal Maleter were arrested and later executed by the bureaucracy. Thousands more were executed, tens of thousands imprisoned, and many escaped into exile.

The Hungarian workers had written in blood one of the most heroic chapters in the history of the international working class. Thirty years later we salute them. For a week after 24 October they had confronted Russian troops militarily and with strike action. For a week after 4 November they had faced a second wave of Russian tanks. They had struck from 4 to 19 November, 21 to 23 November and 11 to 13 December. Their tenacity and preparedness to struggle cannot be questioned. And this without a prepared and organised leadership.

They confirmed in action Trotsky's picture of what the political revolution would look like. In the streets and in the meetings of the workers' councils they filled in the details. Even in defeat they handed on a legacy to workers fighting for socialist democracy against Stalinist, one party dictatorship.

Now more than in 1956, crises and upheavals loom in all of Eastern Europe and Russia simultaneously. The hesitation of the Russian bureaucracy to militarily intervene against the Polish workers in 1980, showed their fear of the contagion spreading to their own armed forces and thence to the Russian working class.

The mole of political revolution is burrowing away in the Stalinist states. It will be the programme instinctively developed by the Hungarian workers that will again be taken up—an end to the bureaucracy, the creation of nationally co-ordinated genuine soviets, with all the democratic safe-guards of election, right of recall over officials and their wages to be tied to average earnings, and an international appeal, first and foremost to the other workers of the Eastern bloc.

It is the responsibility of Marxists to do all in their power to assist the most advanced and class-conscious groups of workers in Eastern Europe to appreciate and clarify this programme, and to make ready for the coming battles of the political revolution.

Lomax—Eyewitness in Hungary. Soviet invasion of 1956 accounts by Peter Fyer and others. Normally £2.95, our price £2.20 including postage from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

# China

# On the road to capitalism?

Second part of  
article by  
LYNN WALSH

**DO THE current reforms raise the spectre of capitalist restoration? Even Reagan now refers to Deng's group as 'so-called Communists', perhaps believing that they have seen the light.**

Those who argue this, whether eager capitalists or apprehensive socialists, greatly exaggerate the scope of the reforms. They are leaving out of account the fundamental economic and social relations established by the revolution, which will not be transformed overnight by superficial reforms.

The barriers to a return to capitalism can be summarised under four headings.

(1) The means of production are still dominated by nationalised property, controlled by the state.

In the countryside, while most farming and other production is managed by households, land ownership remains a state monopoly: the regime still has the ultimate power to redirect productive activity.

## Hybrid

In industry, the big state enterprises continue to dominate all key sectors, and are still subject to central planning agencies. While market features have been introduced into the state sector and private firms are allowed more scope, the economy will still be under the control and direction of the central apparatus.

(2) Attempts to graft market elements on to the centrally planned system, as the experience of Russia and Eastern Europe has shown, produces a distorted hybrid. It may flourish initially but later produces sour fruit. Similarly, moves towards decentralisation

inevitably conflict with the economy's basic centralised mechanism.

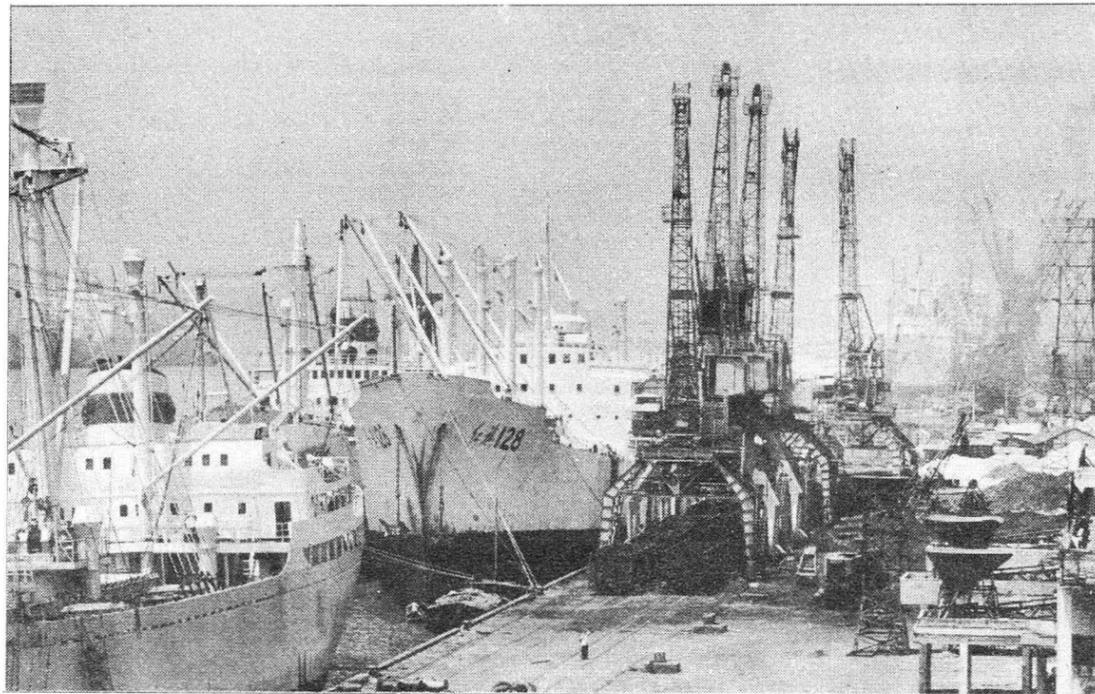
Rapid investment, drawing on state firms' retained profits and bank loans, has stimulated consumer industries. But almost immediately it led to 'overheating'—shortages of materials and skilled labour, wasteful duplication of projects, and excessive absorption of wages and savings by 'luxury' goods.

'Flexible' pricing has boosted the black market. The most serious symptom is the appearance of inflation, which has risen to about seven per cent in the countryside and 14 per cent in the towns, a high level by recent standards.

Deng's reforms have already been punctuated by a stop-go rhythm. In 1980-81, after the initial phase, the leadership put the brakes on, curbing adventurous investments and price increases. Deng was also forced to stamp down on 'economic crimes', corruption, black marketeering and speculation.

One leading Chinese economist, Jiang Yiwei, writing in *Social Sciences in China*, 1980, summed up the problem: "centralism leads to rigidity, rigidity leads to complaints, complaints lead to decentralisation, decentralisation leads to disorder, and disorder leads back to centralisation".

In 1983, the leadership edged forward again, applying new reforms. But then 1986 was declared 'Year of Consolidation'.



Whampoa harbour—Deng's reforms have opened the door to foreign imports.

This summer the Shanghai-based *World Economic Herald* said that: "The power which was transferred (in 1984) to the enterprises has actually been withdrawn." The journal claims that the regime has, in effect, now abandoned its reform policy by applying retrenchment policies identical with the old administrative controls.

## Massive swing

Far from opening up 'the capitalist road', recent measures will sooner or later produce a massive swing back in the other

direction. There are already pointers towards this.

(3) Economic reforms inevitably come into collision with the social interests of the ruling bureaucracy. Most party and state bosses undoubtedly welcomed measures to revive a stagnant economy. They certainly have no objection to the increased perks that accompany more emphasis on 'incentives'. However, if decentralisation and managerial initiative go too far, the authority of the bureaucracy is undermined. If market methods produce dislocation and stimulate popular discontent, the bureaucrats inevitably move to tighten their grip on the levers of power.

Deng's reform programme, reported the *Wall Street Journal* (9 September) is being subverted by "political and economic losers and Communist ideologues." A major problem, the *Journal* (3 September) commented, "is that middle- and lower-ranking officials are blocking economic reform efforts for fear of losing power and privileges." The emerging problems have strengthened opposition amongst a section of the bureaucracy.

(4) The enormous gains of the revolution of 1949 are embedded in the experience of many millions of workers and peasants, who represent a class bulwark against the restoration of capitalist exploiters. Life is still quite austere for most people, and discontent with 'get rich' market policies will awaken new demands for socialist measures. Great expectations have been awakened by Deng's reforms: everyone welcomes the prospect of improved living standards. But the rural poor and many urban workers and youth are now feeling some of the negative effects.

In the countryside, where a minority has been encouraged to 'lead by getting rich', incomes are being sharply polarised. Per capita income of rich regions is estimated to be 20 times higher than the per capita income in the poorest farming communities. There are also differences within communities, however, and a rich peasant-entrepreneur in a prosperous area may have an income 100 times that of a poor peasant household in a poor region. As commercial farming takes off, many millions will lose out. But the prospects of them finding jobs in the cities are extremely limited.

The conditions of most urban workers have improved since 1978 but many now feel threatened by moves to abolish the 'iron rice bowl', the system of job security and guaranteed income. There is

deep resentment at the phenomenal growth of perks for factory managers, top functionaries and new rich entrepreneurs. An end to the adequate supply of lower priced basic foods and other necessities, previously the great strength of the Chinese economy, will especially fuel mass discontent.

For all these reasons talk of a return to capitalism is fanciful. Apart from the social barriers, rooted in China's class relations, worldwide economic crisis and political upheavals testify to the inability of capitalism to develop the productive forces of the underdeveloped lands. (The apparent success of capitalism in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and similar states, will not save these countries from explosive social crises in the coming period.) It is only on the basis of the foundations laid by the post-1949 development of agriculture and especially heavy industry under the nationalised, planned economy, that the Western banks and multinationals can now intervene to implant segments of modern technology and production.

## New phase

Until now, the bureaucracy in China has been relatively secure, surviving even the explosive upheaval of the Cultural Revolution relatively unscathed. Although acting as an oppressive political caretaker for a hitherto weak and isolated working class, the bureaucracy has played a relatively progressive role in developing China's productive forces.

However, the economy has now entered a new phase. Deng's programme shows that the bureaucracy can no longer follow a policy of national self-sufficiency, concentration on heavy industry and crude coercion of the workforce. That line reached its limits, producing chronic stagnation, which is why the top leadership had to try another solution.

The only real solution, as in the other Stalinist states, is for the working class to take over democratic control and management of production and the state. This is the one approach the parasitic bureaucracy will never take, and therefore they are forced to turn to the capitalist West for help. This in itself is a reminder that their progressive role is far from unlimited. Meanwhile, any development which is stimulated by the reforms can only strengthen the working class—the force which will eventually take the future into its hands.



Chinese children drink American coke, but the private enterprise system cannot return.

## Deng's reforms

Beginning in 1978, the Deng leadership introduced a series of economic reforms. These revived a stagnant economy, and initially produced marked—if uneven—gains in agricultural and industrial output.

After a retrenchment, renewed reform in 1984 produced a peak annual growth rate of over 20 per cent in the first half of 1985. But the new policies have produced shortages, inflation, and discontent amongst those who have not shared in the new prosperity.

In agriculture, which still accounts for about two-thirds of the labour force and a third of gross national product, the government boosted output by raising 'procurement prices'—the level of payment for mandatory state purchases of staple foods.

After 1983, the government gave way to massive pressure from below for de-collectivisation of agriculture. Retaining ownership of all land, the state now allows the leasing of plots to households. Under the 'responsibility' system, involving a contract to sell a quota to the state, farmers can sell grain and other crops on the market. 'Specialist' households are allowed to run manufacturing and service enterprises employing labour.

In industry, the reforms have been more complicated, and problems have forced the leadership to make modifications. The 'commanding heights' remain under central control, but state enterprises are allowed to trade part of their output at 'flexible prices'. After paying tax, state firms are allowed to retain profits to invest in their own projects. Both 'collective' and private enterprise have

been allowed to raise capital and sell goods and services on a market basis. Administrative controls were relaxed and much more initiative allowed to local managers. Emphasis shifted from 'red' to 'expert', with attempts (not wholly successful) to introduce individual incentives and flexibility of labour.

In external economic relations there was a sharp turn away from Maoist autarky. From 1978 growth was linked to the import of modern technology and capital goods from the West. The state sanctioned large scale borrowing from foreign banks and agencies. After 1979 a number of Special Economic Zones were established around the coastal cities, and the tax and tariff rules for foreign investors were relaxed.

The 'open door' is a vital part of the reform programme, but it has contributed to a massive budget deficit and the rise in inflation.

# Spanish miners force bosses back

THE ELECTION of Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist government for a second term last June has opened up an entirely new situation in Spain.

Normally, the summer months see a decline in political activity as the mass of the people take to the beaches and swimming pools. Not so this year. August was a hot month in every sense of the word.

The social ferment was most intense in Andalucia, in the south. The recession which hit the industrial north has meant a catastrophe for the mainly agricultural south.

In the boom years up to the early seventies, the young unemployed could still escape the grinding poverty of village life by emigrating to more developed regions or to Western Europe. Now the safety valve has been closed. Former emigrants have been forced by unemployment to return, not only from abroad but also, increasingly, from Bilbao and Barcelona.

## Dynamite

The mines of Rio Tinto (started with British capital) were like an island of prosperity within a sea of misery. Surrounded by the poverty of the rural masses, the miners and their families have enjoyed a reasonable standard of living.

Through decades of militant struggle, in which more than one foreman ended up with a knife in his back and

First in a series  
NOTES ON SPAIN  
By Alan Woods

more than one police detachment retreated before demonstrations armed with dynamite, the workers had compelled the company to give them a series of concessions. Inside the clean, whitewashed homes one could find colour TVs, fridges and modern furniture.

I well remember a conversation I had a few years ago with a prominent local trade unionist, who assured me that it was now very difficult to get the men to participate actively because of the pressure from their wives, who were "backward" and only concerned with creature comforts.

How ironic these words sound now! August saw an earthquake in the consciousness of the workers of Rio Tinto. Without warning, management announced the closure of the copper mining operation.

The announcement was made in August (the heat in these parts is unbearable then) to reduce its impact. But the bosses miscalculated badly. The workers' reaction was immediate. A strike was



"Who are you and what is your business?" Miners' wives on a roadblock. The banner reads: "Comrades join us. Your blood is the miners' blood."

called, supported by the majority.

The most outstanding feature was the behaviour of the women. Within days, not a trace was left of the old "backwardness". In the best traditions of the Spanish working class, these women showed a complete freedom from inertia and routine.

Throughout the dispute they held daily mass meetings which they called "Popular Assemblies". Upwards of 300 women attended these meetings, which discussed the progress of the dispute, decided on tactics and organised pickets with six-hour shifts.

These pickets played an outstanding role. Rio Tinto

is a vast open-cast mine. At the beginning of the strike there were a few men still working. Without hesitation, the female pickets marched into the mine and spoke to the strikebreakers. They all came out—some of them weeping. The strike was now 100 per cent.

## Initiative

Showing considerable initiative and class instinct, the Rio Tinto workers tried to link up with the agricultural labourers. Delegations were sent to inform them about the dispute. The Rio Tinto strikers went to join the pickets of the *jornaleros*, the agricultural workers fighting

for land reform, and agricultural labourers came to Rio Tinto to do the same.

The "Popular Assemblies" spread beyond the mine to the whole of the surrounding area. The women organised roadblocks which controlled access to the area.

When a car full of supporters of the Spanish Marxist paper *Nuevo Claridad* came up from Seville, it was stopped by women who asked: "Who are you and what's your business?" When the comrades identified themselves, they were welcomed with open arms. But there is no doubt that undesirable elements would have been turned back immediately.

The struggle in Rio Tinto ended only last week with a partial victory for the strikers. Shaken by the mass movement, the company offered a formula which temporarily avoids mass redundancies.

Despite the understandable disappointment of the activists, who felt that more could have been achieved, there is no doubt that the movement forced the bosses to back off, for the time being at least.

However, the events at Rio Tinto are a harbinger of what is to come. It is clearly part of a strategy by the capitalists to test the ground for a general onslaught on jobs and living conditions.

# Reagan's dirty tricks exposed

FOUR US war heroes have been on hunger strike on the Capitol steps in Washington, DC, for over six weeks in protest against the Reagan administration's policy of undermining the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Following the abortive Reykjavik summit meeting on "arms control", and damaging disclosures about the administration's dirty tricks in Central America, Reagan's foreign policy has never been in greater disrepute.

Despite its fondness for moralising, the administration has been caught lying and defying Congress decisions.

## Disinformation

It has been proved that US agents have been operating with the Contras in Nicaragua, and Watergate reporter Bob Woodward has uncovered a campaign to spread 'disinformation' against the Libyan regime.

He quoted a memo by Reagan's security aide, Poindexter, outlining a strategy which "combines real and illusory events through a disinformation program with the basic goal of making Gaddafi think that there is a high degree of internal opposition to him within Libya, that his key trusted aides are disloyal, that the US is about to move against him militarily".

The aim was to portray Gaddafi as "paranoid and ineffective" so that "forces within Libya which desire his overthrow will be embolden-

By Pat Craven

ed to take action".

The *Wall Street Journal* on 25 August was the first paper to fall for the false story, with a report headlined: "Second Round: Col Gadhafi and US Again May Be Heading Toward Confrontation: Libyan Imprint Seen Anew in Foiled Terrorist Plots: Reagan Ready to Strike".

In order to make the disinformation campaign effective, not only the press, but even the intelligence services of the US and its allies were told lies.

A British official claims that the US government gave the British government "wildly inaccurate" information: "It was a deliberate effort to deceive". Another British diplomat is quoted as saying: "They seemed poised for another military attack on Libya on very little evidence of terrorist activities. I was appalled and there was a row between the Foreign Office and the American State Department".

US State Department Press Spokesman, Bernard Kalb, resigned in protest, "worried about faith in America... American credibility".

The Nicaraguan incident



Contra terrorists in Nicaragua—Reagan calls them "Freedom fighters."

has shattered the official US government story that they are giving no direct aid to the Contras. The plane shot down within Nicaragua was found to belong to Southern Air Transport, set up by the CIA in 1960 and then sold to "ex-CIA operatives" for an operation run by retired Maj-Gen John Singlaub, who is heavily involved in financing and training the Contras. The head of their 'training academy' has said that senior policy officials in Washington "are aware of what we are doing and they

approve".

The captured pilot of the plane, Eugene Hasenfus, a former US Marine, now held by the Nicaraguans, was officially working for the government of El Salvador, but has admitted that he was "on a gun-running mission as part of a clandestine operation in support of the Contras".

## Web of intrigue

Congress has been compelled to react and is seeking a full-scale inquiry into this

flagrant defiance of its votes against direct military interference in Nicaragua. In the Senate, an investigation has revealed an "interlocking web" of intrigue, involving weapons smugglers and drug traffickers, "linked to a senior Reagan security adviser".

These inquiries may bring more facts to light, but will not change the basic reality that when it comes to defence of profits, power and prestige, the world's strongest capitalist states will stoop to anything.

## Zimbabwe

MUNICIPAL WORKERS' anger against favouritism and threats of victimisation recently spilled over into a demonstration of over a thousand against the Director of the Works Department in Harare Municipality.

This is significant in a country where corrupt bureaucrats are often defended by the government, and strikers arrested or victimised.

"I'm not afraid to go to jail, we are hungry", said the workers' leader in the presence of the police.

The workers accused the Director, Mr Mahachi, of appointing his favourites and threatening workers' leaders if they protested.

A demonstration of over a thousand took place on 9 October. Placards demanded Mahachi's dismissal and defended workers' leaders.

The workers also demanded that the Minister of Local Government should come to hear their grievances. Instead, the Town Clerk tried to persuade them to leave the issue in his hands.

In the charged atmosphere he was shouted down, and workers insisted that union officials should take action. "Respect workers, why should we be oppressed", they sang to the tune of a liberation war song.

The demonstration showed the determination among Zimbabwean workers to defend their rights. They are not raising opposition to the Mugabe government at this stage, but are being driven to action by the government's defence of capitalists and reactionary officials.

## Gas sell-off hits the poor

Dear Comrades,  
Pensioners and the unemployed in some parts of Birmingham have been left without any money for the weekend.

The reason is that British Gas have written to all their customers about buying shares, with the result that the Post Office were unable to deal with the volume of mail and therefore people's giro's were not delivered.

So privatisation does hit the least well off. What's worse, final demands are still getting through!

Yours fraternally  
Lila Evans  
Birmingham Labour Party Young Socialists

## Debt scheme

Dear Militant,

The issue of a student loan system is being pushed in our colleges and universities.

After three to four years to obtain a degree we will then be required to pay a debt of £3,000-£7,000.

Are we to pay this despite the initial costs of setting up home, out of our first year's wages? Or are we to find ourselves paying this off over a number of years?

This loan scheme is bound only to favour those with wealthy relations.

Yours fraternally  
Peter Stacey  
Preston

## Classified ads

15p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-Display £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. Militant meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by first post on Friday, the week before publication.

○ Manchester and Lancashire Militant supporters congratulate Gail and Phil Framp-ton on the birth of their daughter Sidonie.

○ Militant Rally in the Albert Hall: Can all parents who will require crèche facilities during the rally on 16 November please contact the Rally crèche, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB for a crèche booking form.

○ Surplus Value require singers and musicians to build for the revolution. Phone Mark/Tim 01-254 9551.

### Militant Meetings

□ Huddersfield "Fight the Tories not the socialists". Wednesday 29 October, 7.30pm. Speaker: Tony Mulhearn. Huddersfield Polytechnic.

□ Sittingbourne Marxist discussion group. Every second Tuesday at 29 Waterloo Rd, Sittingbourne, Kent. For further details ring Sittingbourne 72632.

□ Wroxall Marxist discussion group. 2 Mountfield Rd, Wroxall, Isle of Wight. Every Wednesday. Phone Vic Dale on IOW 854759 for details.

## Tory to slum it.. ...for a week!

Dear Comrades,

Following the start of the '86 re-run of the Jarrow march, Tory MP for Newcastle central, Piers Merchant, dismissed the march as a waste of time.

His comments about it "being no wonder they can't get jobs" were immediately replied to by one marcher who demanded that Merchant himself should try living on the dole.

Always quick to score a few publicity points, Merchant jumped at the chance saying he and his family could cope. The amount of benefit he would receive if he was unemployed he said would be £60 per week, and then said his wife and family could cope with that for a week!

He even went so far as to ask the council for a house for the week! Newcastle city council refused saying any houses they had would be allocated to people who needed them, not to people seeking publicity.

The people of the North East are asking that Merchant should go on the dole, but should try living on £60 per week every week, and see how he copes when the quarterly bills come in, and when the kids need new clothes.

Yours fraternally  
Si Potter  
Jarrow



Message to the Tory Party from the Young Socialists' 'Tories Out' demonstration last Saturday. Photo: Dave Sinclair

## Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.



## Prejudice and education

Dear Comrades,

On 30 September, Haringey council education committee discussed the introduction into sex education classes of 'positive images of homosexuality'.

A recent survey of teenage lesbians and gay males showing that 12 per cent tried to commit suicide due to

harassment or depression, shows the need for such education. Unfortunately the council has refused to counter the lies and hysteria whipped up by the local Tories.

About 200 supporters of the council lobbied the committee for full implementation, while about 100 Tories

and mis-led parents turned out in opposition. The teachers fully supported the council by a unanimous vote.

Pressure has to be kept up on the council for the proposals to set up a working party on guidelines for school curricula and in-service training to be passed at the full council meeting with resolutions and letters of support. Other councils around London and elsewhere are holding back on implementation till they see how the situation develops in Haringey.

Yours fraternally  
Jon Johnson Newham  
South LPYS

## Right-wing 'pruning' Labour's policies

Dear Comrades,

A lot has been written and said about the Labour Party leadership's decision to ditch the red flag for a flower.

At next year's conference will we see the song itself ditched? It would be more in keeping with so-called 'new realism' to get rid of this nasty reminder of socialism

Could we hear as its replacement "I never promised you a rose garden"?

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Williamson  
Edinburgh Central Labour Party  
Young Socialists

Dear Comrades,

As I was looking through a copy of the Labour Party constitution I noticed that clause IX states that:

"The duties and powers of the NEC shall include the following: ..to ensure the establishment of, and to keep in active operation a constituency Labour Party in every constituency."

Does this mean that those members of the NEC who voted for the suspension of Broadgreen and Knowsley North CLP's will vote for their own expulsion from the party for breaking the constitution?

Yours fraternally  
Dave Fryatt  
Bow and Poplar Labour Party

## Free gaoled trade unionists

Dear Comrades,

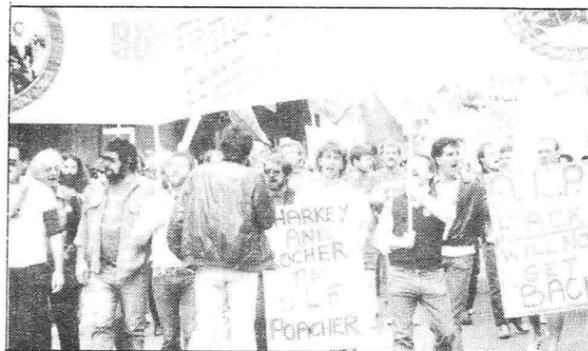
The gaoling of Building Labourers Federation leaders Black and Owens (see Militant 818) has produced outrage among unionists in Australia.

They are languishing in Long Bay Maximum Security Prison until January 1987, on 'trespassing' charges which carry a maximum penalty of a \$50 fine!

Their crime: visiting union members on site after legal recognition of the BLF had been withdrawn.

At the Liverpool building company's site in South Australia BLF members walked off the job and have been conducting a campaign ever since.

The campaign to free Black and Owens has received widespread support from metalworkers, transport workers, plumbers, electricians and hospital workers



Contingent from the Building Labourers Federation on the May-day '86 march in Sydney.

across the country.

The BLF is calling for international support to have Black and Owens freed. British unionists can help by sending donations or messages to BLF, Room 2000, NSW, Australia.

Yours fraternally  
Matt Hammond  
Sydney, Australia

## On the march

Dear Comrades,

I am on a day placement at a nursery as part of a course. I receive no grant off Tory controlled Cheshire County Council.

I give them a day's work for a certificate in social care and don't receive any money. I get left alone most of the time with 19 children and there will be 18 more coming after christmas.

The time I am left varies from 30 minutes to a morning or afternoon's lessons.

After working for nothing one day a week I have to travel to college four days a week, which costs me £2.56 a day.

After the 26 October fares are going up again, running from 7am to 7pm. This is life in Tory Cheshire, work for nothing and pay through the nose to get there.

Exploited student from Warrington

## Turning a blind eye

Dear Comrades

At a debate in Glasgow Technical college, a former nurse, now nursing tutor said that she was completely unaware of cuts in the health service imposed by the Thatcher government.

Afterwards I asked if she was aware of the hundreds of premature babies who die each week because of the lack of incubators.

She answered that it "had nothing to do with the Tory government". I had to agree, because as far as I and parents of these children are concerned, the Tory government has turned it's back on these critical cases as well as many others.

Yours fraternally  
Rosemary Ankers  
Cathcart Labour Party

## Left out in the cold

Dear Comrades,

Arch witch-hunter George Wright, Welsh Regional Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, is angry with the Welsh Labour Party bureaucracy.

They won't let him attend a Labour Party annual conference as a delegate. And in recent years this conference has become a rather wayward left wing affair. Last year they had the nerve to oppose the witch-hunt. No wonder George thinks he ought to get involved.

But why has he been refused? Well, it's nothing personal George—it's just that Labour Party Wales Annual Womens Conference is not really for men.

Yours fraternally  
Chris Peace  
Cardiff Central Labour Party

## Bill Murray

In memory of Bill Murray, life-long socialist who died on 17 October 1984. He will always be fondly remembered by those who knew him in Edinburgh Trades Council and Calton-Lochend Labour Party. From his friend and comrade Bill Pendzeich, and his brother and comrade John Murray.

# Climax collapses

COVENTRY CLIMAX has gone into receivership and the jobs of its remaining eight hundred employees are threatened. A number of small supply firms are likely to be dragged down with their customer.

Of course it takes more than the recent relatively small fire to destroy a firm like Climax, which at one time employed 3,000 people in Coventry. This year, it had accumulated debts of £18m.

Steve Ferguson, who was TGWU convenor from 1978 to 1982, is angered by the local paper saying that strikes while the company was part of British Leyland were responsible for its decline.

"It was lack of investment" he told me, "the stoppages were often provoked by management who we believed were brought in either to sell us off or close us down."

Climax's collapse comes on top of the loss of nearly six thousand jobs in manufacturing industry in Coventry and Warwickshire this year.

Another firm recently sold off by British Leyland, Self Changing Gears, has announced sixty redundancies and the future of the factory is uncertain.

Automotive Products at Leamington announced three hundred redundancies, blaming falling demand for the car components they make

## Receivers

The receivers, Price Waterhouse, say they expect to find a buyer for Climax. But to make it so saleable they have already declared 170 more redundancies.

Workers were horrified when they were callously lined up and handed envelopes—white if they were to stay and brown if they were to go. Within ten minutes the redundant workers were off the site.

Price Waterhouse are sending out prospectuses advertising the firm in three sections: fork lifts; engines; and spare parts and sales. This raises the prospect of the break up of the company and the sale of a quarter of

a million square feet of empty land for redevelopment.

At a meeting organised by Coventry MP Dave Nellist between Labour industry spokesman John Smith and workers' representatives he argued that: "BL should be brought back into public ownership, restore manning levels to what they were before privatisation and make the first offer of jobs to former workers who are still unemployed."

He is pushing for an emergency debate in parliament on Coventry Climax and Self Changing Gears and John Smith is to set up a delegation of the three Coventry Labour MPs and trade unionists from the factory to see the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Climax's collapse discredits the Tories' eulogies to the blessings of privatisation. The company was a subsidiary of British Leyland until it was sold off in 1981.

The capitalist consortium who bought it used the bosses' usual "jam tomorrow" arguments to close

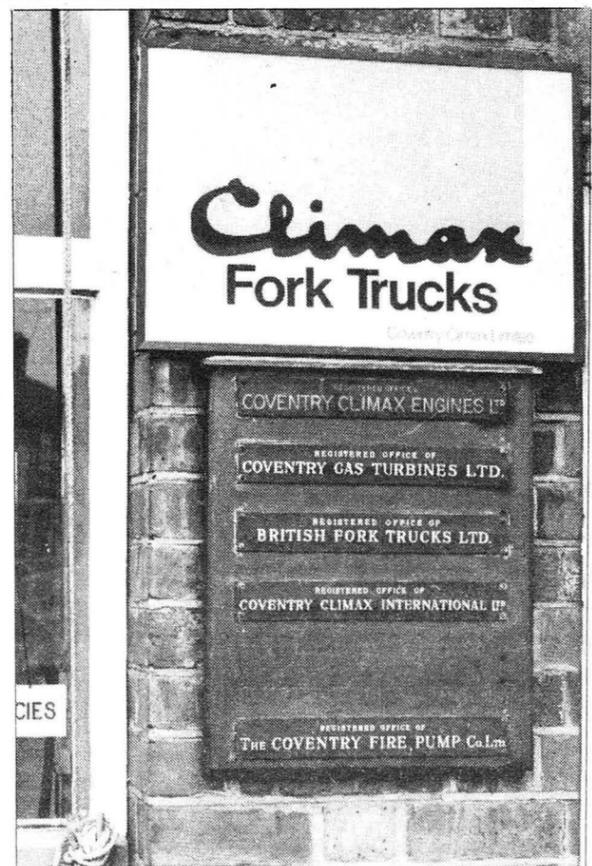
plants and declare two thousand redundancies then, and further redundancies since. But the sacrifices of the workforce have not saved the firm, which has been incapable of competing on a shrinking world market.

It has now emerged that the consortium has not paid a penny of the £4.6m it owes BL for the company. Strangely enough, the first instalment was due in a couple of months' time!

## AEU leaders

Nor has the nationalist approach of Bill Jordan and the AEU leadership helped save jobs. In August Jordan visited the plant and met the directors who had announced a hundred redundancies the month before and two hundred more up their sleeves.

He was sympathetic to the bosses' problems and used the AEU Journal to call on his members to "put pressure on the gaffer to order British trucks rather than West German or Japanese." A lot of good that did the Climax workers!



Jobs in the motor industry won't be saved by turning the unions into the sales and marketing agents of British capitalism.

In the long-run they will only be guaranteed by the nationalisation of the whole motor industry under

workers' control and management and its integration into a socialist transport plan run in the interests of working people.

By Tony Cross  
(Coventry North West Labour Party)

# Nantgarw closure

**NANTGARW MINERS, Gary Thomas and Kevin Hurley talked to Militant about the newly announced plans to close their South Wales pit.**

British Coal are closing the pit as part of their strategy to attack the South Wales miners because of our militancy. They also want to get rid of loss-making pits in preparation for the privatisation of the industry. No one will want to buy a colliery with a strong union in it.

The colliery makes a loss because British Coal will not invest. When they do invest they waste it. £1,000 worth of machinery is allowed to lie idle and be left underground when it could be raised and used elsewhere.

Most of the men are relieved at the announcement. The only future they could see was one of low wages and management dictatorship. Our pay has declined dramatically since the strike through lack of bonus.

MacGregor talked about creating a small, highly efficient industry, but the attempts to Americanise mining and destroy the power of the union is unacceptable to the men.



But 80 per cent will end up on the dole. I'm afraid they see that as better than working in the pit under these conditions. Obviously the youngsters will have spent their cheques in two years.

At least the NUM men will have the pride of knowing they fought and lost, unlike the other mining unions. Nacods are too late in seeing the need to fight pit

closures.

We have no faith in the review procedure—we would still lose our jobs—and after Christmas with less redundancy pay under the new terms.

But it was definitely better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all. Scargill was right. In the same circumstances we would do the same.

The statement was made in front of three witnesses, one of whom was also a Nacods official. Following that incident Mick had to have a series of interviews with the colliery manager over a period of three to four weeks.

Statements were taken from the two witnesses and both Nacods officials but only the official was interviewed. Mick complained about his two witnesses not being interviewed but was sacked anyway. This shows the lengths that British Coal will go to get rid of leading activists in Notts.

# Notts victimisation

MICK MCGINTY, vice-president of the Notts NUM and delegate for Ollerton colliery was sacked on Friday 10 October for allegedly hurling threats at a Nacods official.

The incident occurred whilst he was speaking to the official about an incident which had happened some six weeks before when two men were sent home and Her Majesty's Inspectorate called in.

He told the official he had seen two statements at Notts NUM headquarters and it seemed to him that in future he should be more careful. It was meant as a friendly warning and in no way as a threat.

# Jaguar strike

JAGUAR CAR workers in Coventry have voted to return to work after the company agreed to withdraw time-and-motion men from the factory for 48 hours.

In recent months the company have been running the track with the XJ40. As the car is completely new, timings have to be taken to establish standards of work. This is accepted as the usual practice. If the car runs as long as the last car, the Series III, for eighteen years, we need to get these timings right from the start.

The company enlisted the help of industrial engineers from outside. In recent months we had meetings with our shop stewards to set down some rules to help establish the timings.

The company constantly refused to accept our recommendations. If a job is in

dispute over a given time we believe a shop steward should be involved. But the company will only accept this if they can choose the shop steward to be involved.

We also believe shop stewards from track II should have some say in track I procedures as soon they will be building this car.

Recently things came to a head with the workforce refusing to carry on working whilst constantly under pressure from the industrial engineers. A dispute was started on Wednesday 16 October when they caused workers to down tools.

A worker was told by the IE that he was just being observed whilst really he was being timed. This stopped the track, the workers demanding the removal of the IEs. The company would not accept this so the

workers refused to start work.

We called for support from fellow workers on other tracks and got it wholeheartedly. The company refused to talk to us until we went back to work whilst still under pressure from the IEs.

All through the dispute the union officials have advised us to resume work, but we refused to do so while still under pressure from the company and their industrial engineers.

They are building a new hospital on the site at the moment. They are going to need it with the speeding up of the track, it is not uncommon for men in their 30s and 40s to have heart attacks because of the stress.

By a Jaguar worker

# Sogat executive fail to take initiative on Wapping action

AT A special meeting to discuss the Wapping dispute in the light of the ballot result, the Sogat NEC again rejected the immediate introduction of a special levy.

They decided that there should be a ballot preceded by a campaign. Under rule they have a right to impose a levy for six months before a ballot is necessary.

The money to sustain the News International strikers is urgently needed now.

The fact that they admit that a campaign is necessary is an admission of the failure of their strategy.

After nine months of strike action there should be no need to campaign for the levy.

If the levy had been introduced at the beginning of the dispute, when it should

have been, it would have acted as a catalyst to promote the action.

The Sogat leadership have decided to move but it is too little too late.

The real positive actions necessary to win the strike were discussed but rejected because of fear of legal action which would then be followed by sequestration.

This is an abdication of leadership. The strike should not be allowed to drag on. The action must be stepped up.

If the print unions had resolutely stood firm from the beginning and had used their full resources then victory would have been gained months ago.

By a London Sogat member

# Liverpool teachers

THE DISPUTE between Liverpool City Council and the National Union of Teachers over cover for absent teachers has been referred once again for national discussions between both parties. This time, however, the City Council have offered to send the disagreement to ACAS for binding arbitration if, as expected, national discussions break down.

In the interim period the NUT have agreed to withdraw its threat of industrial action including action planned this week. The council has likewise agreed not to deduct salaries for those members currently in dispute with effect from 22 September 1986.

# Industrial Reports

# Tory D day bus serv

26 October 1986 is 'Deregulation' Day for the bus industry. The 1985 Transport Act comes into effect. It requires bus operators to run services on a 'commercially viable' basis.

The Tories have ordered that Britain's buses, 95 per cent of which are currently operated by the public sector, be privatised.

From October anybody who owns a bus and holds a PSV licence may operate a bus service in competition with other operators.

Passengers will find themselves returning to the chaos of pre-war days before the nationalisation and standardisation of bus services.

Operators competed on profitable routes, racing each other to bus stops. Unprofitable but socially necessary routes had no buses at all.

In order to assess the changes that the Act will enforce it is worth looking at the situation prior to the introduction of the Act.

## Bodies

Depending on where you live in England and Wales (the Act has different implications for Scotland) your bus service will currently be provided by one of the following bodies: London Regional Transport; a Passenger Transport Executive run under the auspices of the old metropolitan county councils; Local Authorities; a subsidiary of the state-owned National Bus Company.

In a minority of cases, particularly in rural areas, buses may be provided by small independent operators, probably in receipt of financial support from the local county council.

From October the requirement for privatisation means that all PTE and LA bus operations are being transferred to limited companies. NBC subsidiaries are preparing for privatisation and the competition this will entail.

By Chris Stone

At present PTEs, LAs and NBC operate a coordinated service in many areas on a successful basis but the Act will require them to compete against each other, duplicating services on profitable routes and neglecting unprofitable ones.

It requires bus operators to have registered bus services they believe they can operate profitably with the Transport Commissioners by 28 February this year.

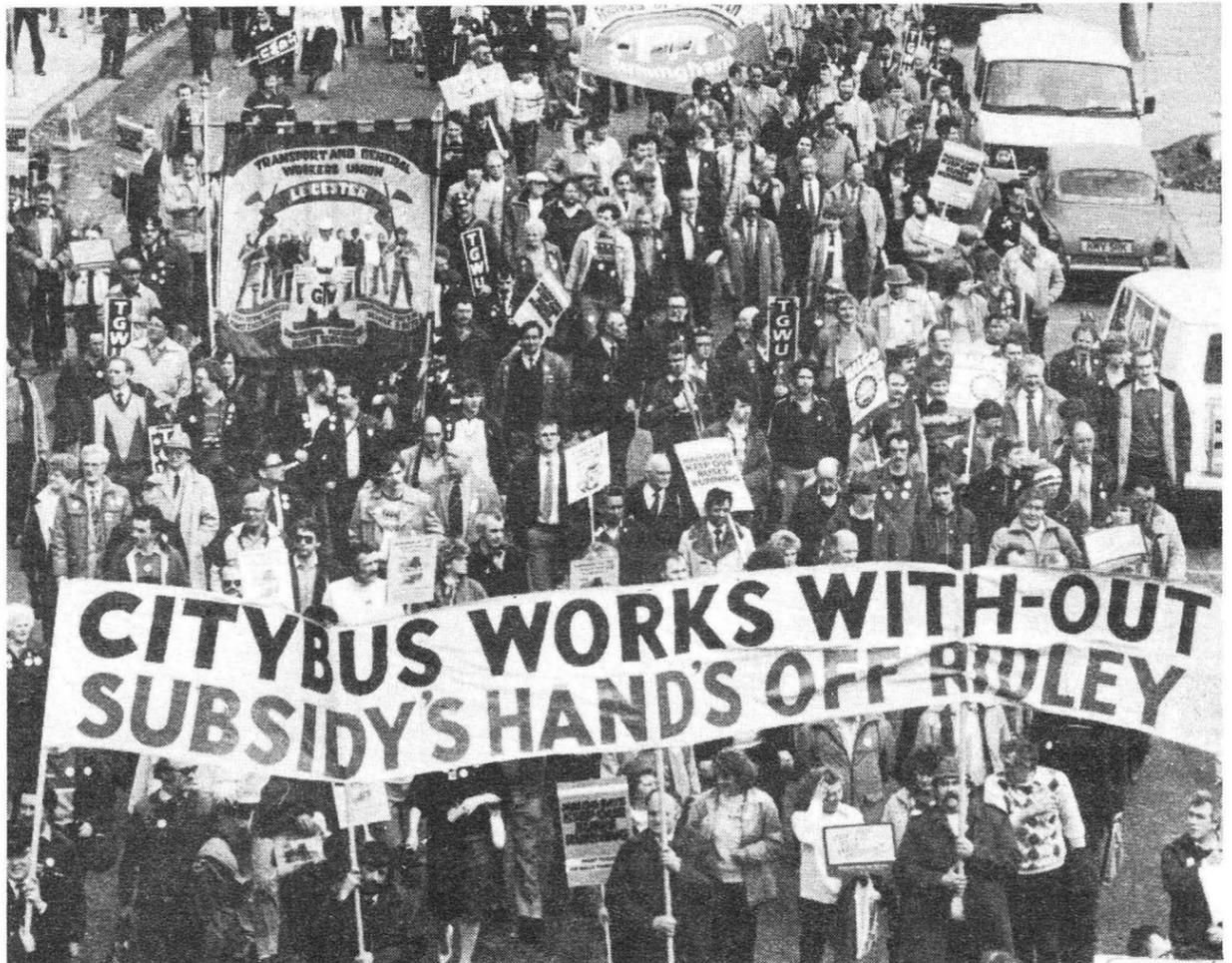
Due to the very nature of bus operation many routes, particularly in rural areas cannot be operated profitably and after the registration process many county councils found that local bus operators had left large gaps in their local networks.

This being the case the Act then allows for county councils to 'tender out' the unprofitable services if the council considers them to be socially necessary.

This aspect of the Act has turned Tory doctrine on this issue completely on its head. The aim of the Act was to make bus operators less dependant upon public money, but many county councils are now having to find extra money to hold together what will be a very skeletal service after October.

Labour-controlled Avon county council has announced that it will have to budget more to support local buses next year, as the Act allows for bus companies to pull out of even commercially viable services at short notice.

Avon's extra money will be used to meet this eventuality. If county councils do not make budget provisions



Busworkers lobbying the House of Commons in 1984 against cuts in the service.

to tender out services suddenly dropped at short notice the effects on the travelling public could be catastrophic.

## Side-effects

It is not only individual bus routes that will suffer. In many areas there will be service cut-backs across the board. In Bristol there are strong rumours that no buses will run before 2pm on a Sunday or before 6am on weekdays.

Although car ownership in Bristol is high many thousands of workers rely on buses from very early hours to reach factories on the city outskirts. If workers are

forced into using their cars (where they have them) because of fewer buses cities will become even more congested and polluted.

In rural areas and outlying housing estates housewives, OAPs and the unemployed will find themselves increasingly isolated. The lack of publicity about Deregulation day may in itself cause problems as unsuspecting passengers find buses not turning up and their services dramatically changed.

But it is not only the passengers who will experience difficulties. The demise of NBC has meant that a national pension agreement for bus crews has been withdrawn and work-

ing conditions will suffer as staff who are lucky enough to keep their jobs find themselves employed by privatised companies struggling to make money at the expense of passengers and employees.

## Reduced buses

In anticipation of competition by other operators many NBC subsidiaries are replacing conventional buses with mini-buses in the hope of providing a more frequent and cost-effective service. Bus drivers have been told they must choose between accepting lower wages to drive a mini-bus—or the sack.

The Act will also speed up

the decline in the bus manufacturing industry. Chassis and body builders that still remain in business are hanging on by a thread. In 1986 NBC ordered no more than 280 buses compared with over 1,200 in 1973.

The next Labour government must be committed to repealing the 1985 Transport Act and to the introduction of a planned public transport system under the democratic control of elected and accountable representatives of transport workers, passengers, local authorities and central government—within the framework of a socialist planned economy.

## Price of privatisation in Notts and Derbyshire

A REPORT in a Mansfield local paper, the *CHAD (Chronicle Advertiser)*, states the cost to Notts and Derbyshire County Councils and their ratepayers of deregulation of buses to be £6.8 million in subsidies to maintain services.

Last year under the old system Notts County Council had been able to save £500,000 on budget. This year it has already had to earmark an extra £500,000 to maintain the concessionary fares.

The Trent bus company has announced a total of more than 200 redundancies. In Notts, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and South Yorkshire wages for those still working in the industry could, and in some cases

already have been reduced.

Demands for a longer working week for less money are common in management talks. They see deregulation as a way to erode the present conditions which the workforce has built up over the years.

## Campaign

Southern National have imposed cuts in wages of £15 a week gross and management are recruiting people to jobs on the basis of a standard 45 hour week. Southern Vectus management asked workers to work a free day a week for the company!

At the Mansfield District bus depot, the union branch (Mansfield NUR No2) many months ago set about infor-

ming the workforce, by means of meetings and a regular newsletter and more recently with the setting up of a workplace branch of the Labour Party, about the threat of deregulation to the public and the workforce.

A combination of this and hard work by the Branch Committee and branch members at work has, as yet, resulted in no job losses on the OPO (one person operation) shifts or in the workshops of Mansfield District.

By Andy Sullivan

(Branch Committee Mansfield NUR No2) personal capacity

## West Midlands drivers' strike

BY A two to one vote 3,600 bus drivers working for West Midlands County voted to strike for 24 hours on Saturday 18 October.

SIMON HEATHER, chair of Liverpool Street garage TGWU in Birmingham explained the dispute to Bill Mullins.

The strike is a warning to management that their cavalier treatment of our members has gone far enough. The Tories' deregulation of bus routes has been the green light for the bosses to put the boot in.

The strike has been called as a result of a number of issues including their proposal to cut our earnings by £30 a week by withdrawing the guarantee of weekend working.

We are also demanding the reinstatement of Donald Randall who was sacked two weeks before he was due to be made redundant with

£20,000 redundancy pay.

This spiteful action has incensed the members. It's a result of management attempts to cut back on costs and speed up the work rate.

Brother Randall was given an unfamiliar route without the normal route training. He was involved in an accident and the company sacked him whereas in the past it would have led to two or three days' suspension.

## Redundancies

Management are constantly trying to erode our conditions, particularly since earlier this year when we had an opportunity to fight back over the pay deal but the full-time officials threw it away.

In their haste to be 'competitive' management announced 800 redundancies then realised that this would cause chaos and reduced it to 400.

Under the deregulation measures the present bus routes are only guaranteed for a few months then only those that are 'profitable' will be kept on.

Local councils are supposed to subsidise unprofitable routes. But with local government spending slashed by the government, further cuts and redundancies are inevitable.

If the management don't make concessions then we will probably go for another ballot calling for further Saturday strikes or even an all-out strike.

Even the drivers who have applied for their redundancy are supporting the action. Time and opportunities have been wasted during the fight against the Tory attacks on the industry.

Nevertheless the mood of the bus workers is to fight. What it needs is leadership at national and local level.

# ice disaster

## Weymouth Sealink sit-in continues



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report) II

LABOUR'S PROGRAMME: A draft Labour Party statement on transport policy to be considered by the NEC's Home Policy committee outline proposals for the bus industry following the repeal of the 1985 Transport Act. It dodges the issue of re-nationalisation by proposing powers to allow local authorities to municipalise bus services in their area, if they wish.

### Liverpool steward predicts price rises and service cuts

A Walton bus shop steward talked to Richard Knight about the effect of de-regulation on Merseyside.

FROM THIS Sunday the number of buses operating from the new company Merseyside Transport Ltd will go down from 1,275 to only 800.

At the same time we have seen large wage increases for the bosses. One of them got nearly £15,000 a year extra. Workers have gained in wages by £30 per week but there has been a massive worsening of conditions.

#### Conditions worse

Everything that we've negotiated over the years has been lost. There will be no Saturday, Sunday or overtime rates, no special payments for split shifts and the maximum hours worked has gone up from 7 hours 36 minutes to 8 hours. That means that for every 19 duties done, one job will be lost.

Also, on conditions, they've halved the amount of time for 'paying in' and reporting and the meal break. The running time of the buses has been reduced by 20 per cent which means the buses will be going much faster.

Big fare increases will come in from October. Peak hour rates will increase and for many areas of Merseyside it will be a massive increase. In Kirkby the off-peak fare will rise from 30 pence to over 80 pence. Commuting into Liverpool five days a week will cost an extra £192 a year.

Four arterial routes in Kirkby, the 19, 17, 14 and 20 will run but there will be no internal service. The 144, 151/2/3/4/5/6 will all be withdrawn. These new routes have been imposed without talks with the trade unions or consultation with the community involved.

In terms of job losses for Merseyside Transport Ltd, the number of bus workers will have gone down from

5,000 to 3,000. There will be three garages closed and the back garage at Edge Lane which is like half a depot.

But more alarmingly, between 15 and 26 January that will be the end of the three month 'test' to see if the routes pay. Those that don't make a profit will then be withdrawn.

#### Union response

One busman described it as 'dog eat dog'; that the fare increases will be a vicious circle, passengers will be lost and that could force routes to be unprofitable so fares will be increased again with more resulting passenger losses.

In Walton depot there was a 'battle fund' of £5 per man and a 10p per week levy but it is felt that there is no national lead from the Transport and General Workers Union.

It almost seemed like a paper exercise, with plenty of leaflets but no real attempt to mobilise the rank

and file for action.

The one-day strike on pensions was a success and should have been followed up with a week-long stoppage involving every transport union.

A Labour government must be pressured to reverse all the cuts that have been made on the buses. The subsidy that used to be given to the Passenger Transport Executive to buy buses has been abolished and could effectively mean the end of the bus industry in Britain.

The Bedford Bus and Truck have already closed and other companies could go to the wall. Just to give an indication; the average number of new buses bought by Merseyside Transport used to be 100 per year. This will go down to 25—and that is only a projected figure.

On some routes, for example North & Western, the bus drivers are being given a mop and bucket after they've finished the route to clean the buses out.

The porters are in general agreement that if management get away with this sacking no union member will be free from victimisation.

By Ian Macconnachie, Dundee LPYS

CATERING STAFF in three Tyneside hospital recently struck against cuts. Management at the RVI, Princess Mary maternity and Wyles hospitals have drawn up in-house tenders for privatisation. Just a few weeks ago workers were on strike at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Gateshead against cuts.

Over a year ago domestics at the RVI were privatised in spite of strike action. Now it's the catering workers and in a few months the laundry will face the axe. Even the ambulances have been cut.

By Bill Hopwood

day, updating the 'anti-vandal' alarm and putting in a claxton which is fitted with anti-flashing lights. The men want radios and are adamant about it. They don't believe management promises about screens—there have been too many empty promises before.

By Jackie Walsh

THIRTY PORTERS have walked out of Dundee Royal Infirmary in support of sacked shop steward Andrew Rae.

He was dismissed by new management for defending himself against a drunk visiting the hospital. Porters and nurses have been attacked by patients. Recently a nurse was confronted by a patient wielding a pair of scissors.

The real reason behind the sacking, he believes, is political. They want to get rid of someone who fights in defence of workers' interests.

### In Brief

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME workers in Trafford, Greater Manchester have staged a one day strike with possibly more action to follow in support of their demand for a better trade union facilities. Almost 300 workers on five building sites are in trade unions, mainly Ucat. They are demanding better conditions, but above all the right to permanent trade union representation (they are all on temporary programmes) and proper negotiating machinery.

1,000 TGWU members, mainly women struck for over a week at Volex Butts mill in Leigh, Lancs over pay. The national claim was settled at 5.5

per cent from 1 May and since then they have been negotiating a local top up. They won an extra 2 per cent and further improvements from next May through consolidation.

Both reports by Margaret Manning

STEVENAGE BUS drivers held a secret ballot last Friday afternoon and voted by 45 to 41 in favour of continuing strike action for more protection of bus drivers from assaults.

The have been on striking on Friday and Saturday nights for four months (see Militant 815). Tony Wilson, Stevenage bus drivers TGWU branch rep explained the background to the ballot: "Management offered us strings which the men weren't prepared to accept."

"All they offered us was screens which would be fitted at night and removed during the

MEMBERS OF the National Union of Seamen at Weymouth are bitter at the settlement worked out by NUS and the officers' union Numast with Sealink management. They have voted to continue the action, and the occupation of the Earl Godwin and the other Channel Island ferries, despite the deal.

At the beginning of last week the entire Sealink operations were tied in port by a national strike which forced the management to the negotiating table.

Regretably that initiative wasn't maintained by the union leadership. Certain gains have been achieved in the short term at Folkestone, Harwich and Holyhead, but the future still looks very doubtful.

#### Concessions?

At Folkestone, where management were threatening to discontinue the two boats operating from there to Europe, a joint working party has been agreed to review the future.

At Harwich management have agreed not to cut the crew levels on the St Nicholas.

At Holyhead twenty jobs are to go through natural wastage but remaining crews will now work a week on and a week off, instead of being on and off for 48 hour periods.

But it is on the troubled Channel Island crossing where the most serious attacks were threatened that the worst deal has been done.

Sealink originally planned to pull out altogether and charter their vessels out to another newly formed com-

pany in which they would own a large stake and with crews working at much reduced rates of pay and conditions.

This present deal means that where there were two daily sailings from Portsmouth all year round, and one daily sailing all year round plus one daily seasonal sailing from Weymouth to the Channel Islands, there would be just one all year daily sailing from Portsmouth, and two seasonal sailings only from Weymouth.

Those left by this deal would still be employed by Sealink management, at existing terms and conditions rather than the "offshore" terms.

However, how certain is any of that? The Earl Granville would operate the run from Portsmouth, but with manning levels cut from 102-86, and with leave reduced from 80 to 60 days per annum.

The details of the seasonal sailings from Weymouth have yet to be worked out, between now and April!

Where until now there were 316 permanent seamen and another 168 seasonal workers, under this deal there would be just 86 manning the Earl Granville on a permanent basis, with some 150-160 additional required to work just seasonally.

The rest of the permanent staff and the present seasonal staff would all go, their jobs would sink without trace.

So far as Sealink seamen at Weymouth are concerned, it's not good enough, and the battle goes on.

By Martin Elvin

## Strathclyde FBU

STRATHCLYDE fire-fighters have just voted by more than 60 to 40 per cent in a 90 per cent turnout to take strike action.

They want the Labour-controlled Strathclyde regional council to withdraw proposals to cut 160 jobs from the establishment of nearly 2,000. It would involve cutting the number of fire-fighters on appliances fighting fires.

Initially the action will be one hour stoppages. There is an angry mood amongst the workers over the proposals to reduce the locally-agreed staffing levels to the outdated 30 year-old national standard—which the FBU are committed to improving to the Strathclyde level by national conference decisions.

This vote in the FBU's first-ever strike ballot has a special significance as it is to maintain a level of service rather than to fight physical redundancies.

The fears of fire-fighters of increased risk associated with reduced staffing levels in the more hazardous and complicated circumstances of modern fire-fighting seems to be the main reason for the mood of determination to resist these cuts.

The view of the FBU is

that the Labour group should turn their fire on the Tories rather than the fire service, so crucial for the lives of working class people.

The resolve of the Strathclyde brigade to fight for the service will be viewed by many firefighters throughout the country as the start of a fight to defend jobs and services in the fire service and to improve the national staffing standard.

Although Strathclyde FBU still seek a negotiated settlement they have prepared the members for further ballots on escalation should the need arise. The national executive of the FBU are now campaigning amongst the rest of the membership for action on similar issues.

Supportive action from other brigades may be necessary as the situation develops and the possibilities of national action to defend and improve staffing levels could develop following Strathclyde's example.

Messages of support to: Strathclyde FBU, 52 St. Enoch's Square, Glasgow G1.

By Rab Chalmers  
(Strathclyde FBU Brigade Committee, personal capacity)

# Militant

Hungarian Revolution  
1956—pages 8/9  
Young Socialists'  
march—pages 4/5

**CPSA/COHSE elections**

## Left stands for union democracy

**IN TWO trade unions—CPSA and COHSE—workers have the opportunity to elect general secretaries committed to accountability and union democracy, and who are prepared to lead determined action to defend those they represent.**

John Macreadie, the *real* general secretary of the CPSA, having been democratically elected by the membership in the Summer, is now being forced to stand again in a re-run election, after a dirty campaign of smears and lies by the right wing clique that currently controls the union national executive.

Kevin Mullins, a charge nurse in a large psychiatric hospital, is the Broad Left candidate for the general secretary of COHSE.

Both have rejected the inflated salaries paid to trade union leaders—£26,000 for the COHSE general secretary and £28,000 in the CPSA—and the many perks that go on top.

### Low pay

Within COHSE and CPSA the majority of members are low paid, many on less than a fifth of the salary of their own union's general secretary. With these workers in the hospitals and offices, this pledge is finding wide support.

As unions organising public sector workers, CPSA and COHSE have been at the sharp end of Tory monetarist attacks. Spending cuts, job threats and privatisation have been particularly aimed at the NHS and civil service.

It has precisely been in the battle to maintain jobs and services, that the right wing have demonstrated their incapacity and unwillingness

**By Mick Barwood**  
(Broad Left Organising Committee, Treasurer)

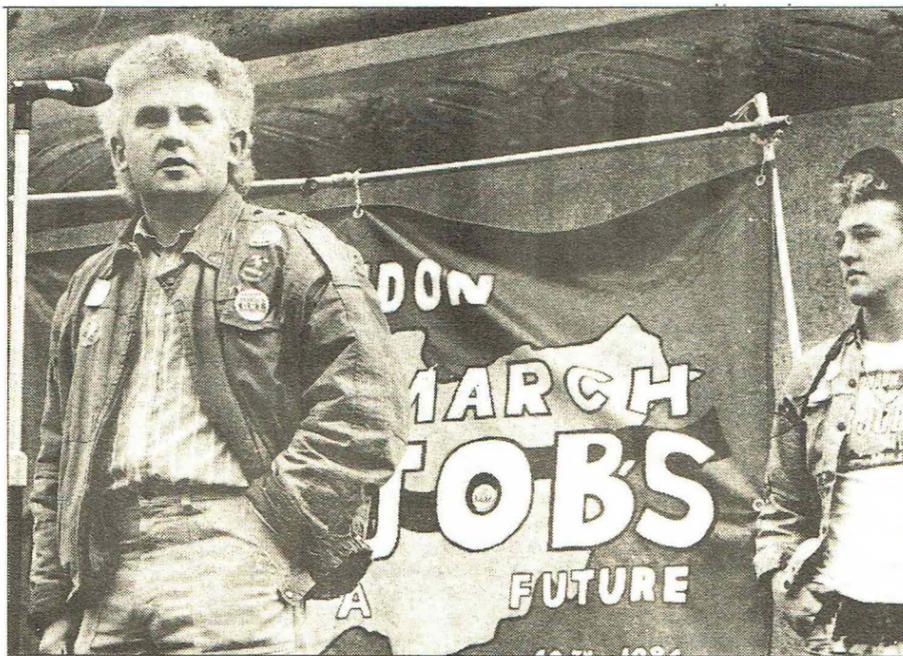
to make a stand in defence of their members' interests. In London alone, 32 hospitals have closed since the Tories came into office, without any decisive action from the COHSE leadership.

The right wing CPSA leadership, including their candidate in the re-run Deputy General Secretary John Ellis, have been willing to talk to the Tories about their plans to dispense with national wage rates and pay civil servants differently, depending on the demand for jobs in their region. In areas of high unemployment the government hopes to take on workers desperate for a job, at lower rates.

This could undermine every basic trade union principle of workers' unity, but the right were prepared to discuss it, while John Macreadie demanded implacable opposition.

But the right in the trade union movement are being exposed by their failure to actively back members who enter into struggle. Cleaners at Addenbrookes hospital took the COHSE leaders at their word, and struck in opposition to privatisation. After a year of heroic battle, official recognition was withdrawn.

To the union's leaders it had become an embarrassment, a constant reminder of



John Macreadie addressing Labour Party Young Socialists in Trafalgar Square.



Kevin Mullins

their inability to launch national action against private profiteers.

CPSA members at the Newcastle Central DHSS office were also on strike for a year, over shift working, and

were let down by the national leadership.

Not surprisingly the fighting trade unionists at Addenbrookes and Newcastle Central have given their support to Kevin Mullins and John Macreadie, for a new direction for their unions nationally.

As active Labour Party members and socialists John and Kevin are clear in their support for a new Labour government. But they are not prepared to postpone the struggle against the Tories, or withhold their full support for workers taking action, until after a general election.

### Labour victory

But as John Macreadie explained recently: "A Labour government will be confronted with two alternatives: either to try to

manage capitalism better than the capitalists themselves, or to change society decisively in the interests of working people." Vigilance and determination will be just as necessary by trade unionists after an election.

A victory for John Macreadie and Kevin Mullins could mark a turning point, not just for their unions but for the whole labour movement. It would be a serious blow to the discredited ideas of new realism, pioneered by leaders like Alistair Graham, the former CPSA general secretary. Rather than new realism, John and Kevin represent real trade unionism, using the collective strength of the membership to win better wages, better conditions and a better society.

## Labour's purge continues

YET ANOTHER special session of the National Executive on Monday 27 October will consider disciplinary charges against Felicity Dowling, Liverpool councillor and secretary of the District Labour Party until it was undemocratically suspended by the NEC last year.

Felicity first appeared before the NEC on 26 March, the day after the High Court ruled that key aspects of the NEC's procedure were unlawful. When the right tried to go ahead regardless, seven left wingers refused to participate and the hearing had to be abandoned.

Felicity now faces only the charge of "Membership of *Militant*." Charges of "Malpractice" in the DLP, cobbled together by the Enquiry and the original pretext for the purge, have been dropped.

Any pretence that this is anything more than a blatant political purge has been dropped. The treatment of the eight already expelled showed that the right were not concerned with "evidence" and had made up their minds in advance.

Join the Anti-witch-hunt lobby outside Labour Party Headquarters—150 Walworth Road, Monday 27 October, at 8am.

## and it costs thousands

WHEN THE Labour Party is desperately appealing for funds, members will be outraged to find out that up to August 1986 the NEC spent over £32,000 from its contingency fund on the Liverpool DLP Enquiry and disciplinary hearings. Most of this seems to have gone on printing reports and NEC members' expenses. The figure is unlikely to include the massive legal fees or the wage bill of officials who have devoted an extraordinary amount of their time to expelling socialists.

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