

# Tory rent robbery

THE TORIES are stepping up their war on council housing and ordinary working class tenants. Council rents could double and tenants be made to subsidise the poll tax if a new law they are hatching is brought in.

By Ben Eastop

Under Thatcher's 'caring citizen' policy not only will the poor have to pay for the poor; they will also subsidise the rich.

Not satisfied with the present Housing Bill, which aims to throw millions of tenants into the clutches of private landlords, the Tories have worse in store.

A new law, scheduled for 1990, will force up rents to market levels. The extra income will be used to try to make the huge poll tax levy seem smaller and defuse the anger the Tory tax has caused. But tenants will still foot the bill through higher rents.

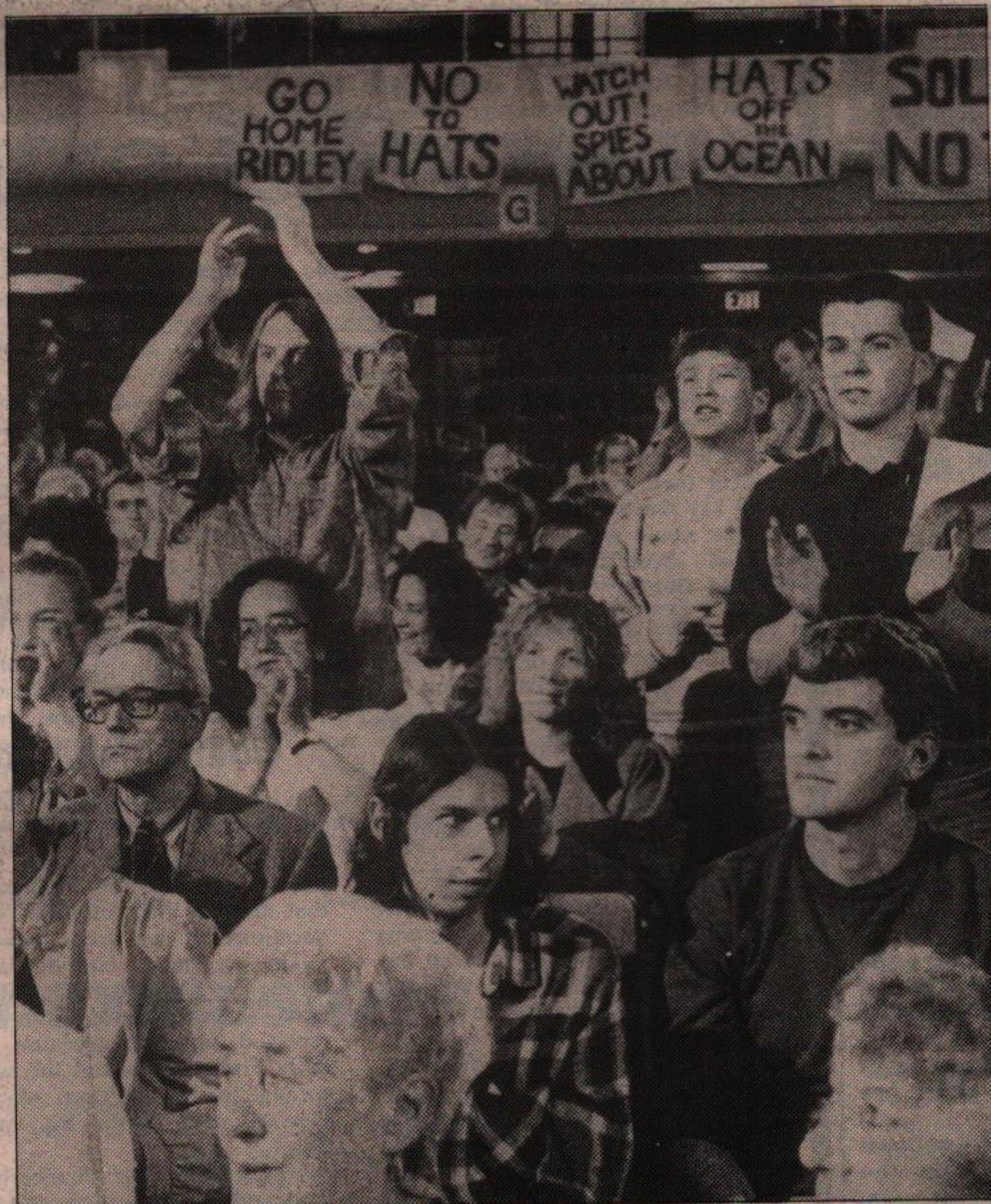
## Direct powers

Councils will no longer be allowed to hold rents down by putting money into their housing accounts from elsewhere. And environment minister Ridley will have direct powers to fix rents so councils can't get round the legislation.

On top of this, government assistance for housing benefit will be cut and councils will have to meet the full cost of benefits from rents. Council tenants in work will have to subsidise next-door neighbours who have lost their jobs or are on poverty wages and rely on housing benefit.

As one Southwark tenant told *Militant*: "What with higher council rents and poll tax, it's the working class who are going to have to face all of this".

In future, councils will have to pay all housing costs out of the housing account. Income from rent will have to



1,000 Tower Hamlets tenants cheer speakers condemning Housing Action Trusts being used by the Tories to spearhead privatisation plans (See page 2). Photo: Steve Gardiner

cover the costs of borrowing money to build new homes and of maintaining existing properties. Any surplus would automatically be creamed off to pay for other expenditure.

In the last century workers were thrown into disease-ridden city slums by a burgeoning capitalist system hungry for profits. Cheap housing provid-

ed by the state was one of the most significant reforms won by the labour movement.

Now the Tories want to destroy public housing and hand it over to their private landlord friends and the rent sharks. In place of a service provided by the state they want the poor and disadvantaged to be helped

## Inside

### Gloucester tenants fight homes sell-off

See page 6



### Bradford Tories to cut 9,000 jobs

See page 4

### Race and education

See pages 8-9

out by those one rung above.

Already council tenants are organising against the Housing Bill and the threat of privatisation. But these protests must be fully backed by the whole labour movement and turned into a full scale war on the Tories' plans.

Labour must commit itself to repealing the Housing Bill and any new legislation which takes away the fundamental right to decent, cheap housing. The huge repayments on loans—30 per cent of the annual budget of inner London authorities—should be written off.

The banks and building societies should be nationalised to finance the biggest building and renewal programme ever carried out and ensure everyone a decent home to live in at minimal cost.

## One year after the crash

IT IS now a year since the great stock market crash which began on Black Monday, 19 October 1987. In one day share values on the stock exchanges of the world plunged by 25-50 per cent, sending a cold shiver down the spine of international capitalism.

But how have the advanced capitalist countries been able to avoid the crash in the real economy, in production and trade, that the stock market collapse seemed to anticipate?

Output in these economies has accelerated, by three to four per cent in 1988, faster than any year this decade except the real peak year of 1984. The *Financial Times*, however, comments that "The fact that economic growth rates of anything over three per cent can be hailed as an economic boom perhaps underlines just how far expectations have been lowered during the austere 1980s."

Is it true as Nigel Lawson maintains, that capitalism, by a judicious use of properly co-ordinated international economic policy, has 'shrugged off' the widely predicted crisis?

Certainly the stock markets have not recovered from that terrible week last year. With the exception of Tokyo, all of them are still way below the values achieved in 1987. Major investors remain resolutely opposed to entering the market and transactions on the London stock market are 45 per cent down on 1987, leading to considerable job losses in the City.

What triggered off the stock crash was the fear among investors that the huge US budget and trade deficits could no longer be financed by borrowing from Japanese and European capitalists without soaring interest rates. This would then threaten to choke off demand for both consumer and capital goods, and therefore investment and output.

When the US trade deficit began to rise, despite a sharply devalued dollar, and with its interest rates, then investors decided to sell - all at once.

The Group of Seven (G7) major governments reacted to the crash by immediately agreeing to lower interest rates and pump extra money into the world economy from central bank reserves. In other words the US government forced the other governments to agree to finance its deficits further. Pay up or face a slump was the message.

In the third world, however, output growth is lower than in 1987, as the price of raw materials (after a temporary respite) is falling sharply again. The price of oil has never stopped falling.

The growth of 1988 then is a product of extra demand for goods stimulated by more liquidity and by lower raw material prices. The result has been higher production, but also a new danger - fast rising prices.

The G7 governments have temporarily avoided a slump by boosting inflation - after six years of relatively sluggish growth in output but with low inflation.

Now they are recolling from the inflationary impact of their easing up on monetary controls. They are pushing up interest rates again just as they did in 1987.

Over this year the US trade deficit has only shrunk very modestly. Indeed it celebrated the anniversary of the crash with a monthly increase similar to that of August 1987. Also the US budget deficit has hardly been dented. The huge debts owed by the third world economies to the advanced capitalist nations have not been reduced, maintaining the possibility of a major financial crisis.

All these underlying factors, which led to the loss of investor 'confidence' in the world economy one year ago, are still present. To these must now be added inflation - formerly the problem of the 1970s.

The stock crash of October 1987 was not immediately followed by a recession in the world economy because of governmental action and further exploitation of the third world. But then neither was the 1929 stock market crash followed by an immediate slump. A downturn in output only really began nine months later and in some countries two years on.

Last October *Militant* commented that international co-ordination of policy "can only at best delay the inevitable". Perhaps even by next year the recession, of which Black Monday was the warning sign, will grip the major economies, smashing any illusions in the permanence of capitalist prosperity.

## HATs and poll tax

# Tories under fire



Photo: Steve Gardiner.

Angry Tower Hamlets tenants tell Tory minister what they think of HATs.

## Tower Hamlets

"YOU'RE THE nearest, hit him!" a tenant shouted when arrogant Tory minister David Trippier told 1,000 Tower Hamlets tenants they were the victims of "irresponsible and misleading propaganda".

By Tony Cross

Chair, Bow branch  
Labour Party, Tower Hamlets

Trippier had accepted an invitation from the Tower Hamlets Tenants Federation to explain why six Tower Hamlets estates are being turned over to Housing Action Trusts (HATs). But he began to sweat as he was repeatedly interrupted by boos and slow hand-clapping.

As the meeting carried

on the temperature rose and angry tenants came near to lynching him. Several older tenants' patience gave out and they stormed to the front of the meeting to harangue Trippier even while people were speaking from the platform.

The minister's small supply of tact soon gave out under this barrage and he turned to insulting speakers and audience alike. He told Ocean Estate tenants' leader Dick Charlton that his estimate that it would cost £200 million to buy back estates was "tantamount to a pack of lies" (slow hand-claps, cries of "Off!").

He told tenants they were getting misinforma-

tion from political activists ("Tell him to get on with it and stop talking all that crap!")

And he told them they couldn't vote on HATs until it had been tried out because "we've never had HATs before so you can't judge". ("He wants them for the yuppies!")

## Euphoria

When speaker after speaker lined up to hammer Trippier the meeting reached heights of euphoria. Council Labour group leader Phil Maxwell received three standing ovations during a contribution from the floor in which he warned the Tory: "We will build a campaign in

defence of our housing the like of which your government has never seen."

To say there was a mood to fight at this meeting would be a gross understatement. Now the tenants federation must spread the campaign to non-HATs estates, some of which already have anti-HATs posters in their windows, and take up the fight against the whole housing bill.

A monster demonstration could be organised in the borough. But above all, local authority and other unions must be prepared to back tenants up with industrial action if necessary to smash the Tory and Liberal attacks.

## Stirling

TENANTS IN Stirling were astonished to hear their Tory MP, Michael Forsyth, say that on the issue of the poll tax he would not hear a word said against Scottish Labour leader, Donald Dewar!

By Ian Stanton,

acting secretary of Central  
Region Anti-Poll Tax Union

"I'm the MP around here. I can do what I like and go where I please," said the Scottish Office minister, as he arrived with a police escort at a packed meeting of over 100 tenants in the Raploch housing scheme.

But his arrogant confidence was short-lived. He was clearly shaken by his constituents' anger and bitterness towards the poll tax. "We need our money for food and clothes. We can't afford to pay the poll tax," he was told by a tenant.

In an attempt to justify its 'fairness', this architect of the poll tax, 'reassured' the meeting that Stirling single people would have to be earning £60 a week before they were liable to pay the full tax of around £300.

A Young Socialist pointed out that this 'fairness' meant a young person on poverty wages of £1.50 an hour paying the same as a Tory cabinet minister!

Mags McMenemin, secretary of the Raploch Tenants Association, slammed the Tory government for cutting benefits, slashing council grants and introducing the poll tax. Forsyth was reduced to pathetically interrupting her with cries of 'garbage!'

To loud cheers he was sharply told:

"Listen pal! You've had your say. Maggie Thatcher might be stubborn, but so is Maggie McMenemin!"

Forsyth was further rattled when he was presented with a tin of EEC mince which pensioners have been queuing up for throughout Britain. "If it's good enough for the working class, it's good enough for you!" he was told.

## Going nowhere

At one point in the meeting Forsyth threatened to walk out as he couldn't get his own way. But he was unceremoniously told by one tenant that until he had answered all their questions he was going nowhere.

The tenants' confidence grew throughout the meeting. Calls for a mass campaign of non-payment received rapturous applause. Predictably Forsyth attacked the idea and sprang to the defence of Donald Dewar, who shares his views on this.

Despite this cosy alliance between Tory and Labour leaders, the meeting overwhelmingly passed a motion supporting mass non-payment.

A Mori poll for Scottish Television has indicated that already 400,000 Scots will not pay the poll tax. There is growing confidence that the next few months will see that figure more than doubled, as the anti-poll tax unions in Scotland build an army of over a million non-payers.

This army will crush the poll tax and drive Forsyth and his Tory government from office.

## Liverpool

THE FIRST public meeting called by Liverpool Broadgreen Against the Poll Tax was attended by 250 people.

By Howard Lewis

Allan Till, secretary of Broadgreen Labour Party Young Socialists, got a warm response when he said that during a previous attempt to impose a poll tax the collectors had their heads cut off and used as footballs.

"I'm 20 years old," he said, "and I've lived under Thatcher for half my life. We've got to use the poll tax campaign to sink the Tories' flagship and this vicious government with it."

Terry Fields MP, responding to press criticisms for leading a campaign of non-payment contrary to party policy, said: "Working-class people cannot afford to pay the poll tax. It's about time our leadership woke up to the feelings of working-class people."

"They talk of staying within the law, but the Tories break the law every day. Where were the Tory laws at Zeebrugge, King's Cross and Piper Alpha? The reason for the press hysteria is that the ruling class are terrified of a mass campaign of opposition developing."

At the end of the meeting 140 signed up to join the campaign. As one woman joined, she said: "My lad is coming up to 18 and I was looking forward to giving him his own front door key. If this poll tax is introduced then I'll be forced to take it back off him and throw him out."

# Steel workers pay for profits

BRITISH STEEL is to be privatised. No propaganda about small shareholders this time – this is a straight sale to big business. Steelworkers have been under the cosh of the Tories and their henchmen since 1980 when a thirteen week national strike was sold out by Bill Sirs and the Iron and Steel Trade Confederation leadership.

After the strike, the British Steel Corporation (BSC) began to work towards denationalisation and mergers with the private sector. The plan's codename was Phoenix as the industry was supposed to rise from the ashes!

Nationally BSC has cut employment from 186,000 in 1979 to 54,000 in 1987. In South Yorkshire there were only 16,000 steelworkers employed by last year.

In preparation for privatisation, BSC in the Sheffield area worked alongside the private steel firm GKN from 1980 to 1986 in a strategy to corner the most profitable market of engineering steel.

Throughout that period there were a number of closures. By the end of this process, using mainly public money, BSC and GKN had cornered the engineering steel market.

Yet this was not enough for private industry's fat cats. Inside BSC, shift levels were lowered and the steelworkers' concept was in-

By Chris Weldon  
Sheffield AEU  
district committee  
personal capacity

vented where production workers began to do general maintenance jobs previously done by fitters. This was still not enough – BSC closed Tinsley Park with 800 redundancies.

## Fit for what?

Then an agreement was reached in January 1986 to start trading in April under the name United Engineering Steels (UES). This takes in the GKN group plus three steelworks left in South Yorks. The new workforce is 10,000 strong.

It prides itself on being the largest producer of engineering steel in Western Europe. But it is reliant on the motor industry so a fall in that industry would hit UES.

Work practices and conditions have got worse under privatisation: pensions are lower; trade union organisation is consistently attacked. Manning levels have



A rundown steel factory in Sheffield.

Photo: Jake Sutton.

## Tories make their friends rich

THE TORY conference cheered its rich supporters up by promising more privatisation, more easy money for private speculators.

The controversy over the closure of the Royal Ordnance (RO) factories (see *Militant* 14 October), shows how much money can be made out of sacking workers.

been cut but the workload remains the same. There are more unsocial shift patterns.

The advert says "British steel fitter and better". Fit for what? Fit

The privatised giant, British Aerospace (BAe), took over 15 RO factories from the government in 1987 for £190 million. One site has been closed down and three more are planned to close.

The value of Enfield and Waltham Abbey alone as redevelopment land is more than £450 million. This leaves BAe with £260 mil-

lion profit and many more sites still operating – or ripe for plunder by asset-stripping owners.

BAe also took over the Rover group in July for £150 million, with £547 million worth of debts written off. Now the company's total property value is £2 billion, of which £1.13 billion is estimated to be 'surplus to requirements'!

In other words, more factories face closure, more workers face the dole queue, all to boost short term profits! That's what privatisation is all about.

The revelations about these dirty deals will make RO workers even more determined to fight the latest closures at Patricroft and Bishopton.

for sale to the Tories' friends to make quick profits – and it's all done on tax-payers' money.

British Steel (what's left of it) will make money for its new

owners but this will be done on the back of its workforce. We must demand that the next Labour government should:

★ Renationalise the

steel industry  
★ Return proper pensions  
★ Link steel with coal and rail to rebuild what the Tories have demolished.

## Euro MPs demand release

THE CAMPAIGN against the frame up of Mahmoud Masarwa received a major boost this week when the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning his treatment.

The resolution demanded his right to be represented by the lawyer of his choice and his right to be tried in public; it also called for his immediate release.

The motion, tabled by Belgian MEP Jef Uilburghs and 22 others, was passed in an emergency debate on 10 October, receiving 60 per cent of the votes, with the Socialist, Communist and Green groups supporting the resolution.

The attempt to frame Mahmoud, try him and sentence him without publicity or protest has failed dismally. The International Labour Move-

ment delegation to Israel has received a sympathetic response, with members of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) offering to take up his case. A full report of the delegation will appear in next week's *Militant*.

### Censorship

As a result of the delegation, the wall of press censorship surrounding the case has finally been breached with both the *Jerusalem Post*, and the *Mapam* (United Workers' Party) paper *Al-Hamishmar* carrying details of Mahmoud's trial.

However the Israeli authorities haven't stopped their dirty tricks yet, rejecting Mahmoud's second lawyer, Avraham Orin again, on the

grounds that he did not have the necessary security clearance. This move, only four days before Mahmoud's court appearance on 18 October, is a clear attempt to deny him legal representation.

Any alternative representation will be considerably more expensive so it is urgent that financial support is rushed in to the campaign as soon as possible.

This week's donations include £50 from North London Poly Labour Club, £25 from the Socialist Teachers Alliance London, £25 from Stirling University students union, £16.50 Wirral DLP, Kensington ward LP (Merseyside) £5, Lothian Rank and File Teachers £10, Whitwell ward Bolsover £10, Beverley Town ward (Hull) £10. Forest Gate ward New-

ham £10, £42.26 from NCU London Broad Left.

Donations to Campaign for the release of Mahmoud Masarwa, PO Box 524, London E2 9AH. (Cheques payable to Mahmoud Masarwa Defence Campaign).

New sponsors include Harriet Stevens, regional secretary CPSA DHSS section Wales and South West region.

Protest resolutions should be sent to: Israeli Embassy, 2 Palace Green, London W8, and Prime Ministers' Office, 3 Kaplan Street, Jerusalem, Israel 91919. Copies to Histadrut 93 Arlozerov St., Tel Aviv Israel. (please quote Mahmoud's membership number: 197132 50). Copies also to PO Box 524 London E2 9AH.

Free



Mahmoud Masarwa

## First Scottish expulsions

"I WANT to see Springburn turned into a *Militant*-free zone," declared Michael Martin, Scottish Labour MP. He has instigated the expulsions of three Marxists, Stevie Lees, Emma Phillips and Charlie Robertson. These members have 27 years of membership between them.

These are the first ever expulsions in Scotland and Martin hopes that this will be the beginning of a wholesale purge. Investigations are already underway

in Cumbernauld, Livingston, Cathcart and Pollok.

### Internal strife

If the Labour Party in Scotland follows Martin's plans it will seriously weaken Labour's standing. One reason why the party had an overwhelming victory in Scotland in the general election was that it has not been affected by the expulsions and investigations in England.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) is already staging a revival. Many people see it as the only party standing up to the Tories. If Labour engages in wholesale expulsions the SNP will be given a further boost.

As Charlie Robertson, one of the three expelled, said, "most people in Springburn would prefer Michael Martin to direct his energies towards turning Springburn into a drugs-free zone, an unemployment-free zone and a poll tax-free zone."

## Liverpool schools victory

GIDEON BEN-TOVIM has resigned as deputy chairman of Liverpool council's schools sub-committee.

The district Labour Party decided unanimously to scrap the proposals of the primary school re-organisation working party and to disband that body. This forced him to go.

The overwhelming majority of DLP members were opposed to the way the policy-making role of the party was replaced by a committee on which Labour was in a minority.

In his announcement to

the press Ben-Tovim accused the Labour administration of being politically, educationally and financially irresponsible.

He further opposed the disbandment of the working party and the scrapping of its proposals. At the last working party meeting he even said that it must not be forgotten that the previous DLP had been disbanded for acting upon its own decisions.

He went on to accuse some Labour councillors of being stampeded by *Militant* supporters who had in-

fluenced the reactions of parents. In reality, the tremendous build-up of pressure in the party and from parents forced him to go. This reflected a desire for primary school education policies to advance the interests of working class children.

The DLP must take a fresh look at this area of educational policy and ensure that a working party is established from within its own ranks to present policies that will answer our educational needs.

# Bradford Tories to cut 9,000 jobs

BRADFORD'S TORY-controlled council is set to slash a third of its workforce – up to 9,000 jobs – over the next five years. After only two weeks of taking power the Tories, backed up by the Liberals, have pushed through a £5 million cuts package. Tory leader Eric Pickles has threatened to implement the job cuts in only one year if the unions don't agree to cooperate.

The Tories have got their eyes on valuable council assets which they want to turn into cash. They plan to sell off the Alhambra theatre, recently renovated with rate-payers' money at a cost of £8 million, and the Richard Dunn sports centre.

But they are also worried by local resistance to the poll tax. They want to cut services quickly to reduce the council's future poll tax levy.

The Labour Party, obsessed with witch hunts, lost overall control in the May elections. The Tories only gained a majority when they won a recent by-election. Labour's right wing, busy with attacking *Militant*, are to blame for letting these hare-brained Tories take over.

The Tories intend to privatise services ahead of the timetable set by the Local Government Act. Refuse workers in the city have already been on strike for a week because of understaffing.

Nalgo members faced with immediate job losses are looking for a lead from their union branch. But the



Bradford – one of Britain's poorest cities – now part of a Tory 'experiment' in slashing jobs and services.

BRADFORD TORY council has suffered its first defeat, at the hands of *Militant* supporters, after just three weeks in power.

The first act of the Tories was to ban *Militant* from holding public meetings on council premises.

But under pressure from petitioning, resolutions to the labour movement and coverage in the local press and radio the new 'tough' leaders of Bradford council have caved in. *Militant* supporters will be allowed to book any council-owned rooms they wish.

A spokesperson for *Militant* was due to speak against the council ban at an official lobby of the council called by local authority workers protesting against the cuts.

Rather than allow a *Militant* supporter five minutes to address such a meeting the Tories preferred defeat.

This will be a boost to local authority workers – the Tories can be defeated. With *Militant's* policy and programme we can win.

right wing leadership have not yet even put out a bulletin! In the housing directorate, which is to be split up by plans to sell off all council housing, *Militant* supporters on the stewards' committee have issued four bulletins.

The Nalgo branch is now backing a half day strike on 25 October, the day of the next council meeting and if the council doesn't back down there will be a ballot for all-out industrial action.

150 jobs are immediately under threat but these may be found through early

retirement and redeployment. But the council offers no guarantee of salary protection beyond nine months and are refusing to discuss it with union officials.

There is a clear need to act now to protect wages and conditions. To allow the Tories to get away with their 'first wave' would give them the initiative for future cuts. To allow them to win this battle in Bradford would allow them to set the agenda for other councils in the future.

By a Nalgo member

## Militant says

★24 hour strike when the council meets on 25 October.

★Non-cooperation with those organising cuts.

★For the formation of a joint shop stewards committee – an injury to one is an injury to all.

★For the development of an across-union strategy of industrial action to defeat the Tories.

★No witch hunts in the Labour Party. Stop attacking socialists and fight the Tories!

★For a Labour council in Bradford pledged to reverse cuts and job losses and start a programme of expanding services and creating jobs.

*Militant* readers' meeting Stop this Tory council Hear: Tony Mulhearn (sur-charged Liverpool councillor)

On: Wednesday 26 October at 7.30pm

At: The Royal Standard, Manningham Lane, Bradford.

## Birmingham: resistance grows to right's cuts

BIRMINGHAM'S LABOUR council has announced £10 million worth of cuts, a freeze on recruitment and the closure of social services area offices. A senior councillor has also spoken of a minimum 4,000 jobs that that will be lost.

Earlier this year, Marxist councillor Richard Evans and 20 other councillors had the whip withdrawn for refusing to vote for the closure of a seaside hotel for handicapped children.

Since then the Labour Party's national constitutional committee (NCC) ruled that the whip was never withdrawn properly and that no further disciplinary action should be taken. Richard Evans spoke to *Militant*.

"The right wing have refused to accept the decision of the NCC and have carried out further disciplinary action. Myself and three others have been removed from the education committee. Another councillor has been taken off the leisure services committee.

### 'Crimes'

My crimes were to move an amendment to a report which would have guaranteed cleaners in voluntary aided schools their jobs, wages and hours.

I also spoke and voted against the Employment Training scheme (ET). Birmingham council is refusing to implement Labour Party and TUC policy of opposing ET and has started a 3,000 place scheme. I also called for the withdrawal of a letter sent to striking education awards staff which threatened them with the sack if they did not return to work.

The district Labour party has recently adopted a 'no cuts' policy and have called for a public campaign with the trade unions against the cuts.

## STOP PRESS

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT Labour Party has voted overwhelmingly for the reinstatement of the three councillors removed from the education committee and for the reinstatement of the councillor removed from the leisure services committee.

The meeting went on to vote overwhelmingly for the resignation of council leader Dick Knowles.

The cuts are being made to put money into the reserves and hold down the rate rise for next year. But we must explain to workers in the city that next year the alternatives are a huge rate rise and massive cuts, or a fight against the government to recover some of the £482 million that has been stolen in rate support grant.

The council should start a 'no cuts' campaign now, mobilising the workforce and service users to defend our services from the Tories' attacks.

In Birmingham we are suffering from a slow death of a thousand cuts. The working class of Birmingham have a lot of time for the fight put up by Liverpool council. After all, they built 5,000 council houses when we did not build one family house.

Yes, I am optimistic for the future. In May I won a previously safe Tory seat overturning a majority of more than 2,000. Workers in Bournville, the ward I represent, voted for a socialist programme. With a campaign against the cuts I am confident we can recruit sufficient members into the Labour Party to deselect right wing councillors and return councillors prepared to fight."

## Unions need one voice

WORKERS WERE stunned when the 9,000 redundancies were announced. There was a lot of disbelief – some still don't believe it's going to happen. Many are feeling uncertain and insecure.

By a Bradford Ucat member.

A lot of them work for the council after being made redundant elsewhere. It's never been known as a good

payer but at least it had job security, so many people got into debt thinking they would pay it off later. Now these debts will never be paid if they are thrown onto the dole.

The unions have been quiet. A lot of workers think the unions are to blame because they've never done anything for them and conditions have deteriorated.

We've got to resist privatisation but already

we've had attacks on our wages and conditions since the trade union leaders and the previous Labour administration agreed to competitive tendering.

### Stop the cuts

There's been a push on for the last few months to get more work out of us for less money. We've got to stop it; the first step is to keep a 'no redundancy' policy and stop all cuts. The

union leaders are keeping each section of the workforce isolated. The effects aren't seen by members in the whole context.

Shop stewards of different manual sections and white collar grades have no communication with each other. We need to come together because unity builds strength. Then you can speak with one voice.

## All we want is a new home

TENANTS ON the Lower Grange estate are resisting plans to sell off their estate to the highest bidder. Modernisation work begun by the previous Labour administration was shelved when the council ran out of money.

Many tenants are virtually living in third world conditions. Despite this a petition was signed by 400 out of the 500 houses still occupied who want to stay with the council. They also want proper funding to finish the work.

Maureen Crompton, a tenant on the estate, describes some of the conditions.

"It takes a piece of your heart away when you fight for five years and get nowhere. We were fighting for modernisation – just a toilet upstairs and a big kitchen. It's not much to

ask. The toilets are outside the kitchen so the kids don't wash their hands properly before touching food. Our whole family had dysentery for four months.

### Stunt

"All we got from Tory councillor Godsby-Peet was that we shouldn't be using our children for a political stunt at council meetings but we should be at home cleaning our houses!

"Our homes are clean, but there are no street lamps, the pavements are up and rats run around in the open. It's getting so you are afraid to let your kids' friends see the estate. My son wrote a letter to the local paper – he just wanted a new house.

"We've been down to council meetings. Many mums at those meetings cried their eyes out. It is terrible flipping begging in this day and age.

"The Lord Mayor wanted us out – they wouldn't let us into the gallery at the last meeting because we were throwing paper at the Tories before.

"The chairman told people 'over there' to be quiet and I said: 'I'm glad you think we are people and not animals because animals live better than we do on Lower Grange'.

"He lives in some big hall. Our local Tory councillor, Farley, has two houses.

"If we were privatised where would we all live with the 9,000 on council house waiting lists?"

# Youth lobby Tory conference

O.T.T

Photo: Steve Gardiner



TENANTS' LEADERS on Brighton council estates were told not to expect a policeman to investigate crime during the Tory party conference, Young Socialist John Heddon told Radio 1's Newsbeat programme.

John was invited onto the programme to comment on the Tory party conference, as a young Tory had commented on Labour's conference the week before. "Most of my more political comments weren't used," he says, "but they did broadcast my comments on the massive resources used to protect the conference."

There was a minesweeper off the pier, the Special Boat Services jumping in and out of dinghies and the Special Air Services terrorising parts of the town, dropping armed men in public places.

No-one objects to the Tories holding a secure conference, John said, but this was over the top.

# LOADS OF ANGER

"WE'RE NOT going to pay the poll tax. We couldn't take out a loan. That's why we've got to stop the Tories."

"The Tories are trying to smash our union - but when we fight there is no way they'll succeed."

With students and youth facing the threat of the poll tax, Employment Training, further cuts in education and student loans, it was no surprise that such comments were common

on the Thursday of Tory party conference. Over 2,000 young people had travelled to Brighton to demonstrate outside it.

Their anger was clearly apparent when the march was held up for an hour as it passed the conference hall. There were jeers every time a Tory showed his or her face and when one Tory yuppie yob waved his wallet, shouting "loadsamoney", the anger erupted.

Inside the conference, the Tories were planning the destruction of the National Union of Students (NUS). It is now up to the NUS leaders to use the fighting spirit of youth, shown on the demonstration, to ensure the Tories don't succeed.

By John Heddon  
Brighton LPYS chair

## Big brother watches students

AS IF paying the poll tax wasn't enough, students will have to carry an identity card if the Tories' 'community charge' becomes law.

This is the most blatant attack on students' civil liberties ever. A Tory amendment to the legislation, due to be introduced in November, will force educational institutions to issue every student with a certificate giving his or her name, address, date of birth, place of study and

course.

All students must be provided with the certificates within 28 days. New students will be issued with them as quickly.

There is no doubt that this measure will be used to intimidate students and try to prevent them from getting involved in non-payment campaigns.

Colleges will have to provide poll tax registration officers with any information on the certificates within 21 days of being asked for it. It

will be used for the prosecution of anyone trying to avoid paying or registering for the poll tax. Pressure may even be exerted on college authorities to expel students involved in non-payment campaigns.

The Tories' 1987 code of conduct for higher education enabled college authorities to use the police to smash student struggles. They will be able to come onto campuses and add the facts on the certificates to the state's ever-growing

armoury of intelligence about individuals.

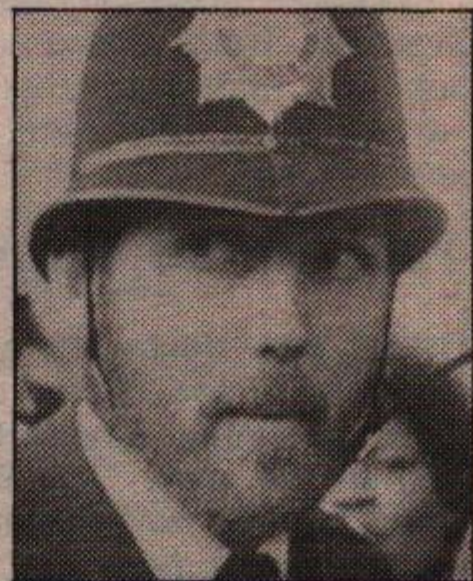
Even worse, this information will be on sale. Anyone can buy it for a knock-down price of about £1 a head. The Tories can't resist helping their friends to turn a fast buck, even out of personal information!

Far-right groups, like the notorious Economic League and the fascist grouplets, could find out the personal situation of activists and use this information for their own ends.

Some overseas students who use false names and addresses to escape brutal dictatorships would be put in terrible danger.

It's now even more urgent that the National Union of Students (NUS) and NUS Scotland campaign on conference policy to oppose the poll tax. Labour councils must be pressed to refuse to implement these plans and instruct colleges not to compile the required information.

If this threat to civil liber-



ties is taken up along with a mass campaign of non-payment, the Tories' snooping plans can be smashed.

By Darren Summers  
Hackney South LPYS

## Strike to support Graeme Jones

THE STUDENTS' rights committee at Plymouth further education college won a massive victory on 13 October.

An emergency meeting of the student association (SA) backed our demand for a half-day strike on 2 November to oppose the sacking of dockyard apprentice Graeme Jones. He was victimised for political activities in the college and is appealing to the Civil Service Appeals Board on 4 November.

And Devon and Somerset area NUS have agreed to call a half-day rally on 1 November in support of Plymouth FE's campaign.

The Plymouth meeting also unanimously supported a mass campaign of non-payment of the poll tax and rapturously applauded FE national committee member Colette Williams, when she spoke about trade union and student union rights.

Student association

leaders who have disrupted previous meetings with organisational manoeuvres were dumbstruck by the level of support. They had subjected Colette to an 'investigation' before allowing her to speak at the meeting.

But clear and precise arguments won over some students who professed to be Tories in the past and weakened the SA executive who can no longer intimidate students.

By Nina Hajjiyanni

## Education for all demo

"FREE STATE education for all" will be one of the slogans of a national demonstration being organised by the National Union of Students (NUS).

It was proposed at the NUS executive by Marxist Colette Williams. For the first time this decade NUS will be organising a national demonstration in the first term of the academic year. It will be mid-week at the end of November and was agreed by the chairperson's casting vote. Only the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' voted against.

Most importantly, Colette suggested that the TUC should be immediately approached to make it a joint demonstration and this was agreed by the same margin. NUS will be producing material to involve education workers.

Education is under the most serious attack since the war. Both students and

workers will suffer enormously from Tory cuts, privatisation, loans and tuition fees. Now's the chance to launch a serious battle to defend education.

Pressure is already mounting on the NUS (Scotland) executive to build for the Strathclyde University demonstration against the poll tax and loans on 16 November.

This and the national demonstration could provide the spark for a national struggle to defeat the Tories. The NUS executive must approach the unions for a 24-hour shutdown of education, to weld students and workers into a fighting force that would assure that struggle is victorious.

By Cheryl Varley  
NUS FE national committee  
(personal capacity)



### Instant credibility?

BARCLAYCARD ARE setting up a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) money advice unit in Liverpool, to deal with debt.

But aren't they responsible for much of the debt in the first place? No, say these plastic philanthropists. "Research shows that bank credit cards account for only three to seven per cent of all debt problems brought to CABs". Well, that's all right then.

They also sponsored a meeting on CAB at Tory conference. Tories love big business sponsorship. Watch out for Benson and Hedges chest clinics and Johnny Walker liver transplant units.

### Tears of profit

HAN YOUNG Ja earned more money last year than any other South Korean, about \$7.3 million. She runs a firm which makes tear gas.

### Botha's British billion

BIG BUSINESS doesn't worry where its profits come from. British exports to South Africa rose by 12 per cent last year and another 17 per cent between January and August 1988. The apartheid state could become a billion pound market for British capitalism this year.

A billion reasons why the Tories oppose sanctions. In fact they fully back all trade with apartheid. "There is good business to be done here and I would urge you to secure more of it", Sir James Cleminson, chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board told a business audience. The Board is part of the Department of Trade and Industry.

### Fate worse than death

THERE ARE times when the stupidity of the secret services is quite welcome. *Spycatcher* tells us how in the early '70s MI5 was being pushed to concentrate more on the threat from the 'far and wide left' in Britain.

But John Jones, from F-branch, responsible for rooting out 'domestic subversion' objected to infiltrating officers into left-wing groups "since many of them lived promiscuous lives and there were some sacrifices even an MI5 officer would not make for his country!"

### Post-comprehensibilism

MARXISM TODAY, Neil Kinnock's favourite 'new realist' comic told delegates at Labour's conference:

"Unless the Left can come to terms with these New Times it must remain on the sidelines. But coming to terms with New Times means first understanding what New Times are, what they mean. That is what this issue (of MT-eds) is about. At the heart of New Times is the shift from the old mass-production Fordist economy to a new more flexible post-Fordist order...."

"In the process our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivities are being transformed. We are in transition to a new era." Hope this makes everything clearer.

## Gloucester tenants say:



Tenants do a mock auction in a protest outside City Council offices.

GLOUCESTER'S TORY city council has approved plans to sell every one of its council houses to a housing association.

Local tenants oppose this deal, which has been called the 'sale of the century'. North Housing Association (NHA) has been offered all 6,500 properties for just over £20 million. That's £3,200 a house. But council tenants say they're worth from £40,000 to £55,000 each.

The Tories say the difference was

because the housing association would have to do repairs!

### Ballot campaign

Gloucester council and the tenants will have representatives on the association's regional committee and can elect one person to the national body. But NHA can veto anybody they don't like!

Tenants will vote on the plan in February. The campaign against the

# Don't sell our homes!

sale has forced the housing chairman to promise that voting will be by simple majority. Normally, under the new Housing Bill, non-voters would be counted as voting for a takeover. Tenants will make sure he sticks by his word.

The council have spent £35,000 on a PR firm to push their plans through, and denied the tenants a similar grant to publicise their case. But tenants are confident they will win.



Malcolm Price.

Ann Williams, chair Gloucester Tenants Federation told John Ewers.

WE'VE HAD many estate meetings with up to 250 people along to discuss how to stop this sale.

The tenants are very angry and shout for the chief housing officer and chairman of housing to resign. We always put it to the vote. An overwhelming majority always wants them to resign. They won't, but it's obviously shaken them.

A public relations firm called Target has sent out press releases in favour of the sale. The housing committee chairman employed this firm, using rent and rate payers' money without their permission. That money could have been spent on repairs.

Our campaign can't afford a PR company, but the council are

putting out glossy literature and an advertising jingle on our local radio station. They should try to convince tenants like we do, through meetings and putting the facts.

### "We'll fight on"

The chief housing officer invited tenants to Newcastle to look at North Housing. So we got a minibus, funded by the unions, and took two legal advisers.

We didn't go looking for dirt but it wasn't difficult to find. They have some nice estates but their real showcase only came about from having a really strong tenants association who forced them to make it good.

We talked to NHA tenants and ex-tenants. One woman told us she'd gone out one rent day and came back to find the rent man climbing a ladder to see if she was

just not answering the door.

One ex-tenant got a possession order because they said her dog had fouled the balcony. Another lady was taken to court because she was £300 in arrears. She was on income support and the DHSS should have paid the rent but they'd made a computer error. She was in fact in credit. North Housing hadn't even apologised for the anxiety they'd caused.

In August tenants sat-in at the council housing offices to show councillors how angry they were. The council said it was childish but they had to listen to us where in the past they've never consulted us.

We can keep fighting at least as long as the council for our homes and our futures, and also to house the waiting list and the homeless when we no longer need the houses.

Malcolm Price, Tenants Federation treasurer told John Ewers:

I'M FIGHTING for everyone's basic right of a roof over their heads. If you can't afford high mortgage payments, the only alternative is council housing.

If the sale to NHA goes ahead, I think they'll scrap the present council waiting list, build few new homes and neglect maintenance and repairs.

Rents will go up a lot. I'd need an extremely well-paid job to pay them. In fact I'd refuse to pay, I couldn't afford it.

The council's housing chairman told the press that tenants were leaving the federation, disillusioned with our policy. That's rubbish, tenants are joining us every week, and meetings have voted unanimously against the sale.

The Tory council don't want council tenants. I sat in on a Housing Committee meeting where they spoke of us as a burden. But they're living in fairyland if they think we'll vote for this sale. Tenants should vote them out and get a Labour council.

The Tories say we're 'scaremongering' when we tell tenants the implications of going over to NHA. Then they spread lurid stories about total breakdown in council repairs and 70 per cent rent rises. But we wouldn't let a council get away with that. At least with the council you can vote them out.

I had a private rented place once. Three times the landlord tried to get me out for no reason. I kept the place reasonable and paid my rent on time, but he wanted to convert the house into flats.



Matson estate.

It's quite pleasant here in Podsmead and Tuffley. But I think the area would become run down if NHA took over. We need more community playgrounds in the area but they wouldn't be interested in that or in maintaining the green areas.

### Jobs threatened

The people who cut the grass and tidy up would lose their jobs as well as many others in the Housing Department.

I'm not talking off the top of my head. The Federation took a long look at North; we didn't like what we saw. Our delegation took photos which show our places are palaces compared to the NHA's there. I'm

in the building trade and even the painting of their houses was disgusting.

Tenants will fight to stay with the council, but it must be a Labour council. I agree with you; if that Labour council followed Liverpool's fight to get money to build and improve houses, I'd certainly support them and urge all tenants to do the same.

I'd say to all tenants, vote 'No' in the ballot. Get active in your tenants association and the federation and help our fight. It's the most important we've faced for years.

Militant Meeting. Wednesday 26 October 7.30pm, Coney Hall, Coney Hill Road, Gloucester.

# Spycatcher — threats to Labour

THE THATCHER government has waged a legal battle for two years in court rooms from one side of the world to another, they have misused £3 million of public funds, in an effort to suppress Peter Wright's book *Spycatcher* and to prevent press coverage of its contents.

Now the Law Lords have finally backed up the Appeal Court's ruling that, when the book was already freely available abroad, Thatcher's insistence that the 'national interest' would be damaged if Wright's claims were further publicised, rang hollow.

## White paper

The press can mention again the treacherous conspiracy of sections of the capitalist state apparatus in MI5 to subvert the democratically elected Labour government of Harold Wilson.

But the Tories are intent on closing the loophole, which would prevent future publicity about the

undemocratic threat from the security services to the rights of the working class. Their recent White Paper to amend the Official Secrets Act would make breaches of confidentiality and leaks by security personnel automatically a criminal offence. There would be no mitigation that they felt they were acting in the public interest.

The press will be prohibited from repeating any leaks from within the security services. Future illegal plots must be hushed up.

The conspiracy to compromise Wilson continued from before his election as prime minister in 1964 right up to when he stepped down in 1976. In the MI5 director general's safe, the file on Wilson's friends ran to several volumes.

In *Spycatcher*, Wright (an MI5 assistant director) claimed he was approached by a group of 30 others about undermining the Wilson government. Now it has become clear that it was Wright who was doing the approaching.



Wilson with Barbara Castle, both victims of MI5 surveillance.

But it was not just Wilson who was under scrutiny. CIA counter-intelligence chief, James Angleton, who encouraged Wright, was also involved in activities against other Labour leaders, including Australian prime minister Gough Whitlam and Ger-

man chancellor Willie Brandt.

Wright and the other conspirators bugged phones. They leaked disinformation to damage Wilson to friendly journalists, even to *Private Eye*. So much for the independence of the press.

MI5 conducted surveillance of a whole list of leading Labour figures like Jack Jones, Hugh Scanlon, Judith Hart, Jack Diamond even Robert Maxwell.

According to a new book on the Wilson plot, a Tory MP was investigating some of Wilson's friends for MI5, while at the same time working for the Tory Party trying to dig up evidence of any personal indiscretions by Wilson.

## Tories

What is exposed is the close interlocking of the capitalist state's security services, Tory politicians and big business. What worker could afford to believe that the state is a neutral instrument answerable to its democratically elected ministerial masters? Its loyalty is to protect the interests of the minority who own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange.

With Wilson they were dealing with a right wing Labour leader who had no

intention of challenging the rule of capital. To what lengths would the security services and the other arms of the state go against a left Labour government that represented any threat to the profit system?

Roy Hattersley wrote off the TV programme *A Very British Coup* as "irrelevant." Perhaps it is when Labour, from the viewpoint of the boardrooms, is in his 'safe' hands.

But Wright has confirmed the fundamental danger to the efforts of the working class to take control of society, that will be posed by the state apparatus.

As an immediate, minimum step, Labour should hold a labour movement inquiry into the Wilson plot and the activities of MI5. And it must be forced to commit itself to the abolition of the security services and their secret files.

By Jeremy Birch

# WHERE TO FIND US

# SELL Militant

MILITANT SELLERS have shown once again that no matter how often our enemies attack us they can't erode the support for our ideas amongst working people.

In the face of the *Yorkshire Post's* feature on *Militant*, attempting to whip up a witch-hunt in Bradford, sellers in the Barkers End area of town sold 13 papers going door to door.

*Militant* sellers in Reading have reported, that the local Labour Party right wing, in the first stage of a witch-hunt, have attempted to ban the sale of *Militant* outside public meetings. As a measure of their success 10 papers were sold outside the very general committee meeting where the proposals were being discussed! On the Saturday in town a further 20 papers were sold.

On a public sale in Bootle's the Strand 42 papers were sold, underlining the continuing support for the ideas of *Militant* in Liverpool. On the Holton Moor estate in Leeds, earmarked for sell off to a housing action trust (HAT), 20 papers were sold by 4 sellers, that is, to one out of every 3 flats visited.

In Tower Hamlets a new seller notched up 6 sales out of a total of 21 outside Bromley by Bow tube, while down in Dover's town centre 15 papers were sold in less than hour by P&O striker Sue Haynes.

**EAST SCOTLAND**  
For details of meetings contact: Andrea Charles - 031 659 6187

**STRATHCLYDE**  
For details of meetings contact: 041 221 1443

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

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

**SOUTH WEST**  
For details of meetings contact: 0272 631471

**Swindon:**  
Fight the poll tax  
25 October  
St John's Ambulance Hall,  
Corporation Street  
7.30 pm

**Gloucester:**  
Stop the housing sell-off  
26 October  
Coney Hill Church Hall,  
Coney Hill Road  
7.30 pm

Speakers - Bill Mullins,  
Malcolm Price (treasurer  
Glos. tenants' federation)

**LONDON**  
For details of meetings contact: George Roberts - 01 739 9123

**Woolwich:**  
Fight the poll tax,  
25 October,  
Glyndon Community Centre, Raglan Road  
8.00 pm

**Shoreditch:**  
Fight the poll tax  
24 October  
Shoreditch Library,  
7.30 pm

**MANCHESTER/LANCS**  
For details of meetings contact: Mike Johnson - 061 273 8648

**Oldham:**  
24 October  
Red Rose, Holts Estate.  
7.30 pm

**Preston:** 24 October  
Fight the poll tax,  
Lancashire Polytechnic Students' Union, Fylde Road,  
7.15 pm

**EAST MIDLANDS**  
For details of meetings contact: Andy Jackson - 0602 423001

**Rally:** Smash apartheid, forward to the South African revolution!  
30 October  
Big Hall, People's College, Maid Marian Way, Nottingham 1.00 pm

**WEST MIDLANDS**  
For details of meetings contact: Bill Mullins - 021 552 7624

**Stafford:**  
Fight the poll tax,  
25 October,  
The Bird in Hand, corner St Mary's Place/Earl Street 7.30 pm

**WALES**  
For details of meetings contact: 0222 736682

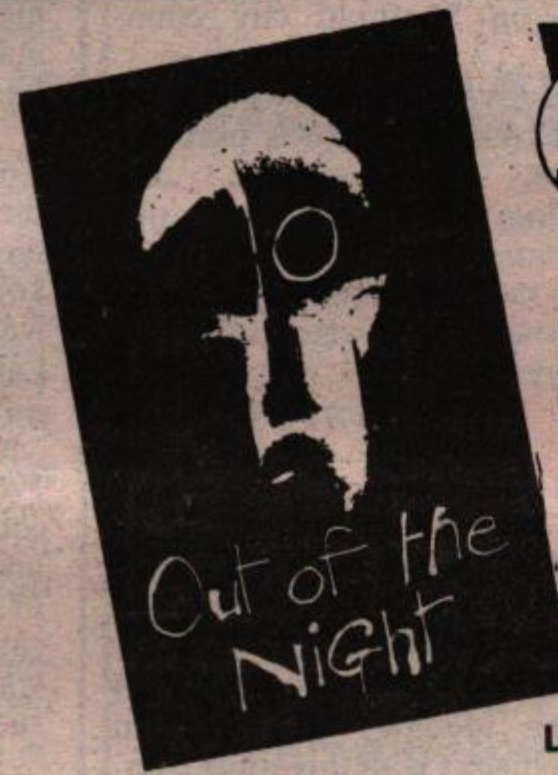
**EASTERN**  
For details of meetings contact: Teresa Mackay - 0473 713179

**HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY**  
For details of meetings contact: 0703 422841

**Reading:**  
What *Militant* stands for  
27 October  
Reading South Community Centre,  
Northumberland Avenue,  
8.00 pm

**YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE**  
For details of meetings contact: Henry Gregory - 0709 371250

**Bradford:**  
Stop this Tory council!  
26 October  
The Royal Standard,  
Manningham Road,  
7.30 pm Speakers - Tony Mulhearn, local council worker



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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 YOUR NEXT STEP...  
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT!  
I wish to become a Militant supporter

**Militant** Name.....

Address.....

**SUPPORTER** Tel:.....

or telephone 01-533 3311 NOW!

# Race and education

## The socialists

**13 YEAR OLD Ahmed Ullah is murdered in the playground of Burnage High School, Manchester. The subsequent report criticises the methods of dealing with racism by the school's head and the council. Labour-controlled Kirklees council climbs down in the face of white parents withdrawing their children from largely Asian schools. These events have all brought into question how the labour movement should tackle race and education.**

**COLIN DE FREITAS examines the background to this complex issue.**

▶ **RACISM AND** racial violence are a symptom of the economic and social decay of capitalist Britain. Last year there were 20,000 racial attacks including several murders.

The press blamed the anti-racist policies of Burnage High School for the murder there. But racial attacks in schools are not unique to Burnage.

In some schools racial attacks have become so widespread that they employ security guards to escort black students in and out.

In 1981 33 pupils, mainly Asian, had to evacuate a Birmingham classroom minutes before a firebomb exploded. In 1984 a 12 year old Bengali boy was dragged out of his school in the East End of London and stabbed repeatedly by a gang of white youths. In January this year a black school student hanged himself during a depression brought on by continual racial harassment at school.

Where were the 'shock horror' stories in the Tory press about these outrages? They displayed a hypocritical sympathy for Mrs Ullah but used the opportunity to launch an attack on anti-racist policies in schools. These rags continually spout racist filth which encourages acts of violence against blacks.

In the inner cities, where increasingly the future for black and white school leavers is of poverty, unemployment, slum housing and meagre social services, the weapon of racial division is used by the ruling class to try and pit white against black in competition for limited resources.

This has been happening in the field of race and education, as in the deliberately inflammatory way in which the Tory press dealt with Burnage, Dewsbury, Maureen McColdrick and the campaign by the black community of Bradford against Honeyford, the right-wing head teacher.

Their aim is to give the impression that blacks are getting special treatment in schools at the expense of white children. They hope that this will divert workers' attention from the consequences of Tory cutbacks in education and the prospect of unemployment facing many school leavers and will bolster racist reaction.

It is also a timely bid to weaken resistance to the Education

Reform Bill, particularly to schools opting out of local authority control. Hence Baroness Cox's response of "so be it" to the charge that opting out could lead to racially segregated schools.

That is why the anti-racist policies of Labour councils can only be successful if they explain how racism is used by the Tories and the capitalist class. Their failure to do so has paralysed them in the face of the Tory onslaught against anti-racist education.

Sheffield's anti-racist statement for example says: "Racial discrimination is a direct result of racism and is a problem which cannot be simply equated with class, sex, urban deprivation, inner city malaise or with linguistic or cultural differences." This was wholeheartedly endorsed by the Tories on Sheffield city council.

Basically they say that racism is caused by racism and is purely a question of prejudice and psychology. Marxists, on the other hand, do not simplistically equate race and class but understand how the two are historically interlinked.

▶ **Capitalism was founded** on capital accumulated through slave labour in the Americas. Racism developed from the need to justify this enslavement of African people as commodities to be bought and sold. It was the ideology necessary to equate blacks with the other commodities on the plantations of the Americas.

Pseudo-scientific theories were conjured up to prove that blacks were no better than beasts. Biblical precedents were sought, in the 'curse of Ham' for instance. The entire history of black civilisation was wiped out in the process.

These ideas then achieved an impetus of their own. Even after slavery was abolished, racism remained a powerful force in undermining the unity of the oppressed classes.

It was used by the American ruling class, for example, in limiting and rolling back the gains made by blacks and poor whites in the period of reconstruction after the American civil war.

Racism later was a virulent expression of the nationalism of the conquering nations to justify the exploitation of the colonial people. The capitalists made a conscious effort to imbue racism into the petit bourgeois and upper layers of the working class, whose privileged position in society was derived from colonial exploitation.

The British ruling class, who perfected the 'divide and rule' strategy to make easy their domination of the colonial peoples, use the race weapon in Britain today to divert attention from the ills of British capitalism. They use blacks as a scapegoat for unemployment, bad housing and declining living standards.

The immediate effect of racism is the super-oppression of blacks but it is above all a political weapon to confuse and divide the working class.

Despairing white youth will not

be convinced just by moral pronouncements on the evils of racism but by understanding that support for racist ideas serves to guarantee their continual exploitation by the capitalist class.

The failure of the Labour leaders to combat racism has meant that many confused ideas on race and racism have come to the fore, mainly peddled by the 'experts' in the race relations 'industry' who attempt to blunt the class explanation of racism.

Many of today's ideas on multicultural and anti-racist education are rooted in the Labour leaders' compromise on immigration controls in the 1960s.

Gaitskell and the Labour leaders' initial opposition to the 1962 Immigration Act was based on the grounds that these controls were racist and that the real problems were inadequate housing, the closing off of the job market and poor educational facilities.

"It is a plain anti-Commonwealth measure in theory and it is a plain anti-colour measure in practice," said Gaitskell in 1962. But their opposition was never really consistent. The Labour cabinet in the late 1940s considered introducing controls.

Once Labour came to power in 1964 and, on a capitalist basis, could not provide jobs, housing and services, they adopted some of the Tory arguments for immigration controls and opened the way for a compromise with racism.

In November 1964 the Labour government renewed the Act and in 1965 passed the Race Relations Act as a sop to blacks to counter the charge of racism. For the Labour leaders the problem was no longer racism, housing and jobs but the presence of blacks itself — the problem of 'race relations'.

For good race relations, they argued, it was necessary to limit the entry of blacks and for those blacks already here to learn to integrate into British society. As Roy Hattersley later stated: "Without integration, limitation is inexcusable; without limitation, integration is impossible."

The Community Relations Council and later the Committee for Racial Equality were charged with 'integration'.

The whole racism debate was now couched in different terms. A new classless language on race was manufactured. 'Black', which acquired a political meaning arising from a common form of exploitation, became 'ethnic minority'. Blacks were no longer discriminated against but disadvantaged.

The oppression of blacks was now due to their 'inability to assimilate'. It was a 'cultural question'. These ideas were later encouraged by successive Tory governments and received their most finished expression in the field of education.

Under-achievement of blacks in schools was supposedly simply a cultural question. Between 1966 and 1974 the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) employed an officer to deal with race related matters who had the title 'Inspector for the socially and culturally deprived'!

According to the Department of Education and Science (DES) this 'social and cultural deprivation' of immigrant children was also affecting the education of whites:

"Experience suggests that apart from unusual difficulties up to a fifth of immigrant children in any group fit in with reasonable ease but if the proportion goes over about one third of the school or class, serious strains arise" (DES circular 7/65).

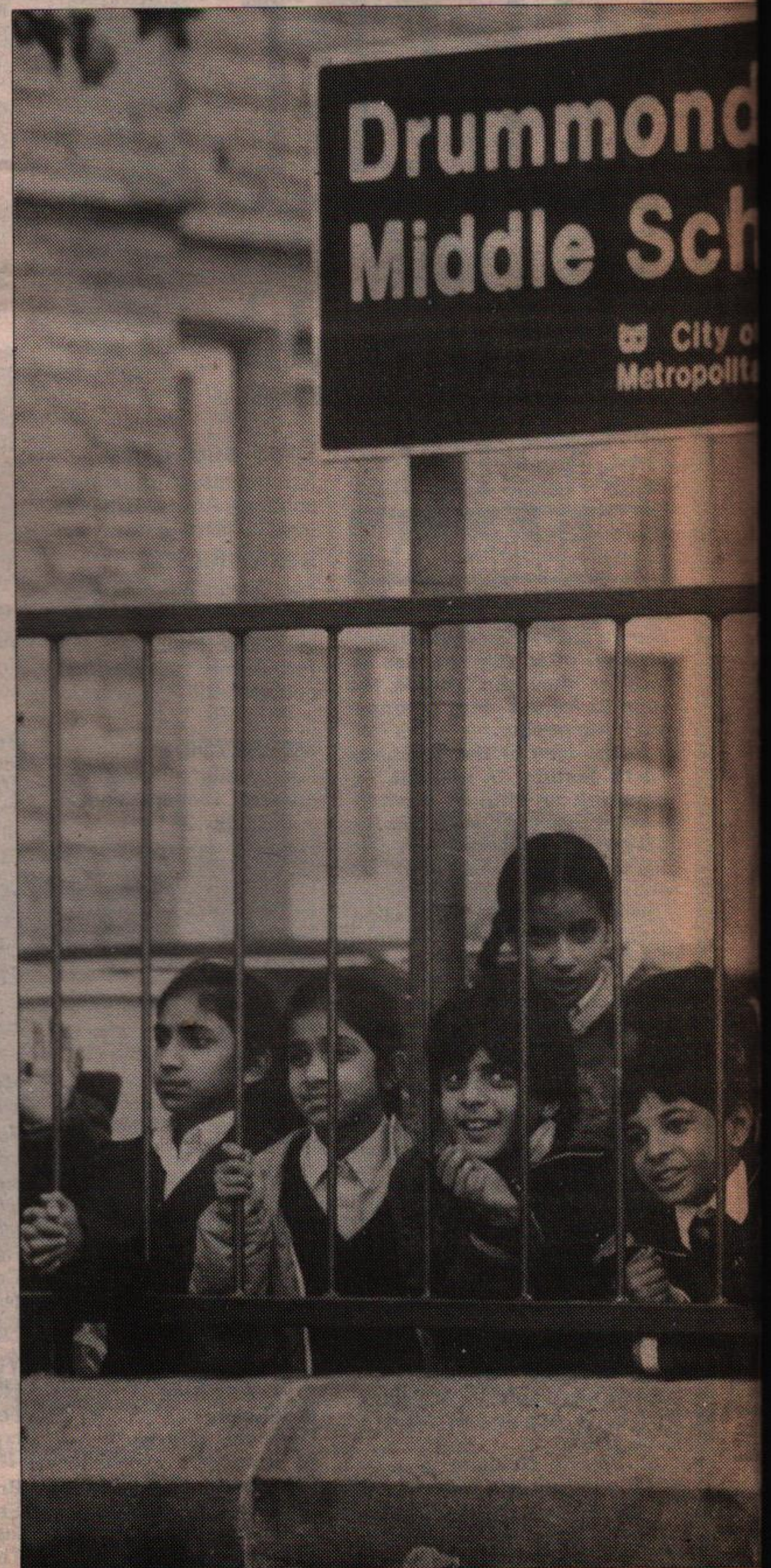
In June 1965 the DES sanctioned the forced removal of black students from schools where their proportions went beyond these limits. Hence some councils such as Ealing and Bradford began bussing black children to other schools.

The next DES circular (July 1965) stated: "It would be helpful

if the parents of non-immigrant children see that practical measures have been taken to deal with the problems in the schools and that the progress of their own children is not being restricted by undue preoccupation of the teaching staff with the linguistic and other difficulties of immigrant children."

▶ **The upshot of this was** that many black children were forced into schools for the educationally sub-normal (ESN). By 1966 for example, 23 per cent of the ILEA's ESN school population was black.

The relegation of large numbers of black children to these schools and the high level of under-achievement amongst blacks was a crippling blow to their parents. Many came to Bri-



Drummond school Bradford, scene of a campaign by the community to oust r



# Education

## view

MILITANT FEATURE

tain with high hopes of better education for their children. In response some formed part-time auxiliary schools for black pupils; others began organising against the councils' policies.

These were the fruits of the Labour leaders' refusal to adopt a class approach to the race question, ultimately due to their unwillingness to break with capitalism.

To appease the opposition to these policies, but more importantly to try and choke off the rising discontent amongst blacks (of which the 1966-68 riots in the USA were a warning), the idea of multi-cultural education evolved.

In 1969 a House of Commons select committee report described black youth as "a social time bomb". It recommended "the

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

teaching of West Indian songs to children in Hackney and Brixton...and for children in Wolverhampton to be shown Indian art, jewelry and costumes".

The potential danger of resistance amongst black youth was a recurring theme in DES circulars, parliamentary select committees and documents on multi-cultural education. The alarm bells of a possible black revolt were ringing in the ears of the capitalists.

The bells became deafening in the aftermath of the 1981 riots, which gave an enormous boost to ideas of multi-cultural education and the agencies of the race relations industry within the educational establishment.

A 1981 select committee, on which the Tories had a majority, warned councils in almost panic terms that "failure to act now that the facts are generally known will cause widespread disappointment and ultimately unrest among ethnic minority groups of our society."

Labour councils have been determined to achieve Tory support for their policies on multi-cultural/anti-racist education. They have done this by not addressing 'contentious' issues of class.

Hence Tory councils have been able to carry on with these policies where Labour left off. Tories and Liberals in Labour councils supported and continue to support all these initiatives on race and education without batting an eyelid.

Multi-cultural education has had little or no effect on improving the educational attainments of blacks, who are still the worst under-achievers in British schools. Yet its justification was that it would compensate for the 'cultural identity difficulties' experienced by black students and at the same time reduce racist attitudes amongst whites.

Marxists fully support educational programmes which seek to enhance the general understanding of students in the history and culture of the countries from which the black population of Britain originate. Undoubtedly this will help to break down the barriers between black and white pupils.

But if they are to have any impact at all they can only be an adjunct and not a substitute for a class approach to racism. They must expose the savagery of colonial exploitation by the same British ruling class which exploited their own white workforce at home.

But under Tory control the DES will never allow such programmes in the school curriculum. After all the fundamental role of education is the preparation of the next generation of workers. This is the purpose of streaming and examinations - the selection of different layers for the different requirements of industry and capitalist society.

Under capitalism education cannot be used to undermine the class nature of capitalist society. Hence demands for effective anti-racist education must be placed first and foremost on the labour movement.

Labour councils can facilitate this by distributing pamphlets and leaflets explaining the need for class unity in the fight against racism.

This approach will gain considerable momentum as part of the overall strategy by the council to fight Tory cuts. Fighting racism will be seen as part and parcel of improving the living standards of all workers.

The classroom cannot be cosseted from the social and economic conditions in the rest of society. That is why racial attacks have spilt over into schools in the first place.

How can the problems of blacks be seriously addressed without attempting to deal with the problems of racism, unemployment, slum housing and police harassment?

Some councils have now abandoned the term multi-cultural education for anti-racist education. But the change in title has often not meant a change in the content of these programmes. Most of the multi-cultural education programmes have been retained, except that anti-racist education is primarily aimed at teachers and education administration staff.

In its essence it explains racism as a combination of white 'power and prejudice', from which whites ultimately benefit. This leads to the conclusion that all whites are inherently racist.

This form of anti-racist education is conducted through Racism Awareness Training, which attempts to educate whites in positions of power out of their racism.

Those who support this idea have gone from blaming blacks for the race relations problem to blaming all the whites for the existence of racism. In both cases the Tories and capitalist system are let off scott free!

In the absence of any understanding on the race question, these misguided ideas have been written into the anti-racism programme of most 'left' local authorities. These developments at best create confusion or at worst fuel reactionary ideas.

In the name of consensus with the Tories on race, the Labour leaders, both locally and nationally, have been eager to evade the class questions bound up with racism.

The ideas of the race relations industry, which have seeped into the councils, local Labour Parties and even the trade unions have served to undermine the clarity in the minds of some activists in campaigning against racism.

The 'trendies' in the Labour Party have brought with them the patronising attitudes towards workers and particularly towards blacks of the middle layers in society.

They put forward ideas which do not challenge capitalism as an alternative to mobilising the working class. For some time now they have acted as a left cover while attacks on the working class are carried out.

But the Tories, who have indirectly financed councils' policies through government grants under Section 11, have used the contradictions of these

policies to castigate the Labour councillors and whip up racism.

This is further exacerbated by many of these very same authorities carrying out Tory cuts. In many cases these have had the worst effect on blacks.

The cuts being carried out by 'left-wing' councils - Lambeth, Brent, Camden, Haringey, Hackney and Islington - mean that even their 'equal opportunities' programmes are a farce!

Many of them have been forced to cut spending on equal opportunities programmes, despite receiving 75 per cent of the fun-

ding from central government.

Camden for example has ended up administering the repatriation of Irish homeless families and has threatened to do the same with homeless Bangladeshis. Yet these people berate the Marxists for adopting a class approach.

With the exception of a few middle class blacks, the ideas of the race relations industry have had no effect on the consciousness of black workers and youth. However, the blurring of the debate on racism cannot hide the horror of being black in capitalist Britain. The social time bomb remains ticking away in the foundations of British capitalism.

## MILITANT STANDS FOR

- ★ No compromise with racism
- ★ A commitment to anti-racist education by the Labour Party, Labour councils and teaching unions that stresses the need for the unity of the working class and clearly blames capitalism for engendering divisions and racism and for the shortages of jobs and houses that can feed prejudice.
- ★ The fullest consultation with parents, the local community and the teaching unions in working out the methods of anti-racist teaching in each school.
- ★ Full support to be given by Labour councils and by the administration in each school to teachers trying to combat racism in schools.
- ★ A fight against all education cuts and a massive increase in spending to allow for the necessary resources and staff to ensure the highest quality of education for every child and allow for the special needs of any group of children to be adequately met.
- ★ A campaign to recruit more black and Asian teachers, allowing for mother tongue teaching for all children who desire it.
- ★ A Labour government with socialist policies, placing education under the control of the labour movement, allowing for education to meet the needs of the individual and society and not just the interests of the owners of private industry.



ctionary head teacher, Honeyford.

Yugoslav workers demand:

# 'We want wages to feed our children'

THE SWEEPING 'purge' of the Yugoslav Communist Party leadership this week has been forced by deepening mass hatred of the ruling elite. "Pah. The Party. Who cares? They are all corrupt", was a typical comment in the streets. But nothing has been resolved by this 'crucial' central committee meeting, with economic chaos and national conflict continuing to worsen. GEORGE COLLINS looks at the recent developments.

IN NIKSIC, in the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro, workers were outraged at the violent police attack on demonstrators in the capital, Titograd, three days earlier. So serious was the situation that R Brajovic, a member of the Communist Party's presidency in the republic, was sent to calm them down.

But at Boris Kidric iron works Brajovic found himself confronted by 30,000 jeering workers. Red flags flew and banners proclaimed: "Long live the working class!" A worker commented: "This looks like the October Revolution."

It was too much for Brajovic; he announced his resignation and left, bursting into tears. Workers shouted after him: "Did we hurt your feelings?"

This scene reflects what could be a new phase in the upheavals of recent months (see *Militant* 7 October): a crystallisation of political struggle by the workers against the ruling bureaucratic elite.

Yugoslavia's deepening economic crisis has produced a tidal wave of industrial struggle: 1,570 strikes involving 365,000 workers last year; 1,000 strikes in 1988-so far. With foreign debts totalling \$21bn, the regime is cutting workers' living standards in line with the directives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The workers' resistance on the industrial plane inevitably brings them into conflict with the bureaucracy. Already, in Macedonia and in the federal capital, Belgrade, angry workers have besieged parliament more than once to put their demands to the government. Many concessions have been won.

But the workers' movement has been complicated by the country's regional and national divisions.

Yugoslavia is a federation of six republics and two autonomous regions ruled by local bureaucracies competing with each other for influence and resources. The autonomous region of Kosovo in particular has been torn by conflict between the local Albanian majority and the Serbian and Montenegrin minorities.

This crisis has been seized on by Slobodan Milosevic, Communist Party leader in Serbia, to launch a nationalist campaign supposedly in defence of the Kosovan Serbs. An es-

timated three million people have taken part in Serbian nationalist demonstrations over the last three months.

The real object, however, is to strengthen the position of the Serbian bureaucracy. Milosevic had been stepping up the pressure in the run-up to Monday's crucial central committee meeting. With a massive purge inevitable he hoped to carve out a majority and call a special party conference to rewrite Yugoslavia's constitution, giving Serbia full control over Kosovo and Vojvodina (its other autonomous province).

## Domination

This would be a step towards securing the domination of the Serbian bureaucracy over the country as a whole (see box).

These 'greater Serbian' ambitions have been fiercely resisted by the bureaucracies of other republics, in particular those of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, as well as Vojvodina.

A dramatic climax in Milosevic's campaign was the demonstration by 100,000 Serbs in Vojvodina, on 6 October. Forcing the provincial party leaders to resign, it was calculated to help shift the balance on the politbureau in Serbia's favour.

However, by invoking the power of the masses Milosevic has set a precedent which is extremely dangerous for the bureaucracy as a whole. Within days it was appearing to backfire in his face.

What Milosevic overlooked is that the workers' national consciousness is bound up with their own problems. Underlying the nationalist demands is anxiety at the country's growing chaos, grievances over pay, jobs and housing, and increasing anger at bureaucratic corruption and privilege.

While whipping up nationalist feelings, Milosevic has also exploited the workers' resentment of the bureaucracy. "Serbia's had enough of leaders!" is the slogan of his faction. He has projected himself as a strong man, a 'new Tito', who would clean out the 'bureaucrats' and deal with the economic crisis.

In the absence of any alternative this demagogic message has found an echo among the Serbian masses and even sections of other



Serbian demonstration.

Yugoslavia's republics and autonomous provinces	Population (m)	Politbureau votes
Serbia	9.3	3
Macedonia	1.9	3
Montenegro	0.58	3
Slovenia	1.8	3
Croatia	4.6	3
Bosnia	4.1	3
Vojvodina	2.0	2
Kosovo	2.0	2

(The army has the remaining vote on the politbureau)



nationalities. However, such a movement could rapidly spiral out of control as workers use their newfound political confidence to enforce their own demands.

This was graphically illustrated as the masses took to the streets of Titograd on Friday 7 October, within 24 hours of the events in Vojvodina.

Unlike in Vojvodina, sections of the bureaucracy in Montenegro support Milosevic. Though Serbian nationalists were present, the demonstration was sparked off by the workers' demands. In the forefront were workers from the Titex clothing factory, furious at their wages of £20 a month.

"We want wages that will feed our children", was the cry. Students denounced the regime, applauded by the workers.

After an all-night siege the bureaucracy appeared to yield - then sent in the riot police, blaming the

problems on the federal government's policies. It was this which sparked the angry protest by the Niksic workers.

The spectre of workers turning on their 'leaders' has sent cold shivers down every bureaucratic spine. If the workers overthrew the Montenegrin leadership, anyone could be next!

## Emergency

On Sunday 9 October federal President Dizdarevic threatened to declare an emergency. Military leave was cancelled, reservists called up and plans made for the military takeover of major industrial plants if unrest spread.

An emergency federal politbureau meeting applauded the police action in Montenegro. Milan Kucan, the Slovenian leader, warned:

"It is not hard to stoke up the fires of political, national, social and other passions, but we should

the need in workers' minds to take control over the economy and society.

Workers are already demanding that wages must be linked to prices. This must be fully supported. But no solutions will be possible as long as the corrupt, repressive bureaucracy remains in power. Every section of workers in Yugoslavia must be united in the struggle to end bureaucratic rule and replace it with a system of workers' democracy, as explained by Lenin and Trotsky:

★ all officials to be elected, with the right of immediate recall;

★ no official to receive more than the wage of a skilled worker;

★ positions to be rotated wherever possible to prevent the crystallisation of bureaucracy;

★ no separate army but an armed people.

This would provide a basis for resolving Yugoslavia's national divisions. Marxism recognises the right of every nationality to self-determination including the right to a separate state if they so desire. At the same time, economic integration, nationally and internationally, is the key to economic and social development.

## Inequalities

In Yugoslavia a national plan of production, under democratic control of the masses, would be essential to integrate the country's resources and eliminate the vast inequalities between the more developed north and the poverty-stricken south.

However, not the sharing out of poverty but the raising of living standards throughout the country would be the real basis for overcoming national tensions.

Yugoslavia does not have the resources within its own borders to fuel the massive economic growth that is necessary to solve the workers' problems. The struggle in Yugoslavia must be viewed in the context of the rising mass struggles throughout Europe, East and West. The advance of the political revolution in the Stalinist states, combined with the overthrow of capitalism in the West, will lay the basis for a socialist united states of Europe in which every nation could rise to its full potential.

The thousands of Yugoslav guest workers in Western Europe are a living link with the workers' movement internationally. Inside and outside Yugoslavia, the programme of Marxism can win increasing support among Yugoslav workers as the only clear answer to the questions they are faced with.

remember how slowly oblivion puts them out."

This crisis has hardened opposition to Milosevic among other sections of the bureaucracy, deepened their divisions, and ensured that Milosevic's bid for power will be more sharply resisted.

Even if Milosevic does elbow his way to the top, it will make no fundamental difference. Sections of workers may look to him to deal with the bureaucracy and pull the country together. But Milosevic himself is a bureaucrat. His basic aim is to recentralise power within the bankrupt bureaucratic system. There can be no lasting solution to the workers' problems on this basis. For every problem it might alleviate, new problems will be created.

The IMF has demanded that inflation be brought down from last year's 170 per cent to 90 per cent this year. Instead, with wages officially frozen, it has soared above 200 per cent. Bitter struggles for wage increases are inevitable, while the regime will be forced to launch even more vicious austerity policies as a condition for further loans from Western bankers.

Every section of the bureaucracy, in Slovenia as well as Serbia, appears to support economic 'reform' to provide more scope for 'market forces'. This would mean job losses, less money for services, higher prices and lower wages—a recipe for even more explosive struggles in the future.

Disillusionment will deepen with every faction of the bureaucracy, raising

# FRANCE

# Health workers lead fightback

THE CURRENT week of action by French public sector workers reflects the general anger at the government's threatened curb on wages. This has been made clear by the all-out nurses' strike, which has involved many other hospital personnel in the biggest movement of health workers in the country's history.

From our Paris correspondent

The health strike has 90 per cent support, in spite of the natural reluctance of health workers to take industrial action.

As in other countries the authorities have exploited the nurses' professional conscience, and working conditions and real wages have deteriorated for lack of adequate funding. Now health workers have had enough.

A series of massive demonstrations, 40,000 strong, have taken place in Paris. Workers are demanding a 2,000 franc (£185) increase a month and improvements in training and working conditions.

The strike is led by a national co-ordinating committee set up in order to overcome divisions among different unions and to bring the strike more closely under the control of rank and file workers.

The health strike is part of a rising tide of labour unrest in France. Car workers at Renault, dockers, electricity workers, teachers and post office employees are either on strike or planning strike action. The key issue is wages.

For the Socialist-led government of prime minister Rocard the strike movement could not have come at a worse time. Leaving aside a few min-

imal reforms - increased spending on education, a wealth tax, measures to alleviate the desperate plight of the poor - it has on the whole adopted policies in line with the interests of the bankers and monopolies.

This enabled Mitterrand to persuade a few personalities in the UDF (party of big business) to participate in the government. Counting on his personal prestige, he promised big business social peace.

But Mitterrand's popularity at the time of the presidential elections essentially reflected the workers' hatred for the previous right-wing administration. The experience of the austerity measures applied by the last left government (1981-86) had undermined the credibility of the Socialist Party leadership.

The presence of UDF ministers only increases workers' distrust of Mitterrand and Rocard. The government, desperately trying to reassure its UDF ministers and big business, and anxious not to encourage wage demands throughout society, has so far refused the nurses' demands.

## Profits up

But with £50bn set aside for military spending over a five-year period, nurses find it hard to accept the government's claims to be short of money. In fact the increased state revenue as a result of increased industrial activity has brought an extra £2bn into the state coffers. Profits in the private sector are also up.

So why should civil servants accept the measly one per cent 'increase', which means a cut in real wages? Why should workers in the private sector put up with



Hospital workers in action.

low wages? Half of all French wage earners take home little more than the minimum wage, while 68 per cent of young workers are in dead-end jobs.

At present it seems unlikely that the UDF ministers can remain in the government for very long. These capitalist politicians have never been popular with the Socialist Party membership. A growing section of the party bureaucracy now blame them for the growing support for the Communist Party.

The policies of Mitterrand and Rocard mean that France is heading for a period of great social unrest, like Spain under Gonzalez. When Mitterrand heaps praises on the nurses for their devotion but refuses their demands, this only strengthens their resolve.

## Sri Lankan Marxist murdered

WORKERS IN Sri Lanka have been chilled at the murder of 15-20 left activists by the Sinhala nationalist organisation, the JVP, in the space of just three days earlier this month. Among them was Upali Vithanage, a long-standing member of the Marxist Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP),

who was shot through the heart in his front yard.

Comrade Vithanage, a former teacher, had been sacked following the defeated general strike of 1980. His wife and two sons are also in the NSSP.

Despite attempts at intimidation by the JVP,

hundreds of NSSP members attended the funeral and followed it with a political meeting at which the Internationale was sung.

*Militant* extends sympathy to Comrade Vithanage's family and pledges to continue the struggle for which he sacrificed his life.

# Ireland: Marxism under attack

THE RIGHT-WING leadership of the Irish Labour Party abolished three left-wing branches at the Administrative Council (executive) meeting on 12 October.

From our Dublin correspondent

Party leader Dick Spring claimed that these branches - among the most active in the country - were "inactive paper branches". This was clearly refuted on the nationally televised *Today Tonight* programme.

The programme exposed the transparent manoeuvres of the right aimed at removing the Marxist candidate and prominent *Militant* supporter, Joe Higgins, who had been democratically nominated with another candidate to fight the working class Dublin West constituency in the next general election.

John O'Halloran, right-wing chairman of the constituency council, admitted that the real motive was to "get rid of *Militant*". He added that his actions had the full support of the party leadership and that he hoped *Militant* would be driven out of the party around the country.

The largest meeting of the

Dublin regional council of the party for years, however, condemned the witch-hunt and voted 20-1 in support of a motion to the Administrative Council demanding an end to the witch-hunt.

At the crucial AC meeting on 7 October a big lobby of *Militant* supporters and other activists demanded an end to the witch-hunt and that "Labour fight the cuts and not the socialists". There were many messages of support before the AC meeting from party branches and members shocked at the undemocratic manoeuvres exposed on television.

## Walk-out

The closure of the Dublin West branches was bulldozed through, leading to an unprecedented walk-out of a third of the AC members in protest.

Those left AC members included Emmet Stagg, vice-chairman of the party, increasingly seen as the main left contender for leadership of the party.

The right wing, oblivious to the damage being done to the party by these clearly undemocratic manoeuvres, seem bent on an all-out witch-hunt. Yet they have



Joe Higgins.

failed completely to restore credibility to the party after the disastrous years of coalition with the capitalist Fine Gael party, which brought the party to its lowest level of support since 1933 with 6.4 per cent in the February 1987 election.

Against the background of poverty, mass unemployment and spiralling emigration, the present Fianna Fail government are en-

gaged in the most vicious attacks on services and conditions for 30 years. The Labour leaders have failed in their responsibility to lead a fightback and build a mass socialist alternative.

Instead, their insane tactics leave Labour at less than 10 per cent in the opinion polls, nearly two years after the historically important break with the coalition.

## Left vote

As the attacks on health and education bite, Labour has only just begun to edge forward in the opinion polls. In Dublin Labour has gained 5 per cent in support amongst workers according to the latest poll.

In a very significant local election in Leixlip, County Kildare, near Dublin, the left parties combined won more than 40 per cent of the vote, with the three capitalist parties in complete disarray.

Marxists are demanding that the Labour leadership build on the anger against the cuts and lead a serious struggle. The analysis of Marxism corresponds to the needs and demands of

workers and their families. For this reason the right-wing witch-hunt is ultimately doomed to fail.

The witch-hunt against the Marxists is the beginnings of an attack on all of the left in the party. It will be resisted to the bitter end. A campaign is being launched throughout the Labour Party demanding the rescinding of the branch closures. This will be taken to all affiliated unions, to the youth and to the working class as a whole.

Already workers are responding. A *Militant* supporter going into work after the television programme was immediately offered £10 by an office worker who said: "I don't agree with all the things you say but if those people are the opposition I support you."

On 22 October a *Militant* rally in Dublin will show increased support for Marxism. Marxism will not be crushed and *Militant* supporters will be to the fore in the struggles which lie ahead and which will transform Labour, founded by the revolutionary Marxist James Connolly, into the mass party of the working class.

# From the sublime...

Dear Comrades,

Being almost housebound I have viewed every episode of Labour Party Conference presented by the BBC until my TV packed up. So I have already witnessed performances from the sublime to the ridiculous.

In the latter category I think Roy Hattersley wins the prize. He made the astonishing statement that because both Lenin and Gorbachov 'believed in' a market economy the Labour Party should do the same.

While still remaining 'loyal' to Nato, armed to the teeth, as ever, against the USSR, we are now exhorted to imitate it. Presumably he was referring in Lenin's case to the NEP and, in Gorbachov's to perestroika, unmindful of the contrast between Thatcher's Britain and either Lenin or Gor-

bachov's Russia, or of the fact that the Labour Party is not in government but (supposed to be) opposing it.

However, it was well worthwhile seeing and hearing our Cathy Wilson from Liverpool. I was unable to hear Ron Todd explain why the hell the TGWU voted for Neil Kinnock anyway.

Like a large proportion of party members, I have had no opportunity to see, let alone discuss

the conference resolutions. So would it be possible to publish them in full, with their results?

I was able to vote for Tony Benn by post and have been told that our branch of Ludlow CLP, with over 40 members, chose Kinnock by only three votes.

Kathleen Jones  
Shropshire

## When Dinosaurs walked...

Dear Comrades,

Attending the conference for the first time I was curious to discover the workings of Neil Kinnock's 'into-the-90s' Labour Party.

Penetrating Blackpool's Winter Gardens proved more difficult than storming the Winter Palace. But having been electronically screened and searched by Darth Vader lookalikes I entered the sanitised world of exhibitors' stalls where UK Nirex Ltd took pride of place next to the stand extolling the benefits of the Falkland Islands. (Is there a possible solution to radioactive waste disposal implied here?)

However, for the traditionalists who still hanker for the class struggle there was always the Justice For Mineworkers stall. Unfortunately, the last I heard, they were being presented with a £500 bill from the Labour Party!

My head spinning from the constant purring of cordless phones and the flapping of personal organisers, I stepped outside the Winter Gardens for a breather only to witness a modernised Labour Party steward ripping down posters advertising the Militant meeting.

Didn't he find his behaviour contradictory, not to say undemocratic, given that a group of neo-fascists demanding the return of capital punishment for shoplifters were allowed to display their posters and banners?

"I'm not paid to think" he retorted, "...just carrying out instructions". We continued to press our point which solicited the following gem of an answer and proof that the class struggle is still alive: "...put any more of those posters up and I'll punch your face in!"

See you next year!  
A Dinosaur

## Classified ads

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

□ **Wanted** - Good, solid, live, political, fun bands/acts for alternative gigs to be organised monthly in central London. Contact Helen or Rico 341 9561

□ **South Africa's** revolution in song 'Toyi-toyi'. £3 per tape. 5 tapes or more, £2.75 each. Order from Salep.

**Help turn Tower Hamlets into a hung council. Come and work in a crucial by-election in Liberal-held Lansbury ward. Meet at Bow and Poplar Labour Party rooms: 172 East India Dock Road, London E14. Monday to Friday 6pm onwards. Saturday 12 till 2pm. Sunday 11am.**

□ **Militant Fighting Fund** Stickers available in rolls of 250 - Fight the poll tax, Smash Apartheid - For a Socialist South Africa. £35 a week grant for all school leavers. £2.50 per roll. New sticker - Homes before profit - Stop the Housing Bill. Militant Rally Commemorative T-shirts. Three designs: Trotsky design size XXXL only; Militant Rally size XXXL, XXL; Militant size XXXL, XXL, L, M. (XXXL, XXL, £6 each. L, M £5) A3 posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg. 30p each. All five for £1.

Militant Fighting Fund collecting tins in red plastic. £1 each. 10 or more 75p each. Available from Fighting Fund Dept, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% p&P. Cheques and postal orders payable to Militant.

# Short-sighted policies

Dear Comrades,

Thatcher and the bosses' literally short-sighted policies have just been brought home to me.

I had an eye test and found that I needed glasses for reading. Next day I was shown the various types of frames on offer. The prices ranged from £7 for some 'Michael Caine' type glasses (which the assistant said looked "pretty horrendous") to anything up to £100.

So I plumped for the £7 ones. "You get £16.50 to help with the cost" she said (because I'm unemployed). I thought I might even make a bit of money on it. Then the bombshell: "So that'll be £7 for the frames and £30 for the lenses!"

So I end up having to pay over £20 myself!



"I don't see what the problem is about paying for glasses. If you can't afford them, do what I do."

Thatcher and the Tories stopped the right to free NHS glasses in 1986 in favour of a free market

approach. Looks like I'll be having an early Xmas present this year - a pair of 'pretty horrendous'

glasses - thanks to market forces.

Paul Ellis  
Birmingham

## Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## Don't worry

Dear Comrades,

One wonders how poor Sir Ralph Halpern (Chairman of Burton's) sleeps at night worrying about how he can spend his £1.36m salary. Don't worry Sir Ralph, you are not alone - why not start a self-help group for insomniacs with the four other top earners who've each had to suffer the ignominy of 'earning' £1m plus! After all you must all be used to helping yourselves.

Of course Sir Ralph's earnings do include performance-related bonuses. When was the last time he sat down to thread a sewing machine?!

Meanwhile over nine million people in Britain in work earn below the European decency threshold (68 per cent of average earnings). A report from the Low Pay Unit said that one in three male manual workers and four-fifths of female manual workers earn less than £3.50 an hour. There's nine million who probably won't be buying any of Sir Ralph's suits!

Ruth Campbell  
Hackney

## We won't go away

Dear Comrades,

The reply to further attacks on the YS will be to go onto the streets and build a mass socialist youth movement.

While Gavin Laird was more concerned about his cordless telephone and that he didn't have a chauffeur driving his car at Labour Party conference, YS members were out on the streets campaigning and supporting workers in struggle.

This was shown on the BBC West news which covered the visit of Edwina Currie to

a Bristol Hospital and the health workers' demo against her. The Bristol YS members were out in force with placards and songs.

This is the response to the right-wing leadership of the party. You can't dampen down our enthusiasm or our ideas by organisational moves. We won't go away Neil.

Steve Pitman  
Newport East LPYS

## Airing his opinion

Dear Sir,

Congratulations to the Conservative Party on the high level of debate at its conference. Refuse collection, coal and roads (especially the fast lanes of motorways!) are all due for privatisation. The privatisation of water will teach people that scarce resources do not fall from the sky.

However, may I use your columns to suggest that air be privatised too. After all what with Maggie's conversion to environmental conservation and Edwina's craze for jogging, I am sure they will agree

that the demand for oxygen is beginning to exceed supply. Why not subject it to market forces?

Everyone could be issued with gas masks containing a meter. And you pay for what you breathe. After all why should people be spoiled by the free supply of an essential service when someone can make a profit on it? They have to realise things like oxygen do not come out of thin air.

I remain your obedient servant,

Concerned  
Finchley Central

## Tories fail to attract nurses

Dear Comrades,

You would have thought with all the publicity the Tories have given to attract nurses back to the service the problems would be getting better.

Not so - management have recently reorganised the community district nurses where they have more patients and fewer resources to give adequate care.

Nurses now have to work up to eleven and a half hours a day to cope with the work load. Management seem content to move staff around with no attempt to take staff problems into ac-

count. New neighbourhood areas which take into account social services and local council services appear to be good planning ideas but in reality nurses have to cover larger areas now than previously.

Only with a democratically run NHS based on workers' participation in the decision-making, together with more resources from the government will the pressures and stress be relieved in an already crisis-ridden service.

A Birmingham health service worker

## No surrender

Dear Comrades,

Our local paper carried three stories on the same day. The items concerned individuals driven to illegal activity - suicide.

The first was an 87 year old woman who threw herself off a block of flats. She was unable to cope on her own; her pleas for help were not answered.

The second was an 18 year old man who was stopped by police moments before throwing himself off a multi-storey car park, overlooked by the DHSS offices.

The third was an 86 year old man who blew himself and his bungalow up whilst trying to gas himself.

These are just three examples of the devastation

caused by benefit cuts, health cuts and cuts in social services. The young, old, sick, disabled, low-paid, ethnic minorities and oppressed majority cannot wait three to four years for what a Labour government, if elected, may or may not do.

Labour must act now by supporting and coordinating the campaigns and protests against Thatcher's laws and the corrupt capitalist system. The movement must not assess its actions by the yardstick of Tory law.

The movement should say clearly - no surrender - in answer to the workers' call for action.

Chris Webb  
Essex

# Striking seafarers appeal for backing

**AFTER EIGHT** and a half months involved in the most bitter dispute in our union's history, 1,000 sacked Dover seafarers still continue to make a magnificent stand against the profiteering shipping company, P&O.



By Sue Haynes, striking P&O seafarer

Our dispute is not over pay. It's about cuts in manning levels, longer hours spent on board our vessels and the effects of these changes on safety standards at sea.

We have faced many hurdles during the dispute. These include our notable lack of media coverage, the refusal to allow ballot papers to be counted which would have endorsed national solidarity action from fellow seafarers, sequestration of our union funds and offices and the reduction of the Eastern Docks picket to just six so-called legal pickets.

Recently we have encountered the heavy-handed tactics of local magistrates, imposing the most stringent bail conditions which restrict the

movement of active fund raisers and forbid strikers to go on the picket line.

All have been attempts to break our resolve and with it the strike.

Our difficulties have not been helped by a half-hearted union leadership who have bent over backwards to stay within the law at the expense of our dispute. They have not given any clear guidance to take us forward. Decisions to call off the secondary action at the height of the dispute when victory could have been ours, and to disassociate themselves from our mass picket, have served only to further isolate the Dover seafarers.

Concentrating on the tactic of the boycott has created the illusion that we can beat P&O just by persuading people to use Sealink instead. A similar argument was put forward during the Wapping dispute - "Buy the *Mirror* instead of the *Sun*" - and failed. The fact that Sealink are now pulling out of the national pay structure shows what a shortsighted strategy this was.

It has been sheer courage and determination which has kept the dispute going against all the odds.

Whilst support from thousands of rank and file workers has been forthcoming, we recognise the need to use the muscle of the TUC and Labour Party. Full solidarity action is needed to ensure that we are not broken.

Meanwhile P&O, with

the aid of the Tory government, have their entire Dover fleet sailing with mainly untrained scab crews and using the busiest shipping lane in the world.

The Department of Transport have given them the green light to sail unsafe ships despite the clear connection between lowering manning levels and safety standards. Zeebrugge, Kings Cross and Piper Alpha have tragically exposed this.

The previously 'moderate' rank and file Dover membership have from day one of this dispute taken the initiative. Our goal was and still is to win. We want to be able to return to our livelihoods with decent working conditions, as trained seafarers.

I appeal, through the pages of *Militant*, to fellow workers to use every possible avenue to help us step up the campaign against P&O.

You should invite a speaker to your trades council, Labour Party or union branch. Get them to boycott P&O.

To keep our kitchens open, where we offer hot meals and company for strikers and their families, we need constant financial assistance. We are ever grateful for the generosity already shown, but like Oliver we need more!

For support, donations and speakers contact the Women's Support Group, at Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent. Telephone 0304 367840.



Dover pickets earlier this year.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

## P&O hypocrisy exposed

MULTINATIONAL FERRY giants P&O have said all along that the competition provided by the Channel Tunnel would force them to increase productivity.

By Eric Segal

Their profits - increased to £112 million this year - apparently were not high enough.

That was the reason they made draconian attacks on the conditions of their seafarers operating the Dover ferries. That was the reason they ceased recognition of the workers' union, the NUS.

In fact, P&O have massive interests in the consortium developing the Channel Tunnel, making their arguments, at best, hypocrisy.

An efficient 'fixed link' between Britain and Europe, with EETPU members, bound by no-strike deals, driving the shuttle trains in the tunnel, is the mouth-watering long term view of the bosses.

In the shorter term they look to huge profits for the construction industry.

Flexilink was the organisation set up to oppose the Channel Tunnel. It included the ferry operators, one of which was P&O, and originally the trade unions.

Only when it became crystal clear that the campaign was run entirely on the ferry bosses' terms did the unions establish the Ferry Ports Joint Action Committee.

Unfortunately, the unelected

and unaccountable bureaucrats on the committee refused to involve other labour movement organisations, preferring to petition Parliament rather than mount a campaign within the working class as a whole.

Of course, once the tunnel got the green light P&O slid away from the campaign. They realised how vulnerable they were. During the course of a whole year only 55 per cent of the Channel fleet's capacity is utilised. It was estimated that once the tunnel was operational overcapacity of the fleet would increase by 650 per cent during the summer.

### Monopoly

P&O recognised the NUS as an obstacle to their plans to make huge staff cuts. In order to increase productivity and profits they had to try and break the union.

The present attack by P&O on their Dover workers represents the opening shot in a war which could leave a consortium of companies, including P&O, with a monopoly of the transport between Britain and Europe.

This in turn would enable them to raise a private tax or toll on all goods and passengers carried across the Channel.

Tory minister Channon announced at last week's conference that he would give the go-ahead for private companies to build or

even own a new high-speed passenger link between London and the Channel Tunnel.

In the words of Andrew Gritten of the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies, "The Chunnel company will provide its own track, run its own trains on it and charge tolls to other operators passing through".

Now, the privatisation of the port of Dover is on the agenda. All this adds up to a desperate situation for thousands of workers in port-related jobs who can expect the same sort of attacks as have been borne by P&O workers.

The words of the port's managing director underline this: "At the end of the day, if the ferries won't use the port, we will put offices on it or build a hotel!"

As well as shipping, P&O has interests in property and construction, including Bovis who are involved in building the tunnel. They have now begun to look towards the takeover of the construction giants Taylor Woodrow.

Yes, you've guessed it, Taylor Woodrow are a major part of the consortium developing the Channel Tunnel. P&O have announced a 9.9 per cent stake which could rise to 20 per cent soon.

In 1985 the cost of reducing cross-Channel fleet capacity and modernising the ferries was estimated to be one-sixth that of building the tunnel but the benefits to the bosses of the 'fixed

### Militant demands

- ★ An end to all blacklisting and the re-instatement of all strikers. Full re-imburement of all lost wages. Remove the scabs!
- ★ Immediate introduction of all recommended safety conditions on the ferries, transverse bulkheads etc.
- ★ Nationalise the ferry companies, the tunnel construction companies and the Eurotunnel Group under workers' control and management so that cross-Channel transport is run in the interests of workers and to ensure safety standards are upheld.

link' were enormous.

Travelling time of only two and a half hours, 24 hours a day, seven days a week would provide the opportunity for increased profits. The French bosses too were keen - the depressed North East of France would be linked to the prosperous South East of England.

All this could have meant big benefits to workers. Hours could be shortened for transport workers and jobs created. But the director of the British Ports Association has revealed the reality under capitalism - expected job losses of 40,000 in east Kent alone.

Already, since 1975 NUS membership has fallen from 50,000 to below 20,000 and the British merchant fleet has been cut by two-thirds.

Now six of Britain's biggest shipping companies, including P&O's Dover rivals Sealink, are

withdrawing from the national pay bargaining machinery of the national maritime board. This puts into doubt the whole future of national bargaining in the industry.

It also shows the shortsightedness of the NUS leadership's campaign to concentrate on an economic boycott of P&O - getting passengers to use other companies instead - when they are all on the offensive against workers' living standards.

P&O's decision to begin investment in the tunnel and to minimise costs on their ferries have gone hand in hand. We have already seen the tragic results. Their refusal to implement simple safety measures and the decision to speed up ferry turn-arounds led to the loss of almost 200 lives on the *Herald of Free Enterprise*. How many more lives are threatened now?

## Industrial reports

# Pits: keep privateers out

CECIL PARKINSON, the energy minister, told Tory conference that they would privatise the coal industry in the next Parliament.

By Ian Isaac,  
South Wales  
mineworker

The press have made no secret of Tory intentions since the miners' strike. But Parkinson's claim that miners "will become shareholders in their own industry", in three to five years time, is new. It is also a con trick.

Why wait for the next Parliament? They need time to make the industry attractive to private speculators. First of all, they desperately want to weaken the resolve of Britain's miners, who steadfastly reject the introduction of American-style flexible working arrangements.

Legislation limits underground mineworkers' shifts to seven and a half hours and five days a week. This was fought for by generations of miners.

Any work outside these times is voluntary and paid at time and a half and double time at parts of the weekend. British Coal and the government are hell-bent on six-day production and flexible working arrangements.

These would increase production at the cost of further job losses, but they want miners themselves to condone these arrangements before sinking

new pits like Margam, South Wales.

The compliant UDM breakaway have accepted a 'framework agreement' on flexible working, but the vast majority of miners remain opposed to compulsory increased hours and longer working weeks.

Britain's mine safety is held up as an example to the world. This comparatively tight rein on safety, and elements of workers' control of safety practices under the Mines and Quarries Act will be sacrificed if the Tories privatise the mines.

Another reason why privatisation plans are long term is to condition the public into paying higher electricity prices (70 per cent of coal output goes direct to the CEBG.)

British Coal has been crippled by paying millions in compensation to pre-1947 coal owners and massive interest repayments to City financiers. But they'll knock up coal prices to fatten the coffers ready for the speculators. Profits will be subsidised by the taxpayer.

The claim that miners will become shareholders is a con. In other privatised industries, gains from shares are only a peripheral part of a worker's annual income. The employers also 'take this into account' when negotiating wages. The mining industry would be the same.

One thing's certain; miners won't be allowed

collectively to own and control the majority of shares if privatisation takes place!

The NUM fundamentally opposes privatisation. For decades before 1947, the Miners' Federation fought for nationalisation. The industry was only taken over after the war because it was underinvested. Bled dry by the private owners, it couldn't supply the coal needed to expand the economy.

Successive governments have closed mines to allow private oil and nuclear power to develop, fearful of the NUM's potential to radicalise the working class in times of struggle.

Miners will resist. The plans may be long-term but we must immediately start a massive campaign in the industry against privatisation. In alliance with other energy workers we must warn the public of Tory plans to increase energy and heating costs substantially to prepare for private ownership.

We need a viable energy sector. We must build on the elements of workers' control in the industry and fight for genuine day to day control of resources and investment.

Miners and other energy workers must develop an integrated energy policy based on socialist principles of nationalisation, workers' control and management. Don't leave it to profiteers and speculators!



# London teachers strike

THIS THURSDAY (20 October) 13,000 members of the Inner London Teachers Association (Ilta) division of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) will be striking in defence of their sacked colleagues and their conditions of service.

The large 'yes' to action demonstrates the depth of resentment felt by London teachers.

At issue is the Ilta's sacking of supply teachers caused by the authority's decision to budget for only 778 full-time equivalents in place of the 973 originally authorised.

By removing these supply

teachers the Ilta has completely undermined the cover, non-contact time and class size agreements reached with the London teaching unions in the summer.

The Ilta leadership, with its cavalier disregard for its employees and its agreements, seems only interested in appearing respectable before the Tory leaders.

They are clearly unconcerned with the effects of their actions on the education service in London.

Previously the Ilta leaders

(wrongly) argued that it was necessary to implement budget cuts in order not "to divert attention away from abolition".

Now, however, thanks in no small measure to the stance of Neil Fletcher and Co, abolition is coming - but there is not even the pretence of fighting the cuts as next year's £80 million slash demonstrates.

Instead, Fletcher has responded by attacking his own employees. Union activists in Ilta have faced disciplinary action, including the sack, recently. First, Tony Marriott, an Ilta steward, was dis-

missed. Then Dick North, Ilta treasurer and a long-standing socialist activist in the union was summarily dismissed in a clear act of political victimisation.

The attack on union activists and organisation has gone hand in hand with increased workloads and worsened conditions of service for all Ilta employees.

The one-day Ilta strike could mark the first sign of a generalised fightback against the onslaught. However, the hard-nosed Ilta management is unlikely to back down before a one-day strike alone.

If the authority are not prepared to back down the NUT must escalate the dispute through sanctioning no cover across inner London schools; widening the strike action; and linking with other Ilta unions.

If the national union is not prepared to authorise such action then local activists and reps will be forced to organise such a response themselves.

By Bob Sulatycki,

Ilta health and safety officer,  
personal capacity

## Brent workers fight back

"I'VE GOT two healthy kids so I'm not bothered" was the disgraceful comment of one Brent Labour councillor to parents protesting at the decision to close Crawford Avenue respite centre for handicapped children. Some parents will have to put their children in full-time care as a result.

By John Dolan,  
Brent East Labour Party

This is just one of a growing catalogue of attacks on jobs and services in the borough.

However, home helps have forced the right-wing Labour council to back down on cuts which would have meant the loss of 240 jobs and a reduction of services by 20 per cent.

Brent teachers are now poised to strike over the threat to 233 teachers' jobs - 10 per cent of the borough's total.

### Staff shortages

Social workers in Wembley are on strike against the dangerously low staffing levels in the child-abuse section of the department. Half of Brent's social workers have come out in solidarity. Staff in the council's housing office have been occupying their building in protest at the inadequate security screens.

Only recently, as part of the cuts, the council closed down all the area housing offices - now there is just one main office for the

whole borough. In a recent incident one member of staff had urine thrown at her.

Refuse collectors have also recently been on strike after a 20 per cent cut in their numbers. Three libraries are threatened with closure. This would mean the loss of another 39 jobs, one-fifth of the total. The response of Labour councillor Cyril Shaw? Brent has too many libraries and too many books!

Brent is the eighth poorest borough in Britain. It has had £80 million stolen by the Tories. The Labour councillors not prepared to lead a fight against Thatcher have got to resign and make way for those who will.

## Universities face winter of discontent

FOLLOWING A successful ballot for industrial action thousands of university technicians at 55 establishments throughout the country were picketing or holding rallies on Tuesday in support of an 18 per cent pay rise.

By David Jones,

Nottingham University technician and member of national campaign committee

In Manchester, where the strike was supported unanimously, Bill Allen, the university MSF branch secretary told *Militant* that the government should fund the claim in full.

The claim is based on the results of an independent review of technicians' salaries and conditions car-

ried out following the 1986 pay settlement which the government has so far refused to fund.

The strike was an expression of anger that technicians feel at their continued exploitation and is the start of what is clearly going to be a 'winter of discontent' within the universities.

The underfunding by the government of universities, in line with their public sector philosophy, is affecting academic staff as well. The committee of vice-chancellors has refused to discuss with the Association of University Teachers a salary rise for this year. They could be taking similar action to the technicians in November.

The ancillary workers' union, Nupe, and clerical

staff in Nalgo last year published a joint document highlighting the problems of low pay in universities.

The technicians' ballot also included an agreement to take further disruptive action if Robert Jackson, Under-secretary of State for Higher Education, refuses to deal with their claim.

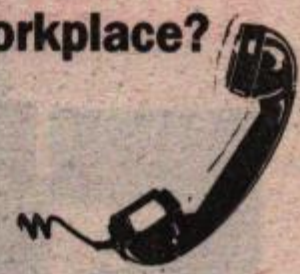
**MSF Broad Left**  
**29 October**  
**MSF Saturday**  
**10am-4pm**

Manchester Polytechnic Students' Union, Salam Chamber, 3rd floor, Mandela Building, Oxford Road. 1st conference.

# Industrial reports

## News in Brief

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



# RUC arrest 18 Chelsea Girl pickets

**TRADE UNIONISTS, including Militant supporters, were arrested last Saturday when supporting 34 Chelsea Girl strikers in Belfast.**

One was punched in the face by an RUC man. The RUC also attempted to bundle a woman with her one year old child into the back of a Land Rover.

All those arrested were peacefully picketing or handing out leaflets. They were held under public order legislation introduced ostensibly to deal with loyalist protests against the Anglo-

Irish agreement. When it was introduced the trade union leadership made no protests. Militant warned that these laws would be used to strengthen repression in Northern Ireland not least against the trade union movement.

It has been reported that two leaders were given advance warnings that Militant supporters were being singled out by the RUC for arrest. They were also informed that the picket would be limited to four. Yet scandalously the ICTU leaders failed to call for a mass picket at the Chelsea Girl shop.

The month-long strike started when 34 women were told to work an extra late night unpaid. When they asked to negotiate they were sacked.

### Profits

In 1987 Chelsea Girl made £18 million profits. Top management earned £70,000 while shop workers take home less than £80 a week.

This dispute can be won. Picketing must be stepped up at the Belfast shop. Regular mass pickets must be organised by other trade unionists. Other branches

of Chelsea Girl in Northern Ireland and Britain must also be picketed. A massive "Don't Shop at Chelsea Girl" campaign must now be launched by the trade union movement.

This dispute has shown peaceful strikes and picketing can be made illegal by public order legislation. The ICTU and Usdaw leaders must be prepared to break these laws.

Trade unionists must urgently rush donations to: Yvonne McKee, Chelsea Girl strike fund, 9 Cloghan Gardens, Belfast.

## Nurses' pay

DESPITE THE Tories' attempts to buy off the nurses, the NHS is still a pressure cooker of discontent. There is not only anger at the complete shambles of the regrading but at the role of our trade union leaders in not organising effective national industrial action.

But we wouldn't have got a penny without the action we took earlier in the year.

Many nurses only stand to gain six to ten per cent, of which four per cent has already been paid. A student nurse will still only get £4,825 a year.

Hector Mackenzie of Cohse does not support industrial action, stating that patients will be placed in jeopardy. But it's

the Tory government who are the experts on that with the long waiting lists, the closures and privatisation.

The horror stories are bound to go on daily and worsen this winter.

We need to build joint shop stewards committees within all the hospitals. The ancillary workers will be coming into action again over their pay claim. Our action needs to be united with theirs.

The working class fought long and hard for the NHS. Health workers have shown they are prepared to fight. It is time our trade union leaders showed exactly where they stand.

By Ruth Herdman, Cohse.

# Support the defence fund

FOURTEEN MEMBERS of the Labour and Trade Union Group (LTUG), including chairman Bill Webster, secretary Peter Hadden and Belfast trades council executive member Frank McCallum, were arrested and charged with obstruct-

tion under article 20 of the public order legislation.

Police also told those arrested that they could face trumped up charges of resisting arrest, disorderly behaviour and assault.

If convicted, these trade unionists could face up to

one month in prison or a £400 fine, or both. To conduct a legal defence the LTUG are setting up a defence fund. We are asking all labour movement organisations to send cash to the LTUG defence fund, 4 Waring St, Belfast.

Labour movement organisations should send protests to Musgrave St RUC station, Belfast. Copies to LTUG defence campaign. LPYS national day of action, Sat 22 October. Picket Chelsea Girl, raise cash.

# Basildon home helps

WITH WHISTLES, banners, placards, stickers and dozens of cars tooting their horns in support, striking home helps in Basildon showed their anger at cuts and poor conditions.

By John McKay

The atmosphere was brilliant with big cheers going up with every toot of support. 75 women strikers were joined by Nalco members and probation workers on the picket line outside Essex county council social services department.

Even an elderly client walked down to show his support. "We should have done this months ago", said one home help.

Lorna, one of the mobile home helps explained what it was all about. "First of all it's the cuts. The clients don't like it and we don't like it. Every home help has had their hours cut. We are owed back money from July 1987. We keep getting fobbed off and we've had



'How can we care while they're cutting?' enough. Some are owed three-figured sums."

"We can't stay and talk to clients any more - there isn't enough time. A lot of them look forward to seeing us. We're the only ones some of them speak to."

By the nature of the home help service it is very difficult to organise. Everyone is spread out. It is this difficulty which has led to management taking advantage of the good will and dedication of the home help workers. This has now changed. The strikers now

realise their strength. On the picket line at least 12 signed up to join Nupe.

A bitter fight will be needed to achieve victory but if the enthusiasm of the pickets is anything to go by it won't be long before that victory is won.

## ET boycott

FIRST SIGNS are that the TUC decision to boycott Employment Training, the government's slave labour scheme, is having an effect.

The director of field operations at the Department of Employment's Training Agency says in a

letter: "Some organisations have expressed a wish to withdraw from ET contracts because of the recent decision by the TUC to oppose Employment Training".

Who was it who said a boycott would be futile?

## Fighting on

THE LONDON Contracting branch is organising "The first meeting of EETPU members since the union's expulsion from the TUC to discuss a campaign inside the EET-PU for reaffiliation on TUC terms".

The organisers state that "There are a number of electricians who support the TUC's disciplin-

ing of the EETPU but who do not believe that setting up an alternative union is in the best interests of either electricians or other trade unionists".

The open meeting is on Saturday 5 November at the Mechanics Institute, Princess St, Manchester, at 11am.

## Severn strikers

BUILDING WORKERS on Laing's £56 million repair contract on the Severn Bridge have returned to work after winning a strike over bonuses.

More than 200 workers walked out on indefinite strike when the main

contractor Laing withheld bonus payments.

Laing caved in after six days and re-instated all bonuses.

By J.Skelton, UD287 branch, North West region Ucat.

# Victory for the 'militant core'

WORKERS AT 15 quarries owned by Tarmac returned to work victorious after winning a three week strike.

By J.Stewart

UGO42 branch, London region Ucatt

The dispute was over a switch from national to single-plant pay deals and affected TGWU and GMB members at quarries in the East Midlands and Lancashire. These quarries have been described as the "militant core".

Tarmac's management have agreed

an area pay agreement with the 15 striking quarries but the company's other quarries have been offered nothing. As far as Tarmac is concerned these will have single-plant, that is, low wage, pay deals.

If 600 workers at 15 quarries can get a better pay deal by going on all-out strike, what could 2,000 Tarmac workers at 80 quarries get?

The companies in the industry are consciously moving towards the break-up of national agreements. They made enormous profits last year - £1.2

billion between the top eight.

The unions should be convening meetings of activists in the industry on pay and conditions in preparation for a ballot for all-out strike using the example of Tarmac's 'militant core'.

The last thing quarry workers need is a deterioration in conditions. Let's face it, it is an absolute disgrace that in 1988 workers in this industry are having to work an average 80 hour week at £2.42 an hour in order to achieve anything like a decent wage.

## Signed and sealed

LUCAS AEROSPACE management and the union joint negotiating committee (JNC) have agreed a solution to a dispute over London weighting.

This has been put into a written agreement to be signed and sealed with copies going to the three

district union JNC officials. Apparently this covert procedure is to make sure that no 'knock-on' effects occur in other Lucas Aerospace factories and was requested by management.

Is this another example of business unionism?

# Militant

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## Inside

**P&O strikers' call for backing**— see page 13

**Stop coal sell-off**— see page 14

# Fight the GCHQ sackings

**ON TUESDAY 18 October, four of the 18 remaining trade unionists at GCHQ Cheltenham were given a month's notice. Six others face disciplinary hearings.**

By Steve Dunk

John Macreadie, CPSA's deputy general secretary commented: "This attack is an absolute outrage. It must be resisted by civil servants and workers generally. Everything must be done to force the Tories back."

The Tories have attacked workers' fundamental right to belong to a trade union. Many civil service workers who heard about the dismissals on Tuesday decided it was time for equally decisive action from the unions; they held immediate meetings and voted to walk out.

Members of the largest civil service union, CPSA, at three Social Security offices in Edinburgh walked out; so did workers at most Glasgow Unemployment Benefit Offices. 200 members at Registers Scotland agreed almost unanimously to strike.

DSS branches in Inner London and Cardiff, DE West London and Nottingham UBOs walked out. Other branches discussed action on 19 October. This on top of the estimated 100,000 who immediately walked out earlier this month when the ultimatum to

GCHQ members was announced.

Civil servants in all unions now look to the Council of Civil Service Unions (Cocsu) to match their own will to win and thus force the Tories to retreat.

The Tories have only got away with their attacks because of hesitation and inaction by the Cocsu leadership. We must meet fire with fire. If we don't defend these GCHQ trade unionists, Tory appetites will be whetted for even greater attacks on civil servants' union rights, living standards and job security.

## Strike action

Civil servants understand that this outrage involves a fundamental issue of principle. Four fellow trade unionists have been sacked because they wouldn't bow to Tory dictates and leave their union. Thatcher's claim to champion individual liberty is utterly exposed.

In all civil service unions, in every office, we must campaign as never before for the maximum possible vote for strike action on 7 November. Let us have an absolutely united demonstration of the burning anger of civil service trade unionists.

But 7 November must be the start, not the end. Civil service union leaders must immediately develop a clear strategy of industrial action, building from the one-

day strike, to secure victory. No legal threats or intimidation from the Tories should deter us.

Our leaders must:-

- ★ Unleash a mass campaign throughout the civil service and the wider labour movement to explain the importance of fighting these attacks and to build for a mass turn out on 7 November.

- ★ Organise mass rallies in all areas on 7 November.

- ★ Put resolutions to all the rallies detailing a programme of industrial action leading if necessary to all-out action before the last day's notice given to the four GCHQ workers.

Industrial civil servants in unions like the TGWU must be urged to strike. We must appeal for effective support from outside the civil service.

The TUC's call for merely a 'day of protest' undoubtedly encouraged the Tories to press ahead with the sackings. Civil service trade unionists must particularly call on the left union leaders to demand the TUC turn this action into a one-day general strike, and to urge their own members to take action alongside civil servants on the day.

If the Tories get away with their attacks, they won't stop at the civil service. Union rights will be threatened in public and private sectors. We must act now!

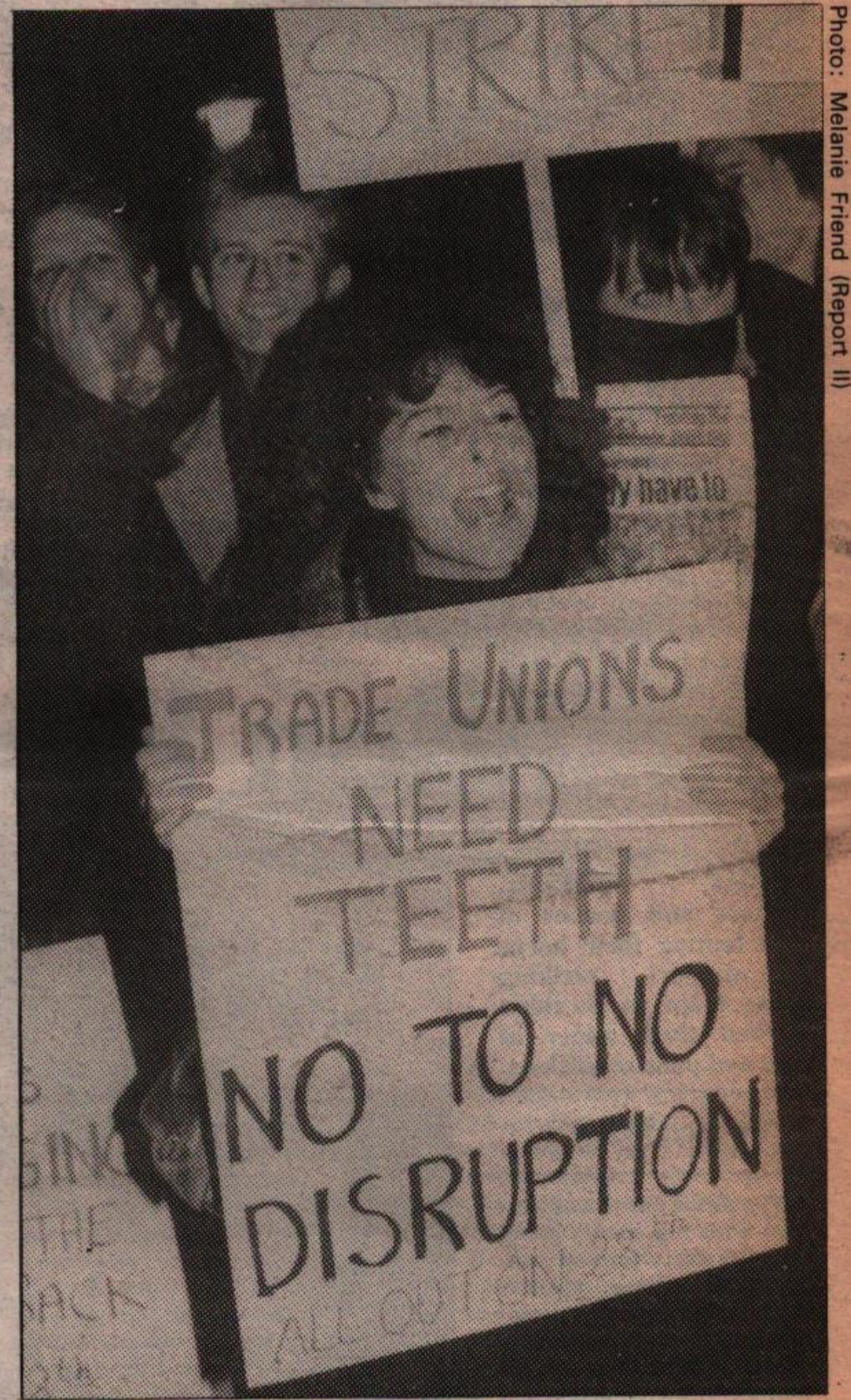


Photo: Melanie Friend (Report II)

Civil servants demonstrate against attacks on union rights at GCHQ in 1984. Union leaders then suggested a compromise 'no disruption' agreement. But the Tories have left no room for compromise now.

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## Back us with cash!

IF YOU happen to be young and rich and your father is a judge, you don't have much to worry about. If you cause £10,000 worth of damage while you're at Tory conference, you'll only end up paying a fraction of the cost.

What a contrast between Labour's youth who showed a real fighting spirit at Labour conference and the Tory youth, who took spirits and started fighting at the Tory rally!

Militant consistently fights for a decent future for young people and workers. And our readers have shown their gratitude for that. Martin Robinson a Hull engineering worker sent us £150 back pay while two readers in Wales sent us £100 each.

Sellers in West Wales collected £74.21 in extras and by selling stickers. Hull sellers collected £55.62.

## Three weeks

There are only three weeks to go to the end of this campaign; have you ordered enough stickers and fighting fund tins for your area to cover the 22-29 October week of action? Make sure you have a stall in your town centre with petitions and stickers.

Raising cash for Militant's fighting fund can be fun. Supporters in Bermondsey raised £54 selling drinks at a social. If your area hasn't organised a social yet, try one for bonfire night or an anti-witch hunting

£50,000 by 5 November This week £2721

## Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales	1684		3,680
2 South West	451		1,260
3 London	2140		7,100
4 Merseyside	1406		5,080
5 Yorkshire	1316		5,060
6 Northern	603		2,350
7 Southern	514		2,050
8 East Midlands	551		2,500
9 Eastern	443		2,140
10 Scotland East	464		2,500
11 Scotland West	558		3,000
12 South East	289		1,500
13 West Midlands	719		3,730
14 Manchester/Lancs	469		2,900
15 National	2,078		5,150
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,685</b>		<b>50,000</b>

disco for Halloween!  
Thanks to Steve Jones, East London £10. Dave Backwith, Bristol £5. Jill Langsdon unemp-

loyed from Caerphilly £5, Mr Singh ISTC Corby £4.75. Jagtar Singh, Leicester Singh family defence campaign 70p.