

# Tory

# economic shambles

# Workers pay the price



Lawson's measures will mean:

- Higher mortgages for the home owners the Tories said they were out to help;
- Higher interest repayments for councils, leading to more cuts in services, redundancies and a higher poll tax;
- Jobs lost and wages cut by companies faced with higher interest rates;
- More and more people sinking deeper into debt.

THE TORIES' economic 'miracle' was a mirage. July's balance of trade deficit was £2.15 billion, almost as much as the whole of last year. There have been eight panic interest rate rises since June.

By Pat Craven

For most of those with mortgages the gains from the budget tax cuts will be wiped out. Those on £10,000 a year with a £30,000 mortgage will be £36 a month poorer. Only those earning over £50,000 a year will still be better off.

The Tory 'boom' has been financed by credit. They encouraged us to spend, spend, spend. Now they want us to pay, pay, pay. Their rich friends made fortunes from this casino economy. But they won't pay the bill; ordinary workers will.

This day of reckoning for the Tory government was inevitable. *Militant* said at the time of the budget: "The new economic storms that loom will finally destroy any illusions about the Tories' economic 'success'. They will be forced to preside over a savage onslaught on workers' wages and conditions, taking back the recent cuts and more."

The Tories' credibility is being shattered. And those 'new realists' in the Labour and TUC leadership who believe the Tory boasts have been answered.

They say that workers with better-paid jobs have been bought off by the Tories and have deserted the labour movement. This idea has permeated the Labour Party's policy review. They have used it to justify the abandonment of more state ownership and other traditional Labour policies.

But this has not increased Labour's support. The Tories should now be on the run, yet they still lead in the opinion polls. Instead of adopting capitalist policies, Labour's leaders should be exploiting the Tories' disarray, mounting an aggressive campaign to expose their bankruptcy and drive them from office.

This crisis and the deeper recession which is now inevitable, puts socialism back on the agenda. A monopoly capitalist system, with its booms and slumps, run for the profit of businessmen and speculators, can never provide an adequate standard of living or security for the mass of working people.

Only a socialist planned economy can do that, through the public ownership of the major capitalist monopolies, under workers' control and management. Then the country's resources can be used to transform society for the benefit of the workers and create genuine and permanent prosperity for all.

## Free Palestinian socialist

THE ISRAELI government and judiciary has made massive, concerted attempts to secure the conviction of Machmoud Masawri, a Palestinian socialist and trade union activist.

This has raised major questions among the country's legal profession and observers in the international labour movement.

The events surrounding the case following his arrest on 17 July are quite unprecedented even in Israel. Above all, intense speculation has been raised about the intervention of Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin to disqualify Masawri's lawyer.

★ Masawri was seized from his bed at 2am in the morn-

ing, only days before he was due to visit Britain on the invitation of several Labour MPs.

★ He was held without charges or access to a lawyer for four weeks when he was tortured and forced to sign a confession.

★ His alleged crime is so secret that no charges have been made public and the

strictest publicity ban has been imposed on his trial.

★ Following the surprise intervention of the Defence Minister, a total ban on all contact with the outside world, including family and lawyers, has been enforced.

(see details on page 2)

## Fighting Fund deadline Saturday

£1,000 donated by a London *Militant* supporter has boosted our Fighting fund in the final week. Help us reach our target of £50,000 by rushing in any last-minute donations NOW.

# Militant

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## Trade crisis could hasten recession

THE ECONOMIC strategy of Thatcher and Lawson is in tatters. The rosy picture of economic success portrayed at the time of the giveaway (mainly to the rich) budget is irreparably cracked.

Estimates for the annual balance of payments deficit now range as high as £15 billion. Lawson's budget forecast was for just £4 billion.

The consumer credit boom presided over by the Tories, despite the temporarily higher growth rates, has exposed the hollowness of their boasts of the UK economy being 'fundamentally sound'.

Demand in Britain grew eight per cent in the first half of 1988, but UK output by only five per cent. Thanks particularly to the savaging of British industry under Thatcher during 1980-81, it is incapable of matching the short-term inflated demand.

There has been a flood of imports into every sector highlighting the historic weakness of British manufacturing. In the three months to August, car imports were up 29 per cent, other consumer goods 14 per cent and capital goods (machinery) up 13 per cent.

Faced by the July payments deficit of £2.1 billion, almost as much as the revised figures for the whole of 1987, in panic Lawson raised interest rates by a full percentage point, making a 60 per cent increase since early June.

He does this to keep sterling attractive to international speculators to continue to fund the payments deficit. And he is desperate to cool credit-based demand to hold back the tide of imports by increasing the cost of borrowing. Although the effect will be to maintain the high value of the pound, making exports still less competitive.

Lawson now says interest rates will have to remain at 12 per cent for some time, which is a guarantee they at least will not come down. If anything they could rise still further.

But what will be the effect of this on reinvestment into British industry—the key to improving competitiveness and to recapturing lost markets at home and abroad? Manufacturing investment is up 14 per cent in the year to July, but that still only takes it back to the level of 1979.

"The combination of high interest rates and a strong pound is a potentially lethal cocktail for industry which will be reluctant to pay the extra borrowing costs for new equipment when it might be priced out of the market by a strong pound." (*Guardian*)

The likelihood of continued high interest rates threatens to damage investment and by choking off credit could actually hasten the end of the Thatcher 'boom'.

According to William Rees-Mogg in *The Independent*, "Britain probably has the choice between an inflationary balance of trade crisis and at least some degree of recession. The general movement to higher interest rates may well produce a world-wide recession in 1989."

In the wake of Lawson's latest one per cent hike, Holland, Switzerland, West Germany and France all raised their interest rates. US rates are already at high levels. There is the danger of an interest rate war. With volatile money flowing around internationally, no country can afford to see their interest rates left lagging behind, for fear of a sudden exodus from their currency.

But if international capitalism has been able for now to ride out the depressing effect of the crash of 87 on the stock markets, it has been by pumping liquidity into the system—feeding the credit bonanza, easing interest rates down and increasing the money supply.

Now they are recoiling at the inflationary effects of their profligacy. US inflation is at its highest for six years and in Britain it has reached six per cent. And none of the imbalances in the world economy that sent those shudders through the stock markets last October has disappeared. Unstable exchange rates and interest rates and the huge American payments deficit and external debt still hang over the world economy.

"The stage is now being set," says the *Financial Times*, "for a fairly substantial slowdown in world economic growth."

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# Release Machmoud Masawri What does the Israeli state have to hide?

MACHMOUD MASAWRI lost his appeal in the High Court on 29 August against the decision to debar his lawyer Andre Rosenthal.

By Militant reporters

Rosenthal's appointment was blocked on the grounds that he did not have security clearance to see certain 'secret documents' connected with the case.

This elaborate trail of legal manoeuvres has been justified on the grounds of 'state security'. But what does the Israeli regime have to hide? Why have they gone to such extraordinary lengths to prevent details of the case—even the exact nature of the charges—from emerging. And why do they seem determined to deny Masawri any opportunity to communicate with anyone outside of the closed 'security vetted' courtroom?

Questions have been raised about why the government are so sensitive, if as their embassy in London claim (in their official press briefing) that

Masawri is just an "arsonist" and "terrorist".

If these were the real charges, surely nothing could be more clear cut—so why the enormous secrecy? In fact, these charges have never been mentioned in Israel itself, raising speculation that they have either been dropped and entirely different charges introduced, or that the London embassy was misinformed! In a further manoeuvre, the trial was set to commence on 30 August, the day after the High Court appeal, giving Masawri no time to obtain alternative legal representation. He will therefore have no choice but to represent himself.

## No democracy

The Israeli regime's claims to be a democracy sound increasingly hollow when someone can be charged with an 'unspecified' offence and denied legal representation at a secret trial with the press forbidden even to mention their arrest.

A huge campaign of disinformation is being waged by officials in Israel's

embassies overseas. In the United States they flatly denied that Masawri had been over-ruled in his choice of lawyer—despite the issue being taken to the High Court!

This stream of disinformation must be overcome by a deluge of protests from the world labour movement. One of our brothers, a courageous trade union activist, who has constantly fought for the unity of Arab and Jewish workers against their common enemy—the bosses—has fallen victim to a massive frame-up. Protests have already begun to pour in, with pickets of Israeli embassies around the world. (See pictures on page 11).

The campaign has received the support of West of Scotland and Merseyside areas of the National Union of Students, and NUS at national level has been approached for support.

Resolutions, telegrams etc. should be sent to the Israeli Embassy, 2 Palace Green, London W8 and to the Prime Minister's Office, 3 Kaplan Street, Jerusalem, Israel 91919. Copies should also be sent to Phil Hutchinson c/o Militant.

# Air traffic crisis

## Lives put at risk by cut backs

THE AIRSHOW accident in West Germany last weekend has led to demands for tighter controls on such displays. But many aviation workers fear that crashes and near-misses are growing even for the millions of people who use the airways for holidays and work.

Like the ferry companies, the airlines are under the pressure of capitalist competition, which pushes safety into the background.

Militant's interview with an air traffic controller (below) shows that future air disasters should not be treated just as tragedies but as criminal acts, prepared and taken on as risk by the profiteers of aviation.

"SIX TIMES this year, the radar screens have gone blank at London's Air Traffic Control Centre. They use these screens to tell pilots the best route to take, given the whereabouts of other aircraft, the weather etc.

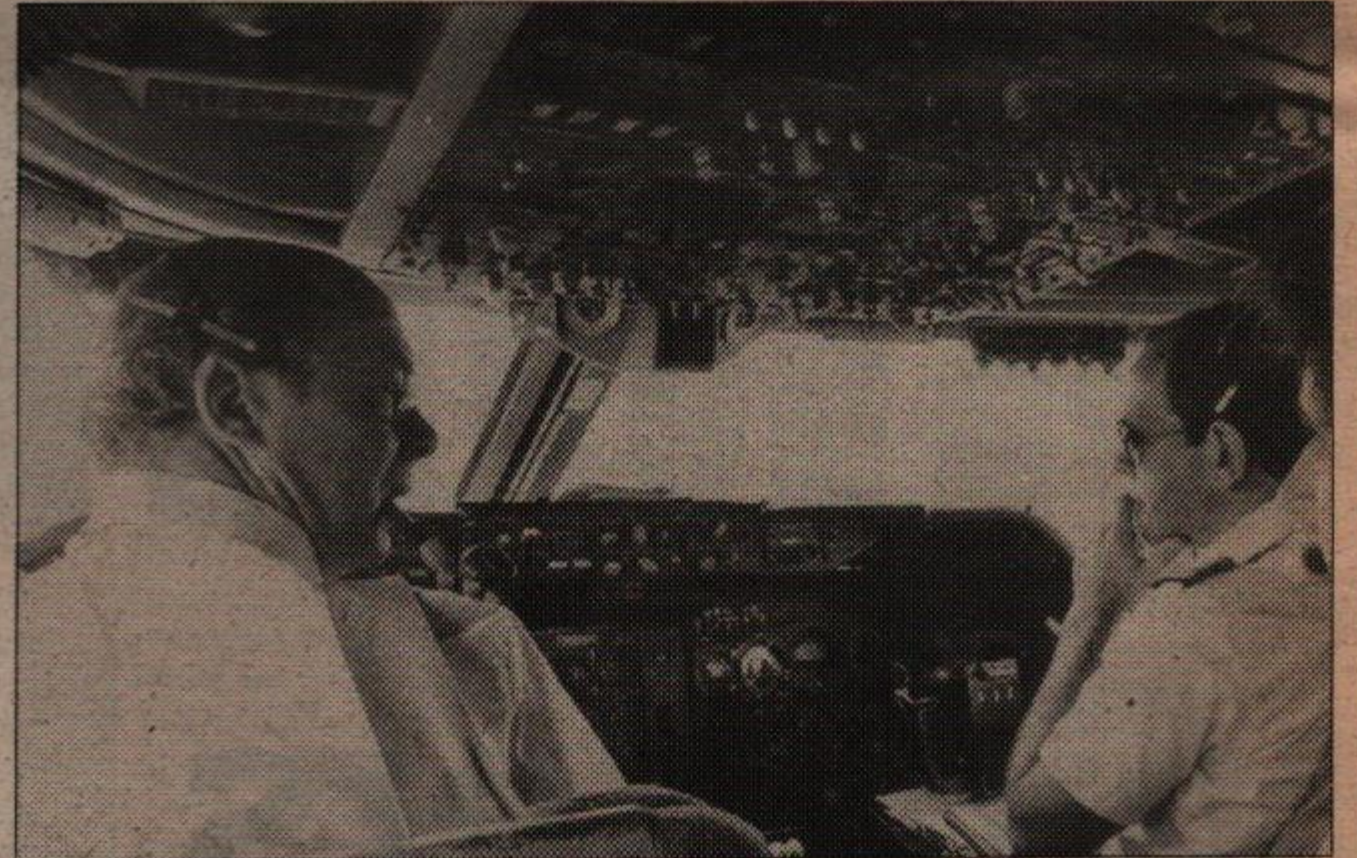
"When the screen goes blank you can smell the fear in the control room. There can be scores of planes in the air, covering a mile every 5 to 10 seconds. But the pilots cannot get the immediate information they need from the radar unit.

## We just hope

"We report the failure to the pilot, who then has to try and remember all the other information he's been told in the last half-hour. Anything could happen. The computer crash which makes the screens go blank takes at least 30 minutes to put right. We stop all planes taking off, then we just hope.

"We switch to manual and procedural operations. But this can't guarantee safe flying.

"A complete computer crash or FLOP (Functional Lapse in Operating Procedure) is rare. More frequent are



Cockpit of a Jumbo Jet — pilots face nightmare of computer black-out.

partial FLOPS caused by overloading of the computer and programming problems, when the computer can lose vital bits of information.

"West Drayton (London), Manchester and Prestwick (Scotland), Britain's three Air Traffic Control Centres, all face increasingly frequent FLOPs, increasing the potential for crashes and near misses.

"But the reason is lack of investment. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), responsible for British air traffic, bought an IBM 360 computer from the USA 20 years ago. The 20 year-old system, 9020D, is used solely for flights at 18,000 feet or higher. To save money, the British bought the IBM360 for £8 million but not the additional IBM ARTS system, used for low-level flying. They tried to bend their own system to perform the same task.

"Both systems need regular modifications. But after 20 years of changes, the modifications are increasingly bodged, leading to computer malfunctions.

"Instead of investing in an integrated system, the CAA just muddles on. Prestwick and Manchester have computers that cannot even talk to each other (i.e. interface). The old computer is also under pressure because traffic is so much greater now.

"The CAA recently announced a £250 million investment programme, but only a minimal amount of this will

go on computer modifications. They tried to find a cheap way out, spending £50 million on a planned scheme at London Air Traffic Control Centre. But after 7 years the plan had to be scrapped.

## Staff shortages

"Staff cutbacks and productivity drives have increased the likelihood of accidents through human error. Two years ago the CAA offered early retirement to everyone. Now we are short of staff. It takes three years to train a controller so we will be short for a long time. The CAA are now desperately employing people who failed part of their training.

"Demoralisation and pressure is up so much that this year sickness has risen by 50 per cent, so there are even more staff shortages.

"Symptoms of stress are widespread. Like any workers we used to have a laugh sometimes at work but now laughs are few and far between. People get obsessed with the noise levels in the ops room.

"The CAA, which is supposed to control this chaos, is a government appointed board which is expected to be funded by levying the airlines, who want to keep costs down. So the CAA can't police the industry effectively. The airways are still a relatively safe form of transport but this is due to the efforts of the workers in the industry."

# Post strike: build for all-out action

NEVER BEFORE have all postal workers been under such attacks. Our union, the UCW, needs a fighting leadership to link together all the attacks and turn the conference decision into action.

By Nigel Buckley,

branch sec, Richmond and Twickenham Amal, personal capacity

Difficult Recruitment Areas Supplement (Dras) is another attempt to break up national pay bargaining. Already we have suffered through the shorter working week deal (where bonuses were eroded), and the introduction of casual labour. But Dras is the most blatant assault, provocatively introduced by 'executive action', so by-passing the union. Management only need to try

to attract staff with 'supplements' because basic pay is so low. Dras isn't like London weighting. Look at the strings. Only areas with six per cent or less unemployment will be considered. Only new entrants are eligible and even this is at management's discretion.

Management can arbitrarily decide to disqualify you for any late attendances, 'poor work performances' or a disciplinary record. Union members will have no right to appeal against disqualification. Members will be divided in workplaces and nationally.

Dras will be funded by taking money from areas of high unemployment where people are forced to accept whatever is on offer and the Post Office finds no difficulty recruiting.

If management take 'executive action' again in reorganising

transfer of mail bags in and out of London (LION), all out strike action is planned by offices affected, including staff at Royal Mail stations in central London.

## Mass meeting

Management want transfer of mail moved to drivers outside London who don't get the higher inner London allowance. Offices at Watford, Southall, Harrow, Romford, Kingston, Twickenham, Dartford, Croydon and Bromley will be hit. 2000 to 3000 jobs are at stake, including closing offices at Waterloo, London Bridge and Liverpool St and big job cuts at Euston, Kings Cross and St Pancras.

We must stand by the decision to strike if they go ahead. Members are also being balloted

over Crown Office closures, a precursor to privatisation. Another campaign is being waged to resist privatisation of Girobank.

The Post Office has declared war on its own staff and they won't budge without the full force of the union. The 24 hour stoppage should be a warning shot to management that further action will be taken if they don't back off.

Regional stoppages are not enough. Private couriers can put all their resources in one area to cover the work. But the shorter working week deal showed they couldn't handle the bulk of mail and couldn't cope with a national stoppage.

Every workplace should have a mass meeting to explain the issues and build for united all-out strike action to defeat Dras, Lion,

counter closures, privatisation and casualisation. We need allowances that reflect members' needs and which mean we don't rely on overtime. There must be no divisive deals.

For decent pay and a national basic rate for all grades and a minimum wage of £135 a week for new entrants.

Privatisation is a central plank in the Tories' strategy both to break up the big public sector unions and line the pockets of big business. The government also use drastic public sector cut to try to keep the rest of the economy afloat.

We must campaign to kick out the Tories and bring in a Labour government committed to real socialist policies including re-nationalising all privatised post office assets under workers' control and management.

# Tories give go-ahead for shoot-to-kill

THE SHOOTING of three IRA members in Omagh, just a few miles from the scene of the bus bombing in which eight young British soldiers died, has all the hallmarks of an SAS Gibraltar-style revenge killing.

By Militant reporters

The SAS-men, in plain clothes, laid in wait, then sprayed their victims' car with machine-gun fire and were hurriedly airlifted away by helicopter.

The Tory government has decided against internment recognising the propaganda gift they gave to the IRA when they introduced it in 1972. But instead the security forces are stepping up surveillance on known IRA activists and it seems are prepared to strike ruthlessly when they have the opportunity. No attempt was made at Omagh to apprehend the three who were shot down.

## Bloodthirsty

In the aftermath of the bus bomb the Tory press in Britain were calling for a shoot to kill policy against the IRA. It seems their demands have been met. The bloodthirsty *Sun* described the latest killings as "a clinically-planned revenge ambush."

But it is the methods of the IRA of individual terror that have created a



British Army patrol in Belfast.

climate of anger and revulsion, where such ruthless state repression will be accepted by many in Britain and Ireland. Their methods have signally failed to remove the troops from the North and they offer no solutions for the problems of Catholic and Protestant workers.

The previous weekend's

violence on the streets of Northern Ireland confirms the necessity for the labour movement to intervene with a programme to unite the working class.

## Petrol bombs

There was an IRA show of force against the extradition of Robert Russell, an

IRA member, from the South.

But it was not just IRA activity. In the Bombay Street area of Belfast, burned down in loyalist attacks in 1969, loyalist bigots clambered over an 8-9 ft 'peace line', entering the Catholic area and petrol-bombing local homes. There were a number of

shooting incidents as well.

Only the labour movement can ensure that sectarianism is not allowed to endanger the lives of ordinary workers.

And as we pointed out (*Militant* 26 August) only a united working class movement can force the troops out of Northern Ireland; the tactics of the IRA only hinder the growth of such a movement.

There is a tense stalemate in Northern Ireland, regularly erupting into tragic incidents of violence. This can only be broken by the labour movement.

A socialist programme tackling the problems of mass unemployment and deprivation would be a great pole of attraction to workers in both Catholic and Protestant areas. It alone could unite the Irish working class, end the presence of the British troops and re-unify Ireland.

Since 1972, Militant supporters in Ireland have been fighting for workers' unity, a non-sectarian socialist alternative in Northern Ireland and an end to capitalism north and south.

Get your copy of *Militant* Irish paper. £3 for six issues. From: Circulation Dept, 3/13, Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.



Dylan Meale.

## Police assault carnival goers

AT THE end of the Notting Hill carnival, one float surrounded by 2-300 revellers was still dancing the night away. Six members of the Labour Party Young Socialists joined in.

With no warning whatsoever and without the slightest provocation, a police van sped into the crowd and 20 police officers appeared and started violently clearing the area. They threw people to the ground and caused havoc.

Norwood LPYS member Dylan Meale was one of the first to be grabbed and assaulted by the special snatch squad which came from the van. Paul Couchman from Southall and Richard Mongan from Southampton tried to stop him being beaten and ended up in the same position — on the floor, hands cuffed behind their backs, getting all hell kicked out of them.

All three have been charged and appear in Marylebone magistrates' court on 19 September at 10 am.

A hospital visit next day showed they had 15 injuries between them. Dylan's nose was broken. An appeal has been organised to pay for their costs. All donations to Paul Couchman, 16, The Watertower, Southall, Middlesex UB1 1QU, cheques payable to West London YTURC.

Attempts to prevent the carnival going ahead must be fought by the whole London labour movement. We look forward to a better carnival in 1989. (See page 4).

# Make September Militant month

MILITANT HAS launched a major sales drive for September. If all our sellers and readers take part, we can get record sales and give everyone the chance to buy *Militant*. You can help, even if you have just read us for the first time.

Set yourself a target for how many you can sell. Sellers in Manchester recently trebled their average sales through a campaign. Those who had never sold more than 20 sold 50, those who had never sold before reached 10. One single parent reached her target of 75 sales, and a young AUEW member sold 50 at

# SELL Militant

his workplace.

Follow the example of Alistair Bishop from Falkirk, who sold 12 papers in an hour on his first ever public sale.

In the first two weeks in September, over a million young people will register for courses

in F.E colleges. Stalls should be set up in the entrance halls, and sales started at canteens and college gates.

Articles on the poll tax and Housing Action Trusts are great for estate sales. Over 60 papers were sold on the Black Lions estate in the West Midlands, earmarked for sale to a HAT. In Edinburgh 21 and 25 copies were sold outside a hospital and a supermarket using the poll tax front page.

September's campaign should establish sales in major workplaces, at factory gates, shop stewards' meetings and union

branches. Are you a shop steward? Could you or your union branch take out an order?

Every first time buyer should become a regular reader and seller. Build up a network of readers down every street, in every workplace, school and college. Sue Wilkie sold 23 down her own street. Six of them are now regulars and one person was interested in selling *Militant*.

If you want to take out an order, become a seller or increase your order, contact the circulation department on 01 533 3311.

# Mass campaign against poll tax

THE CAMPAIGN against the poll tax has been boosted by the unanimous decision of the West of Scotland National Union of Students to affiliate to the Strathclyde Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Organisations and call their members on a half-day strike on 13 September.

By Militant reporters

All over Scotland anti-poll tax unions (APTUs) are mobilising for a week of action between 10 and 17 September to demonstrate the support for a campaign on non-payment.

On the 13th the Scottish TUC has called an 11-minute stoppage. Many workers are demanding it be turned into a one-day general strike. On the 10th there will be marches in Scottish cities and towns; the following Saturday will see a massive lobby of the special conference of the Scottish Labour Party in Govan Town Hall.

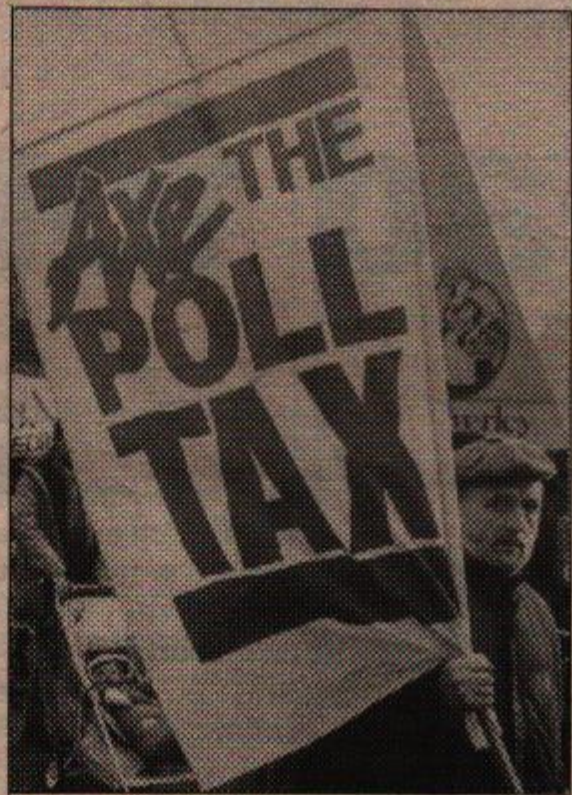
The *Guardian* has conceded that a large swathe of the Labour Party in Scotland wants to campaign against payment. *Militant* supporters, especially in Glasgow Pollok, have played a major part in engendering this reaction. The *Guardian* scornfully refers to them "meddling in a handful of Scottish constituencies".

In Pollok however, where a magnificent mass movement is being built, it is the Labour Party's national officers who are "meddling". Instead of sending in people to assist the struggle, they are holding an inquiry to prepare the ground for the expulsion of prominent anti-poll tax leaders.

Even the Scottish party or-

ganiser, Jimmy Allison, is reported to be angry at action being taken over his head.

Activists have welcomed the move for a 'Committee of 100 prominent people' who will personally refuse to pay the poll tax. At least a dozen Labour MPs have expressed support, including John Hume Robertson and Robin Cook, who has been banned by the Shadow Cabinet from speaking publicly in support of it.



Although this falls well short of the mass campaign of non-payment advocated by the APTUs, it has exposed the right-wing argument that there is no support for non-payment and legitimised the principle.

If it is acceptable for 'prominent people' to break the law by not paying, how can mass non-payment by a million working-class families be wrong? Although the 'committee of 100' have no intention of leading such a campaign, their stand will inevitably

draw more workers to that conclusion.

In England, support for non-payment is growing too. 100 people at a meeting in Wallsend heard Ron Brown MP say that most working-class rights were won by illegality and that this was necessary over the poll tax to save thousands from despair.

Deryck Marsh, one of the 'magnificent seven' Labour councillors who are calling on North Tyneside Council to refuse to implement the poll tax, outlined how the Tories were using the poll tax to attack Labour councils, especially those trying to improve services.

The majority at the meeting signed up to help to form an APTU. Some joined the Labour Party and Young Socialists there and then.

50 attended a meeting in Chester, addressed by Pat Brown from the Glasgow Bridgeton APTU. Chester's wealthiest resident, the Duke of Westminster, the tenth richest man in the world, who owns 10,500 acres around the city, will be paying the same £238 poll tax as the residents of the Blacon estate, Cheshire's poorest, with horrendous living conditions and mass unemployment.

On an estate sale in North Kensington, out of 30 people spoken to, 26 signed a petition against the poll tax and ten bought *Militant*. Council tenants there are already paying £55 a week rent for two-bedroomed high-rise flats with no central heating.

This could rise to £250 a week if the estates are sold off to a private landlord under the Housing Act. For these people 'can't pay, won't pay' the poll tax is more than a slogan; it is a fact.

# 'No socialism this century'

LEADING Euro-communists in the Communist Party of Great Britain (CP) no longer believe that fundamental change will come about through class struggle.

By Ben Eastop

Their latest discussion document marks another stage in their degeneration. The party which began by inheriting the ideas and traditions of the Bolshevik revolution is set to abandon the last remnants of Marxism.

Eight leading Euro-communists drew up the document as a prelude to redrafting the party's British Road to Socialism next year.

But the document is so blatantly anti-Marxist that even the party's general secretary, Gordon MacLennan, and leading 'theoretician' Monty Johnstone (who helped write it) have disowned it. The divisions could herald new splits, and possibly a fourth communist party being set up.

*Facing up to the Future* is well to the right of what the average Labour Party member would find acceptable. Many policies are identical to Labour's right wing's programme epitomised by Bryan Gould, even using the same phrases.

Gould himself praises the Euro-communists' new turn in the *Guardian*. Yet he was shouted down at last year's Labour Party conference for advocating worker share ownership, part of the programme in the new document.

Gould looks enviously at his co-thinkers in the CP. Labour, he complains in the *Guardian*, is "imprisoned" by its past achievements" and a "hostage to its aspirations".

The Communist Party is less constrained because as a small reformist sect it is actually more remote from the working class than Labour's right wing leaders with their union links and overwhelmingly larger membership. Gould no doubt dreams of a Labour Party freed of its socialist traditions, so he can carry on class collaboration in peace.

The CP document attacks the left in the labour movement for keeping alive "old policies" for an old world. It calls for the building of a "new order", built on an "alliance of social forces". But apart from the trendy phrases, it is the same unsuccessful programme adopted by successive right wing Labour governments.

The whole document tries to give a 'theoretical' justification for right wing reformism's programme. Like Labour's right, its authors believe that a more just and equitable society can be created within the capitalist system.

The economy will be "modernised" by boosting investment, training and research. The document talks of developing "an expanding popular culture of social ownership" and, parroting the new 'thinking' of Kinnock and Hattersley, say the market is "the best way to co-ordinate lots of economic decisions."

Instead of workers' control:

"Legislation could be passed forcing the top 200 companies to make over 10 to 15 per cent of their shares to workers' trusts"... "To have a tangible sense of ownership people have to be able to sell their shares"!

These 'communists' are a million miles from understanding ordinary workers. If workers buy shares, it's like betting on horses. If a 'win' comes up it's a bonus - a holiday abroad or some luxuries. In no sense do they consider it will bring them a controlling stake in a company.

The document mistakes the symptoms of capitalist crisis for the building blocks of a new society. Thus "the towns in the new growth corridors - Swindon, Basingstoke, Silicon Glen - are the cauldrons of the new order. The cultures of steel towns, coal towns and textile towns are in decline". This ignores the crisis in the British electronics industry which could only snatch a quarter of the new growth in the market.

But the most breathtaking break with Marxism is the denial of class struggle. "Class in modern capitalism is not the product of a single polarisation between the ruling class, which owns the means of production, and a working class of wage labourers".

The authors see the bitter battles by miners, nurses, seafarers and car workers as a thing of the past. The looming confrontation between workers and the capitalists' Tory government on poll tax and the Housing Bill is not class struggle.

They no longer see a collective interest in socialism - only an alliance of disparate groups. There is no class identity, but workers who somehow are both exploiters and the exploited in 'contradicting class positions'.

They are taken in by Thatcher's claim that there is no society, only individuals and by the apparent support for Thatcher's attack on state interference. So they want an enabling state (the phrase of Kinnock and David Owen), "to enable people to come up with their own solutions to problems."

But the real programme of Marxism means public ownership, an economic plan and democratic workers' control of industry and the state. This would generate the resources to solve all the daily problems of working people, individually and collectively, and insure against state bureaucracy. This will require the decisive act of class struggle, which will genuinely put the mass of ordinary people in control of society.

Just like Labour's right, the Euro-communists are contemptuous of the power and ability of the working class to fight Thatcher and capitalism. It is they not the workers who have been knocked off course by the Thatcher years.

At least Gordon MacLennan was frank at the press conference to launch the document when he said: "Socialism will not be made in the 1990s or the first decade of the next century by this strategy."



OVER HALF a million people, young and old, black and white, enjoyed the floats, costumes, food, music and dance at Europe's biggest street festival, the Notting Hill carnival.

The attendance was far lower than last year's 1.5 million. Many were scared off by weeks of anti-carnival propaganda from the press and police.

There were no major incidents but a very tense atmosphere from the presence of 9,000 police with video cameras. They swooped on groups of people, seemingly for no reason, to snatch people from the crowd and search them.

The number of crimes reported, 192, was very low considering the large numbers of people there, but the number of arrests, 160, was higher than last year.

The police chiefs seemed determined to stop the carnival being an enjoyable event where black and white mix freely.

*Militant* sellers were received enthusiastically and our "smash apartheid" stickers could be seen everywhere.

# DANGER

## YOUNG WORKERS AT RISK

I AM the health and safety rep at my workplace. Every month I get the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents magazine.

The magazine gives reports of accidents that have ended up in court. Most accidents happen to 16-20 year olds who have not had adequate training on health and safety. Here is an example from July's issue:

"While steam cleaning an 18 year old youth was killed instantly after an electrical short in badly maintained equipment. His employer, who ran a vehicle repair firm, was fined £1000 and £891 costs in a crown court after he admitted that he had

put his workers at risk through the manner in which he conducted his business."

Often employers are not even fined this much for the loss of young lives. The suffering for the families of these youth is incalculable and I feel some of these small cowboy firms should be closed down.

But it is the labour movement's responsibility to protect young workers. Unions should be going into small workplaces and recruiting young people who, once organised, can put pressure on employers to maintain health and safety standards.

By Colin Scullion  
Glasgow Nalgo

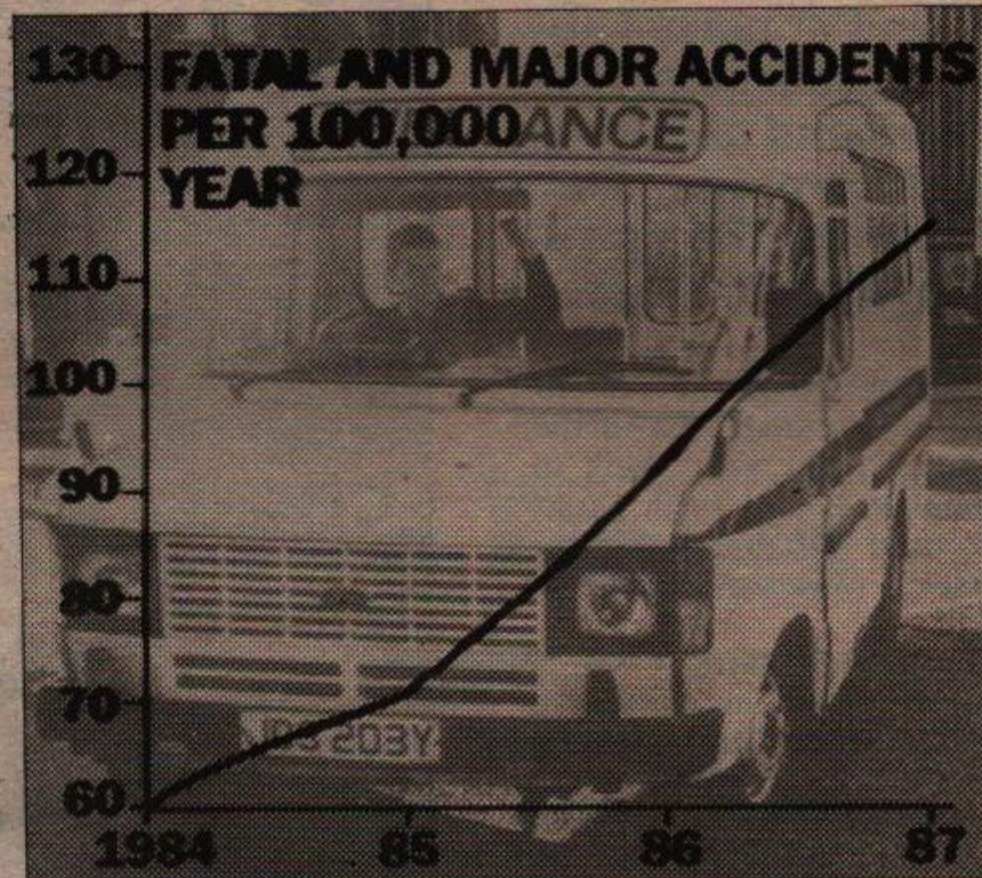
FATAL AND major injuries on YTS have soared, as the graph (right) shows. Most worrying of all there was an increase of 67 per cent in 1987 alone, suggesting more to come.

As from next week about 90,000 young people will have their dole cut and be forced onto YTS. Safety is bound to worsen.

Militant and the Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign have continuously pointed out the safety scandal on the schemes. But the number of schemes closed or refused on safety grounds is actually falling.

Perhaps this is because only 0.15 of workplaces are actually visited by Training Commission safety officers. The Training Commission washes its hands of trainees' safety by saying that the prime responsibility for it lies with the providers of places. In other words with cheap labour employers who are all too keen to cut costs on safety for the sake of their profits.

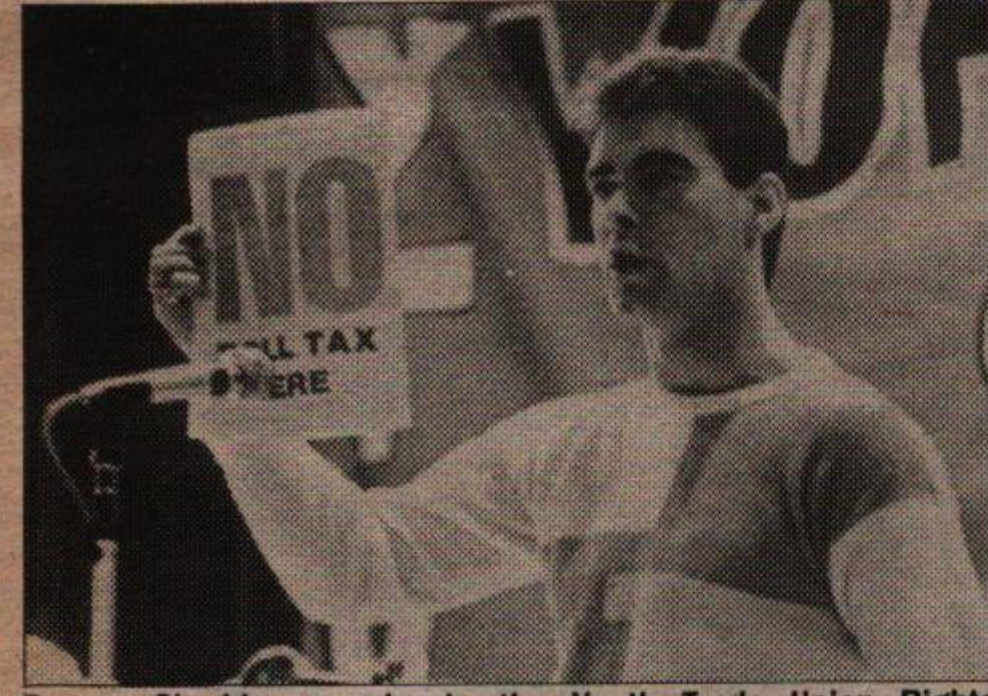
By Mark Meredith  
YTURC national chair



# YTS

## CONSCRIPTION STARTS

## BANNED UNION TAKES OFF



Tommy Sheridan speaks to the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign conference on the poll tax.

STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL council has tried to ban campaigning against the poll tax at Helen Langside FE college. But this only encouraged 85 students to attend a Students Against The Poll Tax meeting on 25 August.

The council tried to prevent the anti-poll tax union from having a stall at the freshers' fair on the grounds that it was an 'outside body' (see Militant 910). Now the assistant director of educa-

tion has shifted his ground and claims the council could be deemed to be supporting the union because a stall would use the college's heat and light.

The council claims this is in breach of the Tories' Local Government Act. Earlier this year Strathclyde tried to ban gay and lesbian societies because of the same piece of legislation.

Local councillor Bill Millar was asked to attend but did not turn up, although jour-

nalists from major Scottish papers did. They heard anti-poll tax campaigner Tommy Sheridan get a rapturous response from the meeting. He told students to spread the non-payment of poll tax message throughout their

neighbourhoods and join the mass campaign against the tax.

At the end students flocked to join the 'banned' anti-poll tax union.

By A Scottish NUS executive member

## FE STUDENTS ENROL IN LABOUR'S YOUTH

THIS WEEK students are enrolling for a new academic year. They face poverty grants, cuts and the Tories' education 'reforms'.

The Labour Party Young Socialists are launching a recruitment drive in FE colleges to organise students and trainees to fight the Tory attacks. The Labour Party Young Socialists and Further Education Labour Students demand:

- ★ A £35 minimum grant for all school leavers;
- ★ Union rights and rates of pay on YTS;
- ★ Access to education for all working people with time off on full pay.
- ★ A guaranteed job or place in higher education after a college course or YTS;
- ★ Funding for student unions at polytechnic levels;
- ★ For a fighting, democratic NUS with socialist policies.

## FIGHT FOR A FUTURE



### Scottish Rally

THE TORIES' poll tax will hit young people the hardest. In Glasgow youth in low-paid jobs will be expected to pay £529. Unemployed youth will be expected to pay 20 per cent, that's £105 from the social security benefits the Tories have already cut.

Many young people will be forced onto the streets in an attempt to escape the tax.

The youth of Glasgow are saying enough is enough. Our message is clear. We won't let the Tories destroy our future; we won't pay the poll tax.

This weekend will see the biggest gathering yet of young people coming together to discuss how to fight the Tories' latest attack. Baillieston Labour Party Young Socialists have called a rally on Saturday 3 September.

The main discussion will be organising the youth fight back against the poll tax. We'll also be discussing what type of Labour Party young people want - one that will fight the poll tax, YTS conscrip-

tion and low pay or a 'New Realist' one. Come along and let your voice be heard.

No poll tax here - for a mass campaign of non-payment!

By a Glasgow young socialist

Baillieston Labour Party Young Socialists  
**Fight the poll tax rally**  
Saturday 3 September  
10am

St Mungo's School  
Crown Point Street

Glasgow Speakers:  
Tommy Sheridan  
David Marshall MP  
Paula Hanford  
(LPYS national chair)  
Paula Cavan  
(LPYS national committee)

## Outward bound

MICHELLE LLOYD from Swansea was sacked from her hairdressing YTS scheme because she refused to abssail down cliffs and canoe down river rapids while on an outward bound course.

From Rally, the bulletin of Garston LPYS

## ILEA ABOLITION MEANS CHAOS

THE INNER London Education Authority (Ilea) will be abolished by the Tories' new Education Bill, even though 96 per cent of parents voted against abolition in a ballot.

It will mean crisis for London's education. £93 million were cut last year. Twenty per cent cuts are proposed next year. And there will be 40 per cent cuts when Ilea is abolished.

London has had a single education authority for over a century. Now individual boroughs will have to take over its responsibilities and it is clear they don't know what they are doing. What will happen to London-wide

bases like the drama and tape studio and the annexes in the country for residential study?

Obviously the boroughs will not have the funds to support Ilea's special facilities. Courses have to become 'cost effective'. Every reform that the directly elected Ilea came up with will be sacrificed to the Tories' profit-and-loss dogma.

FE students and school students are angry at this attack on state education in the capital, as are Ilea trade unionists and parents. But their anger has not been used effectively by the Ilea leaders.

Their campaign has consisted of gestures. At the same time they have put through cuts. Now they have given up.

This term we must build school students unions and mass Labour clubs in the FE colleges. We must fight in the student unions for a united battle with the trade unions in the colleges. A united strategy must be drawn up to stop the Tories' attacks on state education in London and throughout the country.

By Matthew Pledger  
General secretary  
Kingsway college students union

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS  
**SMASH PINOCHET**  
FOR A Socialist CHILE!  
September 11th 5pm doors open  
6pm Rally followed by DISCO!  
Entrance £1or 3or 10.40  
Oxford House, Dorchester St.  
Bristol Green Rd  
all welcome - stalls - refresh available



## Reptile house

"WELCOME, YOU Reptile," said a banner in a New York apartment block when one new tenant arrived. The fond greeting was for the building's landlord Morris Gross whom a judge had sentenced to a \$16,000 fine and a term of 15 days in one of his own buildings.

Gross had committed 438 violations of the city's building code, leading to falling plaster, broken walls and numerous maintenance faults. He turned up with bodyguards, workmen and a new radiator.

But his sentence must have made some impression: within a months four-fifths of the buildings faults had been put right.

The Tories want to sell our council estates to property sharks like Gross. They are not likely to have to suffer living in their own properties, even for 15 days.

## Police sell

LANDLORDS IN suburban London can get into practice just in case they fall foul of the law. Property Weekly advertises a "Totally unique and appealing semi-detached bungalow formed from a listed converted police cell built c. 1854".

The asking price was £124,950. It's in the pleasant riverside area of Thames Ditton and with a double bedroom, luxury kitchens and gardens, so it's not quite Wormwood Scrubs. But sanity and the housing market just don't seem to mix, do they?

## No entry

REMEMBER HOW the western media used to tell horror stories about eastern European states denying the right to emigrate?

Nowadays, at least in Hungary and Poland, getting an exit visa is a formality. So are the Poles and Hungarians flooding into the west to enjoy the benefits of living under capitalism?

Well no, because their problem now is to get an entry visa. At west European consulates in Warsaw, there are longer queues than at the butchers'. Hundreds wait for days, weeks or months to be let into the 'free' world.

Most applications for political asylum are now immediately rejected. British officials stamp Polish passports to forbid their holders to ask for asylum or a visa extension.

## Advisers

DESPITE THE Labour Party's near bankruptcy, the NEC has given the go-ahead for hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of computer equipment, against the advice of computer experts who support Labour.

Cheaper systems are available and the system is incompatible with what constituency Labour parties use. The person who advised the NEC which system to buy reportedly stands to gain £100,000. Must be the same advisers who tell the right wing how to get votes.

## People at work document

# Workers' champion — or referee?

LABOUR  
POLICY  
REVIEW

LABOUR'S POLICY review documents are intended to show what kind of party Labour will be in the next few years. In the second of our series on the documents, BILL MULLINS looks at the statement on 'People at Work'.

THE TRADE unions set up the Labour Party to defend the working class in the House of Commons. They were there to fight ruthless employers and their party, the Tories, who used Parliament and the courts to attack workers' right to strike.

But this policy review doesn't see a future Labour government as a decisive weapon, in the hands of the organised working class movement. Its authors see Labour's role as an arbitrator in the class struggle.

Labour's right wing leadership refused to give full support to the miners, they considered striking health workers an embarrassment. Now they want to turn the Labour Party into another ACAS.

## Ruthless capitalism

Britain under Thatcher is just as much ruled by ruthless capitalism as at the turn of the century. But Labour under Kinnock with the policy review is far removed from the hopes of the early rank and file Labour pioneers.

Nowhere in the document is the word socialism even mentioned. Instead the authors accept that "for the economy, efficient use of the workforce is the basis for the efficient production of goods and services." What they are accepting in fact is the right of management to manage, within the capitalist, 'market' economy that they are now committed to.

They provide facts and figures about the changes in the workforce — more women workers, more part-time workers. But apparently Labour should be "providing means of resolving the conflicts of interest arising from change." They propose a "regulatory framework to minimise conflict."

So Labour's right wing recognises that capitalism means conflict between workers and the owners of capital. But they believe their job is to act as referee.

Trade unionists would welcome parts of the document. The section 'enhancing the quality of life at work' condemns the Tories for "whittling away the basic employment rights of workers," which is "producing a severe deterioration in the working environment of millions of workers."

But this is not due purely to the Tories, though they have undermined many aspects of past legislation which gave some protection to working people. It is mainly the result of the crisis of capitalism.

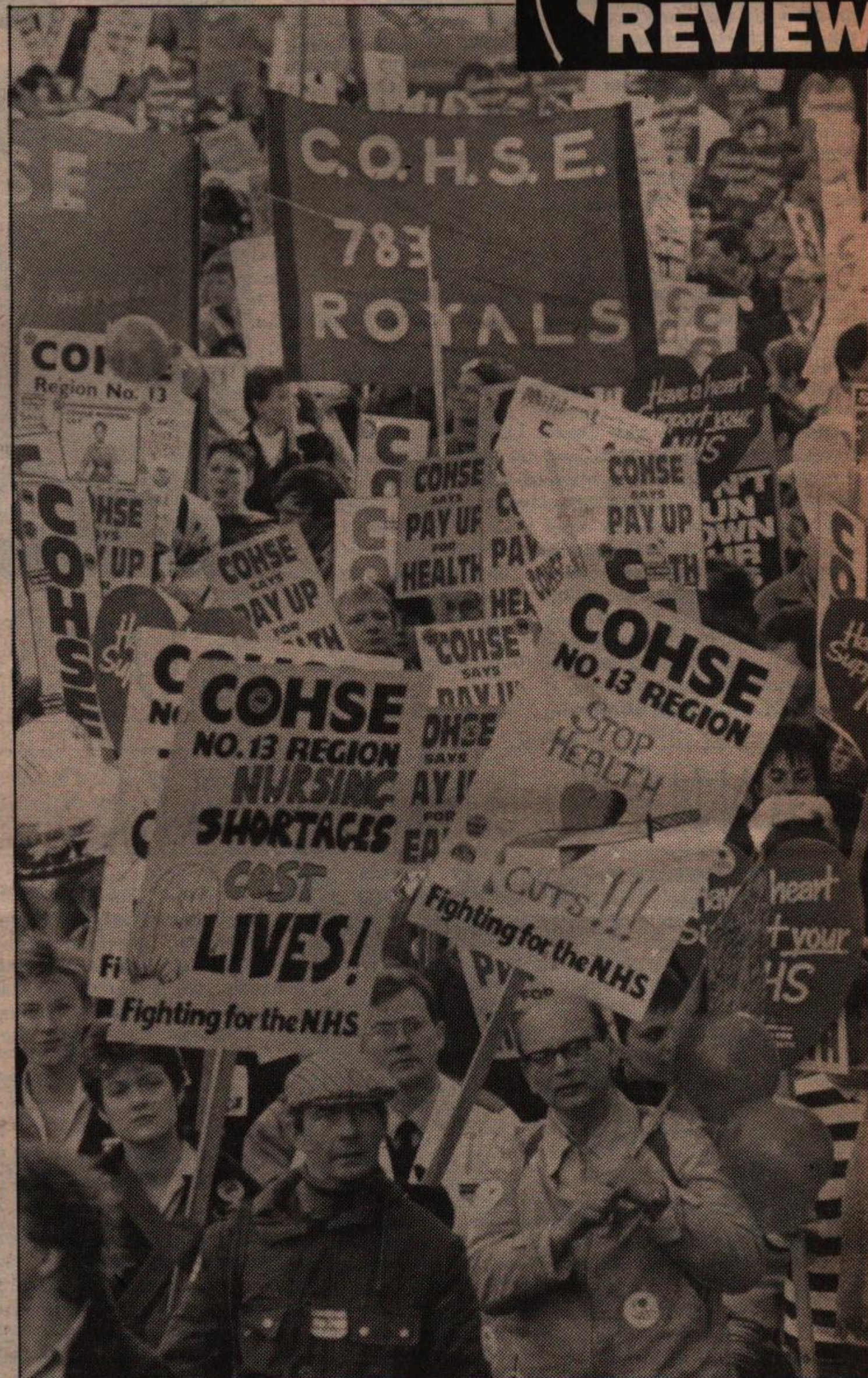
The new regime of fear meted out by capitalist management has been based on the menacing increase in unemployment and the inability of the trade union leaders to lead a fightback.

To counteract all this, the document proposes to introduce a 'charter of employment rights.' Unfortunately it does not go beyond vague phrases — "fair disciplinary procedure...new health and safety laws...a minimum hourly rate."

Labour and trade union conferences have passed many resolutions which taken together could provide a real charter of employment rights. Nupe and the TGWU have set £125 as their modest figure for a minimum wage.

A concrete programme could mobilise millions of workers behind the Labour Party. The document steers well clear of any such commitments; it seems to be based on a 'do-gooders' approach to people at work.

In the section 'job satisfaction', for example, it considers "the design of machinery and workplaces." But for or-



Trade unionists on the 5 March NHS demonstration. Workers want a fighting Labour Party, not a conciliation service.

inary people, alienation from the workplace is endemic to the capitalist mode of production. It will increase as the crisis grows deeper.

Workers will not come to accept their position in the productive process nor co-operate in raising production and efficiency through 'designer workplaces'. It will rather be through their own control and management of the factories and offices, based on public ownership of the economy.

## Toothless committees

But the section of the document on 'employee participation' tries to square the circle. The last Labour government in the seventies commissioned the Bullock report which recommended worker-directors and joint union/management boards. The new document is even a retreat on that. It proposes workers' involvement should concentrate only on "day to day issues."

Implicitly they are saying workers should have no control over the major decisions affecting their working lives — investment, closures, mergers and takeovers. Instead it proposes "workplace forums" where "day to day issues can be considered by employers and management." Labour stands for universal, toothless consultative committees!

The most important section is devoted to a "new regulatory framework." Here it

outlines the anti-union laws passed by the Tories in 1980, '82, '84 and '88. It draws attention to the most vicious aspects, like the 1988 'scabs' charter which prevents unions taking disciplinary measures against minorities defying majority decisions for industrial action.

The document promises to remove these from the statute book. But it intends to keep the legal obligation, imposed by the Tories, to secret ballots before strikes and for union executive elections. It intends to incorporate these provisions into union rule books.

Militant has been to the fore in demanding full trade union democracy — all union officials to be subject to regular election and to earn no more than those they represent. But this should be fought for within the unions and not imposed. Labour must stand for the complete independence of unions from the state and no interference by the law.

Union members must decide whether unions vote on strikes by ballot or mass meetings — the main consideration must be to allow for the maximum discussion.

The Tories are now introducing measures for postal ballots precisely to hinder discussion. Workers will be isolated and subject to the propaganda of the capitalist press. This document waters down even Labour's limited previous commitments and as such it should be opposed.

# Poll tax hits blacks harder

**BLACK AND Asian families have faced nine years of unrelenting attacks from the Tories. We are twice as likely to be unemployed; we have suffered a startling increase in racial attacks; many Asian families continue to face separation or deportations as further racist immigration legislation has come into force. Now with the poll tax we will be hit harder even than most other workers.**

## Deprivation

Black and Asian families tend to be concentrated in the inner cities. It is there that deprivation and therefore the demands on local councils are greatest, and so poll tax will be at its highest. But black and

Asian workers generally have lower incomes than white households. They earn on average £20 a week less than white workers.

On top of this, black and Asian families are more likely to live in larger households where there are a number of adults, all individually liable for poll tax. Only three per cent of white households contain more than six adults, compared to 11 per cent of West Indian households and 29 per cent of Asians.

This is partly due to cultural ties, but also because of the very poverty these workers are forced into. It is almost impossible for young blacks or Asians to set up their own homes.

Many black and Asian families will have to pay three or four times their

present rate bill in poll tax.

A black family of four adults in Manchester will face a poll tax bill of £1088.

An Asian family of six adults in Bradford (which is not uncommon) will have to pay £1662. At least they can be pleased they do not live in Tower Hamlets where their community charge would be £3834.

## Overcrowding

Blacks and Asians are condemned to live in the most run-down and overcrowded conditions. Now under Thatcher's poll tax they will have to pay more for the privilege.

In an Asian area here in Bradford, 78 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households were overcrowded. 23 per cent of the

homes contain 10 or more people; a few contained 18. We are to be stung financially for this!

But those living in London, where half of the black and Asian population are to be found, will be hit hardest. 92 per cent of all ethnic minority households in inner London will lose out under poll tax. That is a recipe for real hardship for hundreds of thousands of families, but with a determined campaign also for a mass fightback from black and Asian workers.

Political refugees, migrants and others also fear that the poll tax register could be used for political or immigration purposes, particularly with this government's record on civil liberties.

In Scotland where the battle against poll tax is

getting into full swing, Asian workers have involved themselves in the anti-poll tax campaign. In Glasgow leaflets have been translated into Urdu and Punjabi and have been given out in Sikh temples.

## Fightback

Gurdial S. Soofi, secretary of Glasgow's Indian Workers' Association, is leading a campaign to make the Asian community aware of the full implications of poll tax. He is planning to organise door to door canvassing of Asian families to get them active in the campaign.

In Bradford a meeting organised by the Labour Party in an Asian area against the poll tax, attracted over 50, and 30 of

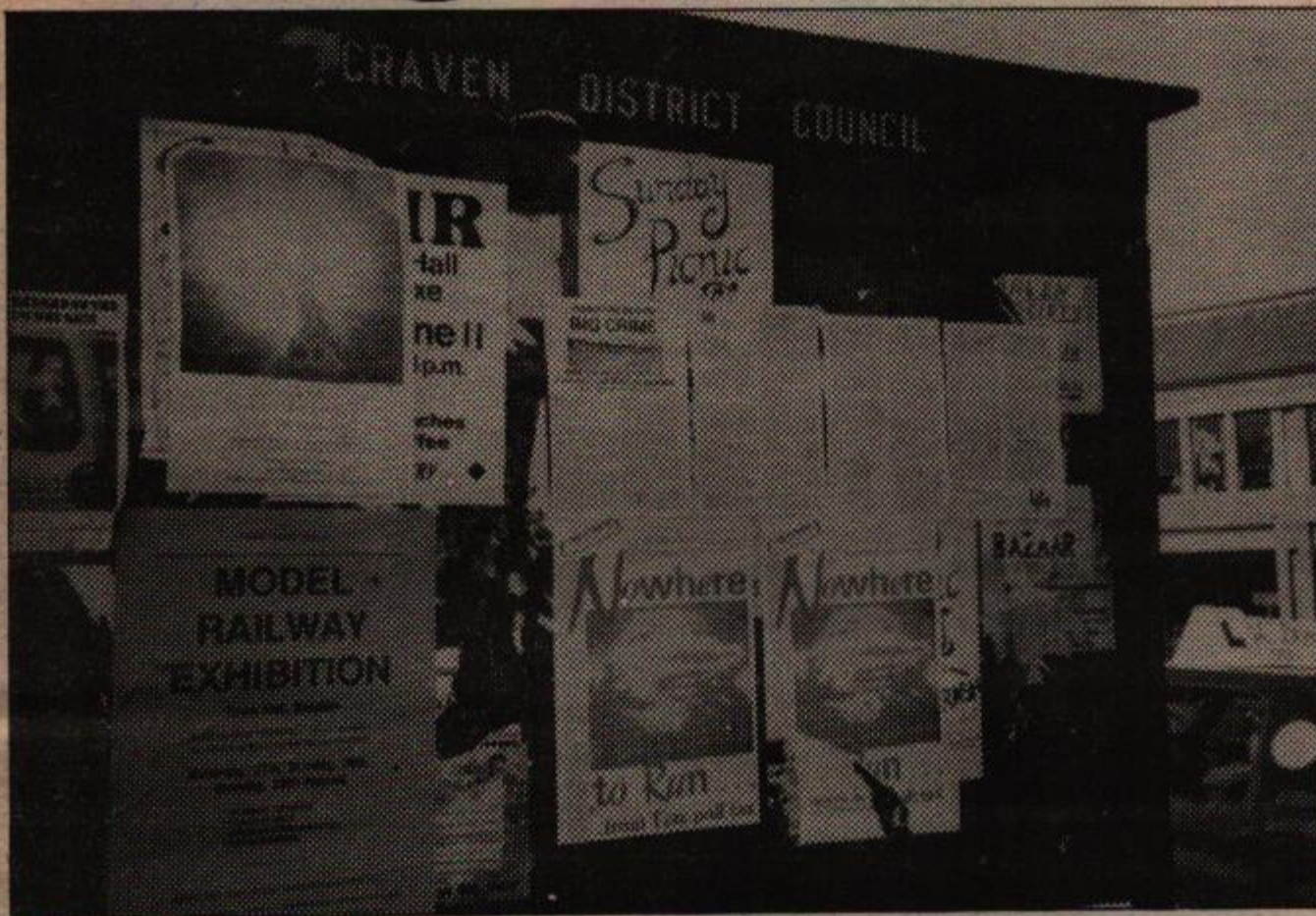
them agreed to join the Labour Party.

Black and Asian families will just not be able to pay the astronomical poll tax bills that will be presented to them. They will readily join anti-poll tax unions and sign up for a campaign of collective non-payment. The most isolated and exploited sections like Asian women and black youth, can be drawn in.

It will be in such a mass campaign that any barriers of language, culture and prejudice will be overcome, and unity of black and white workers forged. Together we can ensure a victory against the poll tax and against the Tory government.

**By an Asian Militant supporter in Bradford**

## Getting Militant in the Dales



Anti-poll tax posters adorn council notice board.

THE ANTI-poll tax campaign has hit the sleepy North Yorkshire town of Skipton.

Posters have been springing up around the town calling for a mass campaign of non-payment using

the design from the youth page of *Militant*.

70 copies of *Militant* were sold, with the headline: 'Scottish workers say no to poll tax.' We had people from all political parties signing a petition pledging not to pay.

After an article about the posters in the local paper, more posters appeared on council notice boards saying: 'Get Militant as advertised in the *Skipton Times*.'

Militant supporters have also got a resolution through the Skipton Labour Party branch backing the MPs who pledged not to pay poll tax. The branch also endorsed a campaign of door knocking using a petition drawn up by Militant supporters, and to organising meetings on all the estates.

Skipton is known as the gateway to the Dales; it could soon become the gateway to socialism!

By David Oselton, Skipton Labour Party

# WHERE TO FIND US

### EAST SCOTLAND

For details of meetings contact: Andrea Charles-031 659 6187.

### Edinburgh:

Fight the poll tax. Speaker - Bob Wylie 13, September Assembly Rooms 7.30pm

### STRATHCLYDE

For details of meetings contact: 041 221 1443.

### NORTHERN

For details of meetings contact: Bill Hopwood-091 276 1736.

### Newcastle:

Stop Workfare 8 September Moorside Community Centre 7.30 pm

### MERSEYSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Richard Venton-051 260 3111.

### SOUTH WEST

For details of meetings ring 0272 631471

### YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Henry Gregory-0709 371250.

### Huddersfield:

Fight the poll tax 18 September Birkby Community Centre, Waspnest Road Creche available

### MANCHESTER/LANCS

For details of meetings contact: Mike Johnson-061 273 8648.

### EAST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Andy Jackson-0602 623112.

### WEST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Bill Mullins-021 552 7624.

### WALES

For details of meetings contact: 0222 736682

### EASTERN

For details of meetings contact Teresa MacKay 0473 713179

### SOUTH EAST

For details of meetings phone 01 533 3311

### HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY

For meeting details phone 0703 786879

### LONDON

For details of meetings contact George Roberts-01 739 9123.

### Hayes:

Fight the poll tax 22 September Cranfield Park School 7.30 pm

### Hackney:

Fight the poll tax 22 September Chats Palace, Brooksby Walk 7.30pm



FORTRESS BOOKS are pleased to announce the impending publication (in mid-October) of our third book - the classic socialist autobiography *Out of the Night*. Acclaimed and attacked when originally published in 1941, it was outlawed in Germany, Italy and Russia.

Through the eyes of the author, Jan Valtin, it is possible to relive the hopes and the agonies of a whole generation of German workers as fascism crushed them in its terrible vice.

Despite the persecution of Valtin at the hands of both the Gestapo and the Kremlin's secret police, the book above all shows the power and self-sacrificing heroism of workers in struggle.

Republished now for the first time since 1941, it will have a new introduction by Peter Taaffe, photographs and a postscript based on new material about Valtin's life researched in the British Library and in New York.

The cover price will be £9.95 plus £2.00 postage for this 688 page hardback.

Order your copy now and get it for £7.95 plus 55p postage. Five copies for £35 post free.

By ordering your copy now you get it cheaper and you help Fortress Books prepare future titles.

Name.....

Address.....

Please send me.....copies. I enclose.....plus.....postage.

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## WHAT WE STAND FOR

- The immediate introduction of a 35 hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- A minimum wage of £135 a week, tied to the cost of living, for everyone including sick and disabled people.
- Reversal of Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, and the health service etc.
- Opposition to the Tories' anti-trade union laws and reversal of attacks on trade unions.
- Fight racism. Oppose all forms of racial discrimination. Labour movement action against racist and fascist attacks. End police harassment. Oppose all immigration controls. Unite black and white workers.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of nuclear holocaust.
- Workers' management of nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one third from the government.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.

# BECOME A Militant SUPPORTER

YOUR NEXT STEP...  
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT!

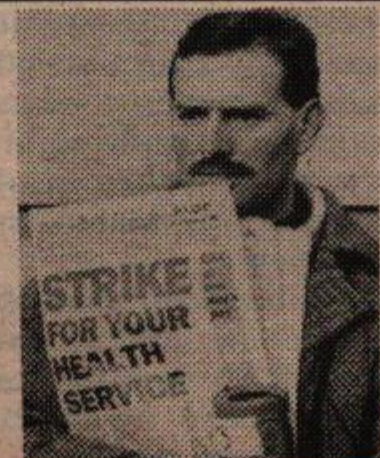
I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name.....

Address.....

Tel:.....

or telephone 01-533 3311 NOW!





THE EYES of the entire labour movement will be focused on the Trade Union Congress this week, which now seems certain to ratify the expulsion of the EETPU. This potentially represents the most fundamental split in the trade unions since the TUC's foundation.

Underlying the EETPU controversy is the central question of whether the TUC continues down the road of 'new realism' - the idea that workers won't fight, so there must be compromise with the Tories - or breaks with the past and places itself at the forefront of the struggles against the Tories and employers.

The Congress takes place against the background of one of the most bitter disputes in recent history - with P&O.

In addition, nurses, infuriated by the Tories renegeing on their pay deal, are again contemplating strike action. Unofficial strikes are continuing to engulf the Post Office and now a UCW ballot has given the executive an overwhelming mandate for industrial action. The building industry in London is in constant turmoil.

Yet the ideas of 'new realism' continue to dominate the thinking of not just the right wing but also of many formerly 'left' trade union leaders.

In practice this has meant the abandonment of struggle. Nupe members involved in the health service strikes earlier this year found that their picket lines had become 'protest lines' with candle-lit vigils and olympic torch relays being offered as the means to save the health service!

Unions, according to the likes of such leaders as Tom Sawyer, deputy general secretary of Nupe, are to make themselves more relevant to workers' needs, not by campaigning against low pay and for improved working conditions, but instead by providing ever more comprehensive benefit packages.

Whilst the EETPU leadership has rightly been condemned by TUC leaders for their single union, no-strike deals, this has not stopped other unions signing similar deals themselves.

In May, the *Financial Times* reported that the GMB, whose leaders played a prominent role in moves to draw up the TUC code to restrict single union, strike free accords, had signed two such deals in a month.

A recent report by Industrial Relations Services revealed that most trade unions are signing agreements that effectively exclude industrial action and in some cases rule out strikes altogether.

None of this offers any way forward for union members. At the Nissan car plant where the AEU has a single union, no-strike deal, union membership is as low as seven per cent. Why join a union when it has signed away its ability to fight to improve your pay and conditions in advance?

Enormous scope exists for extending trade unionism into traditionally low paid and unorganised areas where, predominantly, the workforce is made up of working class women often employed by the most reactionary, anti-union employers.

But these workers will only be convinced to join a union if that union shows itself to be a fighting force capable of achieving real gains for its members.

Contrary to the ideas of 'new

By Nick Toms.

realism', despite all the efforts of the Tories, the trade union organisations have remained intact.

Certainly, unemployment and the destruction of manufacturing industry have taken their toll. Union membership has fallen from 13.2 million in 1979 to 10.5 million today. But unlike the 1920's when membership fell by half at one stage, there has been no major exodus. The trade unions remain potentially the most powerful force in British society.

And as *Militant* has explained, the move to the right amongst the leaders of the unions in no way reflects the mood of the rank and file.

In the period before the last general election, union leaders were able to use the genuine desire for a Labour victory to carry through right wing policies at union conferences together with the witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters.

In the absence of any alternative, a layer of activists were prepared to go along with their leaders.

Productivity in industry has been increasing on average by 4.6 per cent a year since 1979. This is the fastest rate since the war. But it has not been achieved in the main by new investment and technology but through cheap labour and ever greater exploitation of the workforce.

More and more value is being squeezed out of less and less labour. Hourly labour costs are higher throughout the advanced capitalist world than in Britain.

The prolonging of the boom, whilst aiding the Tories' third election victory has also helped to restore workers' confidence.

In the car industry, for instance, there is evidence that activists are gradually reclaiming shop floor rights that were stripped away in the wake of the sacking of Longbridge convenor, Derek Robinson.

With the failure of the union leaders to offer any way forward a yawning gulf has opened up between them and the members.

# New realism is a blind



The nurses have destroyed the myth that workers won't fight. Top right: John Macreadie gave his full backing. Bottom right: Norman V build on the movement.

Movements in the health service, the car industry and the Post Office have been a magnificent confirmation of the perspectives of the Marxists.

Strike action exploding from below has provided a deafening answer to 'new realism'.

Sadly, whilst the Tories were clearly on the defensive over the NHS, the union and Labour leaders failed to translate the tremendous support that existed for the health workers into victory.

But at the Nupe conference, the leadership were overturned on a whole number of occasions, including on their health service strategy. At the Cohse conference the leadership were censured for their failure to mount an effective campaign over ancillary workers' pay.

Even in the GMB congress the voice of the rank and file made itself felt with the executive having to resort to desperate manoeuvres to prevent a vote of censure against leader, John Edmonds.

At Nalgo's annual conference resolutions calling for militant action were generally defeated. But just one month later at a reconvened national local government group meeting the same delegates demanded a fight against the government's Social Fund and censured the leadership for their failure to organise one.

It is this growing pressure from below that has forced the TUC leaders to act over the EETPU.

The lack of leadership has resulted in contradictory moods within the unions. The situation is very volatile. Discontent has surfaced over seemingly secondary issues.

In Barrow, a town that elected a Tory at the last election, there has been an incredible struggle involving over 12,000 workers for 11 weeks over the issue of holidays.

A deep disquiet is developing towards the role of the union

full-time officials in disputes.

Determined leadership now would receive enormous support. Workers more and more realise the need for generalised action. At the time of the NHS strikes in the Spring the demand for a one day general strike had huge support. Hundreds of thousands took solidarity action in support of the health workers.

If the TUC was to build a campaign now around the health service and the Poll Tax then it would unearth a movement that could defeat the Tories.

But if they continue down the road of 'new realism' then the Tories and employers will be encouraged to go for the jugular. It was the failure of the NUS leaders to spread the P&O strike and of the TUC to build solidarity action which led to the union being usurped by the lawyers and later resulted in police victimisation of striking seafarers.

Explosions of discontent will burst out again and again. All the



# Realism in the alley

# John Macreadie

ON 9 SEPTEMBER 1987 *The Guardian* and *Independent* announced that John Macreadie, deputy general secretary of the CPSA, had become the first *Militant* supporter to join the TUC general council (GC).

He was a member until May 1988 when, midway through his term of office, he was unprecedentedly replaced by the new right-wing CPSA national committee with John Ellis, CPSA general secretary.

We publish here an exclusive interview with John, in a personal capacity, on the events which took place during his period on the general council.

**How did you feel about joining the general council?**

It was a great privilege to represent CPSA on the GC. I pledged to carry out the policy of the union and support workers struggling to defend jobs, living standards, conditions and communities. I was pledged to strengthen solidarity between unions and workers in Britain and internationally.

**What are your thoughts today, 12 months later?**

As I said from the rostrum at the 1987 congress, the TUC is a powerful giant which has been lulled into doubting its potential strength and historic role.

A combination of the Tory media, the lack of decisive, socialist leadership and the continued influence of a number of 'leaders' who have done well out of capitalism, has been responsible for this.

**What about the issues affecting CPSA members?**

Congress 1987 carried unanimously a motion on the welfare state, particularly the attacks on social security. The motion instructed the GC to "support workers and unions in struggle and to organise co-ordinated action amongst affiliates and relevant organisations in defence of working class people".

For CPSA members and our class, this was extremely important. At two GC sub-committee meetings, I argued for its implementation and wrote to the GC calling for a national demonstration against the 1987 Social Security Bill.

Unfortunately, it received little support. They had no faith in organising a successful public protest and no intention of implementing the congress instruction. Today, social security claimants and staff are far worse off as a result of the Tory legislation.

**The NHS is one of the most important issues facing workers. How do you see the events of the last 12 months?**

Everyone has an interest in the NHS. The nurses' action brought fresh layers of workers into struggle. Support and solidarity action was widespread. The mood and confidence of workers lifted as millions saw it was possible to defend the NHS and defeat Thatcher.

Nurses and other NHS rank and file members took the initiative, but their union leaders vacillated.

Sometimes I had to struggle even to get a discussion on the GC. I wrote to the TUC in January, calling for a 24 hour general strike in support of the NHS. This call was taken up by NHS staff and trade unionists throughout the country.

Under intense pressure, the

general council and health service union leaders called a national rally in London. This was a great success with over 100,000 marching.

But that was it. No new initiatives to take the movement forward were proposed. It was thankyou and goodbye.

I had called for the rally to be used to launch a 24 hour general strike in defence of the NHS only to be told that this would be a diversion!

People were bewildered and annoyed by the lack of trade union leaders or NHS speakers addressing the rally.

During the great movements in the 1970s against anti-union legislation and low pay, leaders like Fisher, Jones and Scanlon would have used such a rally to put forward a programme for action.

The opportunities for defending the NHS and defeating the Tories were squandered.

**A further round of anti-union laws have been introduced. What has the TUC done?**

Nothing. At the January 1988 meeting and on other occasions, faith was placed in the Labour frontbench, lobbying employers' associations, non-Labour MPs, the House of Lords and even the church.

Together with Arthur Scargill, I argued that rather than placing our faith in the CBI, the Lords or the church, we needed to mobilise the movement.

Regrettably, our warnings have been proven correct. The anti-union laws, the scabs' charter, postal balloting, and attacks on workplace democracy and collective action are on the statute book.

Already the right-wing union leaders are meekly picking up the

support the NUS by calling for solidarity action. The reply was that the NUS had not called for assistance!

I am proud that my last action on the GC was to call for a 24 hour strike in support of the seafarers. Once again, solidarity and supporting workers in struggle were dirty words.

**Much has been said and written about single union deals and no-strike clauses. Fords, Dundee was a major issue. What was your position?**

The Tories have destroyed manufacturing industry and jobs in Scotland. So don't let me hear the Tory criminals crying over Scottish jobs.

Using confidential information, the AEU leadership reached a secret deal with Fords to open a plant in Dundee, ignoring totally the union representation in the industry and the national 'blue book' conditions agreement.

It was jobs at any price. We then saw the TUC prostrating themselves in front of Fords and the Tories. It was a green light for the anti-union millionaire press to launch a tirade against trade unionism.

The TUC let the real culprits, the Tories and the employers, off the hook. Yes, we want jobs, jobs for all, but we must not sell our rights, conditions, and union organisation in the process.

**The TUC faces the prospect of a possible split over the EETPU. What are the facts?**

No-one wants to see splits in the movement.

We need unity against the common enemy, the Tories, and their system, capitalism.

Nor does anyone savour the prospect of a second trade union centre. However, the EETPU

leadership has broken the fundamental principles of the trade unionism.

They have taken their business union methods to new depths, wantonly jettisoning rights and conditions in return for their mess of pottage, an exclusive membership deal for the EETPU which ignores traditional bargaining practices and the most fundamental union principles.

They also worked with Murdoch to sack 5,500 print workers. Their defiance cannot be tolerated any longer simply with a slap on the wrist.

To its shame, CPSA's right-wing executive has mandated our delegation to oppose expulsion. This will isolate us in the TUC. This shows that the right wing are quite happy to attack CPSA activists at DHSS Central Office, but are prepared to defend scabs in the EETPU leadership.

**Summing up, what's your overall conclusion?**

The GC is seen by workers as the leadership of the movement. Workers, particularly the active ones and those in struggle, want it to lead.

This will not come about unless we democratise our individual unions and transform them into weapons to fight for change.

This is the task of the Broad Lefts. Pressure from the rank and file below is necessary. The unions were set up to fight for the day to day interests of workers and to link these to the socialist transformation of society.

Only with socialism will it be possible to solve the problems faced by the working class. Those in the movement who deny this historical truth set back that day.

## After Dundee

**THE MOVEMENT must adopt the following principles in the light of Dundee:**

- ★ Total opposition to 'sweetheart' deals and business trade unionism.
- ★ Opposition to no-strike deals and binding arbitration - for full defence of the right to strike.
- ★ Full defence of and adherence to national rates of pay and conditions.
- ★ No 'beauty contests' of unions in front of employers.
- ★ Defence of traditional negotiating rights.
- ★ Full independence of trade unions from employers.
- ★ No secret deals with employers on green field sites - the movement to determine the appropriate union(s) to organise any unorganised workplace.

laws, except election of officials, in order to help attack the left and strengthen their control over the rank and file. A fight will nevertheless develop against these laws - from below.

**What about the parts of the law on youth and employment training?**

On the cheap labour YTS schemes, the GC's only action during my period was to support a £1 per week increase in the miserable allowances paid to trainees. I was opposed to the movement being identified with such an insult. I sought to refer the proposal back. I didn't even get a seconder!

On Employment Training, the GC set itself five objectives for co-operating with the proposed New Adult Training Programme. None of these conditions have been met. Yet the GC have gone along with Employment Training!

In my view, the TUC has failed working class youth and the unemployed in these measures.

**Hundreds of seafarers are still bravely on strike at P&O. What support did the TUC give?**

At the April meeting, I expressed concern about developments in the NUS dispute with P&O. I called on the GC to



Ellis and the general council failed to... Photos: Militant.

major struggles this year have been initiated by the rank and file, often against both the employers and their own union leaders.

In the absence of any organised lead from the unions, unofficial committees of activists and stewards will spring forward to lead the struggle.

The possibilities for building strong, campaigning Broad Lefts in every union will be excellent. As workers then turn again and again to the trade unions, their traditional mass organisations, they will be transformed.

Demands for the regular election of full-time officials and for them to receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker will become irresistible.

The way will be prepared for re-arming the movement with a leadership based on the ideas of Marxism - committed to struggle to end capitalism and build a socialist society.

# Vietnam pulls out

IN 1975 the Vietnamese victory over US imperialism inspired workers, peasants and youth the world over. Yet thirteen years later, that victory may seem somewhat hollow.

The people of Indochina have suffered the nightmare of Pol Pot's brutal rule in Cambodia (Kampuchea), the invasion of Cambodia by the Vietnamese, a Chinese incursion into Vietnam and a life of unending poverty.

Does the promised withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia herald a turn for the better? Why are they pulling out? What will happen after they leave?

Cambodia, one of the least developed countries in the world, was bombed into the stone age as a by-product of the US struggle against the Vietnamese revolution. One-tenth of the population are believed to have died. Rice production collapsed and the population of the capital Pnom Penh, normally 600,000, swelled to three million as refugees flooded in.

The countryside faced starvation as, with the US defeat in Vietnam, the pro-imperialist regime in Cambodia collapsed. A departing US aid official remarked:

"General deprivation and suffering will stretch over the next two to three years before Cambodia can get back to rice self-sufficiency."

The Stalinist Khmer Rouge guerrillas had been a tiny force before the bombing began in 1970. The war correspondent Shawcross describes the terrible punishment they took:

## Traumatized

"Peasant boys and girls... moving slowly through the mud, half-crazed with terror as fighter-bombers tore down at them by day, and night after night whole seas of 750-pound bombs smashed all round. Week after week they edged forward... forever losing comrades and going on in thinner ranks..."

Traumatized by the bombing, they emerged from the jungles regarding every city dweller as an enemy.

Though a planned removal of part of the urban population back to the villages would have been unavoidable in any case, the wholesale evacuation of Pnom Penh was a political necessity for the tiny Khmer Rouge elite, who had no weapon but terror to control the towns, which they identified with the old ruling class.

Thus we had the grotesque spectacle of a deformed workers' state that treated workers as second-class citizens, emptied the cities and murdered or starved up to a million people.

The Khmer Rouge was riven by factions. Pol Pot clambered to power in 1975-78, with most of his repression aimed against fellow 'Communists'.

As it became clear that Vietnam was becoming a junior ally of Moscow, the Chinese bureaucracy gave support to Pol Pot. Thus the emerging Stalinist regimes in Indo-China became playthings of great power politics.

The Khmer Rouge

fomented a border war with Vietnam in which 250,000 peasants were made homeless. As a Khmer Rouge leader cynically claimed: "Our brothers and sisters are willing to make any sacrifice the minute we wave the 'Hate Vietnam' flag in front of them."

In Vietnam the countryside, already ravaged by war, was further devastated by droughts, floods and typhoons. Under the previous regime the south had been little more than an adventure playground for imperialism, dependent on US handouts. Ten years after the war food production had fallen, with income per head down from \$250 per year to below \$200.

The Russian bureaucracy had started to support the Vietnamese revolution once they realised it would win. Cut off from Western aid, the Vietnamese state emerged as a bureaucracy in the image of Moscow.

Alarmed by shortages, the bureaucrats turned on the ethnic Chinese who dominated commerce and credit in Vietnam. Thirty thousand businesses were nationalised, leading to a mass exodus of Chinese (including a large proportion of skilled and educated people) and the tragedy of the boat people began.

In addition the bureaucracy forced through collectivisation of farming in the south. This could only have succeeded with the necessary resources - tractors etc. - and with the agreement of the peasantry. As it was, the panic measures made the hardships worse.

In 1977-78 Pol Pot wiped out the dissident Eastern region of the Khmer Rouge, with wholesale reprisals against their villages. Since there was no possibility of a policy change within the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese Communist Party decided they would have to invade Cambodia to stop the border war - the first conquest of one 'socialist' country by another.

The Vietnamese army raced through Cambodia in December 1978, greeted in many places as liberators. The West cut off all aid to the starving people of the interior. Aid organisations were set up on the Thai border, causing mass migrations to the west of the country - in effect building a base for the demoralised Khmer Rouge by feeding refugees in camps controlled by Pol Pot.

Pol Pot responded by changing his programme to



Prince Sihanouk.

promise free elections and the guarantee of private property. While denouncing the horrors of 'Communism' in Pol Pot's Kampuchea, Thatcher and Reagan consistently voted to seat the Khmer Rouge in the United Nations as the country's legitimate government.

Later they were able to cobble together a coalition 'government in exile' consisting of Son Senn (a has-been capitalist politician leading a gang of warlords and black marketeers), Prince Sihanouk (ruler of Cambodia from 1941 to 1970) and the Khmer Rouge. With very small forces, Sihanouk and Son Senn mainly live off imperialist subventions in the manner of the Nicaraguan Contras.

## Endangered

The Khmer Rouge bases were smashed in Vietnam's dry season offensive of 1985. Since then they have spread out in small groups throughout the interior, capable of mayhem but not of overthrowing the Vietnamese-backed regime.

Vietnamese withdrawal poses no immediate threat of counter-revolution.

Vietnamese troops, despite the motives of the Stalinist regime, have defended the gains of the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism in Cambodia. Though these gains have been endangered by the imperialist boycott and war, as well as the blunders of the Vietnamese bureaucracy and the crimes of Pol Pot, there is no way forward for the people of either country under capitalism.

The Heng Samrin government set up by the Vietnamese in 1979 was totally lacking in administrative back-up. The ruling party's membership at its foundation was just 66, mainly Communist Party members who had survived Pol Pot's reign.

Now Heng Samrin's party numbers 10,000 with 50,000 candidate members, including many people freshly drawn into the ad-



Vietnamese troops in Pnom Penh.

## Chronology

1975: Victory over US-backed capitalist regime in South Vietnam. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge comes to power in Cambodia.

December 1978-1979: Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia; installation of Heng Samrin government. Chinese incursion into Northern Vietnam.

October 1979: Guerrilla bases set up on Thai-Cambodian border.

1982: Coalition government in exile formed by Son Senn, Prince Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge.

1985: Vietnamese offensive smashes the main guerrilla bases.

1988: Proposed withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia.

ministration. A Cambodian army of 30,000 has been built up, with 17,000 villagers drawn into the militia in one province alone.

So one reason for the withdrawal is that the Vietnamese presence is no longer necessary. Another reason is the raging economic crisis in Vietnam, expressed in an inflation rate now around 3,000 per cent.

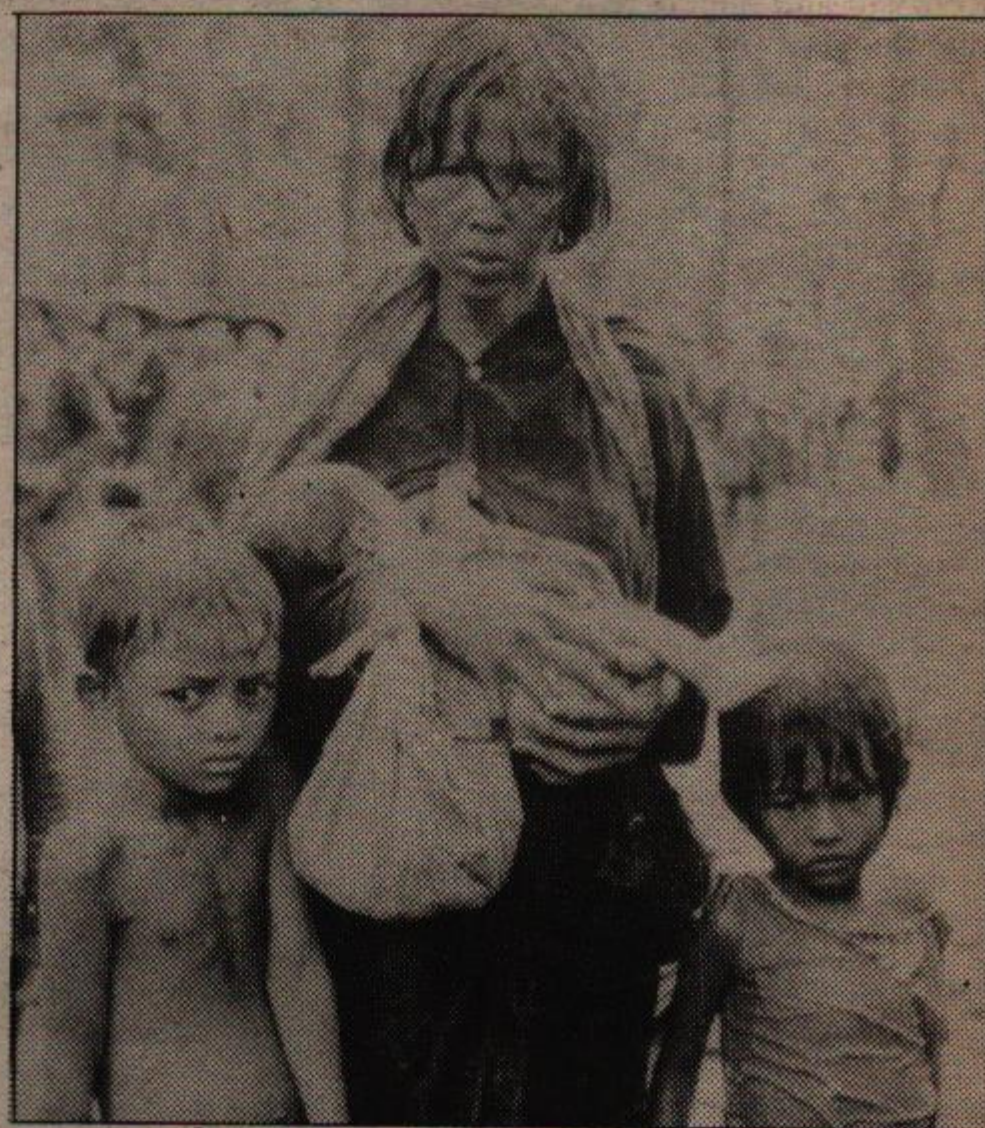
Subsidies have been withdrawn on all but the most basic requirements. Shortages continue, bringing corruption in their wake. Private traders bribe the bureaucrats to get their way. Workers need to hold down two or even three jobs to keep their heads above water.

Meanwhile the four million bureaucrats have been forced to waste 15 per cent of the national wealth, and half the state budget, on maintaining thousands of troops on the Chinese border and in Cambodia.

Imperialism is using the Khmer Rouge to destabilise the region. Vietnam is embargoed by Western states, with breath-taking hypocrisy, because of its 'aggression' against Cambodia.

There has also been an element of arm-twisting by the Russians, anxious to appease Western imperialism and alarmed at the drain of a \$1.3bn a year aid bill to the ancient Vietnamese bureaucrats.

The Vietnamese proposal to withdraw has enabled them to call the West's bluff. Relations among the 'fraternal' anti-Vietnamese coalition partners have occasionally degenerated into a shooting



Starving Cambodian refugees.

war between the rival groups. These splits have been highlighted by Sihanouk's recent 'resignation' as head of state in exile, recognising that his position is becoming impossible.

## Wolves

In 1980 Sihanouk argued: "According to certain Westerners the Khmer Rouge are perfectly capable of transforming themselves into lambs. Such wishful thinking is dangerous, above all for the Cambodian people still in Cambodia."

This deeply divided coalition is incapable of replacing the existing regime. Militarily, the only forces at their disposal are the Khmer Rouge 'wolves'. Sihanouk realises that his

and Son Senn's 'lambs' would be first on the menu if there was a serious possibility of moving into the interior of Cambodia.

And as the Vietnamese commander pointed out: "If Cambodia needs help again, we will give it."

The Stalinist regime in Cambodia is likely to survive, but with its purely nationalist perspective has no solutions to the country's immense problems. It will take the conscious leadership of the working class to show the road to developing South-East Asia as a whole, on the basis of workers' democracy linked to the international struggle of the working class for control over the means of production.

By Mick Brooks

**THE STRIKE** wave in Poland in August has shown the rising tide of workers' struggle against the dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

By George Collins

With foreign debts totalling \$39bn and inflation at 60 per cent, the economy is in deep crisis as a result of officialdom's dead hand, stifling all initiative, mismanaging production and creaming off the wealth.

As in April-May, but on a bigger scale, the strikes were provoked by the austerity and price rises imposed by the bankrupt regime. The workers' demands were a 50 per cent wage increase and recognition of Solidarity, the independent trade union movement built up during the revolutionary strike movement of 1980-81.

The regime has been thrown onto the defensive. Riot police were sent against the least organised sections of strikers, but the bureaucracy are shrinking from an all-out confrontation with the workers.

'Mistakes' have been admitted on radio and TV, and wage concessions and legal reform hinted at. Despite the regime's refusal to recognise Solidarity, it has offered talks with opposition leaders - no doubt in the hope of using them to stabilise the situation - and has been compelled to deal with Solidarity de facto.

**Walk-out**

The movement was sparked by a walk-out of miners at the Manifest Lipcowy colliery in the south-west. Dockers, bus and tram workers in Szczecin, steel workers at Stalowa Wola, Wroclaw railway workers, workers at the Cegielski marine engine plant in Poznan and miners at a dozen other mines rapidly joined in.

Then the workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, birthplace of Solidarity, came out. On 22 August a strike committee leader announced: "The whole shipyard is under the control of the strikers."

Not the power of the regime, but the weakness of their own leadership prevented the workers from fully seizing the opportunities before them.

With the youth in the forefront, strike committees were elected in the factories and mines. In Gdansk and Szczecin, inter-plant committees were formed to lead the strikes on a city-wide basis.

But at a national level Solidarity's leadership failed to show any way forward. This was

# Battle postponed



Striking miners at the Manifest Lipcowy colliery, where the strike movement began.

**SOLIDARITY WAS** created by the Polish workers in the course of the enormous strike wave sparked by food price increases in 1980. From its beginnings in the coordinating strike committee uniting 400 workplaces in Gdansk, the organisation spread like wildfire to involve ten million workers countrywide - the crushing majority in society.

The 'trade unions' controlled by the bureaucracy collapsed. Totally isolated, the regime was compelled for a time to recognise Solidarity and negotiate the workers' demands. The overthrow of the bureaucracy, the establishment of workers' democracy and the spread of the political revolution throughout Eastern Europe was on the order of the day.

Tragically, Solidarity's leadership, headed by Lech Walesa, were influenced not by Marxism but by the Catholic establishment and intellectual 'dissidents' - in reality left-wing bureaucrats. These elements had no perspective of breaking with Stalinism and no answer to the threat of a Russian invasion. They lacked the Marxist idea of linking up with the workers in Russia and other countries.

Instead, they hoped to achieve democratic reforms, including trade union rights and official recognition, without disturbing the bureaucracy's monopoly of power. This seemingly 'reasonable' programme was in fact a recipe for defeat.

The bureaucratic elite forms a parasitic layer within the planned economy. Progress towards socialism is possible only on the basis of workers' democracy. With no essential function and no basis of support, the bureaucracy can only preserve their privileges by means of police dictatorship.

That is why they cannot accept a free trade union movement, which must inevitably become a focus of mass workers' opposition and threaten their whole position. Vainly seeking a compromise with the bureaucracy, Solidarity's leaders in reality temporised while the workers became increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress. The momentum of the upsurge was lost. This made possible the banning of Solidarity in December 1981 and the state of emergency in which many thousands of activists were arrested.

The present struggles in Poland show that the effect of that defeat has worn off. A new generation of workers is moving into struggle.

Solidarity's leaders, tragically, are set on the same course as in 1980-81. Activists must learn the lessons of that period in preparing for the revolutionary battles ahead.

clearly illustrated at a mass meeting at Lenin Shipyard on 21 August where 3,000 workers chanted the idea that was uppermost in their minds: "Strike tomorrow!" Solidarity leader Walesa replied:

"We cannot pull Poland out of her troubles by means of strikes. We are ready for dialogue and talks."

Forced to back the strikes, Solidarity's leadership have provided no direction.

As the police launched attacks on strike-bound mines and occupied workplaces, Solidarity's intellectual 'advisers' openly preached pessimism and defeat. Obstructed in this way, workers could not keep up the momentum.

But the regime is clearly too isolated to achieve any decisive victory at this stage. Battle has only been postponed. The events in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe confirm that the era of political revolution has begun.

The successful strike of Hungarian coal miners last week, the continuing flare-up of national movements in the USSR, the defiant demonstration by 10,000 workers and youth in Prague on 21 August to denounce the Russian invasion of 1968, and the unprecedented demonstration in Moscow in sympathy with the Czechs, are signs of coming mass upheavals throughout the region to overthrow Stalinism and establish workers' democracy.

## Affluence and drudgery

**WITHIN AN** hour of our arrival in Poland, while travelling by bus to our Warsaw hotel, our official guide suddenly announced that for £10 he would give us 22,000 zloty - three times the official rate. No doubt he could sell it at five or six times the official rate.

The average wage in Poland is £85 a month. Everything is expensive to Poles but extremely cheap for Westerners. Many items are still rationed, including meat (2 kilos per person per month) and petrol (36 litres a month). Rationed petrol costs 120 zloty a litre but it is also available without ration tickets for around 300 zloty a litre.

Few private cars are to be seen travelling between the towns and cities. Taxi drivers are reluctant to carry passengers for the official rates (which rose 40 per cent during our visit). They are better off selling their petrol on the black market.

Affluence is not restricted to westerners. In the ski resort of Zakopane the number of houses built for rent is doubling every year. Well-heeled bureaucrats are to be seen wearing all the latest ski fashions, though often unable to ski.

But for many Poles vodka remains the only escape from drudgery, with queues forming at 1pm when alcohol is allowed to be sold. By early evening the bars are closing, sometimes because they have 'drunk it all'.

There are almost three million private farms in Poland (in a population of 38 million) using 77 per cent of farmland. Many farms are very small. Horse-drawn ploughs and men harvesting with hand-held scythes are a very common sight, despite the giant Ursus tractor factory.

At the Lenin steelworks at Nowa Huta the authorities are so sensitive that a snapshot of the main entrance resulted in a visit to the local constabulary and a confiscated film.

In Gdansk, on the eighth anniversary of the strike movement that built Solidarity, there was a massive police presence. Streets were cordoned off, crowds were not allowed to form and police buses were parked down all side streets.

Access was allowed to gate 2 at the shipyards where the Solidarity monument to the workers shot dead by the police in 1970 stands. But the following day seven policemen required medical attention after some 'minor disturbances'.

The situation in Poland has not improved in recent years despite the desperate manoeuvres of the bureaucracy. The emergence from the underground and the rebuilding of Solidarity is on the agenda. If a Marxist leadership is built then the political revolution and the overthrow of the bureaucracy will also be on the agenda.

By a recent visitor to Poland

## Step up support for Machmoud Masawri!



Activists picket Israeli embassies in London (above), Bonn (top right) and New York (right). Raise the call to support the campaign in your trade union or Labour Party - see report on page 2 for details.

# Building boom

Dear Comrades,  
There is, at the moment, a massive building boom which is not just confined to London and the South East but stretches to Southern and South Western England also.

In Dorset the insatiable appetite for building land is such that very soon the land is going to run out.

In one small town north of Poole, the plan for new housing was for 1000 dwellings between 1980-1996 but 996 have been built already, so from now until 1996 only another four can be built!

This is typical of many rural areas and the only solution is to encroach onto farmland - but the land

itself is so expensive this inevitably pushes up house prices still higher. In fact over the last five years house prices in Dorset have risen by 95 per cent!

In many rural areas homes have become hot property and the once quiet towns and villages of Dorset are now highly desirable areas for the yuppies. To get a house in these areas you need to be earning at least £20,000 a year. East Dorset district council had a survey which showed that 80 per cent of people on their lists earn less than £8,000 a year. So the chances of these people owning a home of their own are nil.

In the big towns the

situation is even worse, meaning that young people are forced into rented accommodation with rents of £75 to £100 a week. But how could newly-wed couples live with other people? They'll be forced to get a mortgage and huge debts for years to come.

An example of how much prices are getting out of hand was the sale recently of a beach hut in Poole for £12,000!

And what is the Tories' solution to all of this? Easy. Just set up housing associations (great if you've got the cash) or else privatise all the council estates.

**J Hayes Poole**

# Now we know

Dear Comrades,

In an interview broadcast on Radio 4 Bryan Gould reminisced about his childhood in New Zealand. Listeners were told how Gould had come from a family whose 'natural outlook' was 'conservative' and how young Bryan was once reduced to tears when his grandfather accused him of being a 'Labourite'.

Now I can understand why comrade Gould has spent the rest of his life trying to refute the allegation.

**Andrew Sinclair Burnley**

Dear Comrades,

The crash of the Barlow Clowes investment company has meant that many small investors have lost money they could not afford. For example, some pensioners have lost the nest egg they intended to live on. As a result Cardiff South and Penarth MP, Alun Michael has asked the government to set up a fund to help his constituents who have lost their savings.

A noble gesture but Alun Michael, Neil Kinnock and the other Labour MPs who favour a 'market forces' capitalist economy would be better off warning their constituents of the dangers of investing in the smash and grab roulette economy generated by market

forces.

As you move away from bank and building society deposits in search of higher interest rates in the equity and other markets then the greater is the risk of losing. Insurance companies are now obliged to point out that the value of your investments in these markets can fall as well as increase although they usually do this in 'small print' style.

Competition is the beloved principle of 'market forces' supporters but competition means some win and some lose. In the heady world of capitalist finance and investment the odds are usually stacked against the small investors making them the likely losers.

**Chris Peace Cardiff**

# Privatisation pays

Dear Comrades,

A Labour Party ward in Neath, West Glamorgan, held a meeting about the poll tax recently. The speaker, Labour councillor Vaughan Jones of Cardiff, demonstrated the unfairness of the tax but concluded that there is no alternative but to pay the tax.

A question from the floor asked what support there would be from the Labour Party in the event of an organised non-payment. He declared that the Labour Party could not condone law breakers.

He finished on a 'positive' note by saying that when the Post Office is privatised, everybody should go out and buy their shares, as when people are forced to pay the poll tax monthly the increased amount of bills sent by post will increase the Post Office's productivity and everybody would benefit from the profits!

**Martyn Jones Neath**

# Privileged baby

Dear Comrades,

I have just been watching the 6 o'clock news and I'm absolutely incensed. The main item was about Fergie going into a £350 a night private hospital to have her baby.

What about the conditions working class women face when they have children? With NHS cuts many maternity wards and hospitals have been closed, maternity benefits slashed and the government are now planning to do away with the free nappies and baby powder women receive after they have had

their babies.

With low pay and social security cuts many workers' children are brought up in poverty, only to face compulsory YTS at 16 and a poll tax bill on their eighteenth birthday.

Only the ideas of Marxism can provide a society where women can have children within a properly funded health service, knowing they won't have to face unemployment and poverty when they grow up.

**Angela Sham  
Cohse, Sheffield**

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

# Well done

Dear Comrades,

Congratulations on your splendid editorial of 19 August! The world has not been at peace this century (and I have lived in it since 1902) but the war has only hit us twice, as yet, in this country.

I do agree entirely with the concluding section except that the word 'fraternal' is awkward but that is a fault of the language. The proposed world union might be called 'sisterly' but then I suppose men might consider themselves excluded.

I think that representation in general should be according to occupation rather than to territory.

**Kathleen Jones  
Shropshire**

# Bollards

Dear Comrades,

Liberal councillors in Tower Hamlets were worried about the borough's bollards. So a committee spent its time discussing whether to have a survey of them, costing £900.

Then they discussed the sort of bollards they'd like to have. The officers recommended the Camden bollard, costing £94.95 (plus VAT) each.

Perhaps they're so keen to hand council estates to HATs and property developers so as to raise money for this vital scheme.

**Worried Tower  
Hamlets rate-payer**



Children enjoyed the summer camp as much as the adults.

# Safe solution

Dear Comrades,

Ronnie Sookhdeo's article in *Militant* 29 July was basically good but why promote nuclear fusion? There are three facts surrounding this supposed panacea:

- 1) It's been '10 years off' for at least the last 30! and it is still well beyond our grasp.
- 2) It is not necessary a 'perfect and safe' concept.
- 3) The yield far from being infinite is in fact lower than fission stations'.

The solution is well within our grasp and it is

safe. Solar power satellites could be moored in orbit, converting solar energy into microwaves which could be beamed down and collected by large arrays of dishes. The sun's energy harnessed but without the constant threat of a disastrous cock-up.

The drawback is that only a planned economy with international co-operation to the full could produce both the foresight and finance for such a bold project.

**Michael Drain Hackney**

# Video protection

Dear Comrades,

Under the terms of the new Criminal Justice Act video cameras are to be installed in a number of Crown courts to enable child witnesses in child sex abuse trials to give evidence without having to face the alleged abusers.

I understand that *Militant* in a previous article has opposed the use of video camera link-ups on the grounds that it would set a precedent for the state to use in other trials.

However, as a social worker working with abused children, I have seen the fear and anxiety of children who have to face the abuser

in court and give evidence against him or her.

Many cases rest largely on a child's evidence, and either never reach court or are abandoned because the child feels unable to give evidence.

Whilst I believe that child abuse will only end when we build a society free of all oppression and violence, in the meantime the courts can offer some children protection against further abuse. I feel video camera link-ups can assist that process. I would be interested to hear the views of other readers.

**Jean Thorpe  
Nottingham**

# Classified ads

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**Militant public meeting:** NHS in crisis. 8 September 7pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Holborn tube.

# Children's rights

Dear Militant,

We had a meeting at summer camp. We called it children's rights. Lucy talked on schools and other things. She talked on how some people get called names and all that. I talked on sports. I also talked on other things as well.

Beverly talked on the Red Flag Club they had set up. We are hoping that we can set up a national Red Flag club. We are also hoping to have some other meetings as well...

At summer camp we had a meeting in marquee 2 about children's rights. Lucy Ingham talked about bullying. Anna Lee talked about the bad sports facilities and dangers in parks and I (Beverly) talked about the Red Flag Club and the things that are better at summer camp than my woodcraft camp.

Sarah Manning said where she lives comics cost one pound. And when we went on a trip to Puzzle Wood two girls wanted to get a cake and the cakes were 20p each and it was 20p for one biscuit and the first girl's money got put in the till but when the next girl gave her money in the lady put it in her pocket. I think all the clothes cost too much for people to buy...

We thought about children's rights. Dog dirt in parks could blind small kids. Me, Beverly, Anna and Jackie was thinking if we made a national Red Flag Club it would be cheap and good. Black children are being called names because of their colour. Tax is being paid for comics...

I went to the children's meeting and I said that there were two little twin sisters and one of the twins can't walk and she wants a special wheelchair. But her mummy has not got enough money because the Tories won't let her mum have enough money. So we had a raffle to get enough money and when the raffle ended we nearly had enough money.

**Anna Lee age 9 Withington, Beverly Walsh age 9 Stevenage, Lucy Ingham age 9 Withington, Clare James, age 7 Stevenage**

# Stop HATs - fight for decent housing

THE ESTABLISHMENT of Housing Action Trusts (HATs) is just the first attack of many contained within the Tories' Housing Bill.

Selected council estates are to be taken over, renovated and then privatised, leaving tenants the choice of buying or getting out. The fury of the tenants on the target estates shows the potential to flatten the HATs and strike a serious blow against the whole of the Housing Bill.

By Dave Fryatt  
Bow and Poplar Labour Party

Our success, however, will depend on how well we organise that opposition. We must first explain to all involved just what the HATs mean. Leaflets, petitions and public meetings should be organised but above all the tenants' organisations need to organise door to door canvassing to explain the issues.

The Tories will do everything to try to force the HATs through. We, as tenants, need to make sure we have united all the forces available to fight back. We must build links with all the blocks and estates under threat. This should include going to other estates not directly under threat from HATs to explain what lies in wait in the Housing Bill and the poll tax if the Tories are not stopped.

Above all we need the tenants' organisations to build links with the local authority trade unions. As we stand to lose our homes because of the Tory plans, council workers stand to lose their jobs. It is vital that we fight side by side. Committees of tenants and local authority workers should be set up to coordinate the fight. We must make clear to local councils that we expect them to defend our jobs and homes.

We must refuse to co-operate with the HATs. If local authority workers refuse to hand over plans of the estate or details of the tenancies then the HAT will be in big trouble. If tenants refuse to talk to the HAT surveyors that will create further problems.

However, local authority trade unions need to explain to their members that strike action may be necessary to prevent job losses or to defend victimised members. The ultimate weapon we have as tenants is the rent strike. No tenant would resort to this lightly but history has shown in Clydeside, Stepney and other areas that mass rent strikes can force the govern-



Ocean Estate in Tower Hamlets - privatisation via HAT.

Photo: Militant.

ment and private landlords to back down.

The danger of HATs lies in that many estates have been scandalously neglected by local councils. We need to fight for the resources necessary to make council estates fit to live on. The resources are there but the Tories have decided not to make them available.

The HATs are to be given a start

capital of £125 million to do up estates ready for privatisation. £5,000 for every home on the target estates. If the money is there why hasn't it been given to the councils? The government has cut the money available to housing by millions of pounds. These cuts should be restored. Millions of new homes need to be built to end the council waiting lists and to move tenants from houses which are

beyond repair.

The Tory plans are obviously political. Only socialist councils and a socialist Labour government can guarantee the necessary resources. Through the campaign we must take this message to the labour movement and ensure that a Labour Party and trades unions prepared to fight for decent homes for all can be built. Then the Tory attacks will be beaten for good.

## Flooded homes scandal

MR AND Mrs Eeland and their children had been living in their pleasant newly-built house only six months when they woke up to find the whole development under 2-3 feet of water.

The flooding caused over £2000 worth of damage to their house. This was the start of a year long campaign by residents of the Swansea Park development near Preston docks.

Mr Eeland angrily recalled how the council report on the floods had blamed "unusual weather conditions, a high tide and a pumping station breakdown" for the flooding. But six weeks later, the same thing happened again - with a low tide and the pumping station working perfectly!

The residents investigated and found that the main sewer for Preston is only 50 yards away from the new housing and that the sewer is in appalling disrepair.

They found that all the houses had been built below 7.6 metres, the highest flood level for Preston. The developer, Tustin developments, pledged publicly to knock down the whole development at his own expense if any of the houses were below 7.32 metres.

### Below level

The residents proved that several of the houses were below that level. Suddenly the multi-millionaire developer forgot his pledge!

People who had bought houses and moved in began telling all prospective purchasers that the site had flooded twice, in order to pressurise the builder. But in a bizarre move, Preston's Labour council went behind residents' backs and gave a grant to the North British Housing Association to buy the rest of the houses to rent out.

This led to more questions. Why did the council give Tustin planning permission to build on that area - land previously designated 'non-value land'?

Swansea Park residents have linked up with the Seven Rivers Action Group. Preston council sold Seven Rivers estate to Tustin at £1 a home because council tenants objected to living in such damp houses. The council then gave Tustin a £7,000 grant to renovate these houses. Seven Rivers residents felt this work was not done adequately.

The council's only concession to Swansea Park residents has been a 5 per cent reduction in rates because of the poor state of the roads, which are continuously under repair.

The Swansea Park Action Group are preparing for expensive legal action against Tustin, as their homes are now virtually valueless. Mr Eeland described it as: "A simple case of ordinary working class people taking on the big boys."

They have had no help whatever from local Tory councillors or Mrs Thatcher but they have had little more than sympathy from Labour councillors.

Send messages of support to Swansea Park Action Group, 12 Beverly Close, Swansea Park, Preston.

By Max Neill  
Preston Labour Party

## 'Get out - or you're in trouble'

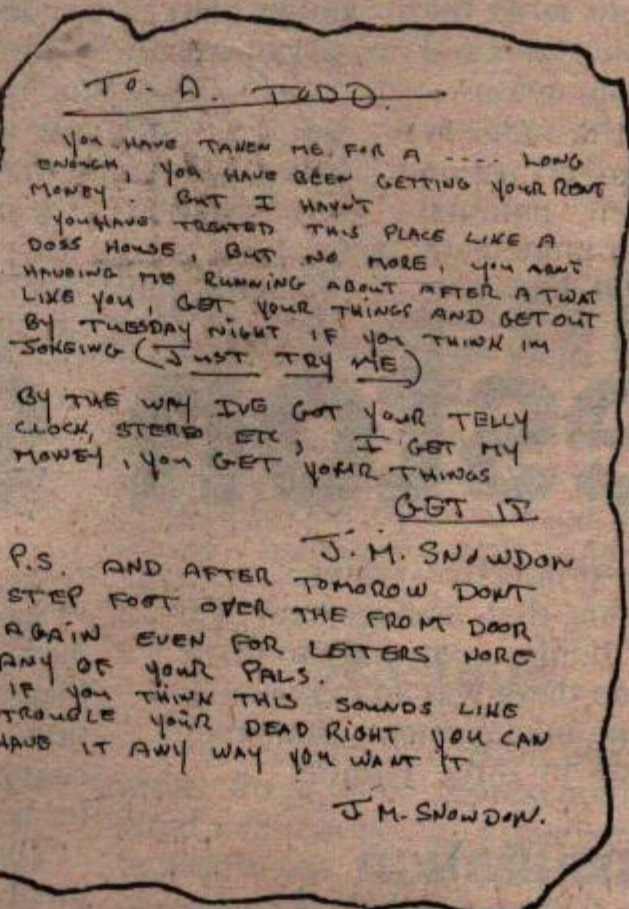
PRIVATE LANDLORDS are showing council tenants the sort of treatment they can expect if council estates are sold off to the private sector under the Housing Act,

By Steve Wood

Letters of eviction are being sent out without the landlords getting a court order as they are legally required to. And they are often getting away with it.

In one notorious case in Keighley, Adrian Todd received a letter (see right) from his landlord, J M Snowden, telling him to "get out". The landlord had taken a TV set and stereo equipment and warned: "If this sounds like trouble, you're dead right."

Another case involved a landlord changing the locks on a property while the tenant was in hospital due to complications with a pregnancy. When she returned home she found new tenants had been installed. They were using her furniture and the landlord refused to return her



personal belongings.

Even though this is a clear breach of the law, the council's environmental health department at first refused to take any action, saying that "the landlord had acted

reasonably". Later they agreed to take some action under pressure.

The police in many areas of the country continually refuse to get involved, seeing this type of situation as a domestic dispute.

### Rent act

Lord Caithness, the environment minister, told the House of Lords on 22 July that he believes that landlord misbehaviour is due to the Rent Acts holding down rents and making property uneconomic. The government thinks private landlords are hard-done-by and so the Housing Act is removing the Rent Acts and making it easier for tenants to be evicted.

The Tories pay lip-service to tenants' rights while siding with the landlords.

The private rented sector contains the worst housing, the worst landlords and the worst cases of exploitation. There are at least 200,000 houses in multiple occupa-

tion, split into flats and bedsits, of which about 80 per cent are unsatisfactory.

Labour governments have also been guilty of failing to develop and implement policies to get rid of private rented housing.

The national executive committee, as far back as 1953, said: "Labour will instruct all local authorities to submit schemes for gradually taking over and modernising blocks of rent-controlled private properties within their areas."

This policy has been ignored, but with two and a half million people living in the private rented sector this is a lot of people to ignore.

The 1953 policy needs to be adopted today. Squalid private rented housing still exists because of the failure of the public sector to provide enough houses. Not until Labour adopts a socialist attitude towards housing and builds the thousands of houses that are desperately needed will the private landlord's existence be ended.

# Post workers' action solid

IN THE first national strike for 17 years, 140,000 postal workers took action on Wednesday. Striking members of the Union of Communications Workers (UCW) from around the country spoke to *Militant* about why the action was taken and why it was so well supported.

## Nottingham

Chris Ridge spoke to Simon Harris, the Nottingham amalgamated UCW branch organiser. "There is 100 per cent support amongst the 1,600 workforce. Everyone feels bitter. These payments are discriminatory. We're on the way to separate pay deals if we're not careful.

"The real answer is to incorporate basic pay. I take home between £86-94. 35 people a day are leaving the Post Office just in the Nottingham district. Pay and conditions are rubbish.

"The workload's gone up 20 per cent. They've forecast another 30 per cent increase but the workforce hasn't increased except for part-timers.

"I think it'll take an all-out strike to beat the Post Office because they are determined to introduce Difficult Recruitment Area Supplement (Dras)."

## Manchester

Manchester UCW striker Mick Holt also reported 100 per cent support. "Postal workers in Manchester

realise the dangers if Dras is implemented. The main argument should be to alleviate the problem of the low pay overall by an increase in the basic wage.

"The main demand that we should campaign on is not just an increase in London waiting, as put forward by Tuffin, but a minimum wage of £135 for new entrants and a substantial rise in basic pay."

The problem of poor living standards for low wage workers in London is a problem which affects workers in all areas.

One Manchester picket said she had two kids so could not work overtime. "What is needed is a rise in my basic income. In my opinion the most hated man in Britain has got to be Nigel Lawson. My mortgage has risen after only three payments."

Being the first strike for 17 years is significant. The mood has built up over years at branch level, pushing the leadership to act in defence of national pay.

The response in Manchester reflects new confidence from the winning of a dispute two weeks ago on casualisation. The biggest 'concentration' depot, handling parcels, is all out. This is a show of solidarity over pay differentials which in the main affect letters, not parcels, at this stage, according to Manchester strikers.

"Thatcher's been trying to pick the unions off one by one." That was

the comment of a railway worker who visited the Whitechapel picket line to give his support. "We should have come out for the miners and now we should be supporting you."

## London

At the massive Mount Pleasant office and all around London, pickets reported that the backing for the strike was completely solid.

At Brockley in South London one picket commented that the Post Office had provoked the strike as part in order to take on the union in preparation for privatisation.

## Midlands

At Birmingham's head office, where there was unanimous support for the action, one picket said: "It should be all-out, not just one day".

"London weighting should be improved. If the Post Office get away with it then there will be selective pay. They are making way for splits in the union."

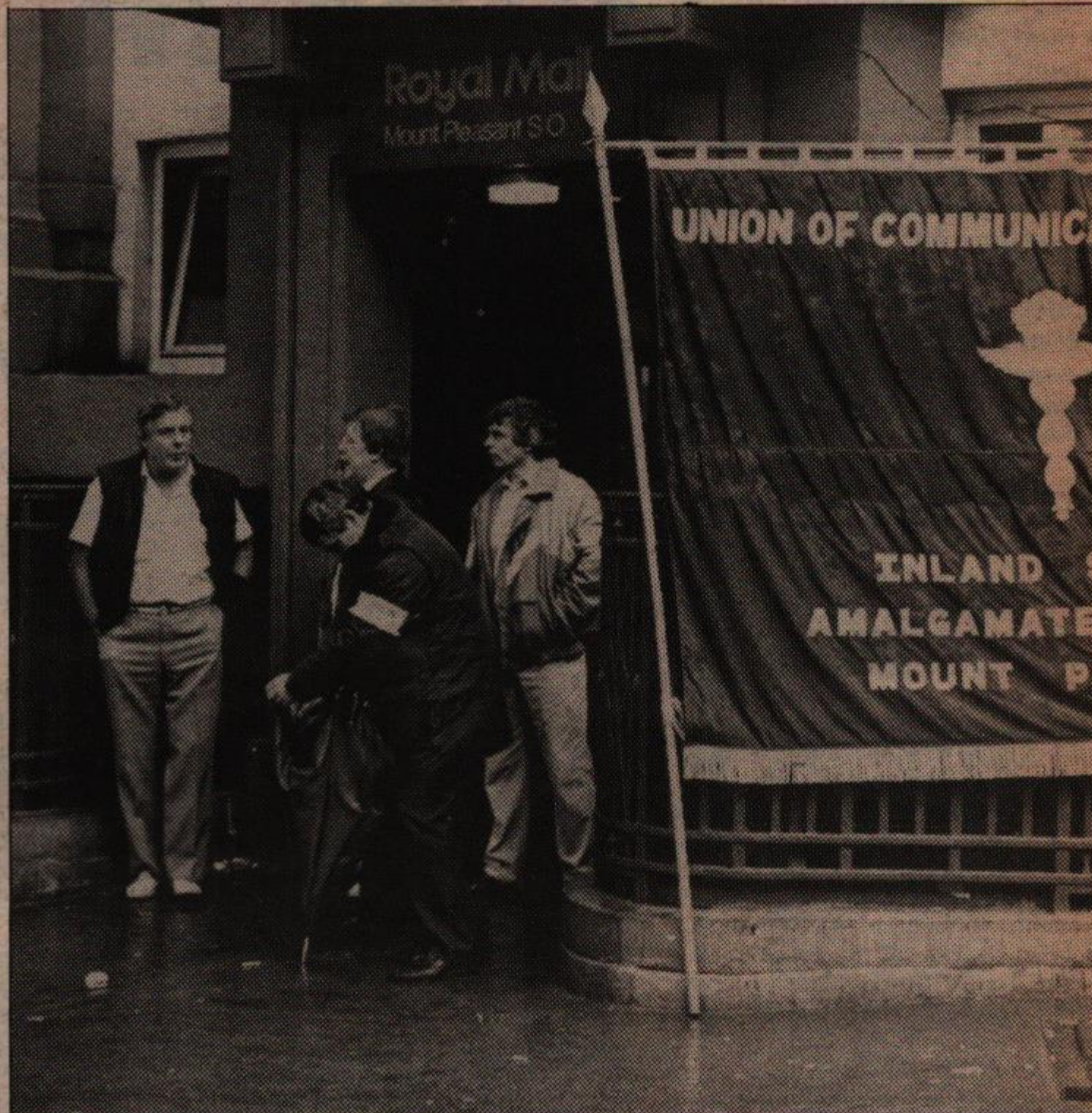
In the 30 Birmingham offices support was running at between 95 per cent and 100 per cent.

Meanwhile, at Stoke only four out of 800 went in to work at the main office.

## Sheffield

The 1,400 members of the Sheffield branch of the UCW responded well reports Chris Weldon.

One picket said:



Pickets outside London's Mount Pleasant office.

"Management are attempting to undermine our national bargaining. There should be an across the board payment to all new recruits, not just to some."

"Today's strike shows the strength of the membership but the pressure must be kept on the national executive to step up the action if we are going to win."

See also "Post strike, build for all-out action" - page 3.

**Militant Public meeting**  
**Build for**  
**United Action!**  
**Wednesday 7**  
**September**  
**7.30pm**  
**Camden Library,**  
**Euston Road, NW1**

# Water bosses tear up agreements

EMPLOYERS IN the water industry have announced plans to tear up national agreements covering thousands of workers.

## By a Nupe member

Following the departure of the Thames Water Authority and the intention of the Northumbrian Water Authority to do likewise, the chairs of the remaining eight authorities have now formally given the unions

twelve months' notice of their withdrawal from the national negotiating councils.

All groups of workers, whether clerical, manual or craft, will be affected in a move which can only be seen as a preparation by the employers of a major offensive on pay and conditions.

With government plans now well advanced to privatise the industry the employers clearly want

scope to increase profits—at the expense of the industry's workforce.

Apart from opening the door to regional pay, other important issues, such as health and safety and pensions, will also be hit.

## Pathetic

The response from the unions at national level has been pathetic so far—and looks as if it may stay that way.

An inadequate three page letter was sent to the employers asking them to "take into account" the views of the unions before coming to a decision. The employers showed their contempt by announcing their intention to scrap the national machinery — and then talk to the unions.

Workers in the industry need to take urgent action to defend their national agreements. An immediate first step should be a na-

tional delegate conference of all those unions with members in the industry.

## Plans

This would open the door to maximum trade union unity at a time when all our members are under attack on the same issue. If we don't fight now we will have to later as the employers start to pick off the weakest groups first.

There must be clear

plans formulated not only on how to defend the existing agreements but on the need to fight for improvements. Despite growing profits there are still many low paid workers in the industry.

The call for a national minimum wage is as vital in the water industry as elsewhere. If linked to a campaign to defend the national machinery it could have an important effect in mobilising union members.

# GEC—Plessey Beeston strike

850 HOURLY-PAID workers, members of the unions TGWU, GMB, AEU and MSF, have been on strike since 23 August at GEC-Plessey Communications (GPC), at Beeston.

## By Gary Freeman

This is the first strike for eight years. Workers voted 97 per cent to walk out if management brought in work study engineers as part of their business improvement programme. This programme rips up agreements going back to 1971, slashes

bonuses in an attempt to unify wages down and ends promotion through the grades.

Many workers are on only £102 per week basic. They make up their money by bonus payments averaging £60-80. For couples working at GPC this move would be particularly devastating. One worker estimated that she and her husband would lose £160 a week between them.

Management want to change from weekly payment of the basic to monthly and pay the bonus twice a year, basing it not on what individuals produce weekly but on what the whole factory puts out — inc-

luding the non-productive sector.

There are fears that management will determine the bonus according to their wishes. Last time there was an experiment with the bonus management said they made no money in three months.

## Consultation

Neighbouring company Boots increased profits last year but the bonus fell!

Although the unions would accept the need for a unified pay structure they justifiably want consultation and want to unify up.

Dave, one of the shop stewards said: "I've a letter at home from the new management at the time of the GEC-Plessey merger saying all terms and conditions would remain the same unless changes were negotiated". This has proved to be a hollow promise.

The feeling is that the old GEC management have provoked this to break the unions in order to drive down wages and conditions.

Messages of support and donations to: GPC Beeston shop stewards' fund, c/o David de Lacy, Transport House, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

LESS THAN four months after right-wing general secretary John Ellis stated at CPSA conference that the strike weapon was dead, UBO and job centre workers at Easterhouse in Glasgow have secured a resounding victory over management on the issue of office integration.

By John McNally, Ian Nisbet, Gerry Croall, and Yvonne Daly, Easterhouse strikers

# Easterhouse 'militancy pays off'

The achievement of every one of the strikers' demands was won after a bitter three month strike.

This is the most clear-cut victory won by CPSA and NUCPS members recently. However, unless the Easterhouse experience is generalised and built upon by the BL84 section executive committee the gains won will be grabbed back in the future.

Office integration is a precondition management must achieve on their own terms in order to press ahead with demands for agency status and eventual privatisation of the Employment Service. In reality it means more work with less staff, a contraction of public services and worsening conditions.

Concessions were given to pilot offices throughout

Britain on the back of the Easterhouse dispute. 48 strikers achieved what months of negotiating by the BL84 section executive committee could not, that is integration with the union having a say in its implementation.

Management's policy of not giving in to strikers is now in tatters. The main factor in the victory was the implacable determination of the strikers not to accept integration on management's terms. The unity between members of both unions was fundamental and the one day all-Glasgow strike proved the depth of support among other Employment Service workers.

The strikers, while realising

the need for escalation, were never panicked into wild or desperate calls for action that could not be delivered or sustained.

The strikers demanded the blacking of Easterhouse giros at Livingston computer centre and escalation to take in the other integration offices. At the time of management's climbdown, conditions were beginning to mature for such an escalation.

## Blacking

The demand for blacking at Livingston was based on the lessons of the London dispute, earlier this year.

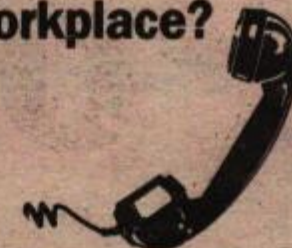
The bureaucracy, both 'moderate' and BL84, were as terrified as management

of the involvement of the computer centres. The absolute insistence that this option be used rang alarm bells in more than just management circles.

The Broad Left leadership of the dispute contrasted with the national and sectional leadership. The BL84 section members resident in Scotland played an absolutely disgraceful role.

The section executive have been handed a massive bargaining weapon by the strikers. They must build on this by campaigning for integration to be introduced on the union's terms, not management's. Anything less would be a betrayal of the sacrifice shown at Easterhouse.

What's happening in your workplace? Phone in your reports to the Industrial Editor on 01 533 3311 before 5pm on Monday.



## News in Brief

### Devonport Dockyard

DEVONPORT DOCKYARD management have threatened to sack a year's intake of apprentices on 2 September after four years of intensive training.

The management claim they have to find 72 further voluntary redundancies this week or to enforce these as compulsory redundancies before March next year. Management would prefer to sack these apprentices rather than laying off 46 fitters who have volunteered to go.

In response to this news 1000 workers threatened to take industrial action this week. Bill Goffin, local AEU district secretary, said:

"Devonport management should not keep recruiting apprentices if it was only training them for the dole."

He went on to say that workers should not be taking industrial action over the sacking of apprentices.

By a Plymouth correspondent.

### French miners win

A SUPPORT meeting turned into a victory celebration in Chesterfield recently. 80 people, mainly miners and their wives, listened as Tony Ramirez, a French power worker, announced that the French government had backed down and conceded the demands of striking miners and power workers.

For over four months, 2,000 miners and 250 power station workers at Gardanne in southern France had been striking for a decent wage, for the

future of the pit and against the introduction of 'flexible working'.

A speaker from the French women's support group clearly showed that the lessons of the British miners' strike had not been forgotten. She described how the women had organised action in support of the strike including a 21 day hunger strike and an occupation of the town hall.

By Paul Crowson, Chesterfield LPYS

# NHS technicians' anger

THE RECENT debacle over the nurses' pay offer underlines the problems which other health workers face in their pay negotiations.

By Gwyn Morris, junior 'B' MLSO, Bedford General hospital and MSF

Scientific officers in the pathology departments have been offered 5.5 per cent backdated to 1 April with a further 3 per cent from the date of settlement. But this offer is dependent on the implementation of extensive re-grading.

Dental technicians have claimed a minimum £24 a week rise, a 35 hour week and 10 extra days holiday. Since 1980 their pay has risen only half the national average. To earn more than the TUC's minimum of £124 per week, a technician would have to work a further two years after qualifying.

No extra funding is being offered for the present offer



The grievances of all health workers must be fought

Photo: Militant

but the government has asked district health authorities to budget for the expected increases. This will inevitably lead to further cuts.

Workers in the clinical support services feel angry, bitter and demoralised as the negotiations drag on. Most understand that the re-structuring is part of plans to encourage health

authorities to privatise these services.

Meanwhile, pharmacy technicians have turned down a 5 per cent increase. This followed a similar response from operating department assistants, dark room technicians, artificial kidney assistants and others who threw out a 5.5 per cent offer.

This mix of factors, plus

the result of the nurses' re-grading is contributing to an explosive mood in the NHS.

Joint union committees should be formed in all health authorities. All health workers are united in the same struggle for a decent wage and only effective action will set the scene for an end to poverty pay in the NHS.

# Newcastle Central Office

SHIFTWORKERS IN Newcastle Central Office (NCO) were informed two weeks ago that due to the changeover of workloads between NCO and Washington Child Benefit branch (because of the Pensions Strategy Project) the complement of staff would have to be cut by 24 posts in September.

Management intended to do this by the compulsory transfer of shiftworkers into clerical areas. This would mean these staff facing a large reduction in pay - up to 350 per week in some cases.

The staff were obviously unhappy about this and angered that no information had been issued to them

previously, not even from the union. The union representatives brought in from London even refused to hold union meetings with the shiftworkers.

## Wastage

Due to pressure from the workforce, these union representatives invited a shiftworker to attend meetings between the trade union side and management and thus keep the workforce informed of events.

On 23 August management agreed that in one shiftworking area, B block, no compulsory transfers were necessary. However, the complement

would still be cut by six posts. This would occur through natural wastage.

In the other area, D block, they insisted that 18 staff had to go. Six of these face the loss of their shift disturbance allowance and data processing allowance - about £50 in total.

Both areas still face the prospect of further staffing cuts in March and April next year. But to date, CPSA officials appointed to NCO by union headquarters have done nothing.

By Bill Thurlaway, CPSA branch treasurer (suspended)

### Animals before staff?

THE ASSOCIATION of Clerical, Technical and Supervisory Staffs (Actss) and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection are in dispute.

In May of this year, the BUAV tore up the union recognition agreement and have since refused to negotiate with or recognise Actss. The shop steward, Dominic Johnson, was sacked and not

allowed to appeal against the decision.

The union is demanding his re-instatement, a restoration of full trade union rights and a boycott of BUAV materials and speakers until this is achieved.

Resolutions should be passed and sent to Jenny Stephenson, 9 St John's Road, Richmond, Surrey.

### Haringey council

THE GUERRILLA war between Haringey council and its trade unions broke into open conflict last week as the council locked out the central telephonists for refusing to use a new telephone system for which there had been no agreement.

The council, expecting its white collar staff to be too demoralised to fight since the voting of £50 million worth of cuts, was

unprepared for the wholehearted blacking of the system.

The result of the lock-out was the effective closure of several departments to the public. Faced with a major dispute, the council toyed with the idea of further lock-outs in an effort to intimidate members but then decided to do an about face on the union's main demands.

By Harry Hamberger.

### Vickers, Barrow

STRIKERS AT VSEL in Barrow, out since the beginning of June, have voted to accept the com-

pany's latest offer in postal ballots. There will be a fuller report next week.

**CHERYL VARLEY** is a member of the Further Education Labour Students (Fels) and the NUS FE National Committee. Below she explains what the Tories have in store for FE students and workers.

# Tory attacks on Further Education



The Tories' Education Bill will mean FE colleges being taken over by Tory slave labour schemes.

- ▶ A £35 a week grant for FE students
- ▶ No privatisation of education
- ▶ Union rates of pay on YTS
- ▶ Kick out the Tories

## THE TORIES' Education Reform Bill means the wholesale privatisation of the education system.

If it is implemented education in Britain will be controlled and owned by big business and run in the interest of private profit. The further education (FE) sector was born during the boom of the 1960s. Up to a million more young people were able to enter into further and higher education.

Now the capitalist economy is in crisis so the Tories are hacking education expenditure. Polytechnics are to be turned over to providing the graduates and research needed by local industry.

So further education will be run to provide the highly profitable factory fodder. In other words YTS, Employment Training (ET) and other such schemes run by the Training Commission (formerly the MSC).

For some years the MSC has been taking over courses and increasing its slice of further education. Last year it had 25 per cent of all work-related courses. Unemployment benefit will stop for all under 18s from 12 September. This will prevent 30,000 youths who normally study

part time in the FE colleges from doing so.

They will probably end up on day-release and YTS, giving the Training Commission yet more control in the colleges. The Bill will rapidly speed up the process of the Training Commission getting majority control of further education. The Government plans FE colleges like huge factories churning out cheap labour rather than centres of education.

The cuts will not just stop at students. Business will impose its own working conditions on college employees. Privatisation of cleaning and catering,

involving job losses and pay cuts, is highly likely. Is it likely that business will finance student unions which will act as a centre of resistance to cuts in the future?

The Tories plan to drive the working class out of their courses and onto cheap labour schemes. They're feeling confident of doing so having got their Bill through Parliament. But that was the easy bit; let's see them implement it!

This year saw a spate of occupations in polys in the traditionally quiet third term. These movements will revive when the colleges go back and spill over into FEs. Last Mar-

ch 300 students walked out of Kirkby FE college protesting at what they saw as plans to turn their college into a YTS centre.

Student unions must link up with college workers' unions to fight attacks on students' and workers' conditions.

Potential exists to link up FE and higher education students with school students, uniting them with the labour movement in a massive campaign to stop the implementation of the Bill.

Education was not given to our class. It was a long hard fight to win it. We will not give it up easily.

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Return to the Circulation Department, Militant, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Make cheques payable to Militant.

## Reach the target

ONE AND a half million youth will be enrolling at further education colleges over the next few weeks, where there will be enormous opportunities to sell the *Militant* and raise money.

By Ruth Williams

We have produced a special sticker for the colleges.

Use rattling tins, sell stickers and ask for extras on sales of the paper. And don't forget to organise a disco or gig for the Fighting Fund too.

£250 was raised at the Butetown Carnival in Cardiff through the sale of 'Smash Apartheid' stickers and by selling hot dogs.

Two supporters from Peckham raised £100 at the Notting Hill Carnival through selling stickers.

Readers in Camden and Southampton ended last week's activity with socials raising £70 and £43.

These are just some of the many examples we have received from last week's special drive to raise money for *Militant*.

Joan Williams, from Neath, has donated her overtime money of £200, a pledge she made at the Marxist Summer Camp. Martin Milne from Paisley and T. Austin from London have also redeemed their IOUs from our recent rally for £40 and £50. If you have an outstanding IOU to the Fighting Fund please redeem it straight away.

Thousands of Post Office workers will be on strike this week giving up at least a day's pay. Why not match their sacrifices and send a donation to *Militant*?

Deadline 3 September This week £4112

## Fighting Fund Week 8

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales	2586		3,510
2 London	5053		7,090
3 South East	981		1,570
4 South West	727		1,270
5 Eastern	1108		2,260
6 Southern	958		2,020
7 Scotland East	938		2,150
8 East Midlands	901		2,530
9 Scotland West	893		2,520
10 Merseyside	1610		5,000
11 Yorkshire	1910		5,950
12 West Midlands	1217		3,960
13 Northern	819		3,270
14 Manchester	652		2,900
15 National	2176		4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,529</b>		<b>50,000</b>

Thanks to:  
 I. MacConnachle (Liverpool) for £40; A. Smith (Dundee) £30; M. Dean (London) £40; Ian Pringle (Cohse, Perth) £10; Mr. Hanley (pensioner from the Pot-

teries) £5; H. Bonifacio (Gibraltar) £5; Chetan Patel (London) for £100 through sales of Lenin's Collected Works; and The Stevenage Arms for £145.