

For a national  
24-hour  
NHS strike  
on 6 December

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Health minister Kenneth Clarke - threats of legal action.

# Tories bully the nurses

**NEVER BEFORE** have nurses been subjected to the bullying, blackmail and vile propaganda given out by Tory ministers.

By Mick Griffiths,

Cohse branch secretary,  
Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield

The Tories have put the boot into the nurses, intimidating them with threats of legal action or suspension for daring to take action to win a proper reward for the work they do.

The government has been planning this all along. They have underfunded the regrading and told health managers to put nurses on the lowest grades possible. They have divided the top grades, giving them much bigger increases, from the lower grades who get next to nothing. This is in line with their longer term aim of a privatised NHS, run by a small core of trained staff with the rest made up with casual and agency workers.

Now they are deliberately provoking the nurses with all kinds of threats. Health minister Kenneth Clarke said the government would back any local manager who wanted to take out an injunction to stop nurses taking industrial action.

In Wakefield, and possibly elsewhere, sisters and charge nurses

have been sent letters giving guidelines on disciplinary action. Nurses on strike or even 'working to grade' should be sent home without pay, it says. But here the sisters have been totally behind the other nurses and refuse to have anything to do with it.

## Suspension threat

These guidelines were drawn up by the Tory employment minister following the 'winter of discontent' in 1979. They say staff suspended for taking part in effective work-to-rule, or other action, should be told to sign a guarantee to carry out all duties asked of them, or they would face the sack. But until now the guidelines haven't been used.

In Whitehaven, West Cumberland, 600 hospital staff are on indefinite strike after management sent home two nurses for working to grade and threatened legal action. Significantly this is the first time in this dispute that other hospital workers have joined the nurses in industrial action.

Threats by Tory ministers and management should be met with fighting opposition from the unions. Management at Leavesden Hospital in Hertfordshire threatened to use an injunction to stop night nurses 'working to grade'. But two mass meetings of Nupe and Cohse members have

both voted unanimously to continue the action and to ballot for a strike.

Clarke has bragged that the strikes are only sporadic and claims that most nurses are satisfied with their gradings. This is a lie. Many more, equally angry nurses haven't joined the walk-outs because of concern for their patients. Tory cuts have meant that already many are working with emergency level staffing.

Clarke's jibe and his bully-boy tactics should be answered with the biggest ever mobilisation of health workers. Turn the lobby of Parliament on 6 December into a mass demonstration and a 24-hour strike of all health workers on that day. Let's show the Tories that there are hundreds of thousands of health workers who are prepared to fight for a fair deal.

At a local level, wherever nurses are suspended for taking any action the unions should immediately hold a strike ballot for nurses and all hospital staff, while guaranteeing emergency cover.

The health union leaders must insist, now, that if any legal action is taken against their unions the TUC should mobilise the whole trade union movement in their support to defend the right to struggle.

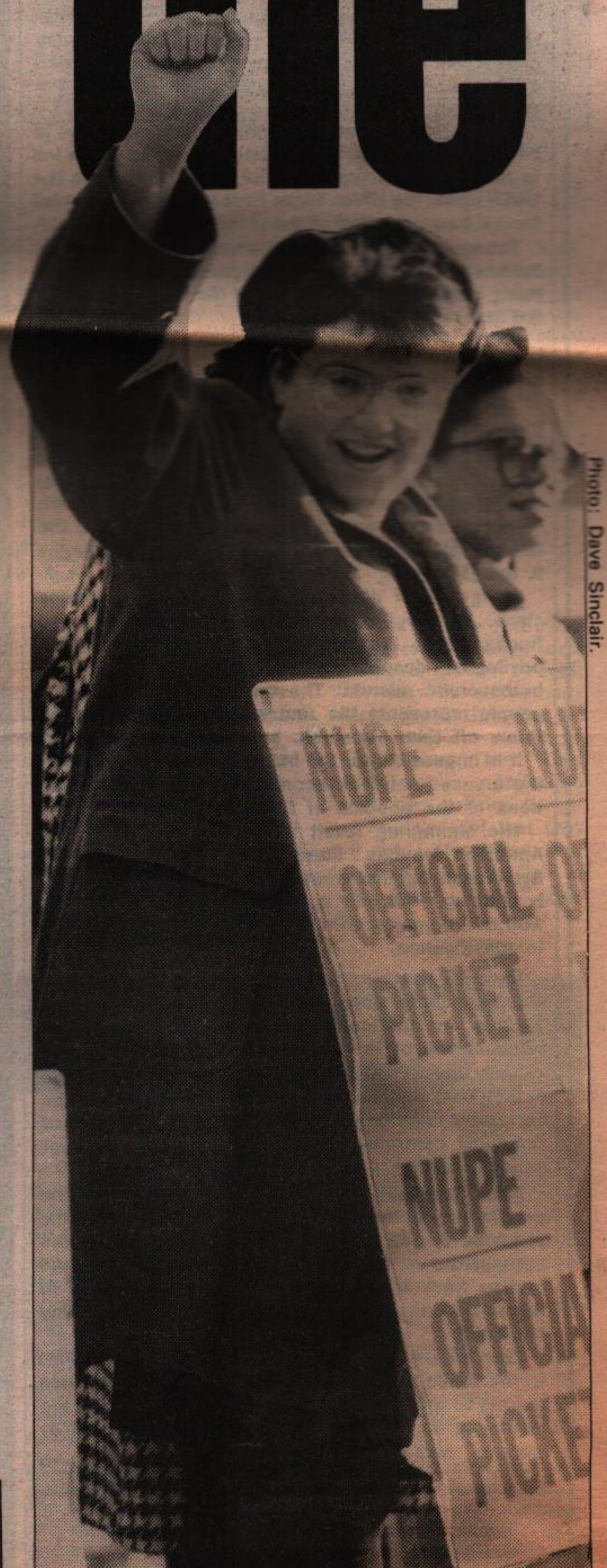


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Nurses on three-day strike at Charing Cross Hospital in West London.

**Inside** ● More nurses' reports - page 14

● Trotsky on booms and slumps - pages 8-9 ● Pakistan - page 11

## Crisis in Estonia

ESTONIA IS the latest of the Baltic states to compel the Moscow bureaucracy to reach for the panic button. It is the smallest of the USSR's republics. Yet the action of its hand-picked 'parliament' on 16 November has openly challenged the right of the Kremlin grandees to decide its fate.

Stopping short of outright secession, it imposed an Estonian right of veto on legislation from Moscow. The national sensitivity of Estonia as well as the other Baltic peoples of Lithuania and Latvia, already at fever pitch, was inflamed by Gorbachev's decision to give the proposed Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow the power to ratify the USSR's borders.

This is a clear violation of the right of self-determination enshrined officially in Article 72 of the USSR constitution. Each republic has the right "freely to secede from the USSR." But woe betide any nationality trying to invoke it.

The Moscow bureaucracy stubbornly refused this right to Nagorno Karabakh. Faced with the latest national revolt, three of the Kremlin's top bureaucrats were dispatched to the Baltic states.

Yet Estonia defied their open warnings and Lithuania only retreated from taking a similar stand at the last moment. This provoked a mass demonstration in Lithuania, and general strike on 20 November protesting at the Lithuanian 'parliament' decision.

In Estonia the vote was by 254 to 1, including those deputies representing Russian and Ukrainian immigrants, accounting for 40 per cent of the Estonian population. Almost a million people in Estonia signed a petition protesting against proposed changes in the constitution.

The roots of this revolt are partly historical. There is widespread outrage at the historical crime which led to the forcible incorporation of these states into the USSR under the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the subsequent forced transportation of thousands to labour camps.

The relatively favourable economic situation of the Baltic states, which enjoy the highest productivity and living standards of the whole of the USSR, has also fed this movement.

The Communist Party chiefs have seen which way the wind is blowing and have attempted, at the moment successfully, to put themselves at the head of this national revolt. They hope to steer the movement in a safe direction.

In all the Baltic states there is the development of a form of 'national Stalinism'. The Baltic bureaucrats are attempting to arrive at an accommodation with Moscow. In no way do they intend to upset the bureaucratic apple cart with the entrenched privileges it brings them.

Things stand differently with the Baltic working class. Perestroika and glasnost have opened the floodgates to the pent up anger at the unbridled privileges, despoliation and waste arising from bureaucratic misrule. The movement of the Baltic people represents the first stage in an attempt to throw off this intolerable burden.

It is impossible for the bureaucratic elite to satisfy the aroused national, economic and social expectations of the peoples of the USSR.

The simmering revolt in Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia remains unresolved. A movement in Byelorussia against great-Russian chauvinism recently built up. And only a matter of a few weeks ago 100,000 demonstrated in Georgia demanding an end to russification.

Over 40 years ago, Trotsky explained: "Although there can be no once and for all prepared formula to resolve the (national) problem, still there is the resilient will of the interested masses themselves."

"Only their actual participation in the administration of their own destinies can at each new stage draw the necessary lines between the legitimate demands of economic centralism and the living gravitations of national culture."

"The trouble is, however, that the will of the population of the Soviet Union in all its national divisions is now wholly replaced by the will of the bureaucracy which approached both economy and culture from the point of view of convenience of administration and the specific interests of the ruling stratum."

Every word of Trotsky applies with even greater force to the Baltic states now. Moreover he also supplies the key to solving their problems: the overthrow of the privileged bureaucratic elite and its replacement by workers' democracy.

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# South Africa: revolutionary fighter murdered

THE MARXIST Workers' Tendency of the ANC mourns Comrade Siphon Dladla, brutally murdered by assassins in Natal. His death is a tragic loss to revolutionary youth in South Africa and throughout the world.

Comrade Siphon, aged 19, was one of the first Congress youth to enter battle against the counter-revolutionary gangster organisation, Inkatha, whose hands drip with the blood of hundreds of workers and youth.

Siphon was an ANC soldier and Marxist. Along with other heroic youth, he established a reputation throughout Natal for tenacity, hardness and determination in the struggle to drive Inkatha out of his township. He played an indispensable role in the creation of armed self-defence organisations.

As a builder of the ANC on the ideas of Marxism, Siphon shared with us the understanding and confidence that the state, the bosses and Inkatha will be smashed. This they could not take from him. He fought and died for non-racialism, democracy and socialism.

Until proven otherwise, the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC holds Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha responsible for the cold-blooded murder of Siphon Dladla. Hiding behind the screen of a 'peace agreement' with the national leadership of COSATU and the UDF to disarm Congress ranks, Inkatha continues to step up the assassination of workers and youth.

To all who knew him, Siphon was a leader and a friend who shared with the comrades in joy and in sorrow. His bold example inspired hundreds. His courage and military prowess disguised his youth.

He will be greatly missed by his family, his young child and all who fought at his side.



The funeral of another victim of apartheid. Read first-hand accounts of the struggles in *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, November issue now available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

## Sri Lanka: assassins kill again

A MEMBER and a supporter of the NSSP were murdered, and 30-40 others seriously wounded, in a horrifying attack by gunmen of the Sinhala communalist organisation JVP on a mass meeting in Colombo on 17 November.

The meeting was the inaugural rally of the Socialist Front (an alliance of four left parties) in the run-up to Sri Lanka's presidential election on 19 December. Ten minutes into the speech by Vasudeva Nanayakkara, organising secretary of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP), the killers attacked with automatic weapons and bombs.

The victims were comrades Chandrawimala, a full-time NSSP member of 13

years' standing who participated in the general strike of 1980, and Jayantha. Comrade Chandrawimala leaves a widow and two children.

As the gunmen opened up all speakers fled except comrade Vasu, who played a heroic role in regaining control of the situation. The meeting continued for another hour, with wounded workers speaking.

Vasu compared the blood spilt with that of the Chicago workers in the 1886 Haymarket massacre, which has become symbolised by the red flag of socialism.

*Militant* extends deepest condolences to the families of the murdered comrades.

capitalism.

*Asisoze sikulibale futhi ziyohubeka njalo nomzabalazo owawufela.*

We will never forget you, we will never give up the cause you died for.

Already contributions have been received in memory of Siphon Dladla, to carry forward the work he

died for. Clare Doyle, member of the Editorial Board of *Militant* has contributed £20. Please raise contributions in your trade union, Labour Party, LPYS branch etc, and send them to Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund: c/o Councillor L. Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

# Victory for union rights

AN IMPORTANT victory for union rights was won last week. The Civil Service Appeals Board ruled the Ministry of Defence (MOD) decision to sack Plymouth dockyard apprentice Graeme Jones "unfair", and recommended his reinstatement with back pay.

The Board hasn't given detailed reasons for its decision. But they evidently rejected the MOD claim that their high-handed decision was justified because Graeme threatened "National Security".

Graeme's dismissal totally ignored the MOD's own disciplinary procedure. In June, Graeme was summonsed before local management. A letter containing various allegations, but no specific charges, was read out.

Graeme was not allowed a copy but he was asked for his comments. Graeme said he wanted time to reply. However, three days later top management wrote informing Graeme he was

sacked.

At the 3 November Appeal Board hearing, the MOD was challenged over their allegations. In effect, they had to agree that, even if they'd gone through proper procedures, the alleged offences probably wouldn't have warranted dismissal. Instead they claimed "national security" made it vital to dismiss Graeme.

"National security", it seems, was threatened because Graeme was allegedly a "disruptive influence" at Plymouth College, where he attended courses as part of his apprenticeship.

Graeme's "crime" was to support attempts, through setting up a Students Rights Committee, (SRC) to build a democratic students' union and re-affiliate the Students Association to the National Union of Students.

The campaign to defend students' interests collided head-on with the former Principal who retired last summer. He wanted a

"democracy-free zone" in the college. Political activity, to his mind, would antagonise Tory college governors, local businessmen and the MOD.

## Security

The bogey of an alleged threat to 'national security' clearly referred to Graeme's campaigning activity in the college and the local area. Nothing more sinister was suggested.

The MOD regularly sacks workers who organise to defend basic democratic rights. Unfortunately, they often get away with it, particularly in navy-dominated areas like Plymouth. MOD managers use autocratic powers with breathtaking complacency. Unfortunately, the ineffective role of trade union officials, bound by routinism and red tape, contributes to this.

Graeme was represented very effectively at the hearing by a barrister. But disgracefully, Graeme had to organise his own defence.

Despite requests through his local branch and to the national office, Graeme's union, the AEU repeatedly refused him legal aid.

Graeme Jones won a significant victory particularly for young workers' rights. AEU members should ask why this success has been won in spite of their own union leadership's attitude.

The Appeals Board calls on the MOD to reinstate Graeme. But it would be foolish to assume they will automatically give him his job back. The AEU and other public sector unions must take steps to ensure he is fully reinstated with no loss of rights.

AEU members will be outraged by their officials' handling of the case. Graeme has already been invited to speak at a number of AEU meetings.

Messages and donations to Graeme Jones, c/o 59 Palmerston St, Plymouth.

By a student correspondent.

# RUC harass Militant supporters

OVER THE last few weeks supporters of the Irish *Militant* in Northern Ireland have come under serious threat from the state. This is in response to the growing influence of and support for *Militant's* programme of class unity and socialism among both Roman Catholic and Protestant workers.

The incidents listed below point to a general stepping-up of repression against *Militant*. For obvious reasons, we are not printing the names of all the individuals involved.

By an Irish *Militant* reporter

DURING THE past few months two plain-clothes police officers have on four occasions used a pretext to approach a leading *Militant* supporter. They identified themselves as being from Royal Ulster Constabulary headquarters. One gave his name as Sean O'Neill.

On the fourth occasion the comrade was taken to a coffee house in East Belfast. There the officers tried to persuade him to go to a hotel for a free lunch with their 'superior', whom they said he would meet only once.

In the course of this conversation the comrade was offered £100 a month, assistance with rehousing, a monthly meal and drinks and other financial inducements, in return for information on *Militant*.

He was asked to agree to a monthly meeting to pass on information. The comrade refused the offer and did not turn up to a further meeting which the officers tried to arrange.

The following week these two officers were identified carrying out undercover observation work at the Chelsea Girl picket line, where the Irish *Militant* is regularly sold. In the course of the Chelsea Girl dispute, 15 *Militant* supporters have so far been arrested.

These arrests took place on Saturday 15 October. *Militant* has received information from a trade union source that the RUC contacted officials of the N Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on Friday 14 October and told them they intended to "arrest the Militants on the picket line".

From the police behaviour the following day it is quite clear that they came with the prior intention of carrying out arrests. A *Militant* supporter who had been prominent in the dispute but who arrived after the arrests had taken place, was singled out from a crowd of trade unionists who continued to leaflet at the store and he was arrested within minutes of his arrival.

A public meeting in support of the strike, held a few days later, was interrupted by armed policemen, who later admitted that they had been sent to find out who was present.

## Make an example

Two weeks ago Irish *Militant* received information from a police source that the RUC have been discussing singling out individuals. This source identified two leading *Militant* supporters, Peter Hadden and Manus Maguire, and said that the RUC intended to "make an example of them".

Manus Maguire has since been threatened by an RUC officer. On Saturday 19 November, Sergeant D Park of Queen Street barracks whispered in his ear: "If I had my way we wouldn't be dealing with you through the courts".

In another incident, one of two *Militant* supporters who were harassed by the police while poster for a meeting was interviewed in a police station. A large file was produced which the police claimed was his file and he was informed that serious charges were going to be made against him.



RUC members on Patrol in Antrim.

Photo: Militant.

Many other incidents could be listed. Comrades involved in various activities from paper sales to leafletting are now subject to regular harassment and threats of arrest.

*Militant* supporters in Britain are facing witch-hunting tactics from the Labour Party right wing. In N Ireland the threat is from the state and more direct. There is clear evidence that individuals have in the past been 'set up' for assassination through information passed by RUC officers to Loyal-

ist paramilitaries.

It is a scandal that socialists and trade union activists with a long record of opposition to sectarianism and of upholding the ideas of socialism in the difficult circumstances of N Ireland should be singled out for such threats and harassment.

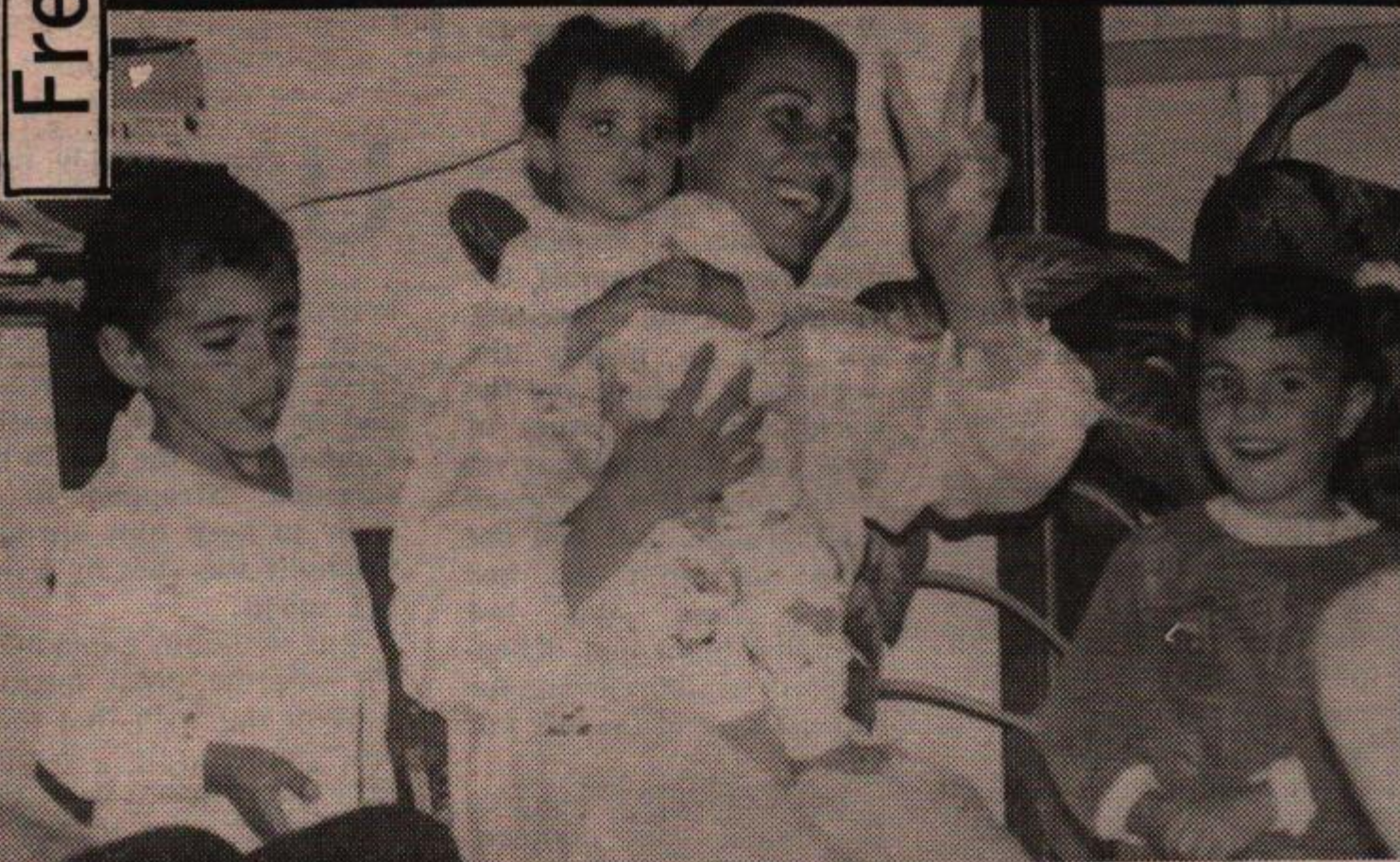
A question mark also hangs over the role of those trade union leaders who were informed that *Militant* supporters were to be arrested but did nothing to prevent it. The labour movement in

N Ireland and Britain must raise an outcry to force the state to end its policy of repression.

Resolutions of protest should be sent to the N Ireland Secretary of State, the Labour Party national executive committee, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the TUC, demanding they act on the matter.

Unless this repression of socialist activists is vehemently opposed, there is a danger that it could escalate into an extremely sinister situation.

## Free Mahmoud Masarwa



Mahmoud's wife Wafa with their children Telal-za'atar, Feda and Magdalene.

DISGRACEFULLY, THE Kinnockite majority on the National Union of Students executive have withdrawn their support for imprisoned Palestinian socialist Mahmoud Masarwa.

Their excuse: they didn't have 'enough information' on the case (despite the report from an international labour movement delegation to Israel) - and Mahmoud isn't a student! As pointed out by Colette Williams, a Marxist member of the executive, neither is Nelson Mandela.

The real reason is Mahmoud's socialist opposition to the policies of the PLO leadership, in contrast to the NUS leaders' uncritical attitude. Oppressed Pal-

estiniens, it seems, only qualify for support if they agree with the NUS executive!

Despite these antics support for Mahmoud has continued to flood in this week. However, we have now less than one week to raise more than £1,000 for the first instalment of his legal expenses. We are sure that with an extra effort this can be achieved.

Thanks for £47.18 from a collection at the Welsh Labour Party Women's Conference, £50 from MSF Bedford General, £25 from MSF Liverpool CNS Branch 265, Hackney Nalco £10, Mid-Sussex CLP £10, Holland Park Branch LP £10, Chatham Branch LP

(Hackney) £10, Darlington Trades Council £10, and Teesside Poly Labour Club for a collection of £3.50.

Donations should be sent to PO Box 524, London E2. Cheques payable to the Mahmoud Masarwa Defence Campaign. Letters of protest to Prime Minister's Office, 3 Kaplan Street, Jerusalem, Israel 91919.

★ Messages of support can now be sent direct to Mahmoud in prison. We urge all labour movement organisations that have supported his case to do so. Write to Mahmoud Masarwa, Prison No 0018, 342 Space 3, Prison Nizan, Prison Service Ramle, Israel.

## Legal threat to Tories

AS WELL as the opposition of thousands of workers, Bradford's town hall Tories are now facing legal obstacles to their plan to sell off 14 old people's homes.

According to a confidential report leaked to the *Bradford Star*, the price they would fetch if sold as old people's homes would be so low that they could face prosecution for selling at less than the best possible price without government

permission.

The profit could be lower than £850,000, less than the £1.25 million they have recently spent modernising just two of the homes.

If they sell them with no restriction on their future use, they could make as much as £1.5 million, but they would then risk breaking their statutory commitment to maintain the current number of residential places for old people.

Council leader Eric Pickles has conceded that some homes will not now be sold: "We may be selling only nine or maybe fewer of the homes now".

But given the Tory government's admiration for Pickles' policies, it cannot be ruled out that they will grant permission to a cut-price sale, so the fight to save these homes goes on.

## Defend Bermondsey

ALL THE indications are that the Labour Party national executive committee on 23 November will have taken disciplinary action against leading members of Bermondsey Labour Party.

Despite a year-long investigation and 160 pages of evidence, the original allegations of intimidation and financial malpractice have clearly been proved groundless.

In a report to the NEC Organisation Sub-committee, the majority of the evidence backed the Bermondsey party officers. The inquiry team have already been forced to withdraw the threat to suspend them for a year.

Unable to proceed on the

basis of this evidence, the inquiry team is presenting, at the last minute, a shorter 40-page report to the full NEC. Based on anonymous informers, it excludes all the evidence favourable to the Bermondsey party. It is a crude attempt to cobble together a story to support a witch-hunt.

Even so, the inquiry has only been able to recommend an audit of the books, the reconstitution of the constituency party after a membership check within the next three months and the suspension of the officers for this period (though there is no provision in the rule book for this).

Bermondsey members are protesting that such ac-

tion is being proposed on the basis of hearsay and malicious tittle-tattle. Despite the lack of evidence the press are trying to pressurise the NEC by highlighting allegations not proven in the report.

Party activists believe the NEC will see sense, avoid such a suicidal course, stop the witch-hunt and let the Bermondsey party get on with defeating the Tories and Liberals.

But if the witch-hunters persist, Bermondsey activists are determined that disciplinary action will back-fire and there will be a mass campaign for socialism throughout London.

By a Militant reporter

# The life of James Connolly

## Workers' unity and Irish freedom

**JAMES CONNOLLY'S** life began 120 years ago in the Cowgate district of Edinburgh. It ended 45 years later before a firing squad in Kilmainham jail. The intervening years turned him into an

almost legendary figure in the labour movement in Ireland, Britain and America. Harry Whittaker, a Ucat member, examines the legacy of Connolly.

**B**orn of Irish immigrant parents, Connolly was deeply conscious of his Irish roots. Cowgate was a teeming Irish ghetto which had a large influx of political refugees, which helped to develop the political consciousness of the young Connolly.

After a few dead-end jobs, Connolly was faced with the 'choice' that has confronted so many working class youngsters before and since - enlist in the army or starve. He joined the King's Liverpool Regiment which shortly moved to Cork and then Dublin. It was there that his socialist ideas began to catch up with his fervent Irish nationalism.

With the ill health of his parents he deserted and returned to Scotland where he soon became active in the socialist movement. He became secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation and began writing for *Justice*, the Marxist-inspired journal of the Social Democratic Federation.

In 1895, desperate for work, he moved to Dublin with his wife and children to accept a job as organiser of the Dublin Socialist Club. There he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP) with the idea of uniting the struggle for independence and socialism.

"The struggle for Irish freedom has two aspects; it is national and it is social. The national ideal can never be realised until Ireland stands forth before the world as a nation, free and independent. It is social and economic, because no matter what the form of government may be, so long as one class owns the land and instruments of labour from which mankind derive their substance, that class will always have it in their power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow creatures."

Connolly understood that the failure of other socialists to comprehend the dual nature of the Irish question was the root cause of the lack of progress of socialism in Ireland. He publicised the ISRP and its socialist aims with weekly open air meetings in Phoenix Park.

In 1898 he went to Scotland to raise money for the launching of a newspaper for the ISRP. Keir Hardie donated £50. The *Workers' Republic* was born and

Connolly declared the principle on which the paper was based: "To unite the workers and to bury in one common grave the religious hatreds, the provincial jealousies and the natural distrusts upon which oppression has so long depended for its security."

Connolly was editor, contributor, composing room staff and machine minder for the *Workers' Republic*.

**T**he ISRP were the first to protest against the Boer war. Connolly described it in the *Workers' Republic* as being "for the purpose of enabling an unscrupulous gang of capitalists to get into their hands the immense riches of the diamond fields."

The Irish Transvaal Committee, of which the ISRP was the driving force, was formed to campaign against the British government's intense recruiting drive in Ireland. Despite severe unemployment and police brutality against those who campaigned in opposition, the recruiting drive failed miserably.

But Connolly, dismayed by the bickering of Irish socialists, emigrated to the USA in 1903, a move he later admitted was a mistake. He had made a reputation for himself by now as a lecturer and as a leading socialist thinker. And he had the ability to explain the most complex issues in a clear and simple manner.

He had mastered French and German and was soon to master Italian. Yet just a few years before his wife had to check his first writings in English for punctuation and grammar.

In America he joined the Socialist Labour Party and was elected on its national executive. But he found himself in constant and bitter conflict with the SLP leader, Daniel de Leon. The cause was de Leon's vehement attacks on the Catholic church, which Connolly believed were alienating large sections of the working class from the socialist movement.

It was during his stay in America that the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies, the IWW) came into being. Connolly immediately became active in the IWW, organising workers in transport and construction, dockers and garment workers.

**A**t the same time he completed *Socialism Made Easy* and *Labour in Irish History*. Shortly after his *Labour, Nationality and Religion* was published. In *Labour in Irish History*, Connolly's most admired work, he came to the same conclusion as Trotsky, really to the theory of the permanent revolution, without being in direct contact with the Russian Marxists.

The struggle for Irish independence had been betrayed time after time by capitalist and middle class leaders. The working class are the only dependable force and must come to the head of the independence struggle, but they will bring with them their own class demands too.

"We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting landlord; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute pressmen - the hired lawyers of the enemy. Not these but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared."

Connolly returned to Ireland in 1910, after Jim Larkin, the great trade union leader, had appealed for funds to bring him back. Connolly became Ulster organiser of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, which had been formed by Larkin.

**I**n the historic 1913 Dublin lock-out, Larkin was arrested. Connolly immediately came down from Belfast, only to be arrested himself and sentenced to three months. After an eight-day hunger strike he was released and he assumed leadership of the ITGWU.

In the course of the struggle Connolly formed the Irish Citizens' Army to protect workers from police brutality. But he foresaw the day when it would become a revolutionary force capable of confronting imperialism in Ireland.

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, Connolly was disgusted that the so-called leaders of the national movement, like Redmond, pledged to support the war effort in the belief that they would be rewarded with home rule. Their capitulation had split the nationalist ranks. The Irish Volunteers disowned the imperialist war and saw it as an oppor-



Top: James Connolly. Bottom: Irish workers in action; the inheritors of Connolly's struggles.

### 'The Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free foundation can be reared.'

tunity to fight for independence.

Connolly denounced the war in the *Irish Worker*, a paper set up by Larkin. Not unexpectedly the paper was suppressed by the authorities a few weeks later.

He was filled with disgust at the betrayal of internationalism by the leaders of the labour movement of the different countries, all of whom lined behind their own capitalist class in the war. Only a handful - Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Maclean and Connolly himself - kept the flame of international socialism alight.

Connolly pressed the Irish Republican Brotherhood to announce a date for the uprising they were planning. He became a member of the IRB and joined their Military Council. But his recognition of the vital role of the working class had been in no way dimmed. In fact a week before the rising he told the Citizens' Army: "The odds against us are a thousand to one. But if we should win, hold on to your rifles because the Volunteers may have a different goal. Remember, we are not only for political liberty but for economic liberty as well."

**T**he Easter Rising 1916 was for Connolly a chance to strike a blow against the slaughter of the imperialist war and to inspire the workers of Ireland and the world with the vision of class war. "Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord."

But Connolly recognised the rising was doomed. "We are going to be slaughtered," he said.

He was commander of the insurgent forces in Dublin and vice-president of the provisional independent Irish government they declared. While directing street fighting, Connolly was twice wounded, the bone in his leg was shattered into fragments.

Finally Connolly and Padriag Pearse, the leader of the Volunteers, agreed that they had no choice but to surrender. "In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers, now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered," as Connolly put it.

**U**pwards of 130 had been killed or seriously wounded and 180 buildings destroyed. Retribution was swift and bloody. Within three days court martials had sentenced 90 to death. Connolly was the last to be executed. Strapped to a chair to keep him upright Connolly was shot by a firing squad.

But as Lenin explained: "It was the great misfortune of the Irish that they rose prematurely." Within little more than a year, the Bolsheviks were in power and following the Russian Revolution, Ireland was also caught up in the revolutionary wave that swept Europe.

Maclean and Trotsky defended the Easter rising against those like Plekhanov who attacked it as "positively harmful". Trotsky explained that the "historic role of the Irish proletariat was just beginning."

Today there are streets, buildings and hospitals named after James Connolly. But not until the working classes have finally rid themselves of capitalism and established a worldwide socialist society will a lasting tribute be made to this remarkable and heroic man.

# THE CITY BEAT

John Gallagher was a policeman in Glasgow when he became a socialist. He talked to Tony Cross about his experiences in the force:

WHEN I was 18 I joined the police. I left school without any real plans of what I wanted to do. I went to college for a year, flunked that and then became a social security officer for ten months. It was a real dead-end kind of boring job, the money was really garbage.

My older brother was in the police and he suggested I join. This was 1985 and there was no job security anywhere else. I was young and naive so I did.

After you get on the street, for two years you're on probation. That's the period when if you don't conform to the normal work practices you can get bombed out without too many questions being asked. You're told: "Keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut," — mouth shut being the most important bit.

You notice after being there a while, there's two groups. There's the cops that will do anything. Then there's the other ones who have some sort of moral fibre, who believe you don't lift someone for nothing. But if justice as they see it calls for it, they'll stick somebody in when they know the normal channels are out of reach.

The ones that are into anything use what's called 'dirty breaches' — the famous 'Glasgow breach' which means if you argue with a Glasgow policeman, you get lifted for a breach of the peace. The actual definition is ludicrous. If you're in any place acting "in a disorderly manner to the annoyance, fear or alarm of the lieges" you're committing a breach.

The new Public Order Act that's coming in in England has sections that try to give the police down there the same kind of powers they have up here.

The first time this happened I said: "Look lads, I'm not going to court and saying this is a breach." For a while they would do it but just ignore me and I wouldn't be called to court. But it gets to the stage when you can't just keep your mouth shut.

After that I started getting sent to Coventry. I'd sit down at a table in the canteen and a couple of them would get up and walk away. There's a very us and them attitude that these type of policemen

have. You're not one of the boys if you buck the system.

They don't seem to have any understanding of what it's like for guys of 23 or 24 who've been on the burro since leaving school.

A lot of the work is just a case of helping people out in sticky situations and that was very rewarding. But I mind once getting called to a grocer's and an old boy about 70 was caught shoplifting — a wee small tin of Campbell's mince and peas. So we got up there and I said to the shop owner: "Right, I'll just take him home," and he said: "No, no, I want him done." Well we didn't actually do it. We said to the shop owner "Ay, OK" and took him home.

Shoplifters are done a lot and a lot of the time it's maybe youngsters with a drug problem or single mothers taking a few packs of sausages, a half dozen eggs. That was horrible having to do that. With older people, it was often obviously just forgetfulness but the shopkeeper would still insist on doing them.

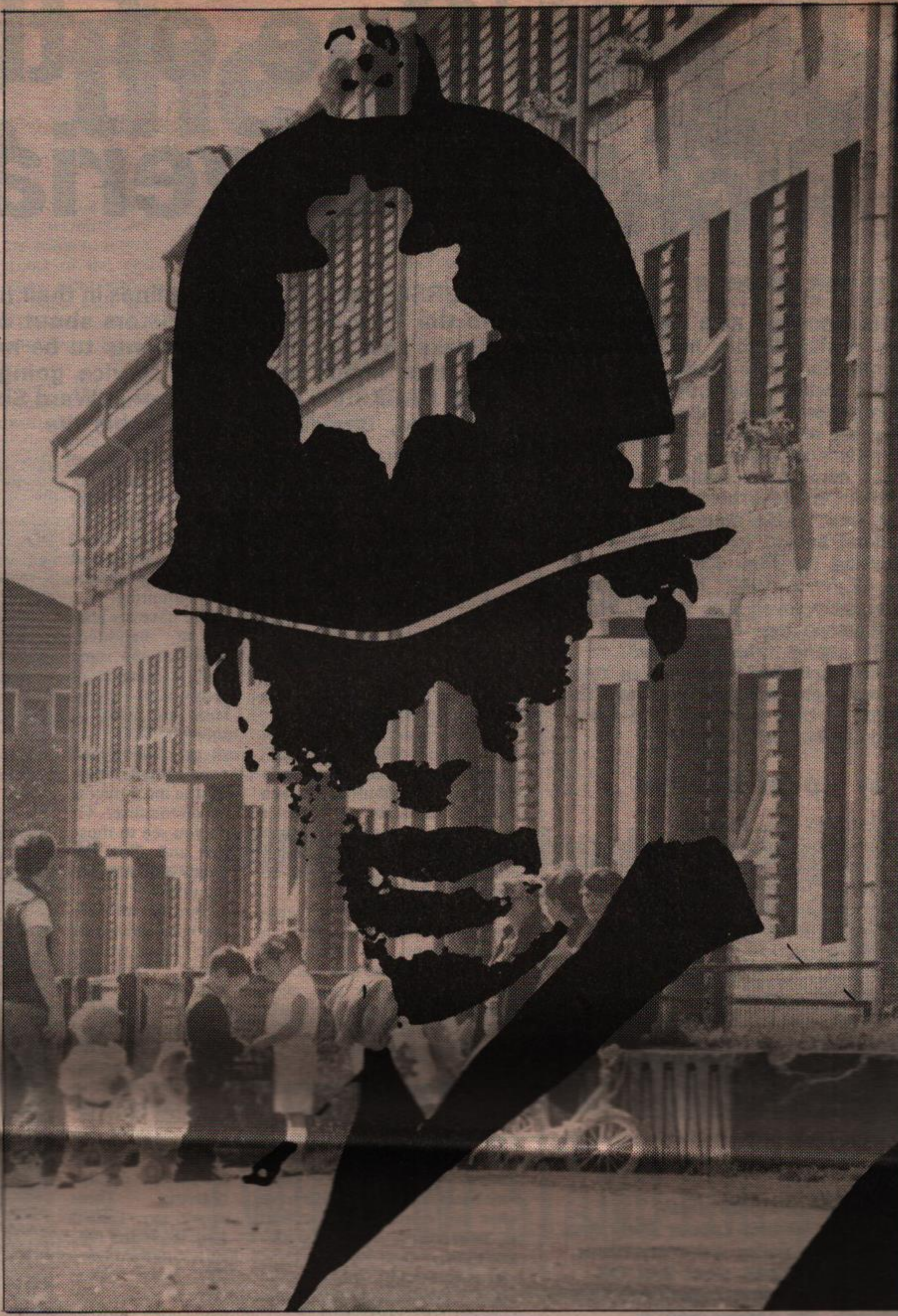
The area I worked in, Barrachnie, there was always young guys hanging about there who'd come down from a big housing scheme called Barlanark. We would be getting 20 letters of complaint a week from residents.

It resulted in the youth getting hassled all the time. We were supposed to whisk them away from the place as soon as they started larking about. But there was nowhere for them to go. There wasn't even a chip shop in Barlanark; they had to go down to Barrachnie to get their chips.

Car radio theft is huge; five a night sometimes. I knew a few that were into it, just young guys who got their giro once a fortnight but it was done in by the beginning of the second week. Everybody else is going out enjoying themselves on Saturday night, so they go screw a couple of Cavaliers or Astras, get the radio and then they can go out Saturday night.

I got a sort of rapport with a lot of the young people. I would just stand and talk to them because the way I looked at it was they weren't shouting their mouths, getting into a fight while I was there, so nobody was going to complain.

Sometimes they would be talk-



Photos: Militant

TRAINING WAS a story in itself.

I was politically naive when I first joined. I went to the police training college. The guy that ran it was a retired major-general and was given an honorary police rank to train us.

When I got there we got shown a video and it was a police raid on a peace convoy. I'd seen it before because down at my sister's in Bristol it was on the local news.

So they showed us this video with the police battering them with their truncheons, dragging women out of the buses and beating people up and after it an inspector says "This is a Channel 4 production and that was actors." And I knew it wasn't! I knew he was lying to me!

That was the first time I thought: "Jesus, these guys are really warped!"

They tried to justify the use of police horses in the miners' strike. It was ludicrous.

The police's own guidelines say you disperse a crowd where they have somewhere to disperse to. But they would consciously herd them into a confined space and then charge the police horses at them and use the excuse that police and miners could have been injured. It never

ing to me and they'd see a van coming that they knew a pair of bastards were in and they'd say "We'd better move now; here's the police coming." The first time a guy said that it made feel a wee bit not too bad.

even entered their heads to just close the gates and stop the trucks going in.

A bit before the last elections I got talking to one copper about democracy. He said the system of democracy was a load of crap: "You can't let them plebs out there vote!" So I said: "What are you talking about?" He said: "I think the military should kinda control the country and keep order. But of course they're too authoritarian, you need a group of entrepreneurs to run the economy."

So I said: "No don't be daft, that's like Chile or something." And he says: "Yes, I'm quite a fan of General Pinochet." I just didn't say any more! A month later he was promoted to sergeant.

Another guy was a sergeant. Somebody mentioned social workers and that was it! He was away: "Social workers...left-wing commie bastards!" He started going off his nut: "There all the f...ing same, the Labour Party and all that. They're all f...ing commie bastards, restrict our powers and all the rest of it. The Tories, they're just as bad as well. They're going to cut our money, too. Come the revolution, and I don't mean no red one..!" He was wanting the same

Most of them were quite involved in drugs. Prescribed ones was the biggest problem. Now I'm involved with the Labour Party Young Socialists I've become even more aware of the effect of drugs. Apathy's bad enough but

as his colleague.

This October he went to university to do a law degree, sponsored by the police and he'll be promoted to at least the rank of superintendent eventually.

I left because I couldn't handle the fact that what I was seeing conflicted so much with the political ideas I'd come to support. I could hardly get into a decent conversation with anyone at work. You see the kind of things that are going on and the kind of attitude that ordinary people have to policemen. I couldn't handle it any more, especially after the miners' strike people are more aware that the police are forces of the state and the political role they're playing.

I met quite a lot of folks that are totally disenchanting with it. The only reason they didn't get out was that they had a big mortgage round their necks and a wife and wains and all the rest of it. Their reactions to the Tories offering them less money this year are probably pretty nasty. I'd say that about a third of the cops I met would have left if it wasn't for the financial benefits. Thatcher could lose some of the loyalty that she got from the police before.

when it's reinforced with five downers a day, it's a huge problem. There's nothing else to do and so their attitude is "get out of it" with a few heart pills or pain killers.



### On the streets

WHILE GEORGE Bush celebrated his election victory, his new luxury home, the White House, was being picketed by 2,000 homeless parents and their children, drawing attention to America's horrific housing crisis.

As many as 3 million are now without a home in the 'land of the free'. Under Reagan the federal budget for low-income housing fell from \$30 bn in 1981 to \$7 bn in 1987. It is not just the unemployed who suffer. Wage cuts mean that even many in work cannot afford a house. Bush's solution? Vouchers to the poor to pay for their housing. The catch is that there are just not enough homes available.

### Pay up or get out

In BRITAIN the Tories' property-owning democracy is beginning to look like the building societies' dictatorship. Repossessions by building societies have risen from 2,530 in 1979 to 22,630 in 1987. One in ten of the homeless are mortgage defaulters.

Their chances of moving into council houses are also slim. Local authority housebuilding starts declined from a peak of 110,000 in 1975 to only 15,000 last year.

### Out of order

AFTER A 12-month delay, Liverpool District Labour Party has elected its policy sub-committees. When it became clear that the left were winning majorities, Peter Kilfoyle, the Labour Party's 'policeman' in Liverpool, stormed out of the meeting, spluttering threats to rule it out of order. But the right-wing officers stayed and continued the ballots. What a nuisance democracy is when it can't deliver the right results!

### Fire? Dial £999

THE RIGHT-WING Institute for Economic Affairs have reached new depths of lunacy with their proposal that the fire service should be privatised. They say it is an ideal candidate in view of its "splendid brand image", ie it saves lives. More money could be made, said a spokesman, by doing ambulance work.

Even saving lives can make money. After seeing the mess private contractors have made in the NHS it is frightening to think what the result would be if this scheme got off the ground.

### Fare day's work

THE GUARDIAN has discovered that British Rail are considering using passengers to collect fares in return for a commission or discount on their season ticket. YTS trainees might also be used. Could this be the start of a new trend, as the Tories impose cost-cutting on all the industries on their privatisation list?

How about 'mine-it-yourself' coal or 'deliver the post in your own street'? And would the privatised fire service be encouraging us to put out our own fires, for a commission of course?

# 'One of those days' in a geriatric ward

AS NURSES take to the picket lines in their fight for a decent wage, they face the usual blackmail from the Tory press and ministers about deserting their patients. In reality it is government cutbacks that are causing patients to be neglected and only the nurses' dedication and hard work that keeps the health service going.

BOB HARKER, a Nupe member in Ward Six, 23-bed male geriatric, Bensham General Hospital, Gateshead, describes a day in his life.

EIGHT O' CLOCK Sunday morning. A young staff nurse walks wearily into sisters office, collapses onto a seat and takes a long deep breath. It's been "one of those nights" which invariably means it's going to be "one of those days".

The talk of weddings and Christmas from my three female colleagues turns to words of sympathy for the beleaguered staff nurse.

Helen, also a staff nurse, Kay, a senior SEN, and Jackie, an auxiliary nurse, each chip in with a contribution which roughly amounts to "never mind hinney, just skip through the report and get yourself home to a well-deserved rest."

In the corner another auxiliary sits red-eyed, chin in hands, elbows on knees and wishing like hell he never downed that last pint the night before. A few joking remarks from the women at my expense, then we're ready to begin.

### Wanderers

We have "the lot" on our ward - incontinence, hand-fed, stroke victims, amputations, Parkinson's, senile, MS, pressure sores, coma. We also have what are commonly described as 'wanderers' - patients who don't know what they are doing and who wander all over the place, down corridors and through fire exits.

They have to be constantly watched for obvious reasons. They may fall and do themselves an injury. Being short-staffed this takes up a lot of time and, one must add, a lot of patience.

For 22 of our gentlemen the report indicates no real change in condition. Sadly the 23rd, a relatively young patient recently transferred from the busy Queen Elizabeth because of the need for beds, passed away around 6.15 that morning.

The doctor had been told to certify him dead, but night staff apologetically told us that he had not been seen to because they have literally been run of their feet and never had time.

This is understandable. Night-shift consisted of only three nurses and at that time in the morning the rousing patients can, understandably due to their condition, be quite demanding.

Calls for the commode, the odd patient climbing over his cot rails, as well as having to get a few patients up, washed and dressed, takes up a lot of time and energy. Sometimes it takes three of you to lift a heavy patient. Sometimes a number of men may have a slight 'accident' in bed after which they have to be cleaned or bathed and the soiled linen removed.

Following breakfast, Jackie and I are given the job of making the deceased presentable for his relatives, who will be arriving sometime that morning. Later we'll lay him out in a shroud ready for the porters to remove to the morgue.

It becomes a race against

time. There are four of us this morning; this is the norm. First and foremost must come the living and already problems are mounting.

We have six men to be hand-fed, whilst at the same time a number of incontinent patients are lying in soiled beds. Do you sit and spoon-feed your patients, leaving the incontinent in discomfort? Or do you see to those first and allow the 'feeds' to eat a cold breakfast?

During all this the usual cries ring out: "Have we any pads?" "They ain't arrived yet." "What about clothing?" "There wasn't much on the racks yesterday; we'll just have to make do with what we've got."

Kay gets on the phone to the domestics for pyjama bottoms. There aren't any. Bob is sent to Ward One to try and cadge a few pairs. Helen gets a phone call from the nursing officer asking if we have a nurse to spare for Ward Five.

A much-needed box of 'blue roll' won't arrive till 10.30. We have to make do with the one roll we've got. Bob curses, "damn cutbacks!" And as for bed linen, we'll worry about that later.

The drugs round comes next, which sees the removal of Helen from the fray for a short while. We've also got four men to bath and shower as per rota. We're beginning to dream of a cup of coffee.

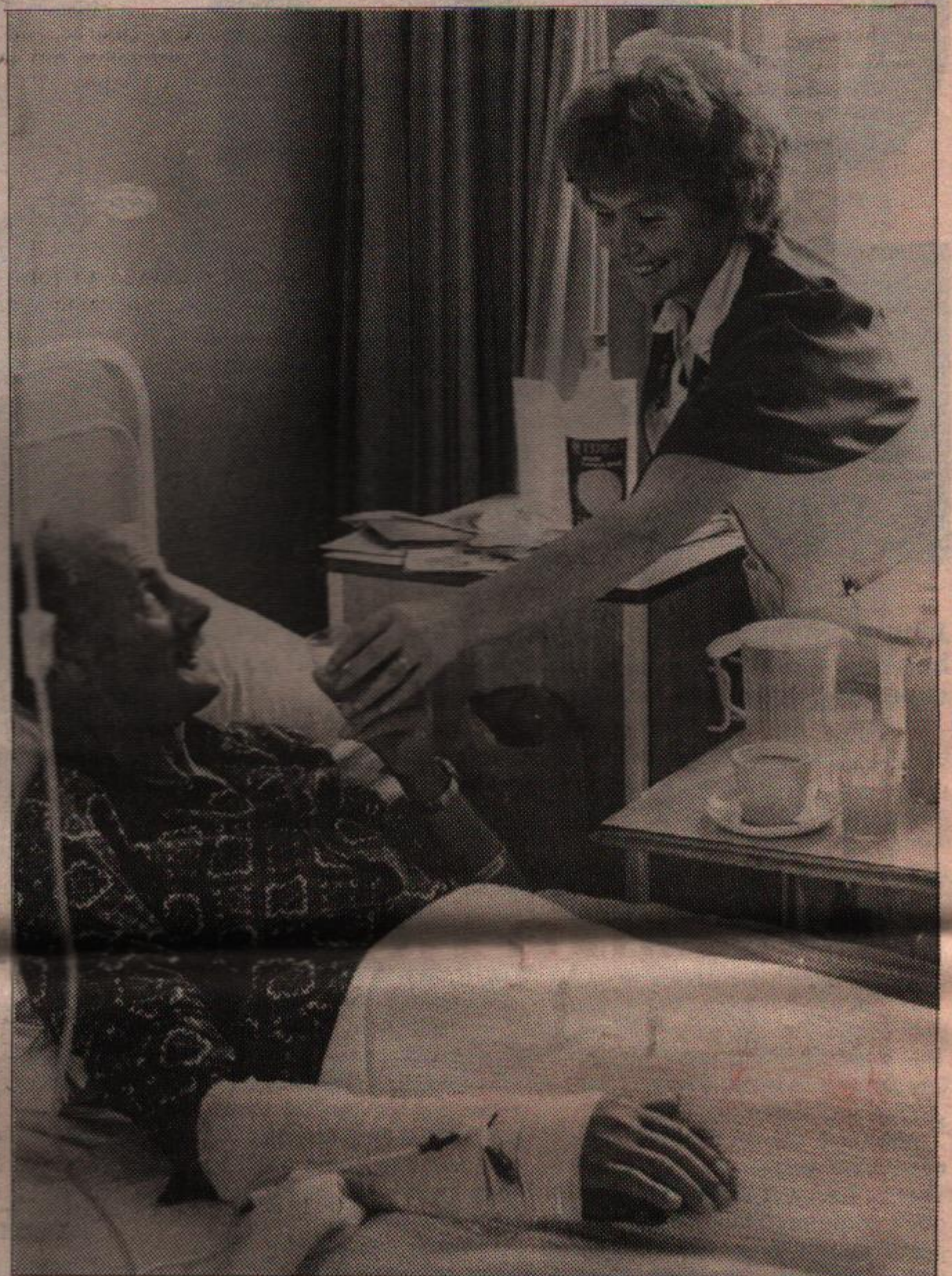
Time is getting on and eventually Kay sends Jackie and myself into the side ward to clean and change the man who died. His relatives will arrive soon and we can't delay any longer. This leaves Kay to struggle on in the ward.

Closing the man's eyes we proceed to bed-bath him, removing his jacket first. For part of this task I roll the body practically on top of me so Jackie can wash his back, bottom and legs. Dentures if possible must be placed back in the mouth; any vomit must of course be cleaned.

Suddenly the door begins to open. I make a sharp dash for it, managing just in time to stop one of our 'wanderers' from entering. I try to coax him back up the ward; he tries to belt me. Eventually Kay comes to the rescue and I'm free once again to plod on.

"We need more staff, Jackie lass," I mutter, then with a sigh, "Ha-way bonnie lad, let's get you finished."

Staff shortages have always been a problem. The strain on



nurses, physically and mentally, is tremendous. A few months ago a total of 27 nurses from the QE were sick, which caused a flap within the health authority. The area, already near danger level, was at critical and even bank nurses couldn't fill the gaps.

The authority decided to 'shuffle the pack'. They closed down Ward Three (surgical) at our hospital for a month, transferred the patient to Dunston Hill and the nurses to the QE. They closed Ward Seven permanently and next year another is to follow as part of cutbacks.

### Reinforcements

12 o'clock. The 'lates' have arrived; reinforcements, thank god!

Helen emerges from behind a screen, dances past a litter of equipment, dodges out of the way of the dinner trolley and laughs: "We're getting there eventually Bob," and as an afterthought, "How's the hangover?" Another dressing done.

Sister and the other 'late' are ready for the report, but before that she informs me that Ward One, which has 30 patients, has requested help. A student nurse is on the sick, so would I go down and give them a hand after lunch?

Meanwhile Ward Two, which only has one qualified nurse on, needs cover during the lunch. Gillian, a 'late' and also an SEN, is sent down there. On

top of that, Jackie, who is on half-day, finishes at 1.30.

Helen pleads for someone from another ward to go instead but to no avail. They too have been transferring staff around. The whole system is crazy; it's just chaotic!

By 2 pm the visitors are in and with what linen we have we are still making beds. At lunch the mood is one of anger over the regrading, staffing levels and cutbacks. Talk of working to grade is rife. For auxiliaries this means no more escort duty, no more dressings unsupervised.

Some talk of strike action. Some RCN members say they are joining Cohse. Meetings are arranged, appeals are mounting.

Cutbacks also bring anger. All our theatres have been closed. We have no cardiac arrest equipment. On one occasion an old man came to visit his wife on Ward Five. When he left, he got as far as the main doors and collapsed with a heart attack. By the time he reached cardiac at QE he was dead.

At 4.45 pm we were still waiting for some bed linen. But now it's home time. A number of patients were already in bed (the ones we had linen for) to help out the 'lates' who were on until 8.30 pm.

Lifting heavy patients, searching for equipment, rushed off our feet, low-waged, short-staffed, cutbacks. This is the health service today under the Tories. And this is on a 'quiet' non-emergency ward.

# Fighting the poll tax

**MILITANT SUPPORTERS** in Liverpool Walton recently launched a campaign against the Tory poll tax. This is their report.

TO GET our first anti-poll tax meeting off the ground, the Labour Party Young Socialists leafleted a small working-class area of Melrose ward. 70 people turned up to hear Mick Morris of the LPYS, and councillors Jackie Smith and George Knibb explain why they were not going to pay the poll tax.

There was obvious enthusiasm for the stand taken by the platform on non-payment - though an ex-councillor, who only three years ago mouthed the slogan 'Better to break the law than to break the poor', said he was perfectly prepared to pay as non-payment was illegal and futile.

This was not the feeling of the meeting. He was put in his place by another ex-councillor who tried to

open his eyes to the fact that ordinary working-class people do not have the luxury of saying they are going to pay the poll tax. They can't afford to. The meeting erupted in support for this statement.

By the end of the meeting 30 had signed up to join the anti-poll tax union. 12 have since applied to join the Labour Party.

## Dramatic

We decided to lobby the local councillor. This proved to be a dramatic experience. The Labour councillor launched a tirade of abuse against *Militant* supporters even before the delegation was seated.

This attack was unprovoked and venomous. It degenerated into personal abuse and allegations of

manipulation of the union by *Militant* extremists. Attempts were made to return to the subject of the poll tax, but they were either ignored or met with the reply that Labour does not have a formulated policy on the issue.

In the end her only notable comment was that in her constituency 60 per cent of the electorate would be better off, though no justification was given for this figure. This particular councillor did not impress upon the APTU that she was fully sympathetic to the problems of the working class in her area.

At the next APTU committee meeting, people from the next ward who wanted to form their own union came along to find out more. Their own ward Labour Party was doing nothing and through us they saw a way of getting started.

We needed money and decided that the best way forward was a public meeting with a speaker from Scotland. To raise money we would distribute the membership cards and have a collection at each meeting. £12 was then raised.

## Cold water

In the light of the enormous success of the anti-poll tax meetings across the city, Peter Kilfoyle, self-appointed official spokesperson for the Liverpool Labour Party, tried, via the Tory rag the *Liverpool Echo*, to pour cold water on these meetings.

In a particularly odious and servile article, obviously aimed at undermining the confidence of people becoming involved in the poll tax fight, he maintained it was pointless to refuse to pay the poll tax. You

would be found out anyway and as well as paying the tax would be lumbered with a fine.

He said we should all follow the official Labour Party line, in other words give up before the fight starts because you can't beat Thatcher.

So it was with a little trepidation that we went out to visit the people who had attended our first meeting. But nobody who had read the article had let it give them second thoughts about becoming involved or decided to pay the poll tax after all.

The highlight of the day's work came when a woman came to the door and said: "The only way that we'll beat it is by breaking the law!"

She wasn't worried about bailiffs either. She had been involved in rent strikes in Kirkby in the early 70s. "When the word

went round that the bailiffs were being sent in we would bale into vans and minibuses and get round there and occupy the place." A class fighter if ever there was one!

Yet when we asked her to join the Labour Party she argued: "What's the use? They're just as bad as the rest." But she agreed to think about it and the following week, after listening to our arguments and giving it much thought, she agreed to join.

It is a sad indictment of the Labour Party that under the worst Tory government in living memory such excellent class fighters are not being recruited in droves. Such men and women will make the Labour Party a fighting socialist organisation capable of playing its historical role of transforming society.

## WHERE TO FIND US

## SELL *Militant*

LAST WEEK'S headline on the nurses obviously accorded with the growing anger at the Tories' regrading con. The militant mood was reflected in the sale of 129 *Militants* in three hours outside the London Hospital. "It seemed as if every other person wanted to read the paper" said one seller.

In Stoke, 50 were sold outside the General Hospital and seven at the Cohse branch meeting.

The socialist answer to nationalism in last week's paper helped sales in Scotland. 40 were sold in an hour outside Wm Low's supermarket in Dundee and 150 on student demos across Scotland.

In Liverpool 60 papers were sold outside the picketed Chelsea Girl and 120 on a demo against student loans. 30 were sold on an anti-racist demo in Southampton.

Our sellers should make sure these buyers are turned into regular readers. Our unequalled coverage of workers' struggles will be in great demand in the coming period.

By Matt Howarth

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

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

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

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

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

**Southampton:**  
 Fight the poll tax meetings,

12 December  
 St Matthews Hall,  
 St Marys Road  
 7.30 pm

13 December  
 Church of England  
 School,  
 Brownlow Avenue  
 Bitterne  
 7.00 pm

19 December  
 St James Church Hall,  
 St James Road  
 Shirley  
 7.30 pm

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

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

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

**SOUTH EAST**  
 For details of meetings contact: 01 533 3311

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

**South Tyneside:**  
 'Fight the Poll Tax'  
 Thursday  
 8 December 7.30pm  
 Smugglers pub,  
 South Shields.

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

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

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

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

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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.

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*Militant*  
 SUPPORTER

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- 2 The Rise of Bolshevism-1917 Birch
- 3 The Russian Revolution Mullins
- 4 The Life of Trotsky Grant/Hemson
- 5 The Theory of the Permanent Revolution Silverman
- 6 The Chinese Revolution 1925-27 Taaffe
- 7 The Chinese Revolution 1944-49 Taaffe
- 8 The Colonial Revolution (China and Cuba) Brooks
- 9 The Colonial Revolution (South Africa) Hemson
- 10 The South African Revolution (6/86) Sejake/Simpson/Nellist

- 11 The State and Revolution Williams
- 12 The Latin American Revolution Walsh
- 13 What is Imperialism? Cross
- 14 Chile on the Brink (3/85) Taaffe
- 15 The Nicaraguan Revolution Saunols
- 16 Ireland and the Permanent Revolution Venton
- 17 Ireland Before Partition Venton
- 18 The Anglo-Irish Agreement - No Solution (6/86) Grant
- 19 The Rise of Fascism in Germany Birch
- 20 The Spanish Revolution 1931-39 Woods

- 21 The French Popular Front 1936 Ramage
- 22 The Early History of the Trade Unions Hopwood
- 23 Marxism and Science Pickard
- 24 Has Thatcher Weakened the Trade Unions? Jarvis
- 25 Marxism and Black Nationalism Lee
- 26 Slavery and Black Resistance Frampton
- 27 Historical Materialism (1961) Grant
- 28 Historical Materialism Cross
- 29 Dialectical Materialism Pickard
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- 31 The Origins of the State Edwards
- 32 Is Britain a Police State? Edwards
- 33 The Causes of the Post War Boom McKee
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- 37 The Socialist Way Forward (Debate: 9/86) Taaffe/Johnstone
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# TROTSKY ON BOOMS AND SLUMPS

THE RELATIONSHIP between the current economic situation – in Marxist terms, the economic 'conjuncture' – and the moods and consciousness of the working class is very complex. It is an issue at the centre of many discussions in the labour movement today, not least among Marxists, because of the political effects of the present temporary economic boom in the United States, Britain, and to one degree or another, in all the advanced countries of capitalism.

The rise in production and the fall in the levels of unemployment have been important factors underpinning the electoral successes of right wing and capitalist parties, and most recently, the election of George Bush.

A number of questions have been posed: how 'permanent' is the economic stability and growth of the recent period; to what extent do the election victories of Thatcher and Bush represent a significant move to the right within the working class; and what opportunities will there be for a renewal of working class struggle around socialist ideas?

As a contribution to this discussion, we reprint here some extracts from a speech delivered by Trotsky in June 1921. The speech was the 'Report on World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International', made on behalf of the

CAPITALISM DOES live by crises and booms, just as a human being lives by inhaling and exhaling. First there is a boom in industry, then a stoppage, next a crisis, followed by a stoppage in the crisis, then an improvement, another boom, another stoppage and so on.

Crisis and boom blend with all the transitional phases to constitute a cycle or one of the great circles of industrial development. Each cycle lasts from eight to nine or ten to eleven years. By force of its internal contradictions capitalism thus develops not along a straight line but in a zigzag manner, through ups and downs.

This is what provides the ground for the following claim of the apologists of capitalism, namely: since we observe after the war a succession of boom and crisis it follows that all things are working together for the best in this best of all capitalist worlds.

Executive Committee of the Communist International to the Third Congress.

Trotsky emphasises that there is a vital dialectical link between the movements in the economy and those in the political arena: the capitalist class cannot restore equilibrium at the expense of workers' living standards, for example, without big repercussions in the class struggle. This is the difference between the academic and arid economics of the university professors and the living 'political economy' of Marxism.

But he also develops a theme which he returns to many times in later years: that it is not a mechanical relationship. It does not automatically follow that economic recession increases class struggle and that boom signals a decline.

Conditions have changed enormously since June 1921, even apart from the later Stalinisation and subsequent winding up of the Comintern. The late 1920s saw an economic recovery, to be followed by world industrial depression after 1930 and another recovery afterwards; the whole period interspersed with titanic social convulsions, revolutions, counter-revolutions, culminating in world war.

After the war, on the basis of the special political and economic conditions pertaining at that time, capitalism entered a period, despite conjunctural ups and downs, of protracted

It is otherwise in reality. The fact that capitalism continues to oscillate cyclically after the war merely signifies that capitalism is not yet dead, that we are not dealing with a corpse. So long as capitalism is not overthrown by the proletarian revolution, it will continue to live in cycles, swinging up and down.

Crises and booms were inherent in capitalism at its very birth; they will accompany it to its grave. But to determine capitalism's age and its general condition – to establish whether it is still developing or whether it is matured or whether it is in decline – one must diagnose the character of the cycles. In much the same manner the state of the human organism can be diagnosed by whether the breathing is regular or spasmodic, deep or superficial, and so on...

Thus the curve of capitalist development is a composite of two movements: a primary movement which expresses the general

upswing, lasting for twenty-five years. But since the economic recession of 1974-5, what Trotsky describes as the 'fundamental curve of development' has been characterised (again, despite conjunctural ups and downs) by stagnation and crisis.

Whereas Trotsky describes the cycles of capitalism occurring in 8-11 year periods, the tendency in the modern epoch is for the cycles to be much shorter, perhaps of only 4-5 years' duration. The present boom, now entering its seventh year, is somewhat of an exception.

The contradictions of the present situation lie in the fact that there is a temporary, conjunctural boom, while the fundamental character of the epoch is one of crisis. Despite the passage of 67 years, therefore, the basic lines of Trotsky's arguments apply with full force today.

It is wrong to deny the fact that a boom or upswing is taking place. But against the opportunists in the labour movement, Trotsky also explains that conjunctural booms do not signify that capitalism has re-established a permanent equilibrium.

As Trotsky pointed out, a temporary economic upturn is not a source of gloom or pessimism for Marxists. On the contrary, it is a period in which the working class consolidates, recovers its strength and prepares for even greater struggles in the future.

upward rise of capitalism, and a secondary movement which consists of the constant periodic oscillations corresponding to the various industrial cycles...

If we analyse the curve of development more closely, we shall find that it falls into five segments, five different and distinct periods.

From 1781 to 1851 the development is very slow; there is scarcely any movement observable. We find that in the course of 70 years foreign trade rises only from £2 to £5 sterling per capita.

After the revolution of 1848, which acted to extend the framework of the European market, there comes a breaking point. From 1851 to 1873 the curve of development rises steeply. In 22 years foreign trade climbs from £5 to £21 sterling, while the quantity of iron rises in the same period from 4.5 to 13 kilograms per capita.

Then from 1873 on there follows an epoch of depression.

From 1873 till approximately 1894 we notice stagnation in English trade (even if we take into account the interest on capital invested in foreign enterprises); there is a drop from £21 to £17.4.....

Then finally, with the year 1914 the fifth period begins – the period of the destruction of capitalist economy.

How are the cyclical fluctuations blended with the primary movement of the curve of capitalist development? Very simply. In periods of rapid capitalist development the crises are brief and superficial in character, while the booms are long-lasting and far-reaching. In periods of capitalist decline, the crises are of a prolonged character while the booms are fleeting, superficial and speculative. In periods of stagnation the fluctuations occur upon one and the same level.

This means nothing else but that it is necessary to determine

the general conditions of the capitalist organism by the specific way in which it breathes and the rate at which its pulse beats...

## Class struggle

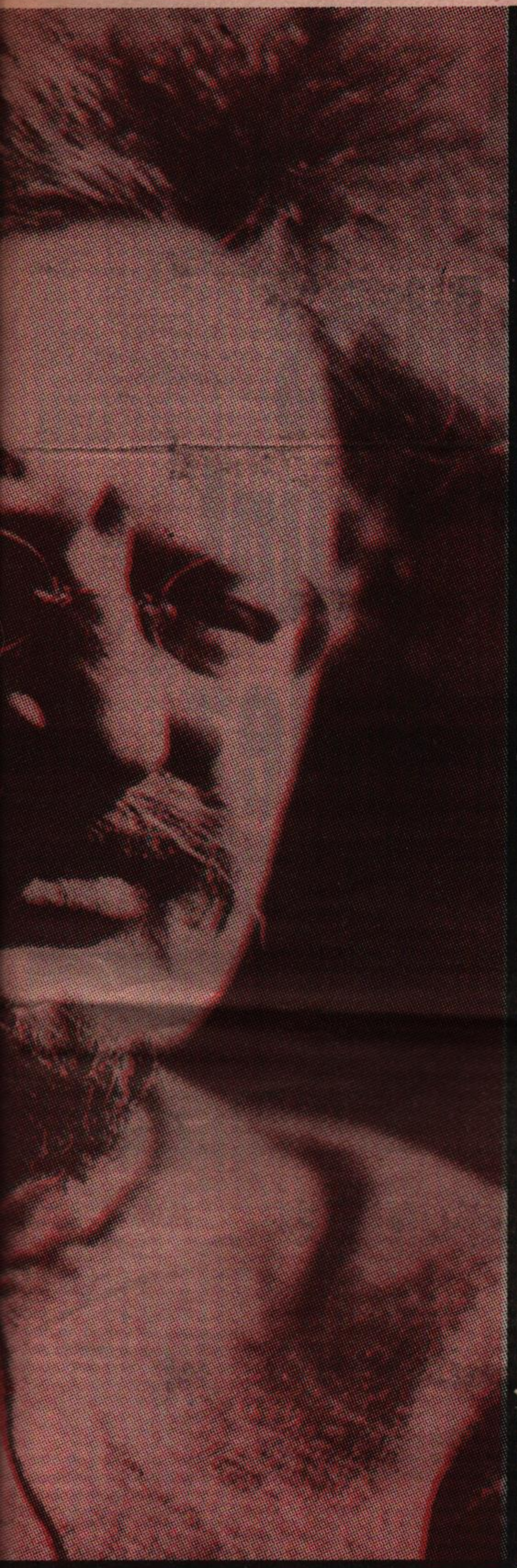
The reciprocal relation between boom and crisis in economy and the development of revolution is of great interest to us, not only from the point of view of theory but above all practically.

Many of you will recall that Marx and Engels wrote in 1851 – when the boom was at its peak – that it was necessary at that time to recognise that the revolution of 1848 had terminated, or at any rate had been interrupted until the next crisis...

It would, however, be very one-sided and utterly false to interpret these judgements in the sense that a crisis invariably engenders revolutionary action, while a boom on the contrary pacifies the working class. The







## 'There is no automatic dependence of the proletarian movement upon a crisis'.

working class had become so consolidated, thanks to this period of prosperity, that it was able to pass to a direct assault.

And should we today, in the period of the greatest exhaustion of the working class resulting from the crisis and the continual struggle, fail to gain victory, which is possible, then a change in the conjuncture and a rise in living standards would not have a harmful effect on the revolution, but would be highly propitious.

Such a change could prove harmful only to the extent that the favourable conjuncture marked the beginning of a long period of prosperity. But a long period of prosperity would signify that an expansion of the market had been attained, which is absolutely excluded...

With such a perspective, a mitigation of the crisis would not signify a mortal blow to the revolution but would only enable the working class to gain a breathing spell during which it could undertake to reorganise its ranks in order subsequently to pass over to attack on a firmer basis. This is one of the possibilities.

The content of the other possibility is this: the crisis may turn from acute into chronic, become intensified and endure for many years. All this is not excluded. The possibility remains open in such a situation that the working class would gather its last forces and, having learned from the experience, conquer state power in the most important capitalist countries.

The only thing excluded is the automatic restoration of capitalist equilibrium on a new foundation and a capitalist upswing in the next few years. This is absolutely impossible under the conditions of modern economic stagnation...

Each measure to which capitalism is constrained in order to make a step forward in restoring equilibrium, each and all of this immediately acquires a decisive significance for the social equilibrium, tends more and more to undermine it and ever more powerfully impels the working class to struggle.

The first task in achieving equilibrium is to set the produc-

tive apparatus in order, but to do so it is indispensable to accumulate capital. But to make accumulation possible it is necessary to raise the productivity of labour. How? Through an augmented and intensified exploitation of the working class, inasmuch as the decline in the productivity of labour power during these three post-war years is a widely known fact...

### Social instability

In short, speaking theoretically and abstractly, the restoration of capitalist equilibrium is possible. But it does not take place in a social and political vacuum—it can take place only through the classes. Every step, no matter how tiny, toward the restoration of equilibrium in economic life is a blow to the unstable social equilibrium upon which Messrs Capitalists still continue to maintain themselves. And this is the most important thing...

From the standpoint of the revolution, in general and on the whole, all this creates for the working class a very favourable and at the same time an extremely complex situation. After all what lies ahead of us is not a chaotic, spontaneous assault, the first stage of which we observed in Europe in 1918-19.

It seemed to us (and there was some historical justification for it) that in the period when the bourgeoisie was disorganised this assault could mount in ever-rising waves, that in this process the consciousness of the leading layers of the working class would become clarified, and that in this way the proletariat would attain state power in the course of one or two years. There was this historical possibility.

But it did not materialise. History — has with the assistance of the bourgeoisie's good or bad will, its cunning, its experience, its organisation and its instinct for power — granted the bourgeoisie a fairly prolonged breathing space.

No miracles have taken place. What has been destroyed, or burned, or ruined has not come to life again; but the bourgeoisie did prove itself capable of orientation in a pauperised milieu; it restored its state apparatus and knew how

to utilise the weakness of the working class.

From the standpoint of revolutionary perspectives, the situation has become more complicated but still remains favourable. It is perhaps with greater assurance that we can say that on the whole the situation is fully revolutionary. But the revolution is not docile, nor so domesticated as to be led on a leash, as we once imagined. The revolution has its own fluctuations, its own crises and its own favourable conjunctures...

The task of the Communist Parties lies in encompassing the existing situation as a whole, and intervening actively in the struggle of the proletariat in order to conquer the majority of the working class on the basis of this struggle. Should the situation in this or that country become extremely exacerbated, we must pose the basic question point-blank and we must join battle in whatever condition the events catch us.

However, if the march of events proceeds more evenly and smoothly, then we must utilise all the possibilities in order to gain the majority of the working class prior to the decisive events.

We do not as yet have the majority of the working class throughout the world; but a much larger section of the proletariat is with us today than a year or two ago. After we have actually analysed the existing situation which is one of the important tasks of our Congress; after we have reviewed the situation in each given country, we must say to ourselves: The struggle will perhaps be long and we shall not advance at so feverish a pace as we should like to. The struggle will also be very harsh and will exact many sacrifices.

We have become stronger through accumulated experience... We shall know how to graph for our tactics not only an ideal mathematical line, but also the sinuosities in a shifting situation, amidst which the revolutionary line must cut its way. We shall understand how to manoeuvre actively amid the decomposition of the capitalist class; we shall be able to mobilise the forces of the workers for the social revolution.

olution of 1848 was not born of the crisis. The latter merely provided the last impetus. Essentially the revolution grew out of the contradictions between the stages of capitalist development and the fetters of the semi-feudal and state system...

Many comrades say that if an improvement takes place in this it would be fatal for our revolution. No under no circumstances. In general there is no automatic dependence of the proletarian movement upon a crisis. There is only a dialectical interaction...

Let us look at the relations in Russia. The 1905 revolution was frustrated. The workers bore great sacrifices. In 1906 and 1907 the revolutionary flare-ups occurred and by the autumn of 1907 a world crisis broke out. The impetus for it was given by Wall Street's Black Friday. Throughout 1907 and 1908 and the most terrible crisis reigned in Russia too. It killed the

movement completely, because the workers had suffered so greatly during the struggle that this depression could act only to dishearten them.

There were many disputes among us over what would lead to the revolution: a crisis or a favourable conjuncture. At that time many of us defended the viewpoint that the Russian revolutionary movement could be regenerated only by a favourable economic conjuncture. And that is what took place.

In 1910, 1911 and 1912, there was an improvement in our economic situation and a favourable conjuncture which acted to reassemble the demoralised and devitalised workers who had lost courage. They realised again how important they were in production; and they passed over to an offensive, first in the economic field and later in the political field as well.

On the eve of the war the



Redundant shipyard workers show their anger at the closures policy imposed by the Socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez (below right).

# Marxism returns to haunt Gonzalez

ON SUNDAY evening 13 November Jose Antonio, general secretary of Spain's Marxist-led Students' Union (SE), was being interviewed on radio, explaining the SE's bold plans to fight the Socialist government's 'youth employment scheme' - in reality, a scheme to provide employers with cheap subsidised labour.

## From correspondents in Spain

The radio programme has a reputation for being boring, and is under threat of closure. But on this evening Jose Antonio's arguments aroused a flood of support from listeners, jamming the switchboard with phone calls: "I voted for the Socialist Party, but this is completely unacceptable"; "Enough is enough"; "It's time something was done!"

The 'youth employment scheme', almost a carbon copy of Thatcher's YTS, has proved a turning point in the deepening rift between the Socialist Party leadership and the workers of the UGT (union federation linked to the Socialist Party) as well as the CCOO (Workers' Commissions, formerly led by the Communist Party).

On a groundswell of anger from below, an unprecedented campaign of action involving both organisations is now being hammered out. A central role is being played by the Spanish Marxists around the paper *Nuevo Claridad*, whose ideas are shared by the leadership of the SE.

**INFLUENCED BY** the economic upswing, Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist government has become increasingly intoxicated with its own 'success' and remote from workers' problems. Thatcherite policies of cuts and closures have earned it the support, at least for the time being, of the capitalist class.

The workers' reply has been shown in struggles such as the virtual insurrection in the town of Reinosa against closure of its steel plant, and bitter barricade fighting by shipyard workers to defend their jobs. The general mood of discontent has forced a section of the trade union leaders into opposition to the government.

As UGT leader Nicolas Redondo commented: "I supported Felipe Gonzalez as general secretary of PSOE, but never as president of the Bank of Spain!"

Egged on by the capitalist

media, the Socialist leadership have embarked on a vicious campaign to break down this opposition. In union after union struggle—at times physical — has broken out between supporters of Gonzalez and Redondo.

The 'youth employment scheme' is the latest in a series of anti-union measures, putting paid to any remaining hope of patching up a new 'social contract' between government, employers and unions this year.

**AS IN** the historic struggle of the school students in 1986-87 it was the Marxists who moved rapidly to link together the youth and workers in action.

The SE's highly successful congress last month (see *Militant* 921) took place just after the announcement of the 'youth employment scheme'. National leaders of the UGT as well as the CCOO were present, reflecting the SE's enormous prestige among trade unionists as a result of its active role in many workers' struggles.

Youth speakers called on the union leaders to organise a one-day general strike as part of a campaign to defeat the scheme. With the media highlighting this demand, it had a big impact among workers and forced the union leaders to commit themselves to action.

The union leaders' first proposal was to call demonstrations in all major cities on 24 November and a march on Madrid on 3 December. No strike action was envisaged.

They also requested the SE to participate not under its own banner but under the banner of the so-called 'Youth Platform' - a coalition ranging from the trade union youth to the youth of capitalist parties. The SE had attended some of its meetings as an observer.

The SE, in response, insisted on the need for strike action. Pointing out that 3 December was the Saturday of a long weekend, they called for action on a working day. The union leaders then changed the date to Thursday 8 December - whereupon the government proclaimed it a public holiday! Following further discussion with the SE, the date of the march was set for 1 December.

**INEVITABLY** THE SE's intervention has been met with intense opposition from the right. Sources high up in the labour movement have revealed

that the government is terrified at the involvement of the Marxists in the unions' campaign.

They are acutely aware of the role played by the Marxists in the massive youth movement of 1986-87, winning the support of the workers and bringing unprecedented reforms from the government.

This fear has been echoed by the 'Communist' Party youth and their supporters who dominate the 'Youth Platform'. With all their policies based on clinging to the 'progressive' capitalist parties, they used every possible manoeuvre to prevent the SE from raising its demand for struggle on a class basis to defeat the 'youth employment scheme'.

On 12 November they put forward their 'alternative': a lobby of all parliamentary fractions, including the right-wing capitalist party of former Franco minister, Fraga!

The Marxists repeated the call to class action and demanded the expulsion of the capitalist parties from the Platform. With the CP youth leaders reacting hysterically, the SE left the meeting.

Explaining the position to the union leaders, the SE got a sympathetic hearing.

The pressure of the workers, combined with the government's attacks, have driven the union leaders to a point where they have no option but to resist. No-one in Spain doubts that the SE is the only youth organisation with the forces to mobilise mass action. This compels the unions as well as the government to take it extremely seriously.

**AS A** result of the Marxists' intervention the union leaders are now committed to a serious programme of action. The SE is calling mass assemblies in schools to explain the position of the union and put to the vote the proposal for a schools strike on 24 November.

Youth will turn out onto the streets, visiting factories and shop stewards' committees to build support for the action and for the march on Madrid on 1 December.

Already there has been a significant response. At the giant Altos Hornos steel plant in Vizcaya the SE has been invited to address a plenary meeting of the shop stewards' committee.

The unions have offered buses to bring people to Madrid from all over Spain on 1 December at a token fare, and offered other facilities to help the SE mobilise the youth.



But the struggle will not end on this day. Further demonstrations have been proposed for 12 December, and a national stoppage (*paro nacional*) to be called by the unions on 14 December.

The Marxists are campaigning for a 24-hour general strike in the workplaces and the schools on 14 December. They are pushing for the union leaders to confirm the call for a joint national delegates' meeting of the UGT, the CCOO and the youth on 16 December to discuss the lessons of the strike and work out the way forward.

Such a combination of forces by the UGT, the CCOO and the youth has never been seen in Spain. To the government it would constitute an ultimatum: either back down, or face an even bigger offensive in January.

The government has reacted furiously to the moves towards class unity. Txiki Benegas, number three in the Socialist hierarchy, has accused the UGT leaders of "falling into the Communist trap" and "besieging the government". Redondo replied that Benegas was using the same type of argument as Goebbels - "only a little bit cruder".

Gonzalez is reported to be threatening a special executive meeting to expel the UGT leaders from the party. While it is not clear that the right wing would go this far, the conflict at the top of the movement is sharpening.

In the face of ongoing provocation, Redondo may be forced onto the offensive and carry the struggle into the PSOE—a step he has so far declined to take.

The mood among workers and youth is becoming explosive. More than ten years after the

mass expulsion of Marxists from the PSOE and UGT, Marxism is returning to haunt Gonzalez in the company of millions of workers.

Redondo is said to have remarked in private that the UGT might as well produce a sticker with the words: 'We're all Trotskyists now!' While not to be taken quite literally, this acknowledges the failure of all organisational measures to uproot Marxism from the Spanish labour movement.

In the next year or two the situation will become even more turbulent. During the economic upswing the capitalist class has been able to buy peace in the private sector. That is now beginning to change.

Unemployment, even in advance of the next recession, has been driven to a staggering 19 per cent, or 3m workers, by the government's 'restructuring' of public sector industry.

Inflation, projected at 3 per cent for 1988, is running at 7 per cent. Wage increases higher than the inflation rate are being demanded as workers claim a share of the record profits that Spanish capitalists have been pocketing. (Since 1982 Spain has been the only country in Europe where profits formed a larger part of national income than wages.)

Ten, and hundreds of thousands of workers will draw political conclusions from the crisis of the system. The struggles now building up will prove to be dress rehearsals for even greater struggles in the future, creating a mass audience for the ideas of Marxism in the UGT, CCOO and PSOE.

## Pakistan elections

## Defeat for reaction

IN THE streets of Lahore, Karachi and many other towns and cities throughout Pakistan the masses have celebrated the success of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the first party-based elections in over 11 years.

This will herald a new period of struggle for the workers and peasants. The end of military dictatorship is a turning point not just in the course of the Pakistani revolution but for an entire region wracked by instability and crisis.

**A**S WE go to press the remnants of the Zia regime are attempting to delay the appointment of PPP leader Benazir Bhutto as prime minister, in the desperate hope of cobbling together an alternative to a PPP government.

However, the very fact that 'free' elections have been held indicates the fragile hold of capitalism on this country of almost 90m people.

Pakistani workers and peasants have a rich tradition of struggle. In 1968-69 the country was in a pre-revolutionary crisis. The '100 cities movement', involving large masses of working people, toppled the dictator Ayub Khan—a

By Pritam Lal

But it was mainly the fear among the ruling class of the mass opposition provoked by the hated Zia that led to his removal.

Although the PPP did not achieve an absolute majority of its 98 seats make it by far the biggest party in the new parliament. This represents a tremendous victory for the masses in the face of rigging, sabotage and slander by the misnamed 'Islamic Democratic Alliance' (IDA, the establishment's coalition of anti-PPP forces).

The fact that Benazir Bhutto, a woman, won massive support in an Is-



Mass rally in support of Benazir Bhutto in 1986, stewarded by 'peoples guard'.

obstacle to a PPP landslide was a leadership with its perspectives confined to the narrow limits of capitalist-landlord rule.

A landslide victory was there for the taking, prefigured by the revolutionary movement of millions which greeted Benazir on her return from exile in 1986.

Benazir is the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's last elected prime minister who was hanged by Zia. Illusions in the era of her father's government (1970-77) have given Benazir her greatest appeal.

Ali Bhutto rose to prominence on the back of the "100 cities movement", building the PPP as a capitalist party with a mass following of workers and peasants. Under pressure from below he promised a radical programme of nationalisation, a minimum wage, land reform, the establishment of a welfare state and the eradication of illiteracy.

On this basis the PPP swept to power in 1970. In the first years of Bhutto's government some of his promises were carried out. However, Pakistan's ramshackle capitalist system cannot afford lasting reforms for the masses. Because he refused to break with capitalism, Bhutto ended up attacking the rights and conditions of working people.

Despite this, after 11 years of dictatorship, Bhutto is remembered as the 'people's martyr' who advocated socialism and challenged imperialism.

**B**ENAZIR REFUSED to campaign on a similar radical programme, which would have involved confrontation with the military. Swept to power on a revolutionary wave she would have faced enormous difficulties in controlling the masses. Without a majority, on the

other hand, she would have some excuse for not carrying out the reforms demanded by the masses.

Thus the PPP offered privatisation instead of nationalisation, dodged the issue of land reform, and promised co-operation with US imperialism and foreign investors. There would be no 'reprisals' against the murderers and torturers of the military dictatorship.

When asked about cutting the military budget which consumes 40-60 per cent of state expenditure, Benazir's reply was: "Surely, if you want to invite martial law" — in other words, using Pakistan's history of military coups as an excuse for doing nothing.

To impose this openly capitalist programme on the party, Benazir set out to purge the campaign of rank and file involvement. The selection of PPP candidates was based on open bribery. After Zia's death the party was swamped with 18,000 applications from individuals eager to 'represent' it in parliament. Some offered as much as 3m rupees (£100,000) for a PPP endorsement.

Of the PPP candidates eventually adopted, an estimated one-third were ex-members of the Muslim League (which held office under Zia), ex-officers, retired officials, businessmen and even feudal landlords.

In Punjab 93 out of 115 PPP tickets were given to feudal landlords. One candidate who had worked for the PPP since 1970 was dropped for a semi-literate landowner who joined the party 18 hours before nominations closed!

In several constituencies PPP workers revolted and in one Rawalpindi constituency PPP workers put up their own rival candidate.

Despite the leadership the elections generated a mass movement around the PPP. In the last week of the campaign rallies on the

scale of 1986 were taking place: 15,000 in Karachi, 200,000 in Islamabad and 250,000 in Rawalpindi, the biggest the city has ever seen.

**W**ITH THE military and the IDA completely discredited, the election result is the best that the ruling class and US imperialism could have hoped for. They have tried to stave off revolution by engineering a relatively cold transfer of power from the hated military to the popular Bhutto.

A government headed by Benazir Bhutto, possibly in coalition with other parties, is now the most likely prospect. But what will its policies be? Demagogically, Benazir has promised "a government which will be a government of the peasants and the workers and the downtrodden". In reality, as a capitalist politician, she will be confronted with all the insoluble problems of capitalist rule.

The land is dominated by vast estates controlled by feudal families (of which the Bhuttos are one). The tenants and workers on the land are more or less bonded labour. Benazir has nothing to offer them.

Unemployment is officially 13 per cent. Many of the jobless are youth with no means of subsistence. Inflation is officially 7 per cent, though prices in the market have doubled or trebled in the recent period.

The literacy rate is 15 per cent, in some areas as low as two per cent. Yet only 1.5 per cent of the country's wealth is allocated to education. Spending on health care is even less.

The Afghan war has flooded Pakistan with 3m refugees, drugs and gun smuggling. In this general climate the struggles of national minorities has flared up. Sind province in the south has seen the worst outbursts of nationalism

and communalism.

This problem has been cut across temporarily by the hopes generated in the PPP. But Benazir is bowing to the control of the army and the Pakistani ruling class which is Punjabi-dominated. The brutal chauvinism of the Punjabi ruling class would exert itself through Benazir's government and aggravate the national question.

This will destabilise every government ruling on the basis of capitalism, and could eventually threaten the disintegration of Pakistan as a nation-state.

**T**HE SUCCESS of the PPP will boost the confidence and militancy of the oppressed. But the 'people's government' will prove to be a mirage. As this becomes apparent, the masses will demand and mobilise for real change.

A new period of strikes, demonstrations and protests will open up. The class polarisation of society will be repeated within the PPP as its workers fight for socialist policies.

On a capitalist basis the turmoil would end in the return of martial law which would make the previous dictatorship seem mild. The victory of the working class and a government of workers and peasants will be the only solution for the masses.

Enormous opportunities for building the workers' movement will arise in the stormy years ahead. A clear socialist programme can link together the workers, peasants and youth of the different national groups and explain the tasks ahead. The Marxist wing of the PPP can develop into a mass tendency which would hasten the defeat of the capitalists and landlords, preparing the way for a socialist Pakistan as part of a socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent.



Benazir Bhutto and poster of her father, murdered prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. severe shock to the ruling class in Pakistan and internationally.

This month's elections took place against the background of a renewed mass movement since 1985.

It is almost certain that the assassins of the late dictator, General Zia ul Haq, were members of the army. Many officers and capitalists were concerned about his reckless involvement in the Afghan war on the side of the reactionary Mujaheddin. They feared a military confrontation with Afghanistan which would be backed by Russia.

Relations with India had also become very strained, with border clashes in Kashmir increasing. War with India would have ended in devastating defeat for Pakistan and, ultimately, revolutionary upheaval.

Islamic nation underlines the significance of the result. Under Zia 'Islamic justice' was used to justify the barbaric repression of women. In one example, a blind girl who was raped and became pregnant was sentenced to be stoned to death on grounds of 'illegal sex'.

All the traditional prejudices against women were conjured up by the IDA to defeat the PPP, but were rejected by the masses.

A further barrier for the PPP was the rule that only voters with national identity cards would be allowed to vote. With 70 per cent of PPP support based among the rural poor, many of whom are illiterate and unable to fill in application forms for ID cards, this wiped out millions of PPP votes.

However, the greatest

## Press distractions

Dear Comrades,

For the second year running the government have frozen child benefit, Bradford Tories threaten 9,000 jobs, BAe management threaten thousands more, violent crime especially against women is up, tax fraud is rife.

But the government hounds the poorest. Council estates are being sold to city spivs; teachers, miners, technicians, grave diggers and steel workers are

fighting for their rights and jobs. Council rents could double - civil servants are striking for basic rights.

But do not worry. Two whales have been saved from certain death, in a magnificent show of concern by President Reagan and the USSR. And if that doesn't work one of the royals will always be up to something.

Melanie Horridge  
Manchester

## Letter from America

Dear Comrades,

"Ain't neither one of them worth two dead flies." This was how one Dukakis voter described the two candidates on his way into the polls. Nationwide 50 per cent of Dukakis's voters and 49 per cent of Bush's voters stated that they were actually voting against the other candidate!

The completely inferior abilities of the two candidates is a sign of the times—an indication of the decline of capitalism. Like any social system, as it moves into crisis and degenerates, the ruling class tends to throw up increasingly inferior types as their leaders.

Now, however, they are stuck with another problem: This campaign was highly unpopular with the voters and for a presidential election was the lowest turnout since 1924 (just 50 per cent). In addition Bush absolutely refused to put forward any sort of program whatsoever. Hodding Carter III, former advisor to President Carter, warned back in April in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Sliding through to victory on platitudes makes sense right up until the day after the inauguration."

More recently a front page *Wall Street Journal* article was headed "Winning isn't all: lack of mandate can spoil victory."

Last year's stock market crash was a warning the massive build up of debt in the US (now equal to 180 per cent of GNP) cannot

continue forever. All the foreign central banks and private financiers of the US debt seem to have agreed that they can wait until the next president is in office until serious measures are taken to cut the federal deficit and to cut the trade deficit.

If such measures are not taken - most likely by cutting social spending and or raising taxes, then another crash in the stock market or a drastic fall in the dollar may result.

Already Bush has painted himself into a corner by pledging not to raise taxes under any circumstances. If he keeps that pledge, a severe fiscal crisis could result. On the other hand if he raises taxes he will be headed straight for a political crisis.

US big business has good reason to worry about the next four years. Traditionally a strong and respected president has been important for maintaining political stability during times of economic and social turmoil. The capitalist class understands that Bush will be taking office in an already weakened position.

One thing is certain: Bush will receive the very closest medical attention available in the country, because if something should happen to him and Quayle has to assume the presidency they will really have a hard time keeping the lid on!

John Reimann  
Oakland California

□ **Militant Fighting Fund.** Stickers available in rolls of 250. £2.50 per roll.

**Revolutionary History No3** Autumn 1988 - War and Revolution in Europe - Out now - Available for £2.80 (includes postage) from Socialist Platform, BCM 7646, London WC1N 3XX.

**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)



**Christmas cards.** Inside: We need the poll tax like turkeys need Christmas. 30p each or 4 for £1. Order from: T. Wedlake, 13. Brackla, Brackla Est, Bridgend CF31 2HE.

## 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.

Tent frames, sleeping bags, shoes, clothing, various items from the WEG Summer Camp have been found. To claim ring Graham on 533 3311.

**Enfield Militant Supporters' Xmas Party.** Sat 10 December 7 till late. 52 Berkshire Gardens N13. 15 mins walk from Wood Green tube.

**Birmingham Militant Christmas party:** Sat 10 December 8 till late. All Saints Hospital Social Club, Lodge Rd, Winson Green, Birmingham. Food/Drink/Disco. £2 waged £1 unwaged.

# Tories fuel racism

Dear Comrades,

I am 15 and I have just finished my homework. Tonight I had to write an assignment on 'Prejudice and discrimination' in which I had to write about apartheid and how the United Kingdom has helped to combat racism.

For this I had to include newspaper cuttings, pictures etc. As I looked through the back copies of the *Evening Chronicle* I found nothing of relevance, so I decided to look through my back copies of *Militant*. I found nine articles I could use but then I realised that I could no longer answer the question. The UK hasn't tried to combat racist discrimination, the Tory tactic of divide and rule has only encouraged racism.

Before I became too depressed though, I reminded myself of the highly successful 'Smash Apartheid' meeting organised by Newcastle East YTURC where 35 people turned up to hear Nimrod Sejake speak.

This proves that although the state is prejudiced the youth are ready to fight any form of racism and realise the only way to eradicate it all is to kick out the Tories.

A Heaton Manor school student Newcastle



Youth fighting racism which the Tory government has only served to fuel.

## Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## Police feel pinch

## 'Justice' in South Africa

Dear Comrades,

A 22 year old white farmer tortures and murders a black farm labourer - he walks away with a fine. The Sharpeville Six are condemned to death for 'common cause' in allegedly stoning to death a black mayor (with no direct proof) - that is the reality of justice today in South Africa.

Jacobus Vorster murdered Eric Sambo for accidentally driving over and killing his two Rotweiler-Dobermann dogs. Eric Sambo fled fearing revenge. Months later he was spotted by Vorster who took him back to the farm and tied him to a tree with his arms stretched around the trunk.

Sambo was beaten with a sjambok and sticks. The next morning he was beaten again. At night Vorster held a barbecue in

the garden where Sambo was bound to the tree. Eventually they cut him down and took him to the local police station where he died of a brain haemorrhage.

The judge sentenced Vorster to five years' jail suspended, as well as paying £30 a month for five years to Sambo's family: a wife and four children.

After an international outcry the Attorney-General of the Transvaal said "There's nothing I can do about it - my hands are tied. But there was provocation in this case and I suppose we have negligence on the part of the deceased. And maybe the boy (Vorster) was fond of the dogs. This would be an extenuating factor."

Richard Knights Liverpool

## Choke back the dust

Dear Comrades,

After a hectic few weeks in Brent, building for a public meeting against the £17 million in cuts being made by the Labour council, I switched on the TV to see *Scruples* - a new series based on the boardgame of Dilemmas.

To my surprise, amongst the 'celebrity panel' was the MP for Brent South, Paul Boateng. The question aimed at Boateng was: "If questioned at a general election press conference on an issue where your view contradicted that of your party, would you toe the party line?"

After much speculation from the other panelists, Boateng gave his reply: "Power for power's sake is like dust in your mouth. I would never vote for anything that my constituents went against. If I thought I would have to stand up for anything that I

did not believe in - I would resign!"

How nice to hear our MP finally stand up for his constituents after so long a silence over the crisis in Brent. Surely he does not believe we are supportive of the devastating cuts which include the sacking of 233 teachers, a 90 per cent cut in youth and community services and a recent rent rise of £7.

Is it not time we heard his familiar cry of "Brothers and sisters..." as he stands in the Commons to protect those who put their faith in him at the last election.

May I also point out that since galloping home to victory on the back of that old horse 'black sections' he has done absolutely nothing to change the lives of the blacks and Asians in the borough as he frequently promised before he was elected.

Joy Amory Brent

Dear Comrades,

The poll tax debate is sinking into layers of the community which the Tories have attempted to buy as their allies. Over the past year or so dissent has been developing amongst the rank and file of the police force with regard to their previous benefits of employment ie rent and travel allowances.

According to the *South Wales Evening Post*, Chief Constable David East must be feeling pressure from his employees for he warned that more police officers could soon be asking police authorities to supply them with homes if the new legislation goes through.

He warned that when the poll tax is introduced in 1990 it would combine plans to cut rent allowances by one third. The Police Federation are opposing this plan and it is to go to arbitration.

Police officers and their families are not immune to the general effects of the crisis of British capitalism. Increasingly rank and file officers will realise that they need to be represented by democratically elected shop stewards in a trade union organisation that represents and fights for their interests as the Police Federation (of the bosses' making) can never do.

Ian McDonald Swansea West

# Working for the Post Office

ONE OF the most militant sections of the trade union movement in recent times has been in the Post Office. To discover more about the background to their

many disputes, TERRY HARRISON spoke to a postman and a counter clerk about the kind of work they do.

## Heavy work and beware of the dog

I'VE WORKED in the Post Office for 14 years. When I started they employed me as a spare man. It was a section where you were supernumerary. You would be on a walk one week, delivering letters, next on lates then sorting and collecting.

They could stop you in mid-stream. You would come into work and management would say: "There's not enough work for you here" and send you off on another duty. I worked in this category for five years before I got my own permanent walk to deliver.

When you first join the Post Office they give you a trial period of 12 months. After that they give you a paper to say that you have been accepted. If you are still spare you have to continue working the way that I have described.

When you are on your own walk, the starting time is 5.45 am, with 15 minutes' grace. This means you can book in at 6 am. A lot of postmen start earlier.

The first thing we do is 'box off' our own mail and start sorting ready for delivery. I work in the city centre, so I sort my mail into firms rather than streets.

Your delivery route is worked out for you and you have to follow it. Within this route you can deliver in a way that is convenient to you. You do two deliveries and finish at 1.30 pm.

Then the day is your own, but if you want you can come back for overtime, starting again at 2 pm. You do primary sorting although you can be given other work.

### Injury

It can be a heavy job. When you are on the platform unloading the vans it is heavy. You have to hook the bags onto a continuous chain as the mail comes in from the outlying areas.

Some of the bags are very heavy, like those from Littlewood's, especially when they are overfilled to get the bags out quickly. You can do yourself a real injury when you are chaining up bags.

When you go out on the walk your bag is supposed to weigh 33 lbs. You can refuse to take your bag if it is too heavy; an official weigh-in of your bag can be requested. I've done that myself. The excess can be given to the driver to drop it along the route or it can be left to the second delivery.

When you come back from your first delivery you are put on sorting for about an hour and a half. You have to ask if you want to go to the toilet. If you are there for over ten minutes the boss comes to look for you and chases you out. If they see you trying to sort your own mail for the next delivery they say they will give you a paper, that is a



disciplinary action.

It's an all-weather job. We are adequately protected but our jackets are heavy and they make you sweat. When I was working outside the city, like all postmen I did have trouble from dogs. If they attack you a warning is issued to the owner. If they don't keep them in, they have to collect their mail from the local Post Office.

### Bitten

It's a very bad problem. Lads have had their fingers badly bitten. There have been some serious injuries when some have had their fingers bitten in the letter boxes. You also get awkward letter boxes where

fingers can get cut.

When you are on a long-term walk you can develop a great rapport with your customers. That's one of the best aspects of the job, especially at Christmas. They'll say you've done a great job during the year; here is your Christmas box. Some will even give you a drink. I've seen some blokes get really drunk as a result of this.

We get £119 per week with £17 bonus. The average take-home pay is £98. We have a laugh amongst the lads; that's one of the best aspects of the job.

## Pressure behind the counter

I'VE BEEN working on the Post Office counter for three years. Normally we start at 8.30 am and finish at 6pm. I'm never on maximum pay. I usually bring home about £440 a month in a flat month.

It varies, though the money isn't bad compared to a lot of jobs. The maximum is £530 a month. To get the job you have to do a two hour aptitude test before you get an interview, regardless of your qualifications.

A lot of recruitment is now done through YTS courses. Instead of paying a trainee for 12 months they put them on a YTS and train them. If they are good enough they get a job. If not they get the boot.

The YTS trainee is on £23 a week whereas when I did my training I was on full whack. At the last count the job entailed 1,230 different transactions of business, from pensions, passports, stamps; it's just a never-ending list.

The main change in the job took place two years ago - the split into parcels, letters, counters and TV licence sections. From a public service it has become a profit-oriented business. Everything is aimed at profit making.

The main effect has been a cut of staff at every office. Management have used a time and motion study called Crown Office Counter Staffing Instructions.

They have four or five people in an office and time how long it takes to serve customers in different transactions and how long they're waiting. It is

averaged out over a month and they do a staffing level from that. Most of it's just a ploy; you know what they're going to do in the first place.

### Part-timers

In our office they took three full-time workers and replaced them with three part-timers. We know that had been their intention. Part-timers work 19 to 24 hours a week, depending on the different duties they are covering.

They are used to cover dinner-time periods and sometimes the evening rush. Part-timers are in the union. They don't miss out on any benefits; they get bonuses pro-rata.

The main problem is lack of staff. If you're in an office eight hours a day, you're under pressure from both sides, management and public. Obviously nobody likes to wait in a queue, so there are pressures on you. Then the boss pressures you to work harder and get rid of the queues.

The effect of taking two staff out of our office was to have queues out of the door for eight hours a day. People then took their business elsewhere, so the queues diminished. Lunch breaks are kept to a tight schedule because of the non-counter work you have to do.



Liverpool postal workers in confrontation with police during recent strike.

We are on a strict rota of breaks; in some offices you have to wait for the boss to tell you to go.

Non-counter work is the summarising of work like giro transactions which are done at the counter. You can't be expected to do this work and serve at the same time. We are given two

hours a week to cash up. You are allowed a deficit of £2. Above this you have to make good the loss.

After so many losses you start having interviews, if you persist you could lose your job. I know quite a few who have lost their jobs. The main problem is the pressure at the counter

and not having the time to do the job properly. You cut corners to get rid of the queues and you forget where you're up to by losing concentration.

Each transaction has a specific time; for instance a passport is supposed to take seven minutes, a car tax four minutes, a pension

payment 22 seconds.

Management mainly watches the length of the queue. They can tell in most offices if one queue is consistently longer than others most of the time. Pressure will be put on that person to pull their finger out and work harder.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

# Health workers take action over regrading



## The day Gordon will never forget

**GORDON LEGGATT** will never forget 17 November. The 70 year old chairman of South Manchester health authority sat riveted to his chair. Even his 'Biggles' moustache could not hide his impotent rage.

By Gail Frampton,  
Withington CLP

He had hoped that he could contain industrial action to Withington Hospital psychiatric unit where he had already shut the acute ward as a warning to nurses working to grade.

But following the nurses in psychiatry taking action, the geriatric unit was out the next night and its hapless managers kept up until 3 am. The night after, Cohse night nurses staged a sit-in, staying in the canteen until E grade nurses were supervising every ward.

Leggatt had even sent out a 'no surrender' letter threatening not to hear the 1,000 pending appeals on regrading until industrial action had ceased. All to no avail. The 94 per cent Cohse vote for industrial action was followed by 86 per cent in Nupe.

17 November saw nurses on strike throughout the hospital and 300 went to lobby the health authority.

The health chief sat at the front

with the mob almost on top of him - and what a mob. Hardly a section of the hospital was not represented.

There were sisters, midwives, student nurses, district nurses, auxiliary nurses, porters, canteen staff and domestics. 100 were nurses who had stood in the rain on the picket line. But the soaking didn't dampen their anger and poor old Gordon had to sit through 90 minutes of truth about working for the NHS.

Beside him sat the Labour representatives on the health authority, grimacing before the onslaught. They formed a convenient dense wall behind which the Tories hid.

### Horror

When the authority condescended to hear the nurses' grievances, no-one waited for the shop stewards or full time officials. They jumped up to speak. Often they came up in pairs, sometimes snatching the microphone off each other in their eagerness to put their points.

The tales of horror mounted to shouts of "shame!" and cries of indignation. Whole speeches were drowned out by incessant applause and cheering.

"Comrades", said one auxiliary, "I've worked here for 16 years but they didn't even bother to grant me

the statutory interview about what grade I would be on. I went on holiday and when I got back I was told I was on A grade."

To the chairman's embarrassment one nurse turned to the workers and said: "You lot know the score. I'm going to talk to this lot" (the authority).

When the cheers died down she pointed out that she had started at the hospital when she was 18. "I'm now 42 and you've given me just a D grade for 24 years service."

Our Gordon turned bright red as she lambasted him from point blank range. He turned crimson when he was denounced by another nurse for using his casting vote to close two wards. But when one nurse waved a sign "Fleece them and Legg-it" Gordon went redder than a beetroot.

Even the sisters showed no mercy: one from the Duchess of York children's hospital got up and angrily argued that her ward had been closed. So, through no fault of her own she was a 'floating' sister and had been given a lower grade.

But perhaps the statement that will haunt ageing Gordon most came from the nurse who declared: "I work in the geriatric unit at Burton House, so you lot just remember. You may be in there one day and we'll have to treat you."

## Whitehaven hospital

**600 NURSES** are on indefinite strike at Whitehaven Hospital. They were forced out when management sent home two nurses for refusing to work 'normally'.

By a Militant supporter

On the same day 6 auxiliary nurses at Worthington and three from Duvoney were sent home. This is a deliberate ploy by management to provoke a strike and break the union.

Significantly, now out on strike in addition to the nurses are switch-board operators, porters, domestics, sterile

stores and laundry workers and engineers.

Now that health minister Kenneth Clarke has given management the go-ahead to use the courts against the nurses, this threat is being hung over them.

But the strike is solid. Only the RCN are scabbing. When the pickets speak of the RCN they cannot do so without spitting on the ground. The authority has appealed to the public for scabs - even though the union is providing emergency cover.

Keith Wylie, Nupe county convenor and Jim Hunton of Cohse spoke to *Militant*. "The

Red Cross is also organising scabbing. But morale on the picket line is very high. We have tremendous support from the rest of the movement.

### Winning

"450 turned up to our rally - the biggest for years. Even doctors from the hospital turned up. We've also had £100 donated from Sellafeld contract workers.

"Attempts to isolate us from the public are failing. We have had a great response to pub and street collections. Old people have brought bacon butties and mugs

of tea. The local chip shop have sent us food and a coal merchant stopped and gave us coal for the brazier.

"We are winning. You should see the management's faces when they come up and demand 16 nurses for emergency cover and we explain that for emergency cover it only needs ten. Their heads hang down. It shows who really runs the NHS. What we need is a national one-day strike," said Keith.

Money and messages of support: Chris Fairbairn, 39 Wasdale Close, Mier House, Whitehaven.

### Angels with no heaven

"THE PRESS call us angels but I don't go to heaven when I go off duty. I have to pay my way. I have a mortgage, water rates, plastic cards, the same bills as everyone else." These were the words of Maureen Braddock, a Cohse shop steward who has worked 19 years on nights at North Manchester General hospital. When management closed ward 26 at the hospital,

Maureen barricaded herself inside the office, piling up chairs behind the door.

"Management are always talking about patient care but when they closed the ward they didn't even give patients time to take with them small personal items for comfort.

"I used to be one of those who said management are not wrong all the time - now I wouldn't trust them again."

### Midland

**FIVE HOSPITALS** in Birmingham are balloting for 24-hour strike action as we go to press. They are: Jaffray, Goodhope, Northcroft, Highcroft and Selly Oak.

Hospitals in Wolverhampton are also holding ballots for strike action and midwives in the RCM are demonstrating outside hospitals in the West Midlands.

### What a con

**1,000 NURSES** at Prestwich Hospital are now on indefinite strike. Hardly any nurses received the 16 per cent pay increase promised by the Tories in April. The way that the regrading has been implemented is a deliberate tactic to set nurses against each other.

Sections of management have had increases of 24 to 49 per cent while staff on the wards have been insulted with small increases averaging 7 to 9 per cent.

At Prestwich the lowest paid workers are the nurses' assistants. They should have been placed on a grade C, yet 376 have been put on grade A and only 3 onto grade D. This means that their pay has gone up from £4,560 to a paltry £5,000.

Questions asked of staff on the regrading were: do you look after new-born children? Do you have a

nursing certificate? Do you work unsupervised? Do you lead a team of staff on grade A?

Prestwich is a psychiatric hospital so the first question does not count anyway. Neither does the last because the wards are under-staffed.

The Tories said that regrading would lead to more skills to provide a better service, yet Prestwich nurses, especially SENs and charge nurses have lost money despite being promoted.

For example, the starting pay on grade D is £275 less than the maximum on grade C. So the health authority have used regrading to cut wages.

Instead of regrading being used to give health workers the reward they need it is being used to divide them. That's why workers at Prestwich have taken industrial action.

### Charing Cross

**PSYCHIATRIC NURSES** at Charing Cross hospital in London voted by 27 votes to one for a three-day strike from 21-23 November.

They are mounting a picket from 7am to 10pm, despite the bitterly cold weather. They are outraged by the government's unfair grading system.

The nurses are seething with anger at Tory health minister Clarke, who has threatened action against the nurses. They point out that they've only taken action after the recent overwhelming support in a strike ballot. The only person who voted against was someone on the highest grade.

One nurse criticised Thatcher, who hypocritically praised Solidarity in Poland while trying to crush the unions here.

# Lothian miners fight closures

MANAGEMENT IN the Scottish area have placed both Bilston Glen and Monktonhall collieries into the review procedure. This means that British Coal intend either to close or partially close both.

By Joe Owens, delegate, personal capacity

The effect on the local area would be catastrophic with the loss of over 1,300 jobs. Potential employment prospects lost as a result of the coal reserves not being won would be even greater.

A mass meeting on Saturday, attended by both workforces, agreed unanimously to a resolution pledging both to fight for the retention of both pits and the expansion of mining in the Lothians. We are now committed to campaign fully, using every resource and means available to ensure the future survival of both units.

This overwhelming mandate means that the campaign has now begun and as far as the men at both pits are concerned they are not prepared to allow them to be closed.

# Casuals in Notts

EX-MINERS who sold their jobs for redundancy payments - one or two year's wages - are now being employed by British Coal on a casual basis, doing work normally done by miners on the books.

By a Notts NUM member

(name withheld for fear of victimisation)

Their terms and conditions of work are believed to have been negotiated by UDM officials. Casual workers have no guaranteed wage, only an understanding with British Coal they'll receive wages

equivalent to those of the regular workforce.

They have to sign on a week-to-week basis, giving them no security of employment. If they happen to meet with an injury they are back on the dole. There's no sick pay, no holiday pay, no concessionary fuel and no service bonus.

Are these the terms British Coal would like all miners to accept?

I appeal to all miners to join the NUM and attend their branch meetings. Join the Labour Party and fight for a socialist Labour government.

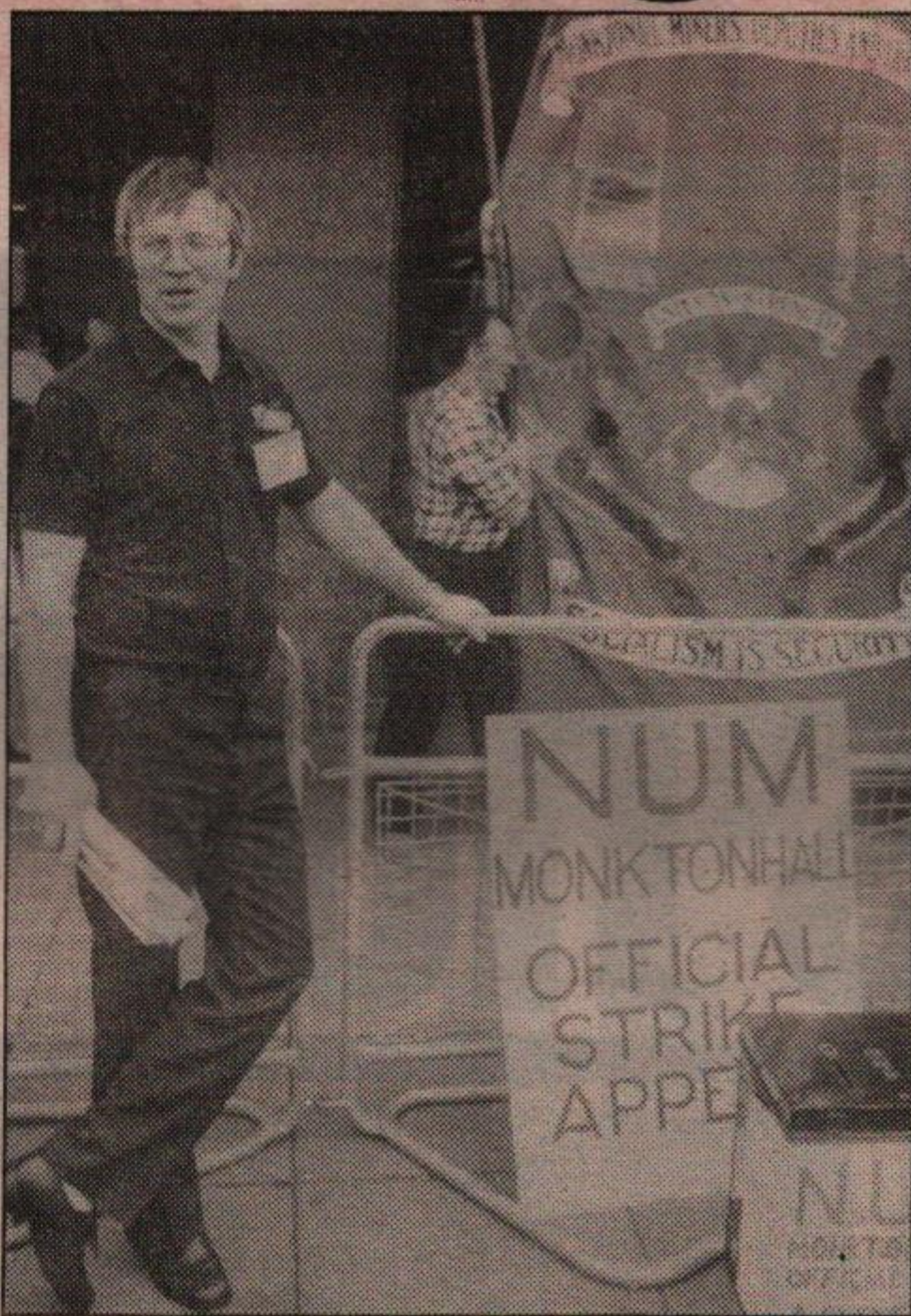


Photo: Militant

Striking Monktonhall miners lobby 1984 TUC.

# Stillingfleet

NUM MEMBERS at Stillingfleet colliery, Yorkshire, are working to rule. They are threatened with privatisation and have also been given totally unacceptable expectations of production at the pit.

The tonnes per man-shift are averaging 81, several times the national average in Britain's under-invested mines. At the end of

September, they had produced £2.3 million profits. Now since the dispute, the pit has only churned out 30,000 tonnes, which is still well above the average.

Even though this is the first dispute for some time, management have decided to pay no bonus whatsoever. This has only made mineworkers even angrier.

# Hoxton striker says 'Thanks'

THE ONE hundred CPSA and Nupcs members at Hoxton DSS have entered their third week of industrial action over the issue of work sharing continuing to uphold the principle of one person, one job per day, a principle which is particularly appropriate at such a time of high unemployment.

By Lesley Crafer, sub branch chair, Nupcs Hoxton personal capacity

It seems ridiculous to me that the government prefers to keep people on the dole rather than employ them in areas where they are clearly needed such as DSS offices. Surely if these offices were adequately staffed the issue of work sharing would not arise.

I've worked for Hoxton DSS for 11 years and been a union member all this time, though not a particularly active one. However I'm increasingly aware of the need for a strong union. Our staffing levels and our members' real wages are falling.

I've recently become sub branch

chair of Nupcs. For many years Hoxton office has provided the public with a relatively good service given the problems encountered at an inner city office. This is mainly due to the good will of staff in the lower grades.

This made it particularly sickening when the management, apparently on the instruction of John Moore no less, threatened several members of staff with suspension for refusing to do two jobs in one day.

Following these threats, union members voted for all-out strike action something I've never known happen with previous managers at my office. This was not taken lightly by the members, many of whom have families to support. Who really wants to go on strike a month before Christmas any way?

To show the unity of union members here, many of the people out on strike did not choose this position for any personal gain. Staff working on non-benefit paying sections are often not directly affected by work sharing. They voted to strike both in support of their colleagues and

on a point of principle.

Negotiations between trade unions and management are going on but both unions have overwhelmingly rejected a proposal from management because it involved work sharing. We the union members, did however come up with our own proposals for dealing with emergency payments. This was rejected by management.

## Rejected

I only hope that future negotiations with management can be more productive and that when we do return to work we will have achieved a result which will enable the staff at Hoxton to give the public the service they need.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported our action so far and hope they will continue to do so.

Support and donations to Bruce Wheeler, DHSS Thames North, 31 Scarborough St, London E1. For speakers ring 01-249 6930.

such as regional and merit pay and YTS and for determined opposition to privatisation.

Civil service workers need a Broad Left presence in every workplace to build effective opposition to the Tories.

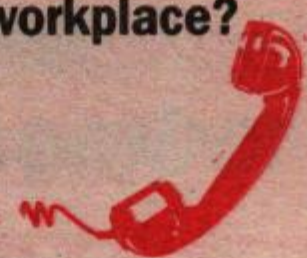
By Tom Taylor, CPSA Broad Left NC

African Labour Education Project (Salep) spoke to the conference which backed *Militant* supporters' resolutions on South Africa and on fighting the poll tax.

## Alternative

Conference voted for a clear alternative to the right-wing NEC capitulation to the Tories on issues

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



# News in Brief

## More tube cuts

LONDON UNDERGROUND (LUL) is pressing ahead with station staffing cutbacks despite the results of the King's Cross fire inquest. Profit always comes before safety under capitalism.

A further attack on the workforce took place on 7 November when an unacceptable attendance allowance was arbitrarily imposed. This means that certified sickness can now lead to disciplinary action. Four instances of lateness or sickness start the ball rolling, leading to

eventual dismissal.

This was brought in on the permanent way last year when one man faced dismissal over being off work with a crushed testicle following an accident at work.

Workers will now disguise illness, doing long term damage to their health for fear of losing their jobs. The unions must now respond to the workers' demands for a strike ballot on this issue.

By a LUL worker.

## Salep attacked

CIVIL AND Public Services Association (CPSA) members have condemned their right wing leaders for a disgraceful attack on the Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund and Nimrod Sejake, a veteran leader of the South African labour movement.

Trade union activist Ivin Malaza was assassinated by Inkatha-backed vigilantes as he worked to build the ANC on a socialist programme inside the country.

CPSA leaders attacked the fund after Nimrod, a co-founder of the South African Labour Education Project (Salep) addressed

conference this year.

CPSA branches have fought the smears put out by John Ellis, union general secretary, and other right-wing leaders. A DSS branch in Leicestershire unanimously passed a resolution condemning Ellis and a flood of resolutions and letters have been sent in by union branches.

Rush letters and resolutions of protest to the CPSA national executive. Support the fund by donating to: Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund, c/o Councillor L Faulkes, 143b Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

## Nottingham post

POSTAL WORKERS at Nottingham's main sorting office have been locked out. After 20 UCW members were suspended for refusing to do new duties, a sit-in took place in the canteen.

Management proposals would mean an end to seniority and rotation of duties. Instead they want to introduce 'suitability' - they decide who gets a duty.

But the local UCW branch is standing firm and management will be under a lot of pressure to

back down with Christmas coming.

This dispute again demonstrates the seething discontent in the Post Office as management continually 'try it on'. And more action is on the way nationally over the threatened Crown Office closures.

Only last week, postal workers in the Portsmouth area and on the Isle of Wight staged a strike in protest at these plans which threaten at least 750 offices.

By Chris Ridge.

## Glasgow Nalگو

SOCIAL WORK staff in the south-west of Glasgow were last week issued with letters, delivered by registered mail, informing them that disciplinary action would be taken against them for participating in the recent GCHQ day of action.

The irony of Strathclyde Labour regional council (who hold a majority of 87 of the 103 seats on the authority) using the very methods used by the Tory government itself against the GCHQ workforce wasn't lost on Nalگو members.

Mass meetings were called in each of the workplaces where staff had received the threatening letters, immediately leading to unanimous decisions to walk out.

Within two hours of the walkout, regional senior management told Nalگو they were withdrawing their threats.

Nalگو members will not acquiesce to attacks on their right to take action when they see fit.

By Tom Williams, convenor, South-West Glasgow social work dept, personal capacity.

# Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

## Militant Public Meeting

after lobby— 3pm at  
Florence Nightingale,  
Westminster Bridge Road, South  
side Westminster Bridge.  
Five minutes from Parliament

## For a 24 hour education strike

# Grants not loans

**THE BIGGEST** wave of student struggles seen for years has been provoked by the release of the Tories' White Paper on student loans. Upwards of 50,000 took part in the day of action organised by the National Union of Students (NUS).

By Darren Summers

5,000 marched in Liverpool. The 'Mexican wave' spread around the rally, such was the euphoric fighting spirit. Thousands more demonstrated from colleges up and down the country. In Glasgow, 12,000 took part in the largest Scottish student demonstration ever. Belfast saw 10,000, more on a student march than at any time since 1968.

The Tories propose the miserly loan of £420 a year (£310 in the final year.) At the same time all student entitlement to social security and housing benefit (worth hundreds of pounds each year) is to be removed. All grants to further education students will be abolished.

'Top-up' loans will hang as burden of debt over students' heads throughout their courses.

The loans package has been announced behind a barrage of propaganda claiming students will be given more choice. The only real choice for students will be whether to buy a book or eat.

In fact, most young people will be ruled out from education. The risk of saddling themselves with a loan will be too great. The Tories, after all, do not guarantee a job with a salary sufficient for repayment. And no-one knows how much such a wage would have to be, as repayments are to be linked to the rate of inflation. As prices spiral upwards, the cost of a loan could rise dramatically.

Action organised by NUS has culminated in the national demonstration on Thursday 24 November. Tens of thousands are expected.

NUS must use this gathering to announce an escalation of action.

As a priority, they should call a 24 hour strike of education, approaching the education trade unions for their active support. From this lobby NUS must announce the day for this action. The NUS executive must organise meetings of activists in all colleges involving all campus trade unions. NUS must also link with school students to defend their future education.

Workers in education, too, understand their futures are at stake. Loans are just one of a range of attacks on education. The opportunity exists to forge an iron alliance between the education workers and students.

The potential also exists to build links across the public sector, with the nurses and local authority workers. A public sec-



Students on 16 November Glasgow march. Under the pressure of students the NUS has been forced to call a mass demonstration rather than merely a lobby of Parliament on 24 November. For this they had to take over by agreement a march already initiated by Militant supporters through the University of London Union.

tor alliance would lay the basis to defeat all the Tory cuts - in education, the health service and local government.

The Tories are already in trouble over loans - the banks have refused to participate in the scheme. With a fighting lead from NUS and the trade union leaders and the formulation of a

clear battle strategy, the Tories plans could be shattered before Christmas.

All student activists should immediately:

★ Organise mass meetings, rallies etc to explain the full implications of loans and involve all students in action.

★ Approach campus trade unions

for their support for action. ★ Send letters and resolutions to NUS demanding they call a 24 hour education strike.

**MILITANT** supporters should meet outside University of London Union, Malet St, at 10am.

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

## Tale of two homes

A LOW-PAID Militant supporter from South Manchester has donated £1500, the proceeds from his house sale, to our Fighting Fund because he is convinced of the need to struggle for a socialist society.

The Labour MP for East Lothian and former Labour spokesman for Scotland has also given away his £2 million mansion house complete with Chippendale collection.

Not to the labour movement, but to a charitable trust. Nor to put himself on a workers' wage. He still owns 800 acres of farmland and is moving into the converted west pavilion of his mansion.

We need to build a genuine voice for workers. Militant needs thousands of extra pounds for the battle to defeat the poll tax, for leaflets, special supplements, more staff. A workers'

paper can only rely upon the donations and fundraising of workers, unemployed and the youth. If you agree with what Militant stands for send off your donation today.

On the streets we are getting a fantastic response using Fight The Poll Tax stickers, petitions and tins.

Make sure that campaigning Days Of Action are planned out to tap the real Xmas spirit of opposition to Thatcher's plans.

Why not organise workplace collections and ask your friends and workmates for an early Xmas present for Militant. Vic Hopwood from Vancouver Canada sent over £64. W Hanlon a supporter from West London gave £50. Two engineering workers from Gwent who cannot be mentioned by name because of victimisation donated £50 and £30 and a reader in Pollok

## Fighting Fund

WEEK TWO

This Week £1,138

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Yorkshire	363		4,850
2 Merseyside	411		6,200
3 Wales	213		3,300
4 South West	84		1,400
5 Manchester/Lancs	125		3,200
6 Scotland West	142		3,900
7 Northern	105		2,950
8 Eastern	63		2,100
9 London	242		8,200
10 West Midlands	119		4,200
11 Scotland East	46		2,100
12 Southern	43		2,350
13 South East	20		1,550
14 East Midlands	24		2,700
15 National	64		1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,063</b>		<b>50,000</b>

donated £15.50 from a bet on the horses.

Last year we had a record number of parties and Jumble

sales for the Fighting Fund over Xmas and the New Year. This year we aim to do even better. Get Organising.