

# TORIES PREPARE FOR CONFRONTATION

## THATCHER'S GOVERNMENT IS BUYING THE LOYALTY OF THE POLICE AND ARMY FOR THE COMING BATTLES WITH THE WORKING CLASS

The Tories know damn well that over the next two to three years, because of the anti-working class policies they intend to pursue, they will inevitably come into confrontation with the trade unions.

At the moment Thatcher, Whitelaw and Co. are trying to be diplomatic about their threatened anti-trade union laws.

But the Tories' plans to boost big business profits at the workers' expense—why else were they backed by the board-room barons?—means that sooner or later they will have a stark choice.

Either break—or at least try to

break—the strength of the trade union movement, which stands in the way of an assault on living standards and democratic rights, or succumb to it [as Heath did].

To take on the organised workers, the government of big business needs to have strong-arm men.

What better way of getting them than increasing the wages and perks of the police force and the armed forces?

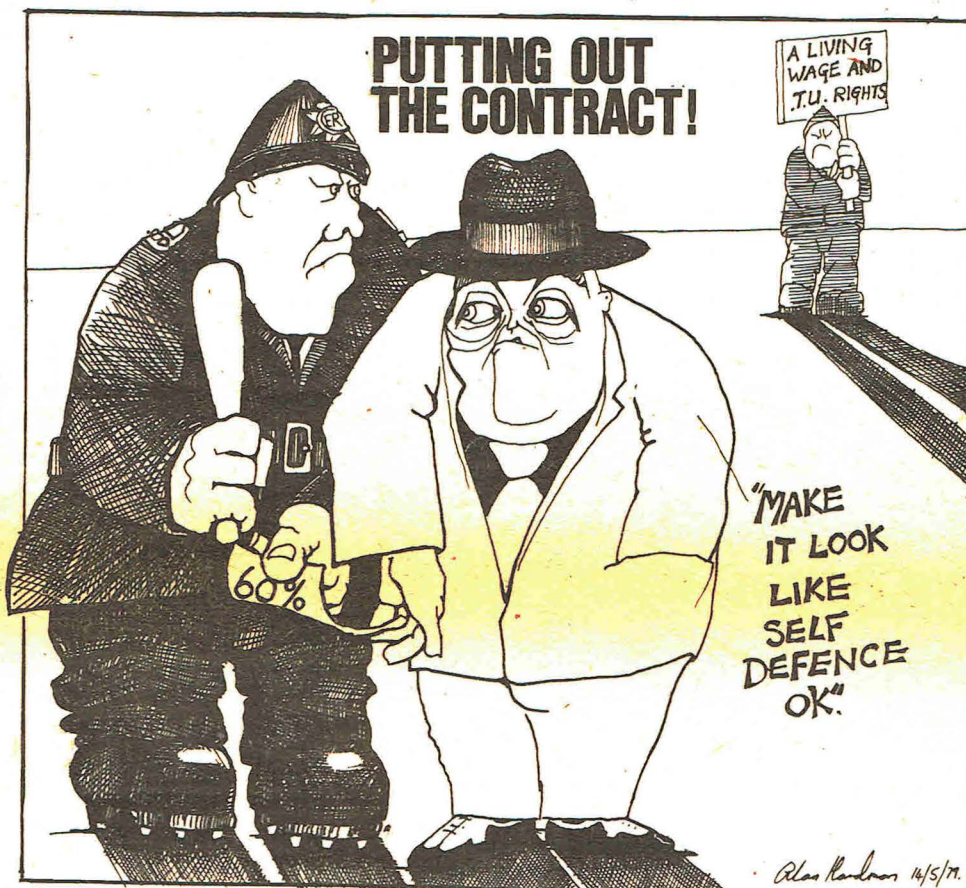
By Anthony Tynan  
(Rhondda LPYS & NUM)

Lord Denning's recent outburst about the power of the trade unions leaves no doubt about the reactionary attitudes of the judges.

London's former police chief, Sir Robert Mark, has also made the anti-democratic, anti-working-class attitudes of police chiefs brutally clear.

Speaking on the radio shortly after his retirement, Mark said:

"I do not think that what we call 'crimes of violence' are anything like as severe a threat to maintenance of tranquility in this country as the



tendency to use violence to achieve political or industrial ends. As far as I am concerned, that is the worst crime in the book. I think it is worse than murder."

For strong-arm men like Denning and Mark, the worst crime in the book

is to defend yourself against the capitalist system. In their eyes, years of unemployment, penurious living conditions, and a determination to preserve workers' rights, are not excuses.

The gigantic pay rises for the police  
CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

# STARVING THE NHS

By Pat Blatch  
(Southampton Labour Party)

The Tories' plans to help wealthy private patients, allowing them among other things to queue-jump in the National Health Service, will make things even worse for working-class patients and hospital staff.

The Health Service is already suffering badly enough from serious spending cuts.

Scandalously, in some hospitals nurses exist on meals left over from the patients, because of low pay and high canteen prices.

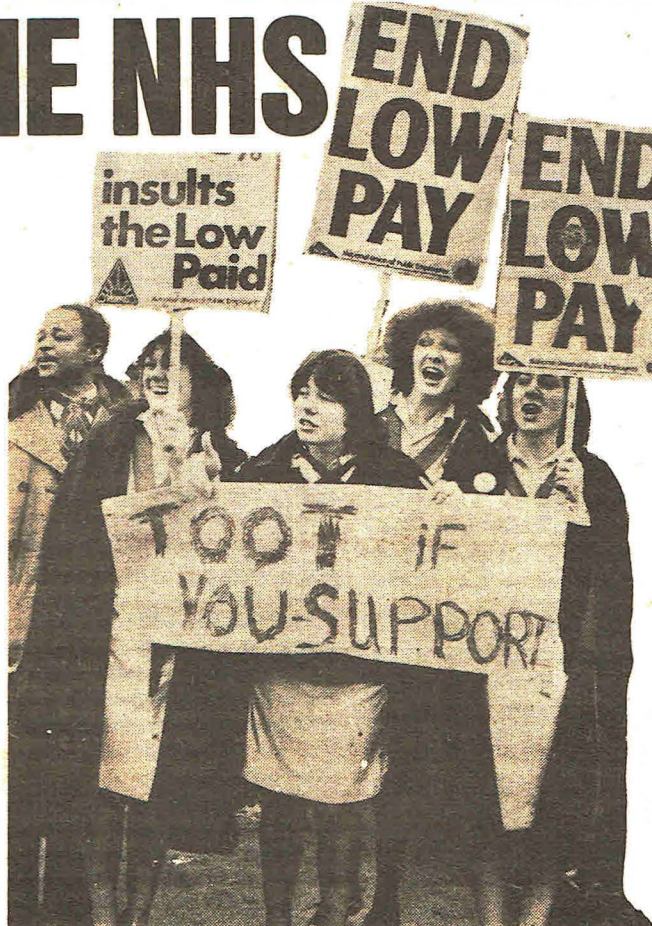
In a Southampton hospital recently, patients on one ward found out about this and, without the nurses' knowledge,

cut down the size of their meals.

A sister reported one incident to the Nursing Officer and a nurse was disciplined. The patients were very angry, and they refused to co-operate with the Sister and admin. until they were assured that no further action would be taken.

All these patients are very ill with serious chest complaints. What was amazing was that they demanded cuts in the price of nurses' canteen meals, better conditions, and more pay for nurses.

These patients would not have raised these issues if they had not seen with their own eyes the effects of the cuts and the way that the National Health Service is being run.



inside  
● UNION CONFERENCES

● THE QUEEN'S SPEECH

● THE ROLE OF TRADES COUNCILS

● CAPITAL'S STAGNANT SEVENTIES



● WOMEN IN THE UNIONS



# Militant

## QUEEN'S SPEECH

Last Tuesday, the Queen graciously read the Tory Manifesto in parliament.

Thatcher's legislative proposals for the next seventeen months were a catalogue of measures designed to increase the wealth of the rich minority at the expense of working people.

Direct taxes will be cut, £ millions for the rich and pennies for the poor. The wealthy will get more help to give their children private education, and rich patients will be encouraged to queue-jump—at the expense of the NHS.

Despite the worst housing problems for decades, the Tories will allow the rapid sale of council houses at knock-down prices, thus intensifying the crisis and strengthening the hand of the landlords and property-speculators.

As expected, the Queen's speech also included the threat of legislation on picketing and the closed shop. But there were no details, and the threat to tax strikers' social security has been postponed for the time being.

Thatcher and Co. have evidently heeded the warnings from big business. Remembering Heath's fatal confrontation with the labour movement, the ruling class favours a cautious approach.

But stealth and diplomacy will not avert collision. The measures announced last Tuesday, together with an intensification of British capitalism's crisis will inevitably provoke massive opposition from organised workers.

However much they try to avoid conflicts, the Tory government will clash with the unions. Later, the Tories will no doubt produce more ruthless measures to hamstring the unions and fetter shop stewards and rank-and-file activists.

But the Tories will not succeed in undermining the strength of the unions simply by passing new laws. What is embodied in trade union power, built up over decades of struggle, will not be cancelled out with legal formulas.

Nevertheless, the labour movement must be prepared to fight a big-business assault. Almost the first act of the new government was to give a big boost to the pay of the police and the armed services.

In opposition, the Tory leaders formulated new plans for strengthening the forces for use against strikes, occupations and other action, including plans for a special strike-breaking force.

If they are to clear the way for driving down working class living standards, they must attack the union organisations which stand in their way.

The rank and file of the movement must therefore make it absolutely clear that on no account will they tolerate the TUC or other union leaders entering into any 'consultations' with the Tories about threatened anti-union laws.

This would be like consulting with an executioner as to whether he should use the rope or the electric chair.

The economic proposals of the Queen's Speech and Thatcher's subsequent speech were an assortment of specific measures aimed at boosting the profits of big business and pious hopes about controlling inflation and increasing production.

The Price Commission will go, removing even that flimsy impediment to profiteering.

The role of the National Enterprise Board will be 'examined'. Clearly, big business has its designs on a number of now profitable firms—once 'lame ducks'—but resuscitated by the NEB at our expense.

Big business is all for 'free-enterprise' measures when they mean more profits, like the promised abolition of the Community Land Act and the castration of the Employment Protection Act.

But businessmen are calling for a 'cautious' approach to abolishing subsidies for industry. Not surprisingly! £85 of every £100 spent on state aid to industry goes to private firms—a lucrative subsidy for profits.

Take it away, and quite a few board-room champions of 'free-enterprise' would find themselves bankrupt—and there soon would be another million workers on the dole!

The Tories' policies will undoubtedly swell the profits of big business and the incomes of the wealthy. But what chance is there of this leading to higher investment in industry, much needed modernisation, and higher output?

As little as under the Heath government! We will see a boom, not of investment, but of property-speculation, overseas investment, asset-stripping, and auction-room treasure-hoarding.

The brutal class policies of this government are determined not just by the reactionary, right-wing character of the present Tory leadership but by the desperate crisis of the diseased British capitalism.

Resistance to Tory attacks is therefore inseparable from the fight to end the rotten profit-system of big business. It was the Labour leader's attempt to run capitalism better than the capitalists themselves that led to defeat.

In the fight against the Tories, the working class must be mobilised and united around a bold programme for the socialist transformation of society.

This is the lesson of seventeen years of post-war Labour government. And it is the conclusion towards which millions more workers will be driven by the ruthless big-business government inaugurated this week.

# E.E.C. — FROM THE POOR TO THE RICH

It was revealed last week that by 1980 the annual cost of Britain's membership of the EEC will be £1,500 million.

In addition the Tories are proposing to devalue the green pound which will put an extra £1.70 a week on the average family budget.

All this is a far cry from what we were told by pro-Market-eers six or seven years ago.

Then the story was that the only hope for the future of British industry lay in the Common Market.

It was to be an escape from the past ties of restrictions and tariff walls into the world of healthy competition.

Just like the escapes of old movie dramas, entry into the EEC meant that "with one bound" we were to be free!

It hasn't quite worked like that.

Membership of the EEC has not solved one basic problem of British capitalism. Low productivity and lack of investment continue and British goods continue to be outsold by their industrial competitors.

The multinationals have profited—the existence of the EEC has facilitated the easy transfer of capital between countries. Big business has done well out of entry, but few others have.

The projected EEC budget for 1980 indicated that Britain and Italy, two of the poorest countries in the EEC, would be paying most, whilst the richest country in the EEC, Denmark, would receive most.

The cost of membership to Germany is only a third of that to Britain or Italy.

The reason for this is that most of this money is bound up in the EEC's agricultural policy. This accounts for 75% of the EEC's £8,500 million budget.

It transfers cash from countries with a relatively small farm sector (e.g. Britain) to countries with a relatively large one (e.g. France).



German metal workers on strike for a 55-hour week: workers throughout Europe face the same problems

The Tories of course want to help their farming lobby, and are proposing to give extra finance to farmers by devaluing the green pound.

This move has been called for by Sir Henry Plumb, head of the Farmers' Union, and Tory candidate in the EEC elections. Large numbers of Tory candidates are farmers, as is the likely leader of the Tory delegation, James Scott-Hopkins.

Whilst the devaluation of the green pound would help some farmers, it would mean for workers' a drastic rise in their family budget.

Butter would go up 12p a pound, cheese 11p, beef 7p, bread 1½p a loaf, and sugar 5p a kilo.

This was not the perspective sold to the British people by capitalists during the EEC referendum campaign.

Then, the aptly-named Sir Con O'Neil, who fronted the big business lobby, told fairy stories of how Common Market millions would save

jobs and revitalise the industrial regions of Britain.

But the big business club of the EEC is unable to develop a planned integration of its economies. Its regional fund is token, accounting for only 4% of its budget.

Because essential power rests with the national capitalists, no real moves to unity are possible on the basis of the private ownership of industry.

Even the Common Agricultural Policy is not real integration. There are different prices for food throughout the EEC and a complicated mechanism to prevent cheap food from crossing national boundaries.

The Common Market is just that—a club for the different capitalists to carve up the market [and each other] in the search for higher profits.

It offers nothing for British workers.

But in itself just to leave the EEC would not solve any-

thing. All the problems of British industry would remain if ownership stayed in private hands.

In addition it is essential that to meet the power of multi-nationals European workers organise on an international basis.

Workers in Britain have nothing in common with their bosses or the international bosses' club of the EEC. They have everything in common with their fellow European workers in the common struggle against unemployment, inflation and cuts in living standards.

The only real way forward is to break with the system that the EEC operates within, nationalise the major European monopolies and build the alternative of a United Socialist States of Europe on the basis of a planned integrated economy.

## WHY DID SHIRLEY WILLIAMS LOSE?

While almost unanimously rejoicing in the Tories' victory, the Tory press and the media have nevertheless greatly lamented the defeat of Shirley Williams in Stevenage and Hertford.

Shirley Williams has said herself that Labour's campaign lacked "robust radicalism" and failed to appeal to young people. Yet she still upholds the very pro-big business policies which led to defeat.

But there are important aspects of the campaign and the result which have not been reported.

Neither Labour nor the

Tories expected Shirley Williams to be defeated. Yet on the day, although Labour's vote rose by almost a thousand, the Tories polled a huge increase to just take the seat.

While voting out one of the leading figures in the government, the Stevenage voters nevertheless gave their Labour council the biggest boost it has ever had. Thirty-five seats went to the Labour Party, with the Tories left almost extinct with only four councillors!

There must have been many people who voted for a Labour council—and yet helped vote in a Tory government.

The Labour council in Stevenage has achieved a high level of public services. People could see the difference. But the Labour government of which Shirley Williams was a

leading member was identified with what used to be called 'Tory' policies.

The political complacency of the right-wing leadership in urging support for the status quo and hoping to win the 'middle ground' was reflected—with disastrous results—in this constituency.

It was a low key affair. Literature appeared late in the campaign, as did posters. The posters played down the Party's appeal: 'Shirley Williams again' was their slogan.

Few meetings were held, and they were poorly advertised. There was no enthusiasm for the candidate at factory meetings at BAC (British Aerospace) where some of her key supporters in the constituency had recently canvassed for a low pay settlement (less than 5%).

The Labour Party Young Socialists, the most enthusiastic canvassers in previous

campaigns, were not encouraged to participate this time.

It was as if some 'expert' had taken a decision to run a low-key campaign, with the politics extracted. If he did, he was rewarded with the biggest adverse swing in the Hertfordshire seats.

The Stevenage seat was thrown away to a Tory scoundrel (who accused Shirley Williams of inviting violence by joining the Grunwick picket line), because of illusions about her personal following (still peddled by the media), and above all because of the lack of a fighting socialist approach which alone could have enthused Labour's natural majority and won the day.

**By Martin Upham**  
(Hertford & Stevenage CLP)



## UNION OF POST OFFICE WORKERS

# JOINT ACTION FOR A LIVING WAGE

**The Union of Post Office Workers' conference comes at a crucial moment for public-sector workers, and Post Office workers in particular.**

Our seven-week national strike in 1971 clearly demonstrated a Conservative government's attitude to public-sector workers, and the lengths they will go to defeat our members.

This conference will be dominated by the 1979 pay claim. Due to be seen in our wage packets on 1 January, we have yet to receive one penny of an increase!

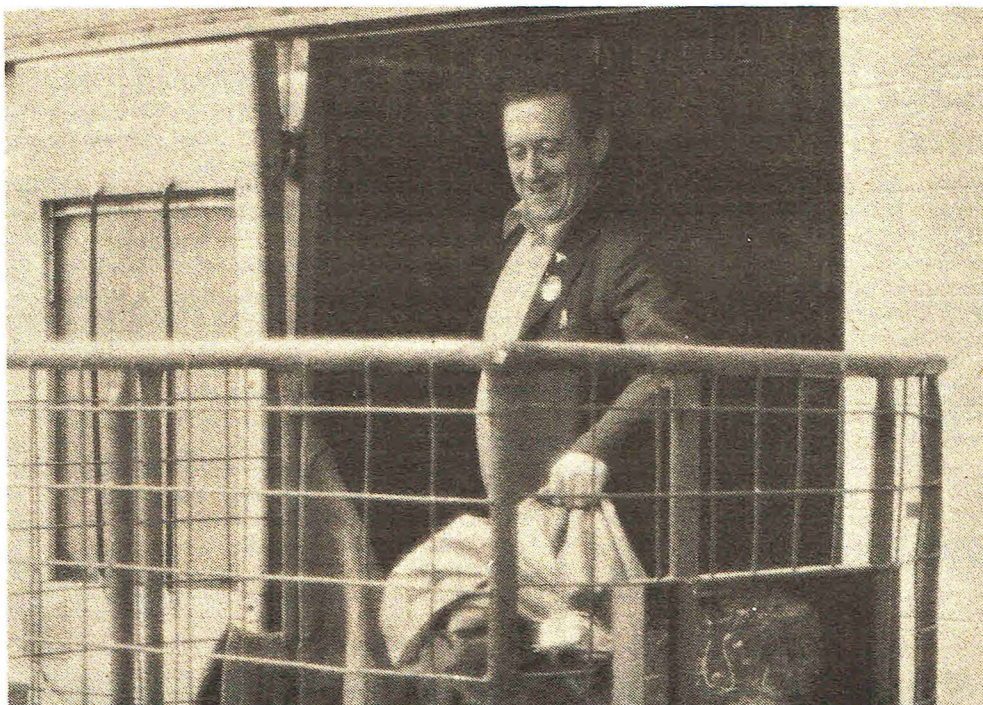
The Special Conference in December 1978 overwhelmingly agreed on a modest claim of 8% increase in basic pay, a reduction of incremental scales, consolidation of pay supplements into basic pay, an increase in annual leave, a reduction of three hours in the working week, and an escalator clause to compensate for inflation.

Four months later our national executive agreed to a settlement which dropped the increased leave, reduced hours and the escalator clause. The rest of the original claim was mostly conceded, but only in return for so-called "efficiency" agreements, which would have threatened jobs and take-home pay.

The proposed settlement was put to a branch ballot and meetings as big or bigger than in 1971 were held, involving tens of thousands of our members. The settlement was decisively rejected by a massive six to one majority.

Since then, the change of government, and a succession of complicated and ambiguous circulars from UPW headquarters have kept the membership in confusion.

As we write, it appears that the Executive Committee have accepted the ballot result, and that the efficiency



UPW members prepared to fight for a decent basic wage to eliminate overtime

Photo: MILITANT

agreements are dead.

The Post Office have agreed to pay the 8% increase in basic pay and to reduce the incremental scales without any efficiency agreements, but have rejected major consolidation.

The Executive Committee seem prepared to accept this as an interim settlement, but want to continue negotiations on consolidation and/or a further increase of 4½% in

basic pay in return for extending this into an 18-months agreement, to end on 30th June 1980.

The UPW leadership want to hold fire until they know the outcome of negotiations with other Post Office unions, so as to argue for comparable terms.

Something on these lines may well be put before conference. Clearly, there is a widespread demand from the

membership for some money now, and these proposals would have that attraction.

Although the efficiency agreements have been dropped, however, this would offer less than the rejected deal.

There is clearly a case for altering future settlement dates from 1st January. Our fight should be for a settlement lasting nine months with the new settlement date from the beginning of Oct-

ober each year, starting on 1st October, 1979.

Instead of just waiting to see how other PO unions get on, we should increase co-operation between Post Office unions, for a joint claim, a joint settlement date, and joint, effective action to secure a claim that would really protect our living standards.

When voting on the Executive's Pay report, delegates must remember the feelings, anger, and the new determination shown by the rank and file in recent branch meetings and actions.

There is now a new mood among the UPW's 195,000 members. The doubts and fears about industrial action that followed the 1971 strike have largely been shaken off.

UPW members are ready to fight for decent working conditions and a living wage that will eliminate the need of so many of us to work long hours of overtime.

We must forge a leadership at local, district and national levels prepared to give a fighting lead to us, a leadership that is worthy of the UPW members.

**By Eddy Newman and Peter Dodd**

(Delegates from Manchester Amalgamated Branch, personal capacity)

## TEACHERS-

### We're fighting for the full claim

"I think I'll join the army, it's better pay as a private," was the reaction of one disgusted teacher in my staff-room to the offer.

Carlisle, the Tory Education Secretary, called teachers irresponsible. The response from big associations like Birmingham and Manchester has been to demand stepping up of the dispute.

"We should stop messing around with sanctions and take some strike action,"

said the secretary of Manchester NUT.

Members have given full backing to the NUT sanctions, although they involve personal difficulties: travelling without cars and not participating in some of the most rewarding activities with kids, like holidays and outings.

Our members are willing to fight.

NAS/UWT members' pay is also being stopped by local authorities. This can only make them more incensed and determined, too.

Among the rank and file of the two unions there is a mood of unity and solidarity.

NUT members are not prepared to cut across NAS/UWT action.

Co-operation has already been established at classroom

level in many areas. This needs to be extended into maximum fighting unity for the full claim.

Our union leaders should organise an official half-day national stoppage involving all the teaching unions, as a first step in a nationally co-ordinated campaign, demonstrating our united strength.

Strike action should be stepped up in key areas, selected in consultation with members locally and nationally.

The Tories are already looking for ways out of the civil service pay comparability agreement. We cannot afford to wait months and years for decent pay—we are fighting for the full claim!

**Felicity Dowling**  
(Liverpool NUT)

## WELSH LABOUR PARTY—

### DRAWING THE LESSONS OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS

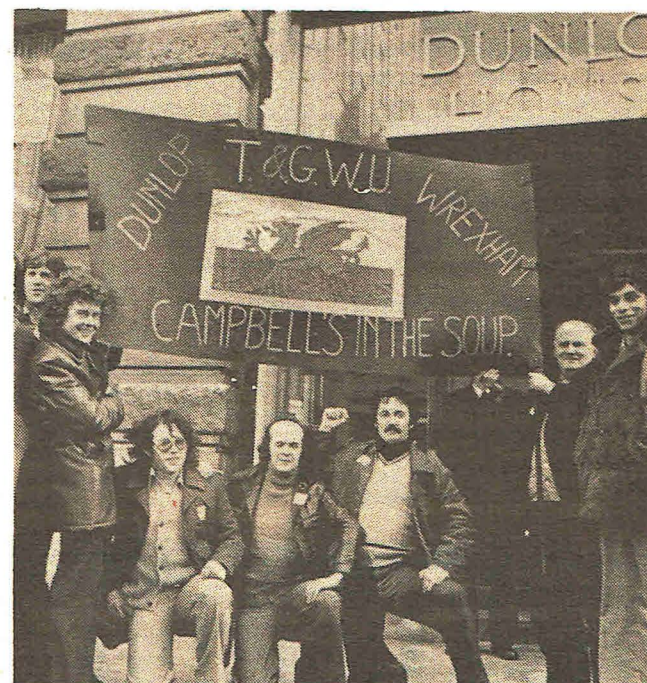
The Welsh Labour Party holds its annual conference this weekend; one of the first regional conferences of the Labour Party since the general election.

It is vitally important that delegates draw upon the lessons of the last five years. It is the policies of the Labour government which have ultimately unfortunately led to the return of a Tory government.

We have a chance to set the mood for ensuing conferences of the labour movement by demanding a programme centring around bold socialist policies.

Most of the resolutions (sent in before the announcement of the general election) show dissatisfaction with the policies pursued by the last Labour government.

But many of the resolutions are very confused as to what sort of alternative should be posed. Some Labour Parties, though, show the way, for example, an amendment from Cardigan CLP calls for a 35-hour week, a national minimum wage, further nationalisation and a socialist plan of production.



Policies to protect workers from unemployment Photo: MILITANT

The results of the general election will have made a significant change in the mood of the delegates. Workers in the Party will be asking why Labour lost the election and which is the way forward for Labour now.

The Welsh Labour Party conference has a very important role to play in mobilising the Labour Party to win the vast majority of people in Wales, the working class, to

the ideas of socialism. This conference has the opportunity to outline, in the run up to Labour Party conference, a clear socialist alternative which can ensure that there is no repeat of the last government's disastrous policies when Labour is re-elected.

**Kenneth Smith**  
(Aberystwyth Labour Party)

## MILITANT UNION PAMPHLETS

- Education in Crisis: Militant Teachers pamphlet 15p
- Socialist policies for the UPW ..... 15p
- A socialist programme for engineers ..... 20p

Add 10p postage and packing. From Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



# DERRY

As we have reported in previous issues of 'Militant', Bill Webster of the Derry Trade Union and Labour Party was the only non-sectarian socialist candidate standing in the general elections in Northern Ireland.

Bill Webster received 639 votes in the election: votes for socialist policies, and votes for a party of Labour in the North. Gerry Lynch and Dennis Tourish of the Labour and Trade Union Group describe the effect of this campaign in Derry.

Forty people converged on Derry for a 'Day of Action' representing Labour and Trade Union Group branches from Belfast, Strabane and

Ballymena, distributing manifestos and stickers; visiting areas with loudspeakers, and holding an open-air meeting in the town centre.

Without doubt, our campaign in Derry has been the most thorough of the election battle.

It reflects our commitment to clear socialist policies worth voting for. All the other major parties contented themselves with traditional sectarian innuendo.

# ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

The previous week we visited Coleraine and Limavady to plaster them with posters and hold open-air meetings. These areas are predominantly Protestant.

As expected there was no sign of activity from the Catholic based parties. But neither was there any evidence of activity by the Unionist organisations.

In this election they have united in treating the voters with contempt, as mindless sectarian voting fodder.

One example of what we were fighting against. An SDLP election bulletin carried a feature headed 'Did you know'. This informed us

that 'in the Derry area the overall Loyalist majority is 3,500.' [For 'Loyalist' read 'Protestant'].

It then went on to examine Catholic areas, giving figures for those who hadn't voted. It concluded: "Apathy is the enemy... Rally in strength."

Parties like this have nothing to offer, save further social misery, division and disappointment.

Because of this kind of propaganda, most working people were indifferent to the election. They saw little to choose from in the main parties.

We have experienced no outright hostility to our

campaign. Groups of young people in the main Catholic and Protestant ghettos have greeted our election workers in a friendly manner.

Relatively few posters have been defaced or taken down—a considerable achievement over here! Only the Derry Labour and Trade Union Party candidate is regarded as non-sectarian.

Imagine the effect that a mass Labour Party would have, based on the unions and fighting for socialist policies right throughout the North!

We are now in the process of raising cash to pay off our debts. We have received some tremendous individual don-

ations. One old age pensioner turned over her full week's pension!

But more money is urgently required. The Derry Party began this campaign with only £15 in the bank and now owes almost £1,000. Donations should be rushed to Gerry Lynch, 2 Claremont Street, Derry.

For us, this election is only the beginning. We will continue campaigning for the trade unions to form a party of Labour, and for that party to fight on socialist policies capable of solving the problems of working class people.

## WE WILL FIGHT THE TORIES - AND WE'LL WIN

"Three days is too long, Tories out" read a placard on the May day demonstration in Swindon summing up very well the prevailing mood.

The procession, plus brass band, moved through the streets with Labour Party, trade union, and the Swindon LPYS banners prominent on the march of over 200 people, well up on last year.

Despite the election defeat, there was no sign of gloom in the rally in the park.

Les Thomas (AUEW District Committee), attacking the Tories for their attitude to the trade unions said: "The unions are not too powerful—they haven't got enough power. It was one of the trade unions that defended workers from the attacks of the bosses."

"I saw the Jarrow marchers go off and I saw them come back... They never saw the ministers—they were told to go back and work out their own salvation. We won't be clear of these situations till we finally get rid of capitalist society."

This received loud applause. He went on: "There's no way Margaret Thatcher will stay in for five years... she will go down in history not as the first woman prime minister, but as the person who led the shortest-lived Tory government ever to its quickest, most decisive defeat."

David Stoddart, winding up the rally, said: "This is no time for recrimination. We need unity. A Labour government dedicated to socialist policies is the only way forward."

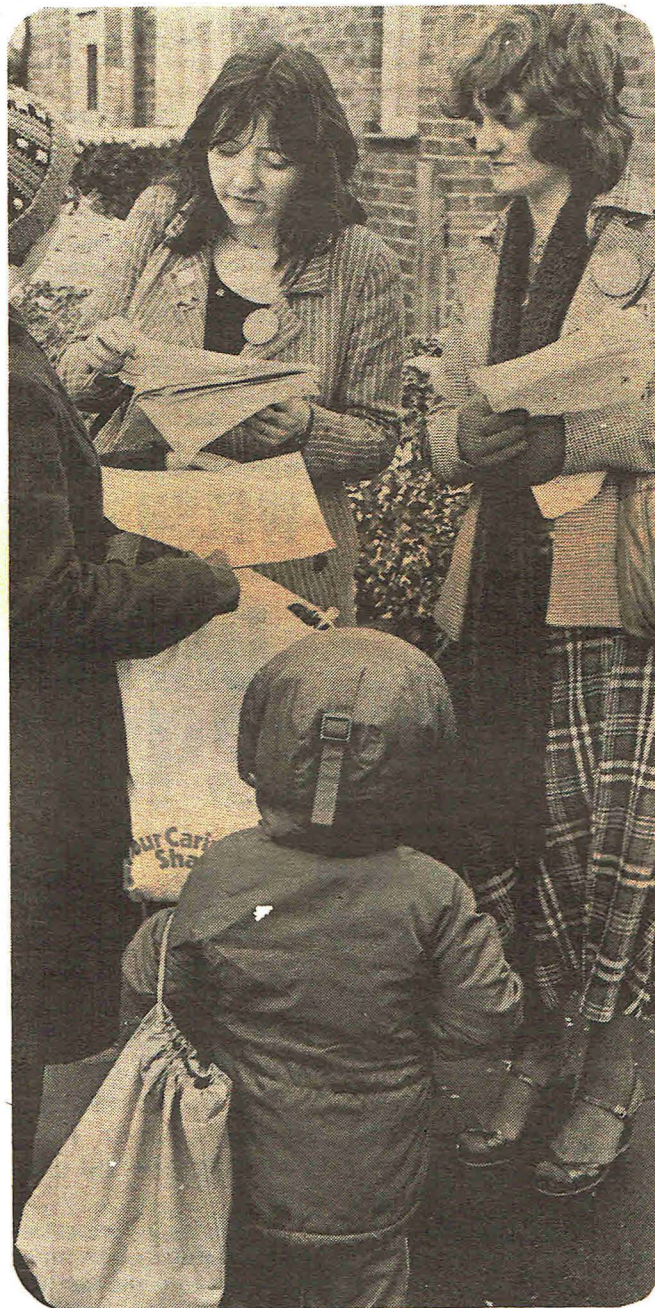
He was right—and the feeling of the rally was with him. We would fight the Tories and we would beat them flat.

But the question in my mind and I am sure many others there was—unity yes. But on what programme?

The programme of Callaghan, or that of the labour movement. This most important issue of the day was left unanswered.

But this rally was a clear sign that before long it will be answered and socialist policies will take firm hold within the British labour movement.

Jon Aylett



The fight against the Tories didn't finish after the election

Photo: J McKittrick/Militant

## SOCIALIST POLICIES ARE PRACTICAL POLICIES

"If we ever needed strong youth sections in the trade unions and Labour Party, we need them now, under the Tories", Jon Ingham told a meeting of Manchester LPYS branches called after the election to discuss 'Which Way for Labour'.

The need for the YS to build links with organised working youth was emphasised, with speakers from the floor drawing on their own experiences in their unions.

Peter Dodd from the UPW described the Post Office workers' strike under the previous Tory government. Unity was vital, not only to defend workers from Tory attacks, but to ensure the labour movement went forward in the fight to improve living standards.

There was a lot of discussion over what programme should be taken up. Two speakers new to the YS questioned the call for a £70 minimum wage and 35-hour week. One said she lived in

the real world—and asked—who was to pay?

In reply, a YS member explained: you only had to live in the real world to see the money was there—but, at the moment was in the hands of the rich, with their property speculation and record profits.

And Jon Ingham pointed out that with technological advances and 1½ million unemployed a 35-hour week was more than possible—it was vital. These weren't unrealistic or idealistic demands they were practical much needed measures.

Along with the rest of the YS programme they offered a way forward for the Labour Party. If socialist policies were implemented we could be sure "there'd never be another Tory government for a hundred million years".

By Beth Miller

(Moss Side LPYS)

## THE BIGGEST SINCE 1945

"The biggest election meeting since 1945"—enthused a senior party worker about the meeting held in Clowne, Derbyshire, addressed by Dennis Skinner and Jon Ingham.

Almost 200 people crowded into the hall. Dennis Skinner said that the outcome of the election would decide the fate of the working class for the next decade. £20 million a day was being paid to big business in tax concessions and hand-outs, yet the Tories still wanted to cut personal tax to benefit the wealthy—at the expense of the poorer paid.

Dennis also attacked the diabolical attendance record at Westminster of a vast number of other MPs; he said he was regarded as something of a freak in certain Parliamentary circles for having Parliament's best attendance

record.

Labour Party Young Socialist speaker Jon Ingham quickly dispelled the despondency previously expressed by some local Party members. Jon made it clear what a Tory government would mean for workers, especially in higher unemployment.

The 35-hour week with a £70 a week minimum wage, he explained, alongside the call for the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies under workers' control and management was the only way we can ensure full employment.

The question of a free press was raised by a member of the public, and answering this, Jon pointed out that there was a newspaper striving for socialism—the 'Militant'. Over 40 copies of the paper were sold after the meeting.

## The Tory Comedian

Tories being run off council estates by hordes of housewives and kids; 14-year olds threatening to beat up adults for suspected Toryism; and tremendous enthusiasm for the ideas of socialism from the youth. This sums up the general election campaign in the working class areas of Garston constituency.

Even the Tories' local comedian (no, not Margaret Thatcher — Ken Dodd!) couldn't make light of the situation for the Tories—and certainly couldn't compete with the ideas of the Young Socialists who just happened to be having a day of action in the same market.

Who was victorious can be judged by the fact that Ken Dodd went away with a thick

ear from a leg of lamb wielded by an angry housewife, while the LPYS went away with support and the names and addresses of young people interested in joining the YS.

The election work carried out by the LPYS members putting forward the ideas of socialism has produced 30-40 young people wanting to join the Garston branch.

This campaign has shown

that the ideas of Marxism can win votes and, most of all, members for the Labour Party—fighters for a socialist answer to the unemployment, bad housing, racialism, and all the other evils that capitalism has heaped on the workers of Garston.

Mick Hogan

(Secretary, Garston LPYS)



# TORIES IN A DILEMMA

To many in the labour movement, Lord Hailsham [formerly Quintin Hogg], Thatcher's new Lord Chancellor at the age of 71, is regarded as something of an eccentric, a relic of the past in the ranks of the Conservative Party.

In some ways his book helps to reinforce the impression of a political lightweight. There is absolutely no serious discussion of the causes of Britain's economic decline (though he claims he is trying to examine what has gone wrong with Britain).

The Tory defeat in 1964, he asserts ludicrously, was due to the abolition of resale price maintenance—a sly dig at Edward Heath whose policy this was, but hardly a convincing explanation, even to Conservative die-hards.

Despite these curiosities, it would be a mistake for socialists to dismiss the book out of hand as the ravings of a political has-been.

Hailsham has held high offices in the Conservative Party (Chairman 1957-59) and in government (Cabinet member 1956-64 and Lord Chancellor 1970-74). He is an experienced politician and his insights, fears and suggested solutions undoubtedly reflect the thinking of at least a section of the ruling class.

He expresses poetic despair at the future: "I have been oppressed by a sinister foreboding. We are living in the City of Destruction, a dying country in a dying civilisation, and across the plain there is no wicket gate offering a way of escape."

He shakes off pessimism, however, to make some very revealing remarks about the Labour Party. He had hoped in 1959 that it would adapt itself "to a permanent role of one of two great coalitions, alternating between power and opposition, each content that the other should make its

own characteristic and complementary contribution to the common good."

But alas, in spite of the efforts of Gaitskell and company the Labour Party is "going more and more irrevocably down the dark alleyways of irreversible and revolutionary change based on its original ideological commitment and class war." In short, the Labour Party is OK provided it plays the game as the Second Eleven for capitalism.

This brings him on to the major argument of his book, concerning the distinction between 'elective dictatorship' and 'limited government'.

## 'Excesses'

To Lord Hailsham, the House of Lords is now an anachronism, though he admits that it has "sought to restrain the excesses of the ministerial majority in the House of Commons." Not Tory excesses, though!

Reading between the lines, he is making it fairly clear that if a Labour government were to attempt, for example, an enabling act to nationalise the major industrial firms, banks and insurance companies, it could be prevented by the use of the remaining powers of the Lords and the Monarchy.

For him, however, these powers are not sufficient. There is an urgent need for 'reform' to prevent such 'excessive' socialist measures.

The House of Commons should have "financial and economic control and control of the Civil Service... Experience in the last ten years has shown it to be utterly unreasonable that it should also carry with it the right of unlimited powers to change the laws of the land."

The right of veto should be held by a second chamber, elected on a proportional

representation basis "to restrain legislation not acceptable to majority opinion."

Thinly-disguised behind diplomatic phrases, Lord Hailsham is explaining his proposals for tying a left Labour government in a constitutional strait-jacket.

He lavishes praise on the Civil Service. As he points out, "The administrative class of the civil service is the main source of what comes across the Minister's table... What comes, when it comes and the form in which it is delivered, is determined almost entirely by this talented and highly disciplined force."

The upper echelons of the civil service, drawn overwhelmingly from the public school and Oxbridge-educated stratum, are no more 'disinterested' in the welfare of capitalism than the Tory front bench, drawn from that same stratum. Lord Hailsham and the Tory Party have no fears for their loyalty.

He also wants more powers for the courts and judiciary, presumably to step up their interventions in the affairs of the labour movement and their attacks on trade unionists.

What Lord Hailsham and his fellows wanted is a tame Labour Party. Alas for them, the Labour Party has awoken from the complacency of the '50s and '60s under the pressure of economic events—and will change far more in the period to come. No wonder he fears for the capitalist system.

But even if the Tories get away with these measures—which would not go unchallenged—there is no way that a determined socialist movement can be held back by such trickery.

**'The dilemma of democracy: diagnosis and prescription'. [Collins £4.50]. Reviewed by a NALGO member.**

# NIGHTS AT THE PARCELS OFFICE

Even the soap is stamped 'ER'

One of the worst things about working night shift is going to work and coming back in the dark. You begin to feel that you are becoming nocturnal: when normal people are going to work you are going to bed and vice-versa.

The work itself isn't difficult, though it is sometimes arduous and always monotonous. Doing a boring job is bad enough at the best of times; at 5.00 am it stretches your ability to keep awake to the limit.

Fortunately, the work is organised on a rota basis, so that you don't do the same job each week. It falls into three categories: loading/unloading, tying bags, and sorting. Practically all the jobs can be done with your eyes shut and you get the feeling that you are just a small cog in a giant mechanism.

Our office is highly mechanised, but there are lots of bottle-necks due to management inefficiency. The machinery breaks down regularly, which is not surprising—it is operated practically continuously and patched up day to day.

The bosses' job is worse than mine though; they have to stand around and watch us work, and answer the phone when it rings. I often wonder what they are there for.

Despite a constant battle by the cleaners and engineers in the office, dust gets everywhere. The experts claim it is



Photo: Chris Davies (Report II)

harmless. I have my doubts.

After one night, the zombie syndrome sets in. You eat and sleep but you feel as if you've done neither. Some men reckon beer is a good antidote but all I can stomach is tomato juice, and all I'm good for is watching TV.

Due to the appallingly low pay a lot of overtime is worked. Where I work the average is about 15 hours per week. Not surprising when you come out with £50 on a flat week's nights.

The Post Office supply you with a fairly adequate uniform, though it rarely fits. But it's your feet and hands that take the biggest bashing. They are not catered for at all.

Under the Post Office bureaucracy everything has a form, even the soap has ER stamped on it. Work is called 'duty' and holidays 'leave'. You'd think you were in the army. Some people obviously do—the TA has 51 members in our office!

Lenin once remarked that a state monopoly postal service was an example of socialised economy. It doesn't feel much like that, but it isn't surprising, the way things are run.

When we get workers' control and management, we will truly have a socialist postal service.

**By a parcel postman**

# This is your Prime Minister speaking...

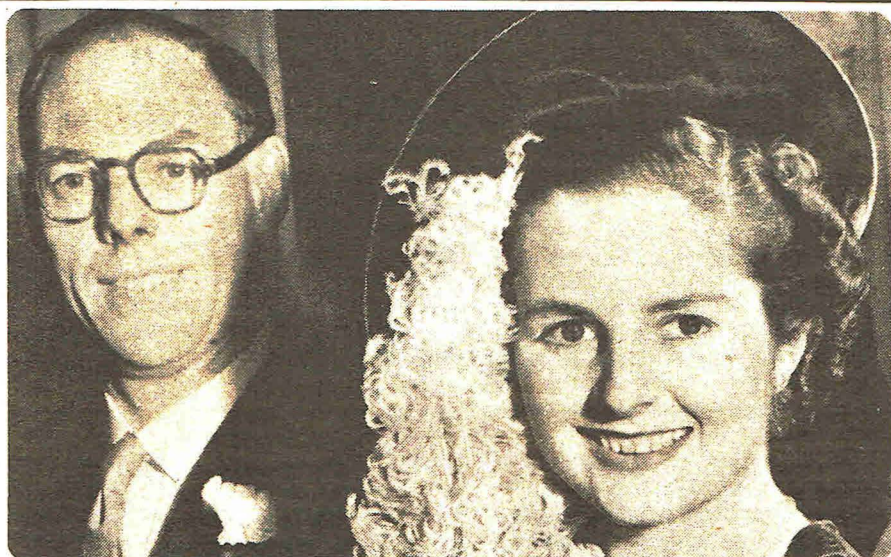
Mrs Thatcher says that the Tories are "a party of ordinary people". And ordinary people are something she knows about: "There was a road near our home where people like that lived and I used to walk along it. So I know what they're like", she once explained.

"Any woman who understands the problems of running a home will be nearer to understanding the problems of running the country", she says.

During her election supermarket walkabouts she spent £20 on groceries without batting an eyelid. And every working mum will sympathise with her domestic problems:

"When the children were young I always had an English nanny. I never had an au pair" she says "because I couldn't really have gone out and left them with an easy mind. I wouldn't have been quite certain whether the au pair could speak English or knew how to ring the hospital if anything happened." Poor old Maggie.

She understands the problems of working class families so well, in fact that after she'd supervised the 1970 increase in school meal charges and stopped free school milk for children over seven, the angry response took her



1951: Ambitious politician married rich

by surprise. She was furious with her civil servants for not warning her about the 'emotiveness' of the issue.

She showed her true-blue potential at an early age; "I wasn't lucky, I deserved it" was her reaction when she won a poetry-reading prize at the age of nine. "Merit", she said, was what won her the Tory leadership.

Of her economics training her sister says: "Margaret was the sort of child who would make a pound worth one pound and sixpence". But what will she do to everyone else's pound?

In the parliamentary debate on the 1975 Finance Bill, a Labour MP protested that £5,000—the amount the Tories wanted exempted for tax-free

wedding presents—was more money than most of his constituents ever saw.

"That's because they don't save", replied Mrs Thatcher, with her devastating common touch.

Our prime minister knows all about economising. She's fond of telling the press that she would like to go to the opera more often, but it's too expensive.

Obviously it's thrift, not a minister's salary and a husband with oil shares, that makes little luxuries possible.

"I can't understand all the fuss about student grants. Carol managed to save out of hers. Of course we paid for her skiing holidays."

And how did she get to the top? During her student days at Oxford she said her personal ambition was "to marry rich and go into politics".

"As soon as I came into politics people would say 'brains and beauty'. I thought, well, how silly."

Her main hope as prime minister, she once said, would be "to give women more confidence".

Confidence in the milk-snatcher—or in the power of the labour movement to withstand the Tory attacks?



# NEWHAM NORTH EAST- DID 'MILITANT' DISTORT

Dear Comrade

Your lengthy article in 'Militant' (issue 453, 27 April) on the Newham North East Labour Party made very interesting reading, and doubtless stated what your readers want to hear. Sadly, however, it contained a number of distortions.

The underlying thesis, 'Marxist Approach Vindicated', could well have been written in the best goodies vs baddies style: 'How we were right and everyone else was wrong.' I'm sure you will accept that not all Marxists in this Party or any other are per se supporters of the 'Militant' tendency.

Your readers are deserving of a less overtly slanted account of events in Newham and, as you correctly state, the events of Newham North East "have not been a purely local peculiarity," i.e. they do have a national significance.

It give me no particular pleasure to point it out—but the contention that what happened in Newham North East has been due to an "expanding working class membership" is simply not true.

The current slate of 'left' officers to whom you offer some grudging support (presumably because it contains

## THE TRUTH?



Renegade Prentice

Photo: Angela Phillips (IFL)

one of your paper's supporters) are all well removed from the 'conditions of the factory floor' (your phrase); viz. two full-time employees of the Labour Party, one teacher, one college lecturer, one officer of a Housing Association and one young man who was previously a research assistant. All good socialists, but not what you claim of them.

As regards working-class trade unionists, the numbers on the General Committee have declined very sharply over the period in which 'Militant' supporters and Trotskyists of other persuasions have achieved positions of some influence. No connection between these two phenomena is necessarily implied, but it is a fact that there are quite a few trade union

delegates in the Party here who have become increasingly alienated from the tactics deployed by your Paper's supporters.

That is the great pity of Newham North East, because the 'left' in the Party here was once united in its struggles—principally to oust Prentice and to expose him as a Tory—and that is no longer the case. Your correspondent's ploy of writing off the rest of the left in Newham North East as 'highly confused' has the merits of being both cheap and offensive—but not of being very illuminating.

The figures on trade union delegates (a fair measure of 'factory-floor' membership) speak for themselves. At the 1978 AGM there were 38 trade union delegates to the

General Committee. At the 1979 AGM there were only 16.

In the same period, the number of trade unions affiliated had declined by 16 from 47 to 31—of which only 14 appointed any delegates. Of these only 9 can be remotely counted as 'left' and that by a generous description—so your reference to a 'majority of left trade unionists' supporting the position of your paper (which is not denied) turns out to be about five individuals.

Over the same one year period the total membership of the Party had declined by 128 (over 10%) as my report to the AGM clearly stated. There are perfectly well understood reasons for this (in Newham North East)—but the plain facts are quite contrary to the implications of your article.

There were a number of other errors—or distortions—in your article, which space does not permit me to go into—though not the least of them is the unfavourable comparison of Jim Dickens with Reg Prentice.

I trust you will accept this letter for publication since I write it in a comradely spirit and am solely motivated, in the interests of truth (however unpalatable), to correct some of the distortions contained in your article.

Faternally  
Alan Haworth  
Secretary, Newham North  
East CLP

## EDITOR'S REPLY

We have checked carefully the points raised by Alan Haworth, and we can say categorically that no distortions appeared in our article.

In fact, Alan Haworth's letter is itself highly selective and therefore, "slanted" in its choice of fact and emphasis. Clearly, Alan cannot bring himself to agree with some aspects of the developments in Newham NE—he was, for example, sorry to see Dickens go—and therefore he attempts to play down some of the proven successes of the Newham struggle.

He should be aware that in polemic the first rule is to state your opponent's case fairly. This he fails to do. He misrepresents 'Militant'.

For example: we never set out to show that the Newham constituency officers were factory floor workers or that they were all the last word in working class steadfastness! On the contrary, while supporting every positive step taken in the re-selection battle, 'Militant' has also tried, in a clear and fraternal manner, to highlight what seem to us to have been their weaknesses and shortcomings too.

What we actually did say in our article was as follows: "During these battles, over a period of 5 years, Newham NE Labour Party has swung left and grown in size, the average age of its membership has fallen sharply and the participation of active, militant trade unionists within it has noticeably increased." (emphasis added.)

This statement remains

true. Alan Haworth knows that the fall in the number of trade union delegates and the decline of 128 in individual membership in the one year he quotes reflects above all the falling away of the pro-Prentice and pro-Lewis right wing. Surely Alan cannot mourn this?

As for the "five individuals" whom he refers to, might it be worth adding that the trade union section of the GMC, which we understand is now growing again, has consistently elected such a "handful" of delegates—who, in the main, support "Militant's" programme—onto the constituency EC on the basis of their policies.

It remains true, and Alan specifically concedes the point, that left-wing industrial workers in Newham NE Labour Party have shown considerable support for the policies of our paper.

The prospects for the future are excellent. 'Militant' is pleased to record that in Newham NE, totally against the trend in East London as a whole, the Labour vote on 3 May increased by 600 over Prentice's vote in October 1974. We are confident that supporters of our paper will be in the forefront of the struggle to recruit more new members, to encourage new union affiliations, and build a genuine mass membership.

Alan's motives for seeking to minimise the achievements of his own constituency are obscure. We, for our part, salute the struggle of Newham's Party activists and we stand by our analysis—including the prediction that the recruitment of industrial workers will continue apace, particularly in branches where 'Militant' has growing support.

# SCHOOLS - MORE CASH NEEDED ...

The Tories have 'promised' 5% cuts in school spending, £420m off the schools' budget, £80m of it immediately.

This can only mean more cuts in building, staff and equipment. Yet our schools are desperate for money.

Some have cut out decorating altogether; equipment is short or non-existent; staff are being cut or not replaced. Many schools are housed in ancient and unsuitable buildings; classrooms double as dining rooms and gyms; repairs are often left until they cause accidents. The list is endless.

Half of Hackney's schools are Victorian in origin (some of the buildings are listed as being of historical or architectural interest) and the Inner London Education Authority admits many are substandard in accommodation facilities or play-space.

Hackney has more than its share of 'problem' children (or 'problem' families). Problems created by bad housing (damp, multi-occupation, tower blocks, etc); lack of leisure and sport facilities,

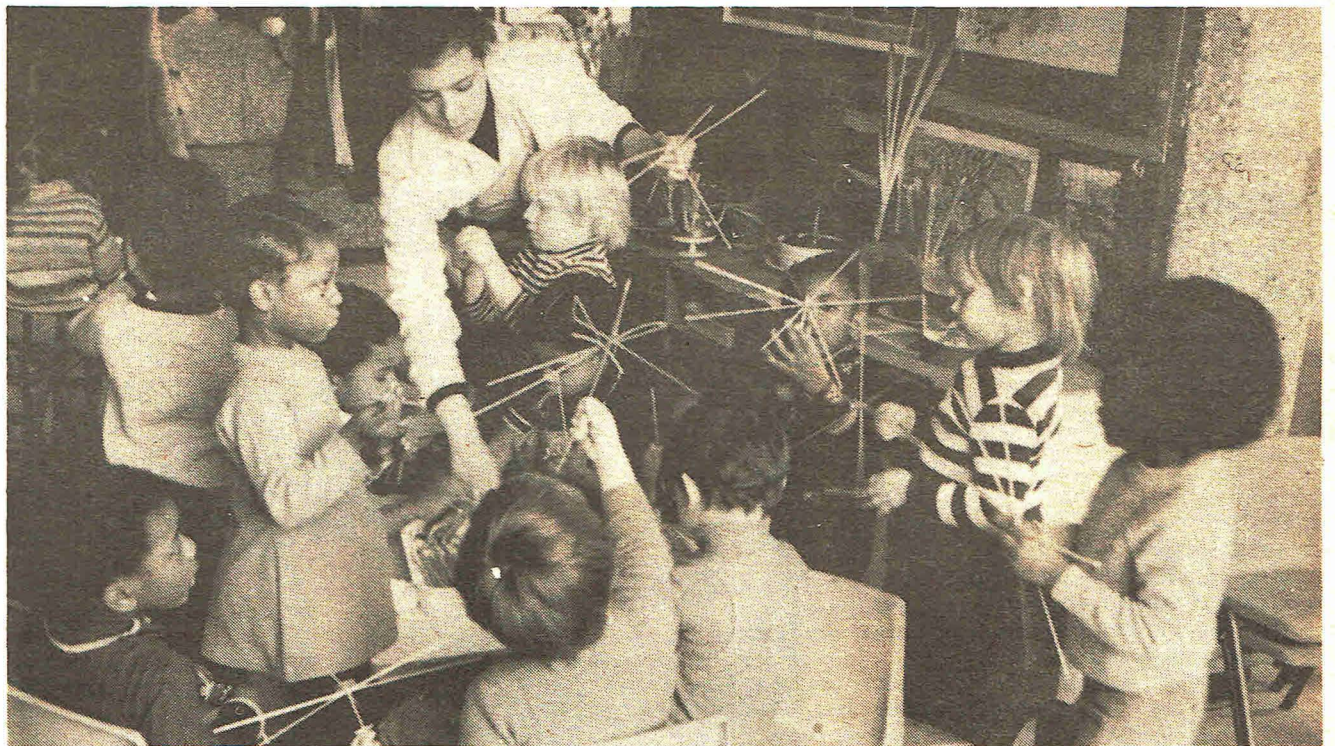
By Lynne Faulkes  
(Hackney Central CLP)

poverty and unemployment, breeding racialism and violence in the homes.

To cite just one example, a large (900 roll) girls' school near our flats has a terrible reputation, though it is housed in some of the more 'modern' buildings. The caretaker has complained about the amount of vandalism, parents complain about lack of interest, non-existent discipline, atrocious exam results.

Local shopkeepers complain about stealing and vandalism. Judging by the number of children seen on the streets, truancy must also be a big problem. What sort of 'education' are our children getting in these conditions? Many feel that nobody's interested in them, so why should they bother? It all seems such a waste of time.

ILEA claims to have made no cuts in recent years and say they do not intend to introduce any (though they make



Education can't take any more cuts

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

no reference to the effects of inflation). Yet it is obvious vast increases in resources are necessary to establish even a basic standard, not to mention the improvements that could be made with a bit of imagination, enthusiasm and ingenuity.

Even the keenest teachers can soon become worn out by trying to cope in these conditions. They either become resigned to it, give up altogether or leave for 'better'

## ...NOT LESS

pastures.

So long as capitalism exists it will continue to view our schools as the cheapest means of educating future generations of workers just sufficiently for its purposes:— manual, white collar and

administrative.

Children are born with an urge to learn. It is a tragic condemnation that this natural desire is stifled in so many of our schools, geared as they are to exams and predetermined curricula.

The labour movement has a strong and proud tradition of fighting for the rights of free and comprehensive education for the working class.

When education is under our control, with an end to selection at all levels: fully comprehensive, with the abolition of private schools, and a massive increase in educational expenditure, we will begin to see the full meaning of the term 'education'.



# NHS Prime target for Tory axeman

The National Health Service was set up as "a comprehensive national health service [that] will ensure that for every citizen there is available whatever medical treatment he requires, in whatever form he requires it..." in the words of the 1942 Beveridge Report.

The Tories have never approved. Now, with business demanding ever-increasing public spending cuts to save capitalism, their attitude to the NHS can be summed up as 'cut it down or phase it out'. The 'Times' special report of December 1978 even asked whether the establishment of the NHS was really all "a mistake".

With public spending cuts, legislation against unions, and Thatcher's vision of a society where no-one pays a penny for anyone but themselves (i.e. the rich hang onto all the money) the NHS would surely be one of the Tories' prime targets.

Sir Geoffrey Howe put their aims succinctly: "cutting out Socialism". The Labour Par-

By Jackie Turner  
(COHSE Middlesex Hospital)

ty's official policy is for a "socialist policy for the Health Service" to abolish charges, and increase funds for taking on more staff, on adequate salaries, and replacing worn out buildings.

But the president of the Conservative Medical Association and now Minister of Health, Gerard Vaughan, stated clearly in 1976 in evidence to the Royal Commission on the future of the NHS: "it is unrealistic to look for any overall improvements in the standards of care which the state can provide."

It is official Conservative policy to encourage the growth of private medicine (e.g. by tax relief) both inside and outside the NHS.

Private practice in the NHS means private doctors are subsidised by use of NHS equipment, highly trained staff and low-paid nurses and ancillary workers. Doctors for example, can charge private patients, say foreign visitors, any amount for a laboratory test done in an NHS hospital, for which the doctor pays almost nothing.

But the Tories' policies

eventually lead to a two-level medical system, with a much smaller, cheaper, second-rate free service with even longer waiting lists than present, for those who can't afford to pay the private rates.

Individuals could belong to private medical insurance schemes like BUPA, encouraged by financial incentives from the government. But would this work?

Fewer people all the time can afford to pay the premiums for cover by BUPA and most new contributors are companies who give private medical insurance as perks to higher grades of staff.

## Too 'expensive'

No private insurance company out to make a profit is willing to take on the old or chronic sick, who need long-term care. BUPA has been known to turn old people out of private nursing homes when they are no longer critically ill and are getting 'expensive'.

The 'Times' concluded an article on the 'problems' of financing the NHS by regretfully pointing out that "the private sector today is farther than ever from providing an alternative system in which the wealthy can afford to

disregard the deficiencies of public health care." But we can be sure that they would if they could.

The BMA, the consultants' organisation, a Tory stronghold, has just put forward a plan for a private national GP service, as part of a threat that GPs will resign en masse from the NHS.

Although drawn up in support of their pay claim (£24,000 p.a. incl. expenses) the plan is an indication of Tory alternatives to the NHS. Costs for patients would be £16 a year or a weekly payment of 35p (less for children and OAPs) with fees of 55p for surgery consultation, £1 for a home visit; (£2 at night), and extra for travelling.

Another disturbing innovation could be contracting out of NHS treatment to private agencies (a scheme already accepted by Warwickshire Area Health Authority for abortions and praised in the medical press as the way to promote a 'better use of scarce care facilities!').

The Tories are also committed to increasing prescription and other charges. Dr Vaughan believes charges help patients to "appreciate the relationship between payment and service" and "tend to contain demand (!) and

improve the service."

Presumably we are to 'contain' illness and ignore accidents, until we die—when we're beyond help anyway! Vaughan also recommends that fewer doctors should be trained in future.

Another way of raising money suggested is 'hotel charges' for non-medical expenses of hospital patients. It is reckoned by the Conservatives that these two items could raise £6m—but in 1977-78 the NHS spent £6,300 million.

If the Tories want serious cuts in NHS expenses they will have to go for wages and jobs, cuts in services and more work for the fewer employees.

This was spelled out in the infamous 'Daily Telegraph' article by Jock Bruce-Gard-

yne, Tory MP for Knutsford: "Cuts must be quick acting. They must concentrate on current... spending. As far as possible reductions in services should take precedence over increases in charges."

He suggests that no posts in central NHS administration should be filled for a year, and hopes that local authorities will follow the example. The "dislocation" deliberately caused to services built up over years would "convince the nation that we are in earnest."

And what about the nurses and ancillary workers' pay settlement? Patrick Jenkin, Tory health spokesman, has let it be known that a Tory government would not subsidise out of central government funds any rises in pay recommended by the comparability study agreed between David Ennals and the Health Service unions.

"Cash limits" would not change and health service employers would have to find money by making economies or cutting jobs in other parts of the NHS!

Both NUPE and COHSE officials have made it clear that any government trying to pull that one would be faced "with a major trade union confrontation within weeks of taking office."



More hospitals under threat

Photo: J McKittrick

# Women and the Trade Unions

Between 1962 and 1975 union membership rose by over 2 million to nearly 10½ million. The increase in women's membership was 1,320,773...64% of the total rise.

The number of women trade unionists increased by 91% compared to an increase of 11% for men. Women more

than ever, see the need to unite with their male colleagues in the trade unions.

Working class women have

been doubly oppressed, firstly as workers but also because of their treatment as second class citizens. Under the present system their prime responsibility has tended to be home and family. They supply the future working class at great sacrifice to themselves, but at very little expense to the bosses.

The Equal Opportunities Act has not expelled discrimination from our society. As always, only the strength of a united, organised workforce

can ensure that it is fully implemented.

The problem of women must not be seen in isolation. The whole working class movement must take up the fight where sections of the working class are more exploited than others, not just leave it to women as if it was only their problem.

Women's committees with no active participation by men can only isolate women further from the trade union movement and can play into the hands of the bosses.

Cuts in public spending and in the civil service have hit and will hit women, the majority of staff in these fields, more than men. Twice as many women as men leave the civil service every year, so even natural wastage will cut deeper for women.

In 1976 the Equal Opportunities Commission surveyed the 29 unions with most women members, to see what gains they had made under the Sex Discrimination legislation.

They concluded "hardly any unions have any idea of the extent to which such clauses have been negotiated and very few have even bothered to commend the clause to their negotiators. Many unions are too complacent about the position of

their women members and think of women's rights only in terms of equal pay".

Equal pay has been achieved in the Civil Service, but there is discrimination in promotion. This is seen more clearly above the clerical grades, where the fact that women more often interrupt their working lives to care for children, aged parents, etc., reduces their promotion prospects. Also the socialisation process conditions women to be less career conscious than men.

Sex discrimination unfortunately also exists in trade unions. Women are often written off as apathetic, working for 'pin money' and whose primary role is in the home.

Women workers often do have poor attendance at union meetings; and do accept low pay and are far more tied up with problems of home and family.

Just as their dual role affects their employment, it also has a considerable effect on their role within the trade

union. They find difficulty attending meetings outside working hours and feel unable to take union positions because of the time needed.

They are also under constant pressure to think of themselves as wives and mothers, which inevitably affects their attitude to work and involvement.

Women must be strongly encouraged to attend union meetings, to participate in discussion and to take an active part in the union. For once women do become involved they are often the best fighters and organisers.

A campaign to take up, not only equal pay, but questions such as promotion, training, maternity leave, day nurseries, family planning facilities, would get a good response.

Linked up with fighting demands for a minimum wage 35-hour week, etc., all workers could be united in a common struggle.

By May Trodd

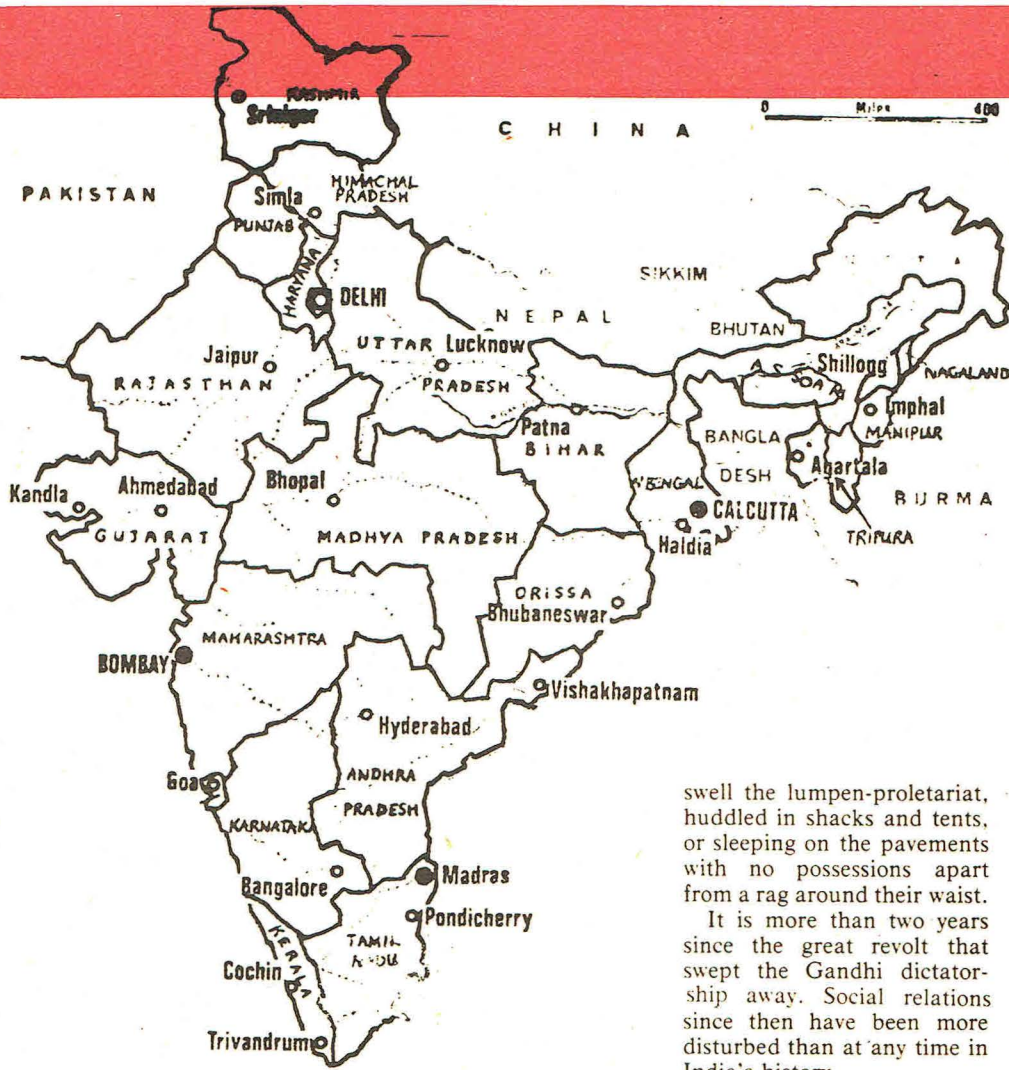
(CPSA)



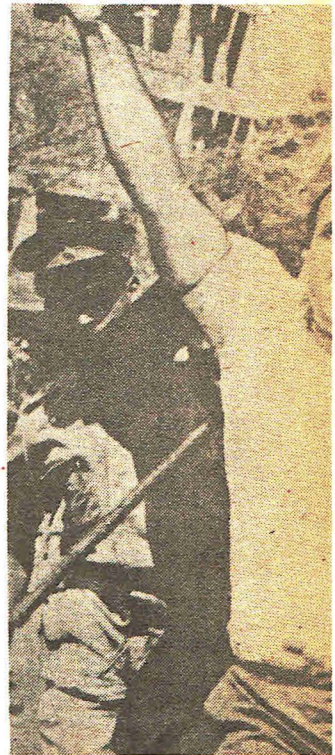
Women workers in the forefront of the heroic Grunwick struggle



**Roger Silverman reports from India on the social revolt which has swept the country since the downfall of the Gandhi regime two years ago.**



# Growing INDIA II



Radical demagogue Datta Samant

**For most of the 650 million population of the world's biggest capitalist country, India is a living hell. 70% live in appalling poverty, and 200 million eke out their short lives on less than ten pence a day. 40% of children die before their fifth birthday.**

**Capitalism has proved incapable of dragging India out of the Dark Ages.**

**Such is the poverty, that the world's second biggest population offers only a negligible internal market, and Indian capitalists look greedily to the markets of Middle Eastern countries with populations of 1-10 million!**

Any small increase in production only causes a glut. Thus, last year 100,000 bales of cotton were re-exported at a loss of £4.4 million—yet cotton mills stand idle and millions are dressed in tatters.

After two good monsoons, over 5,000 tonnes of potatoes are rotting, and 20 million tonnes of "surplus" grain have piled up. Yet 100,000 children continue to die every month of malnutrition.

Stagnant world markets caused a slump of 5.9% in exports last year, and a trade deficit of £750 million. Factories are closing down or operating at a fraction of capacity.

Despite an accumulation of £2,500 million in foreign exchange and gross annual profits of nearly £1,000 million, the big capitalists refuse to invest.

Antiquated plant leads to gross anomalies. Last year a million tonnes of steel were imported while steel mills closed down. Coal stocks are piling up, yet steel companies imported £50 million worth of coal.

Ships wait a month for a berth on the Bombay docks.

The power shortage is so acute that all industry in West Bengal had to shut down for a week last month, at a cost of £460 million in lost production.

In spite of an annual subsidy of nearly £600 million to industry from the state bank, economic growth has painfully crawled ahead by less than 1% a year during the 1970s, compared to a rate of over 5% in China with its planned economy. Unemployment and under-employment have reached incalculable proportions.

In the countryside, the landlords can evade the nominal land-reform laws by no less than eleven legal loopholes, quite apart from bribery and intimidation.

One third of all cultivated land is still owned by 4% of rural households, while 8% is shared between 51%.

Yet a staggering 40% of the population are landless labourers, jostling for odd seasonal employment from the rising class of "kulaks" (capitalist farmers), or on the plantations, from which the Western supermarkets buy tea at less than £1 a kilogram to sell at £4.50.

The unemployed are driven into the teeming cities, to

swell the lumpen-proletariat, huddled in shacks and tents, or sleeping on the pavements with no possessions apart from a rag around their waist.

It is more than two years since the great revolt that swept the Gandhi dictatorship away. Social relations since then have been more disturbed than at any time in India's history.

Indian society is in the throes of a pre-revolutionary crisis. Superimposed on class struggles without precedent in town and country, have been ugly communal riots.

Faced with the rising tide of revolt by industrial workers and rural labourers alike, the ruling class has whipped up the vilest caste, religious, linguistic and racist passions against the 100 million dalits (variously known as outcasts, untouchables and harijans), the 120 million Muslims, the Buddhists and Christians, the tribal peoples of the North East, the adivasis (aboriginals), and the Southern nationalities.

## Divide and rule

In particular it has tried to pit the so-called "backward castes" (intermediate strata) against the "scheduled castes" (dalits). The former have benefitted from the break-up of the massive landholdings of the zamindars (old landlords) and by the "green revolution" in the Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, but are shut out of government patronage.

The ruling Janata Party was hastily scraped together in January 1977 out of all those capitalist factions at odds with the narrow Gandhi clique:

the Jana Sangh, party of Hindu communal bigotry;

the BLD, representing the kulaks and especially the 10 million Jat farmers, and incorporating the right-wing Swatantra party;

the Congress-O, a right-wing splinter from Congress;

"Congress For Democracy" and a whole stampede of other Congress rats rushing to desert Mrs Gandhi's sinking ship;

and, for ornamental purposes, the Socialist Party.

Hoping to channel the pent-up opposition into an alternative capitalist party paying due lip-service to "democracy", these unsavoury characters made glib promises to "end poverty and unemployment within ten years"! In fact, their policies have been designed merely to appease the two most powerful and reactionary forces behind them.

In deference to the BLD they have promoted measures which would enrich the kulaks, including utopian schemes of developing cottage industry, and made lavish grants to the kulaks at the expense of £375 million in new taxes levied on the masses and a budget deficit of £1,250 million.

At the same time, Janata has sanctioned the calculated incitement by the Jana Sangh and its paramilitary army the RSS of the worst communal tensions since 1947.

Well over 20,000 atrocities against dalits have been officially admitted, in every state.

In the two most populous states alone—Uttar Pradesh (100 million) and Bihar (65 million)—last year there were 7,067 murders and 122,677 violent crimes. This is an expression of the violence of class relations today.

In addition to "caste" conflicts, which have claimed the lives of at least 10,000 dalits, thousands have been slaughtered in anti-Muslim riots, all over India.

Hindus have suffered retaliatory persecution in Kashmir, there have been anti-Christian pogroms in Arunachal Pradesh, armed battles between rival Sikh sects in the Punjab, Kanpur and Delhi, and between the RSS and CPI(M) in Kerala, refugee settlements have been attacked and blockaded in West Bengal, there have been regional riots in Pondicherry, adivasis have been hunted like animals, etc.

The RSS have provoked the minorities by holding offensive daily public drills, in uniform and bearing weapons, in which even Janata Ministers have participated; by staging Hindu processions through Muslim ghettos, by withdrawing textbooks unacceptable to Hindu bigotry, by promoting obscurantist laws, etc.

The "Freedom of Religion" Bill virtually outlaws religious conversion, although that is seen as an escape-route for dalits from caste oppression.

Even worse is the current campaign to ban-cow slaughter. Beef is the only cheap source of protein for the minorities (over one-third of the population) and for all except devout Hindus. Yet this ban is already in force in every state but West Bengal and Kerala.

One of the self-appointed saints with which India is afflicted went on hunger strike to coerce the recalcitrant states, until the Prime Minister intervened to promise to impose a total ban from the centre. This gross offense to the minorities is supported by their false "friends", Congress. It reeks of hypocrisy.

Janata and Congress are more concerned with the lives of cows than of people, more intent on upholding this reactionary clause of the

Constitution than those guaranteeing citizens a job, a living wage, redistribution of wealth, or free and compulsory education!

80% of rural children—160 million!—will never go to school. 30 million children are toiling illegally on farms and building sites, in factories and shops. Others are press-ganged into bands of thieves or beggars, sometimes deliberately mutilated first.

And yet the myopic octogenarians in office—Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram—conduct irrelevant crusades against cow slaughter, or for prohibition, another bandwagon careering ahead despite the experience of "dry" Tamil Nadu where a million bootleggers are distributing £500 million worth of illicit liquor to a quarter of the population!

But the chapter of struggle which began with the overthrow of Congress has gathered momentum on the streets, in the factories and even in the villages.

The organised working class, proportionately small but nevertheless a mighty force of twenty million with its hands on the decisive levers of

All the capitalists' men: Jagjivan Ram



# Crisis of a Social Order

## FERMENT



million Maharashtra state employees, 300 units are now in dispute. 200,000 textile workers have called off their threatened strike after substantial wage increases.

At the PAL car assembly plant, which has a long history of extortion and murder by a stooge union, and which employs over 100 highly-paid thugs, the workers have surged into an independent union (led by the radical demagogue Datta Samant). After a long lockout last year, the management have again locked out 9,000 workers and laid off another 12,000 for the last five months.

In more vain attempts to check the meteoric growth of Samant's union, Indian Aluminium has been shut down for three months and Siemens for eight months. Mukand steel plant has been shut for six months.

A record 8,930 man-days were lost in the six months ending March 1978 on the docks. Last year there were 7,000 reports of violence in the Bombay industrial belt, in which workers, trade union officials and managers were beaten up or killed.

In the Dhanbad-Jharia coalbelt, a concentration of 240 mines employing 800,000 formerly backward workers, successive gangster unions have preyed on the workforce. One "trade unionist" amassed nearly £4 million in bribery and extortion!

But the days when this was a lucrative racket are over. With the growth of another independent union, led by A K Roy, who split to the left from the CPI(M), the workers are reclaiming their rights. No less than 400 lives have been lost in violent encounters between workers and gangsters since last October.

The bosses have other allies besides these Mafias. The fingers of the trigger-happy police continue to itch under a Janata government which still intones about civil rights.

In 1977, 300 workers at a "gherao" (mass picket) of the Swadeshi Cotton Mills, Kanpur, were shot dead, and their bodies dumped in the

Ganges. The bodies of 200 labourers at the Pantnagar agricultural college were burned.

Striking workers have been killed at the Bailadila iron-ore mines, Jharia and Dallirajhara coalfields, Hissar textile mills, a Sambhal factory, etc. But workers have defied intimidation.

Since the massacre, a virtual Soviet has functioned in Kanpur. At the Dallirajhara mines, where 10,000 redundancies were threatened, the workers stayed out for 55 days and won victory.

Even these events pale beside the situation in some rural areas. 300,000 labourers last month marched to Delhi demanding work, land and an end to atrocities.

In Andhra Pradesh in the South, where feudal relations remain intact and there is a 30-year tradition of peasant struggles, 75,000 peasants have launched an armed attack on the landlords' estates. Thousands have been arrested and martial law declared, allowing summary execution.

### 'Bihar is burning'

The centre of the storm is undoubtedly Bihar, the second most populous state and potentially the richest, but which has the lowest per capita income in India—lower than tribal Nagaland.

The dalits refuse to be cowed any longer. Complaints at violations of the minimum wage law are now running at 25,000 a year. The BLD-controlled state government has incited the "backward castes" against the dalits by promising them job reservations also.

They have gone on the rampage, sabotaging communications, derailing trains, burning buses, damaging schools, in protest at dalit "privileges". One man in five carries a bomb or home-made pistol.

The government has had to promise the dalits arms for self-defence (while sentencing six of them to death for doing so). Outraged at the distribution of patches of com-



Where 40% of the population are landless, begging is virtually a profession

mon land to dalits under old cosmetic Congress legislation, richer peasants have sent thugs by the hundreds to rape, burn and kill.

Dalits have been beheaded, torn to shreds in crushers, dragged by tractors, flogged, burned alive...Where they have replied by burning haystacks and crops, the police have proclaimed "disturbed areas" and taken emergency powers of arrest, torture and execution.

In view of the massacre of 150 in the steel city Jamshepur, the daily battles at Dhanbad, etc., the comment of one politician that "Bihar is burning" seems justified. But Bihar is only one degree hotter than the other states. All India is ablaze!

The battle-lines are being drawn. The growth of the repressive apparatus is shown by the ratio of military/paramilitary forces to the male population aged 20-50, which has increased from 40:1 in 1947 to 10:1 in 1979!

The Janata government has united all the trade union centres against it in resistance to its proposed anti-labour laws, the Industrial Relations Bill and the Hospitals and Educational Institutions Bill.

The industrialist Tata, who donated nearly £500,000 to Indira Gandhi before the last elections, has spelt out his ideas:

"I am against banning strikes...[except] essential services like banks, railways, ports, police, civil service, defence, posts and telegraphs...hospitals and communications...A government employee should only be recruited on a clear contractual understanding that he voluntarily surrenders his right to strike since the government cannot lock him out."

Against this turbulent social background, the capitalist parties are in disarray.

Attempted re-unification talks have broken down irreparably between Congress-I (Indira Gandhi's wing, flushed with renewed confidence as millions of poor flock back in despair to her banner) and the Congress

rump apparatus (fearful of being swallowed up by the Gandhi clique with their Youth Congress hooligans).

Meanwhile the Janata Party is disintegrating back into its component parts.

The original bloc between the Jana Sangh, with its urban petty-bourgeois base, and the BLD resting on the kulaks, to carve up the powerful Northern Hindi states between them, has given way to a relentless vendetta, in which Charan Singh was ousted from the government for a time, and the JS Ministers were sacked from the Uttar Pradesh government.

A campaign is in full swing to ban the RSS, and the Party has come near to being wrecked. Strange reconciliations have taken place.

### Growth of fascists

When 100,000 RSS members were jailed during the emergency, RSS leader Deoras wrote to Mrs Gandhi from prison pledging support for her 20-point programme.

In an ironic echo, Mrs Gandhi sent a bouquet from her brief prison sojourn to Charan Singh's annual birthday jamboree, his "Kisan Day" (Peasant Day) rally, which at least 200,000 Jats celebrated.

This, to the man who as Home Minister had called for her lynching! Yet the new BLD-controlled alignment in Uttar Pradesh rests on Congress-I support.

The fascist RSS has swelled by 25%. It boasts a million members, 53 front organisations with 3,655,000 members, 40 weeklies, 8 dailies, 93 JS MPs, three Cabinet Ministers, total control of the Delhi administration and of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, and growing influence in police and civil services.

On the left wing, the former socialist George Fernandes demanded the nationalisation of steel, aluminium and cars, and threatened resignation until his bluff was called.

After decades of monolithic Congress rule, India now faces years of shifting, fragile blocs, a succession of weak unstable governments, and a patchwork of state administrations.

Ultra-right nationalist parties are in power in Tamil Nadu and Punjab, left popular fronts in West Bengal and Tripura, Congress-I governments in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and every conceivable permutation of combinations between rival Congress and Janata factions in other states.

The tragedy is that the workers' parties, dazzled by Menshevik fantasies about a "democratic revolution", have tamely latched on to their respective capitalist allies, thus betraying the workers and poor peasants to the deceptions of their worst enemies, and giving credence to their rhetoric!

Congress—after the horrors of the emergency, forced sterilisations, and all—poses again as the champion of the Muslims and "harijans"; Janata—a rag-bag of discredited right-wingers—as the party of "democracy".

### West Bengal

Without a socialist lead to the workers, dalits, persecuted minorities, etc., for a common fight against landlordism and capitalism, the spectre looms ahead of the politics of despair: of fragmentation into warring nationalist camps (as with Pakistan), and of a new Naxalite guerrilla movement, despite the harsh lessons of 1969-71 and the discrediting of Chinese Stalinism; and eventually of a hideous dictatorship more akin to the ferocious Indonesian regime than the cautious and relatively mild bonapartism of Mrs Gandhi.

Not for the first time, West Bengal is in the front line today.

The bloody defeat ten years ago was a prelude to the emergency. A Left Front Minister testily told a journalist who asked about the role of the multinational corporations: "India is India. Chile is Chile. India is not Chile... The people are very conscious, and over and above that, there is a left front government."

But it is dangerous to sing lullabies to the working class yet again. The opportunity must be seized to mobilise the workers to form councils of action, form committees of sharecroppers and labourers, take over the factories and estates, disarm the officers, organise the troops, arm the workers and peasants, defy the central government to do its worst, and appeal to the working masses to resist any attempt to extinguish the torch shining from West Bengal.

Faith in the hollow words of frightened politicians would once again be cruelly disappointed. Faith in the inexhaustible reserves of energy and courage of the workers and poor peasants can be rewarded with one of the greatest victories in human history.



Prime Minister Moraji Desai and Charan Singh



# WORLD CAPITALISM

## STUCK IN THE STAGNANT SEVENTIES

The Bank of England has just published [Quarterly Bulletin, March 1979] a most revealing table [1] showing how the recent performance of the major capitalist countries compared with the golden years of the 'Sixties and early 'Seventies.

For all the major economies, 1973/78 shows a dramatic fall from the growth-rate of 1960/73.

If manufacturing production had continued to grow in Japan at the same rate as it did during 1960-73 it would now be 70% higher than it is; in the European countries (including the UK) the shortfall was 20-25%, in North America 12-15%.

Productivity growth, the basic indicator of the extent to which capitalism is developing the productive system, slowed to about one half or less of the earlier rate.

This reflects the low rate of investment in new machinery, the inefficiencies involved in low levels of capacity utilisation (estimated by OECD Economic Outlook, December 1978, as varying from 73% (Italy) to 86% (Japan) of the 1973 levels), and the difficulties the capitalists have in rationalising production

through plant closures.

Unemployment in the OECD countries has stuck at around 5½%—only Japan (2½%) and Germany (3¼%) are below 5%, but in those countries the real extent of the problem is concealed by underemployment in small scale industry in Japan and repatriation of immigrant workers in Germany.

After the boom of the early seventies the capitalist world achieved no growth at all in 1974 and 1975. A slight upswing followed in 1976 when growth was about 5%, since when there have been two years of semi-stagnation, slow growth of world trade, substantial inflation and a high level of unemployment.

What is in store for 1979? The capitalist economists are all agreed that the prospect is for somewhat slower growth and the same level of inflation and unemployment as during the last two years.

Indeed, the December OECD forecast shown in the table was denounced by the Midland Bank Review (March 1979) as showing "insecure optimism in view of the

**By Andrew Glyn**  
(Oxford Labour Party)

extent of OPEC price increases and the fact that we have yet to see the major acceleration of growth in West Germany that the government there has been promising for more than a year." All even the OECD could find to congratulate itself about was that the pattern of growth between the major countries is likely to be more even.

Mildly expansionary policies in Germany and Japan will boost growth while the US economy slows down. The National Institute forecasts falls from about \$16 billion to \$10 billion in both the US balance of payments deficit and the Japanese surplus.

But this really amounts to sharing out the misery more evenly, rather than any overall improvement. The fundamental factor behind the sluggish growth is the refusal of the capitalists to increase their investment sufficiently. OECD forecasts for 1979

that investment will rise virtually not at all in Britain, about 3% in the USA and 4-7% in the main European countries and Japan. But as the following table (3) shows this leaves it at maximum only 10% above the level of 1973, and well below that level in Japan.

The main factors behind this refusal to accumulate rapidly are the fall in the rate of profit which underlines the crisis and the low level of capacity utilisation which has resulted.

The capitalist governments are prepared to give only feeble boosts to these economies for fear that inflation will accelerate as the capitalists attempt to rebuild their profit margins, making it all the harder to hold down wages. Of course, investment does not cease completely; even with spare capacity, in some sections new methods of production are being developed which will allow costs to be cut giving an advantage in the competitive struggle for shrinking markets.

But in relation to the growth achieved in the sixties,

TABLE ONE

OUTPUT AND PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

	Output		Productivity [a]	
	1960-73	1973-78	1960-73	1973-78
United Kingdom	3.0	-0.9	3.6	0.6
United States	4.9	2.5	3.4	2.2
Canada	5.9	2.8	4.0	3.2
Japan	12.0	0.8	8.8	3.7
Western Germany	5.3	0.8	5.0	3.3
France	5.9	1.4	5.6	2.7
Italy	6.1	2.2	5.2	1.4

[a] Defined as output per man not output per man hour

TABLE TWO

CAPITALIST GROWTH

	1962-73	1973-75	1975-76	1976-78	Forecast 1979
Production % growth	5	-½	5¼	3½	3
Exports % growth	8½	1½	10½	5	5
Consumer prices % growth	4	12	8	7¼	7-8
Unemployment level %	3	4½	5½	5½	5½

Source: Midland Bank Review Spring 1978, OECD Economic Outlook December 1978, National Institute Economic Review February 1979

TABLE THREE

CAPITALISTS' INVESTMENT [1973 = 100]

	1978	1979 [forecast]
USA	102	105
UK	109	110
Japan	86	91
Germany	105	110
France	98	102
Italy	99	104

Source: OECD Economic Outlooks

let alone the possible growth of production under a planned economy, the creeping growth of the capitalist economies represents a monstrous waste of resources, and every year of semi-stag-

nation undermines the confidence of the capitalists; it makes even a temporary boom more difficult to achieve and a lurch into deeper stagnation more likely.

# DIENBIENPHU -Historic Defeat for French Imperialism

25 years ago this month, French imperialism suffered one of its greatest-ever defeats, the fall of Dienbienphu.

This was the decisive battle in the Vietnamese people's struggle against the French.

They had earlier fought the Japanese and had ahead of them over 20 years of fighting against American puppet regimes.

But in 1954 the Viet-minh peasant army fought for 56 days to capture the major French army base and when it fell, over 16,000 French soldiers were either dead, wounded or taken prisoner.

The Chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to drop 'tactical atomic bombs' on the Vietminh but was overruled by Eisenhower, worried about a nuclear confrontation with the USSR.

The fall of Dienbienphu brought a speedy end to the Geneva Conference, convened to bring 'peace' to Indochina.

Only reliance upon their own strength had enabled the Vietnamese to expel the armed forces of French imperialism. A mass 'army' of peasants on bicycles and on foot had transported the artillery piece by piece to the hills overlooking Dienbienphu.



Planning the French defeat: Ho Chi Minh [left], General Giap [right]

Then at Geneva part of that victory was snatched from them and a puppet neo-colonialist regime installed in the south.

A protracted guerrilla struggle ensued, resulting in the final overthrow of capitalism in South Vietnam in 1975.

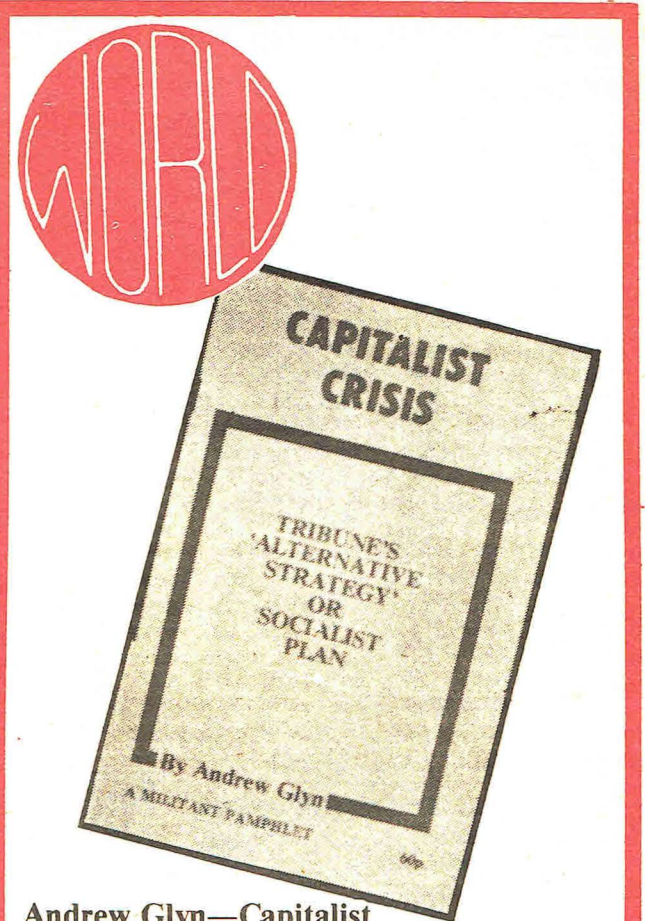
But the peasant-based army led by the bureaucratic Vietnamese Com-

munist Party did not create a genuine workers' state. The bankruptcy of their nationalist approach can tragically be seen in the recent wars with the rival bureaucracies of China and Kampuchea.

Twenty-five years since the victory at Dienbienphu Vietnamese people have made enormous gains by wiping out capitalism and

imperialism. Yet a genuine democratic socialist society, free from all repression, will require further struggle and a political revolution until real power rests in the hands of the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

By Jim Chrystie



Andrew Glyn—Capitalist crisis. Tribune's 'alternative strategy' or socialist plan... 70p [inc p&p]

- Other writings on economics
  - Marx on economics ..... £1
  - Marx—Wage labour and capital ..... 15p
  - Marx—Wages Prices and profit ..... 15p
  - Engels—The wages system.
  - Articles from the Labour Standard ..... 25p
  - Oxford Militant supporters—Key economic facts for socialists ..... 15p
  - West London Militant supporters—Inflation and the financial system ..... 20p
  - Grant—Will there be a slump? ..... 15p
- Please add 10p postage for each pamphlet

WORLD BOOKS  
1 Mentmore Terrace  
London E8 3PN



# TRADES COUNCILS

## COUNCILS OF ACTION FOR THE WORKING CLASS

The annual conference of Trades Councils takes place in Harrogate on 19/20 May. Written at the time of the struggle against the Heath government's ill-fated Industrial Relations Act, Dudley Edwards' article outlines the history of the trades councils and points to their potentially vital role.

Not only did trades councils precede the TUC [Trades Union Congress], but it was these bodies which brought the TUC itself into existence. As a matter of fact, they were an independent, grass-roots working-class movement from the very first.

Today, many thousands of workers in Britain have served as delegates to their local trades councils. This very numerous body of working men and women often represents the most class-conscious, active, and intelligent section of the working class in the locality in which they work.

that they are working for a cause greater than themselves. They believe there is a need for a fundamental change in society.

At the same time, they struggle for a decent living wage, adequate housing, a fair deal for old age pensioners, a better urban or rural environment—they discuss and formulate countless other demands and then campaign for them.

All this activity is done voluntarily, without thought of remuneration or personal advantage. But of over 500 Trades Councils no more than three or four have full-time secretaries. For this reason the Trades Council movement is probably freer from the bureaucratic mentality than any other area of the British trade union movement.

Unfortunately, sometimes this self-sacrificing body of workers are not sufficiently aware of the great significance of their own dedicated



When the working class begins to move. Trades Council are no longer passive bodies

Trades Councils—which, significantly, were in the past combined with Labour Party general management com-

pump" politics.

Yet, whenever the working class began to move on a broad front against the capitalist establishment, the Trades Councils sprang into action. It is for this reason that the more right-wing section of trade union officialdom became concerned to reduce the Trades Councils to purely consultative bodies, and many workers came to think they had been created by the TUC to be nothing but the General Council's mouth-piece in the localities.

A look at history shows that this is a false notion. The TUC actually grew out of the trades council movement. It was a number of the key trades councils, already established as the leadership of the movement locally, who took the initiative in bringing the trade unions together in a national body.

Today, this aspect of trades councils is again becoming of vital importance in the present growing struggle to repel the efforts of the Tory government and big business to put the trade union movement in a strait-jacket by means of various kinds of anti-union legislation, wage freezes, and other reactionary moves.

It was Sam Nicholson, President of the Manchester and Salford Trades Council speaking at its meeting in 1868, who first called "for a congress of our own", and the first TUC was actually called in that year.

The invitations were sent out only to "trades councils and trades federations." "Thirty four delegates attended this congress of which eleven were from provincial

trades unions. At the 1868 congress, the Birmingham Trades Council was deputed to convene the next one."

At this second congress in 1869, forty delegates attended, still mostly from trades councils. For the first time delegates from the London Trades Councils were present.

It is interesting to note that at this time a committee was appointed "to prepare a statement to go out to the world, to trade unions and legislators as to the reasons why we hold the opinion therein contained."

Its agenda reminds us of our fight against the Industrial Relations Act today (i.e. under the 1970-74 Heath government—ed.). Most of the discussion centred around how a fight could be waged against a report of a Royal Commission on TU legislation which left unionists liable to criminal prosecutions under an 1825 Act.

The first victories for a really radical policy calling for an eight-hour day—a potentially revolutionary demand at that time—and other socialist demands were won at the 1890 TUC. This break with the old-style unionism was largely the work of trades councils.

But in 1895, the more conservative elements retaliated and were able to get the trades councils excluded from direct affiliation—ostensibly because this involved dual representation.

Today, the trades councils have only one fraternal representative at TUC. The Trades Councils Joint Consultative Committee has only six representatives elected by trades councils, with six appointed by the TUC. It has therefore become a "policy executing, rather than a policy-making body."

Despite this constitutional restriction of their powers, however, the trades councils have rapidly increased their authority during periods of economic crisis and sharpened class struggle. During such periods they have become the focusing point of all working-class struggles, especially in the big industrial centres.

In particular, the sudden increase in the authority and independent action of the trades councils during the 1926 general strike alarmed the right-wing leaders of the TUC. This was the basic reason why such leaders as James Thomas worked frantically to stop the strike as soon as it had started.

One could do no better than to quote the words of the famous Labour and Social Democratic historian, G D H Cole, to illustrate what the Jimmy Thomases were afraid of. In his book 'British Trade Unionism Today', Cole wrote: "The hour of glory of the trades councils came in the

General Strike of 1926, when either directly or through councils of action which they took the initiative of creating on a broad base, they assumed the task of local organisation and responsibility for the conduct of the strike.

"A great many of them during this period issued local newspapers or bulletins to replace regular newspapers... They issued permits for goods to be delivered to hospitals and other necessary services; they improvised special transport services and conducted intensive propaganda campaigns in neighbouring villages.

"On the whole this work, improvised in a few days, was done with remarkable skill and efficiency and showed large resources of strength and competence in the local leadership."

It was this which struck fear into the hearts of the employers, and worried the right-wing TU leaders. It was a flowering of that amazing initiative and ingenuity of which the British working class is capable, when the dead hand of officialdom is removed.

During the nine days which shook capitalist Britain, the embryonic forms of what Lenin called 'dual power' were rapidly forming. Some trades councils even began to set up their own workers' defence force—to establish their own law and order.

In Newcastle, almost complete control over all transport was established. In some areas in the North East, under pressure, the police even agreed that the special constables should be recruited from the strikers themselves.

Contrary to the views expressed by the TUC president at the 1973 congress, the workers demonstrated in 1926 that the organised working class could take responsibility for the efficient administration of each area and, if necessary, of the country.

If the leaders of the General Council in 1926 did not understand this then, the Tory Prime Minister Baldwin certainly did when he mobilised all the forces of repression: tanks, armoured cars, and the OMS—the auxiliary strike-breaking organisation, backed and subsidised by the government. The ruling class saw the whole movement as a challenge to their system.

Naturally, when the strike was betrayed, the trades councils were again reduced to the passive and secondary role allotted to them by the right wing bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the trades councils remain potentially capable, in any new period of great events, of mobilising the working-class struggle to change society.



The 1926 General Strike. Police guard tram from angry workers at New Cross Garage, London. The Trades Councils played a vital role in local organisation of workers

They spend many hours of their leisure time endeavouring to co-ordinate all the working-class struggles for a better life in their district. They discuss and take decisions on every conceivable issue involving the interests of the workers.

The trades councils themselves can generally quite justly be described as the advanced detachment of the organised working class. Most of them are also inspired by the idea

work, or of the tremendous historical role of the Trades Councils in the long struggle of the working class to create an organisation powerful enough really to change society and put an end to the system of monopoly capitalism under which we live.

History shows that the Trades Councils could well become the organs through which working class power will be finally achieved. To quote Frederick Engels: "The full emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself." The

mittees in some key industrial areas—could be a vital means of carrying through this action to its logical conclusion.

In the recent past, this revolutionary side of Trades Council action has often not been very evident.

The decades of capitalist economic upturn which followed the Second World War brought a period of relative lull in the class struggle, and many Trades Councils became docile appendages of the TUC, concerned with little more than "parish

Dudley Edwards, now a member of Hove Labour Party, has been an activist in the trade unions and trades councils for many years. He was a shop steward at the Morris car plant in Oxford in the 1930s.

His publications include 'Last Stand of the Levelers' [30p] and 'The Soldiers' Revolt' [35p], both available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Add 10p for postage and packing.



Send your views and comments on the issues that affect you to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

LETTERS

LABOUR'S RANKS FIGHT ON



Socialism shines

Dear Comrade

This cartoon, I feel, epitomises the Tory attitude not only to trade unions but to the working class and the labour movement as a whole.

A Tory attack on trade unions is a fundamental assault on the solidarity of the workers, a blunt attempt to sow the seeds of disunity amongst the working class.

However, the Labour leaders have not helped their own case with wage restraint, talk of crossing picket lines and sale of council houses. Nonetheless, it remains the only effective platform from which a working class voice can be heard, amidst the hysterical double-talk of the capitalist press.

'Militant' has kept optimism burning, a bright light in dark ages, calling for a socialist alternative to capitalist pipe-dreams.

We fall for the same old promises time and time again. One of the main reasons must be the absence of an alternative 'daily press' to explain the truth behind the capitalist propaganda we are subjected to 365 days a year.

The growth of the 'Militant' is vital to counter the daily garbage presented as worthy news. May you continue to shine. In fact, may you get brighter and brighter!

I enclose five pounds to help pay your electricity bill!

Yours fraternally  
Ron Burke  
Liverpool

Fight on Party policy

Dear Comrades

At a meeting addressed by Michael Foot at Bangor students' union during the election campaign, I posed the question of Labour Party democracy.

Important points of Labour Party policy democratically passed at Party conferences, such as the nationalisation of the banks, abolition of the House of Lords and opposition to wage restraint had, I pointed out, been left out of Labour's manifesto.

Mr Foot gave a purely legalistic answer, stating that

the constitution does not require that resolutions passed at conference be included in an election manifesto.

This does not alter the fact that the leadership of the Party have once again chosen to treat the rank and file with contempt. (Talking of the constitution, whatever happened to Clause 4?)

Mr Foot admitted that the majority of the Labour Party was opposed to wage restraint but nevertheless he considered a policy of "sensible pay-bargaining" to be "the

Tory 'charity'?

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Imagine my amazement, during the election campaign, when I received a letter from an organisation declaring itself to be a charity. A pre-paid envelope was enclosed, had I been so foolish as to donate.

Who was the charity? Incredible—it was the local Conservative Association.

Just what were they asking for? A mere £6,000, not much, as they implied.

What was it to be used for? The cost of winning the three Labour-held seats in Bradford, an aim which is absurd in this industrial area of West Yorkshire, even with a certain percentage of Labour's voters demoralised by the government's pro-establishment (Tory) policies.

As a low-paid public sector worker, in common with other working people, I fail to see how the Tories can benefit us.

In my opinion, the electorate are not as foolish as some people think.

If Labour campaigned on a socialist programme, there would be no question among working people as to who would win elections.

Fraternally  
Pete Whittaker  
NUPE Bradford  
No 1 Branch

Analysing the results

Dear Comrades

The slogan of the Labour Party Young Socialists during the election campaign was "Labour to power on a socialist programme."

If only this slogan had been adopted in more constituencies we might still have had a Labour government in power.

The LPYS adopted this in many Scottish constituencies — Midlothian, Edinburgh Leith and Labour's most marginal Scottish seat, West Stirlingshire, which now has Dennis Canavan elected with a 10,359 majority.

What happened in South

England though? How can Newham North East CLP now accept any other than the Marxist way forward, when against a heavy flow of Tory votes in the Thames Valley, Labour retained the seat with a majority of over 10,000?

More CLPs should analyse the results, and not be led astray by the Tory press and their attacks on the "left wing". The "left wing" is what many people voted for at the general election.

Yours in socialism  
Bryden Pottinger  
Midlothian Constituency  
Youth Officer

Build the Labour Party

Dear Comrades

At our ward meeting to plan the rota for canvassing the area, the last four years of the Labour government was summed up by one of the older comrades, who said he was willing to canvass, but for the first time in his life he was scared stiff at the prospect.

He asked for advice on what to say when he was challenged on the government's record and manifesto, as it offered nothing for the working class. He himself was disillusioned and saw no hope of a Labour victory.

Certainly his concern has been reflected on the door steps in conversation with the electorate, many of whom have always voted Labour.

They question the policies of the government, which are totally detached from the

needs of the workers and are more in line with Tory policies.

They eagerly accepted the need for a shorter working week, a living wage, an end to unemployment, a planned economy and nationalisation as the programme for Labour.

It is now our duty to draw these workers into the Labour Party to take an active part, to transform the Party into a real workers' party, to elect the leadership that will uphold Labour Party policy and actively campaign for its implementation. To wipe out poverty, low pay, unemployment and all the ills created by capitalism.

Yours fraternally  
May Trodd  
Swansea CLP

Planners' neglect—children suffer

Dear Comrades

Reading the article by Dave Cotterill about St Cuthbert's Village, Gateshead, I was reminded of a recent incident in Hyde Park flats, Sheffield.

During the Easter school holidays a little girl was hit on the head by a TV set which had been thrown from the third balcony, allegedly by a 13-year-old boy. The girl, who has now died, was playing at the bottom of the flats with a friend who had on a previous occasion been hit on the head by a milk bottle thrown from a balcony.

This tragedy follows the death last December of a boy playing hide-and-seek. His head went in a hole in the doors covering the lift shaft.

Faced with a few bars as playing facilities the kids have invented some ingenious but often dangerous games. A challenge has been set for Park LPYS, with a number of members living in the flats, to pose the socialist alternative in the local Labour Party and directly to the residents through leafletting and public meetings.

It is rumoured that architects once came from West Germany and Japan to admire the set-up. Needless to say, there are no architects staying here today, because Hyde Park is a Park in name only.

Yours fraternally  
Martin Hill  
Sheffield Park LPYS

Zia's dictatorship must be challenged

Dear Comrades

Mr ASM Abdur Rob, the General Secretary of the JSD (National Socialist Party) in Bangladesh was arrested by the military government in November 1975.

He is suffering from a brain tumour. Leading doctors in Bangladesh have said that he has to go to London or Switzerland where he will get special treatment, or he will die.

All the opposition parties are asking the government to set him free and send him abroad for treatment. Amnesty International tried to convince the military junta to send him abroad, but the government has shown no interest.

Mr Rob and Major M A

fighter, were arrested together. They were sentenced to 7 years in the so-called 'Bangladesh Conspiracy case' which was held in a military court under military law. They had no access to lawyers and no right to appeal.

This is typical of the treatment given to those who fought for Bangladesh independence. Another freedom fighter, Colonel M A Thaher freed President Zia-Ur-Rahman from forces supported by India, by mobilising his support. In return, Zia-Ur-Rahman arrested and hanged Thaher.

In the recent general election, the government's own Nationalist Party, set up only six months before, won 206 seats; the Awami league, which was in power from

'71-'75 won 40 seats; the right-wing Muslim league (pro-Pakistan) 18 and the JSD 9 seats.

All the opposition parties allege that the election was rigged.

The government was advised by Western friends not to overdo it and win 100% of the seats and therefore a certain number of seats were allocated to other parties to give the appearance of democracy. A 100% vote for the Nationalist Party candidates would have looked suspicious, particularly alongside the 98% Rahman obtained in the presidential elections.

In one constituency the election commission announced an opposition member elected but four days later the votes were recounted with

out any opposition representative and the government candidate was announced elected by 8 votes. He'd originally been defeated by 1,500 votes. This is an indication of how the elections were stacked against opposition parties.

The government are now trying to ensure the stability of their own regime by changing the Constitution to embody the Presidential dictatorship. To change the constitution the government needs the support of 51% of the people but this move could be defeated if the opposition mobilised the people against the government.

Yours fraternally  
A Bangladeshi  
Living in Bangladesh

IMPORTANT NEW PAMPHLETS FOR ALL SOCIALISTS

- Glyn—Capitalist crisis: Tribune's alternative strategy or socialist plan ..... 60p
- West London Militant supporters—History of the Labour Party: reprints from Militant ..... 30p
- WLMS—French Revolution [1789]..... 40p
- Iranian revolution [reprints from Militant]..... 10p
- Ingham—The Fight for the 35-hour week..... 20p
- Trotsky—Transitional programme ..... 25p
- Silverman—Is India on the brink?..... 10p

Please add 10p postage for each pamphlet. Available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



# FIGHT WITH US FIGHT FOR US!

## Build Militant

Area	Target 52 wks	Target 26 wks	Proportion of target received	Received
Eastern	4,700	2,350		1,021
Hants & IOW	3,100	1,550		724
Humberside	2,000	1,000		595
London North	9,500	4,750		1,776
London South	3,900	1,950		1,115
Manchester & Dist.	4,500	2,250		1,035
Merseyside	5,000	2,500		826
Midlands East	3,300	1,650		1,271
Midlands West	9,000	4,500		2,144
Northern	5,500	2,750		1,197
Scotland East	2,900	1,450		431
Scotland West	4,500	2,250		748
South East	4,500	2,250		1,241
South West	3,100	1,550		908
Wales East	2,600	1,300		566
Wales West	3,400	1,700		540
Yorkshire	6,800	3,500		1,535
Others	6,700	3,250		1,767
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>42,500</b>		<b>19,956</b>

Progress towards year's target  Progress towards July 7th target 

**TARGET FOR THE YEAR £85,000 - TARGET FOR JULY 7th £42,500**

### The election of a Tory government is leading the labour movement inescapably to ask 'What went wrong?', 'Why did we lose?'

Tory rags like the 'Torygraph' and the 'Excess' have been hypocritically advising the Labour Party how to win elections. "Be more moderate" they say, "you are frightening the electorate with too much socialism."

Activists in the labour movement will of course take issue, saying that if the Labour Party had fought on the basis of conference decisions the horrors of Thatchers 'Chainsaw Massacre' government could have been avoided.

We haven't got the wealth of the Fleet Street lie machines in our efforts to counter the Tories' arguments, but their arguments need refuting more than ever now.

You can help us to obtain the means though, if you follow the example of the two letters below.

Dear Comrade

I enclose £2 raised at a Labour Party Young Socialist's meeting in Gorebridge at which Tony Saunois spoke to an audience of mainly school students on 'Keeping out the Tories'.

Yours in Marxism  
Brydon Pottinger  
Secretary Newbattle LPYS  
Scotland

Dear Comrades

Please find enclosed cheque for £7 which is, unfortunately, too late for a May Day Greetings display in Militant. However, please accept same amount as a contribution to the 'Militant' fund.

Yours fraternally  
M Carr  
Branch Sec. Merseyside  
Docks Staff T&GWU

students collected us £13 (Lancaster), £7 (Bristol), 'fivers' in Liverpool and Southampton.

Individuals sent us pounds and pennies according to means, ranging from £43 from D Williamson (Paisley) and £30 tax rebate from M Corcoran (Coventry) to 70p from D Hughes (UCATT, Bristol) and 50p from J Cummins (Stevenage).

Whatever you can afford must be rushed to us to put us back on the target of £42,500 by July 7th. Most readers and sellers can probably afford an 'in between' amount on a regular basis.

By Steve  
Cawley

This week's donations included: Manchester student £25, T Warby (Derby) £20, W Coombes (Bristol) £17.20, a 'tenner from H Henry (W Renfrew) and 'fivers' from Mr & Mrs Talbot (Dulwich), R Indge (Ware), D Hughes (Bermondsey), J Needham (Lancaster Univ), M Moorland, K Oxbridge, N Hammond (all Grimsby) and two Leeds supporters.

A school student C Powell (Ware-Hertford LPYS) sent us £3. Thanks also to B Brum (£2.32), L Bezant (Gosport LPYS) £2.25, G Ives (Dundee East CLP) £2.10, M Starr (Bristol LPYS) £1.85, and for £1s to Cllr J Senior (Sheffield) D Hague, R Jones, D Meades, D Carr, D Partington, A Ashworth, T Kellman, A Laird, J Hannan, D Roberts, a UPW member (London) and last but not least the Election Agent of Brent East CLP.

Although the major part of

the fighting fund comes to us in straight donations to support and expand the Militant's political ideas, various fund-raising events can be very easy to organise. Isle of Wight supporters' razor-sharp attitude to fund-raising brought us £45.50 this week. It also left a certain N Brooks looking neater, they've asked us to say!

Over £30 profit from 'election bets' came in, mainly from the Manchester area. In other areas, such as N London, we've even had money in from bets on football, and that was before the Cup Final took place!

Raffles such as Woolston Labour Club's £20, parties, lifts, collecting tins, pontoon tickets, disco tickets and a mail order catalogue were all valuable sources. By these and other means we received a total of nearly £80 from the Bristol area and over £30 from Scarborough and Bridlington readers.

Readers up and down the country also sent us at least £50 in 'extras', i.e. what they collect when selling Militant by asking to keep the change for the fighting fund. All those 5ps add up to a really useful amount, so keep running out of small change, comrades!

But last and largest, is the magnificent collection of over £1,000 at the Militant Sellers' Rally in Blackpool last week. We must particularly thank all those present for their contributions, (made after spending £20 to attend!).

These and every contributor this week show the strength of feeling of Militant readers who want us to fight back with all our might.

So fight with us and for us by donating to our fighting fund!

**THIS WEEK £2,177  
£23,000 STILL  
NEEDED BY JULY 7th**

ads

RATES column centimetres  
CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, All advertisement copy should  
minimum ten words reach this office by SATUR-  
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 DAY

#### MILITANT CAMP

Spend the Spring Bank Holiday Friday May 25th—Monday 28th at the 'Militant' Camp in the Lake District near Keswick.

A political programme of:

- ★ MARXIST ECONOMICS
- ★ HISTORICAL MATERIALISM
- ★ MARXISM AND THE TRADE UNIONS
- ★ PERSPECTIVES FOR BRITAIN  
and an international topic

Speakers include John Pickard, Pat Craven and Mick Brooks.

Cost (including camp fees, light breakfast, lunch and entertainment) £7. Children 6-15 £2.50. Under 6, free. For further details contact Malcolm Lindsev, 20 Sandiways Avenue, Bootle, Merseyside L30 1SD. Tel. 051-521 5398.

#### Militant Weekend School

Friday June 29th to Sunday July 1st  
At: Goldsmith's College Students' Union,  
Lewisham Way, London S.E.14.

Courses on:

- ★ Marxist Economics
- ★ Marxist Philosophy
- ★ Marxism and the Trade Unions
- ★ Ireland: History and Perspectives
- ★ Russian Revolution
- ★ The Labour Party

Friday evening: film 'Harlan County'  
Plus: Debate: 'A Socialist Programme for Labour'  
Speakers from 'Militant' and 'Tribune'

Registration: £2.50—whole weekend, £1.50 Saturday or Sunday only, 75p—Friday evening only.

To register, or for further information, write to: Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**CROYDON Militant Public Meeting.** 'Fight back against the Tories—Socialist policies for Labour'. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant), David White (Croydon Central Labour Party candidate 1979). Friday May 25th 7.45 pm. Cedar Hall, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon.

**LEWISHAM Militant Public Meeting.** 'Fight back against the Tories—Socialist policies for Labour'. Speakers: Jim Brookshaw (AUEW, Fleet Street), David White (Croydon Central Labour Party). Tuesday May 29th 7.45 pm. Deptford Town Hall, New Cross Road, London SE 14.

**COVENTRY Militant Readers' Meeting** 'No to the Bosses' EEC! Fight for a Socialist Europe! Speaker: Jim Hensman (Coventry South East Labour Party). Tuesday May 29th, 7.30 pm. Labour Party HQ, 30 Coundon Road

#### CLASSIFIED

Button badges made to order. Discounts to Labour and union groups. SAE for details from Martin Pearce, Maprographics, 32 Worpole Road Mews, London SW 19.

**£500 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON  
IN 'MILITANT'S' FORTHCOMING  
"EURODRAW"!!**

Date of Draw—July 7th 1979.

Tickets 10p each in books of 10

Order, if you can, from your local 'Militant' distributor, otherwise order from 'Militant Eurodraw', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

**SEND YOUR CASH TO FIGHT  
THE TORY THREAT**



# UNION CONFERENCES: ASTMS,

# astms

## MEMBERS DEMAND BENEFITS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

### 35 HR WEEK TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT



Clive Jenkins, ASTMS general secretary, speaking at 1978 Labour Party Conference  
Photo: MILITANT

## GEC GET TOUGH WITH ASTMS MEMBERS

Ten years ago, GEC Telecommunications in Coventry promised ASTMS members participation in a working party to review their inadequate grading structure. That promise has still not been fulfilled.

In the meantime, average profits per employee have multiplied ten-fold. The company's bank-balance is famous, yet over this period our standard of living has been falling steadily.

In face of the company's persistent refusal to address itself to our claim, we withdrew in official strike action 16 of our members in key areas.

The company's reply has been to threaten suspension of all 420 ASTMS members working in development areas if action is not dropped. They are also attempting to blackmail these sections by refusing to negotiate on the annual claim put forward by the rest of the branch.

The company have obstinately rejected meaningful negotiations. Now we are showing our determination by refusing to back down, despite management's deadline.

Their action is clearly part of the 'get tough' strategy adopted by the Engineering Employers' Federation, towards selective industrial action. It marks the beginning of a new period of confrontation in the telecommunications industry.

By Nick Meinke (ASTMS, GEC, Coventry)

## IRSF SET FOR CHANGE

IRSF conference meets after a stormy year, which has seen our first official strike and a radicalisation of the membership.

Many members were rightly unhappy with the pay deal, but had no confidence in the EC getting a better deal. Those members who were pushed into activity by the pay campaign will be looking critically at the performance of the EC over the coming year.

They will expect Conference to adopt fighting policies to defend and advance wages and conditions of Revenue workers.

Unfortunately, on such key issues as pay and automation, important resolutions that would lay the basis for such progress have been left off the Final Agenda by the Standing Orders Committee.

Support for a change of policy is growing at office and branch level, as members see the practical effect of trade union action. We now need a

programme that can take the Federation forward—dropping the dead letter of Pay Research in favour of pay claims based on the needs of our members; breaking away from the 'spirit of Whitleyism' towards a normal trade union negotiating procedure; and protecting jobs by implementing the existing policy of opposition to natural wastage.

The adoption of such policies would mark the transformation of the IRSF into a fighting trade union, which we will desperately need to face the coming attacks from the Tory government.

Thatcher's threats have already demonstrated to civil servants that they cannot afford to stand aside from politics. If the IRSF is to protect the interests of its members, it must influence political decisions by joining the industrial and white collar unions affiliated to the Labour Party.

By an IRSF member

With important issues such as dispute pay and the election of full-time officials missing from the programme of business at this year's ASTMS annual delegate conference, it seems likely that once again there will be a lively dispute over its acceptance.

Under the existing rules the NEC determine the level of strike pay. The inadequacy of the normal payments in a protracted dispute is reflected by the number of branches calling for strike-pay of £40 per week. This demand is, however, utopian, and would be counter-productive as the NEC would be forced in many cases to withhold dispute authority on purely financial grounds.

The amendment from the Scientific Staffs branch, as amended by Bracknell 939, seeks to set a realistic minimum level subject to annual review, and commit the NEC to take into account the entitlement of members' families to state benefits and protect those who receive less from these sources.

Many of the rule changes to be discussed this year are

purely cosmetic, but there are some important proposals. Most of these involve a shift in power and decision-making from the NEC to the Divisional Councils.

They would bring decision-making closer to the membership, and give extra responsibilities which will help to make the DCs the effective fighting and campaigning bodies we need in the regions.

The discussion of policy resolutions will include debates on economic policy, public sector cuts, health and safety, women's rights and new technology.

The resolution from Birmingham District correctly takes up the adverse effect of incomes policies on employment, but the amendment from Sheffield Health Service to delete the demand for selective import controls is necessary. While this demand is attractive to workers in some industries it does not attempt to tackle the root of the problem.

Whether implemented by quotas or import levies the main sufferers from such a policy would be workers

themselves. Workers buy imported goods because often they cannot afford the British equivalent. Import controls would put up the prices of imported goods and allow the price of British goods to rise in a protected environment.

What is needed is more investment in these industries. Where employers threaten redundancies we should be demanding work-sharing with no loss of pay, and the opening of the books. If a consistent failure to reinvest profits is revealed we must demand nationalisation with compensation only in cases of proven need.

Clive Jenkins revealed some of the other pitfalls of import controls when he spoke in Reading recently. Taking up the problems posed in the insurance industry by the introduction of new technology, he highlighted the need to build links with unions in other countries.

If workers in some countries had heard his earlier calls for import controls the task would have been much more difficult.

Unemployment is also the

central theme of the composite on new technology.

The section on advice to bargainers on the introduction of new technology in ASTMS areas points out that we should not be preventing the introduction of new equipment, but ensuring that the benefits are used to improve workers' conditions and not to boost the bosses' profits at the expense of jobs.

This is clarified by the Bracknell amendment, and should be supported.

We must use the union's technical know-how and strength to explain and draw our members behind a united trade union campaign for a 35-hour week and a guaranteed minimum wage of at least £70 for all; in this way the fruits of technological advance could mean progress for the whole of society, rather than a handful of profit-seekers.

By Paul Schofield

(Delegate, Bracknell 939 branch, in a personal capacity)

## SCPS COMES OF AGE

"Our union has come of age". This was the attitude of delegates to SCPS conference at Brighton last week.

The joint industrial action with CPSA members in this year's pay campaign was seen as decisive in the development of the Union. The SCPS has emerged strengthened and with renewed confidence.

A balance sheet of the lessons of the pay campaign and the final settlement was made. The Union Executive was censured for concluding the dispute without any firm 'no victimisation' guarantees from management for those involved in the industrial action. Delegates were anxious that no member would be threatened with suspension or loss of seniority.

Conference decided that a wider section of the membership must be involved in future disputes and that adequate preparation and consultation with all members was necessary to achieve this.

Above all, one message was hammered home time and time again—the need for unity of all civil service unions in future action. A motion calling on the Executive to investigate the possibilities of a merger with the CPSA was

passed overwhelmingly.

The determination of rank and file members to struggle when given a clear lead, together with the experience of this year's pay campaign, made delegates confident that in spite of disappointment with the settlement, their full demands can be achieved in the future.

Delegates were highly critical of the TUC General Council's lack of support for low-paid public sector workers who were forced to take industrial action this winter.

The mood and degree of understanding of many of the delegates showed that SCPS had shed completely the old "staff association" image. The chastening experience of a Tory government committed to slashing public expenditure and curtailing trade union rights will undoubtedly accelerate this process.

It will also raise in the minds of SCPS activists the need to take up political questions and to link up with the political arm of the trade union movement by affiliating to the Labour Party.

Report from Phil Luker in Brighton

## Dyers and Bleachers - DEFEND THE CLOSED SHOP

Conference meets at a time when Thatcher's reactionary Tory government is threatening the right to picket, the right to a closed shop, and for some workers even the right to strike.

The recent case involving the Dyers and Bleachers and Joe Thompson has been used by the Tories and their friends in the press as an example of the evils of trade unionism and particularly the closed shop.

The silence of the union leadership, who passed responsibility to the TUC, has only given encouragement to the Tory MPs who are backing Thompson.

The membership have a right to a clear explanation. The decision to restore Thompson's union card goes against the decision of the conference in 1976 not to lift the blacking of Denby's.

The executive have a clear duty to carry out conference decisions, not refer them to other bodies for action.

The Dyers and Bleachers have one of the longest and proudest democratic traditions of trade unions anywhere.

It was they who won the fight for the nine-hour day in Bradford nearly one hundred years ago, as well as securing a minimum wage and establishing the practice of union control over the employment of new labour.

All the improvements in conditions, however, do not compensate for the scandalously low wage levels in the industry or the long hours of overtime and anti-social shifts.

In unison with the rest of the labour and trade union movement, the union will have to fight to defend the gains of the past, and to challenge the threatened redundancies.

The incoming General Secretary, Bill Maddocks, is regarded as a militant trade unionist and socialist.

If we are to be successful in the coming struggles with the employers, backed by the Tory government, the entire membership will need to rally around a fighting leadership.

By Keith Narey



# G&MWU, NSSM, AUEW - TASS

## GMWU MEMBERS DRAW LESSONS FROM THE LAST YEAR

Many General and Municipal Workers' Union members worked hard during the election campaign for the return of the Labour government.

Despite the loyal support of the overwhelming majority of active trade unionists, the government's policies paved the way to defeat.

The TUC-government 'Concordat' was unable to save Labour. The crucial question for delegates is why? Was this the best policy for promoting the interests of our members?

It was aimed at heading off a 'wages stampede' and holding industrial action in check with 'codes of conduct' etc.

But the large sections of our membership involved in industrial action last winter know from their own experience that wage rises have not been causing inflation. They have been forced to take action precisely because inflation and other factors have cut real wages and the public services—the social wage.

### Sacrifices

The resolutions sent to congress indicate the frustration of the members. They have made huge sacrifices, yet unemployment has not fallen and low pay remains as a scourge on the working class.

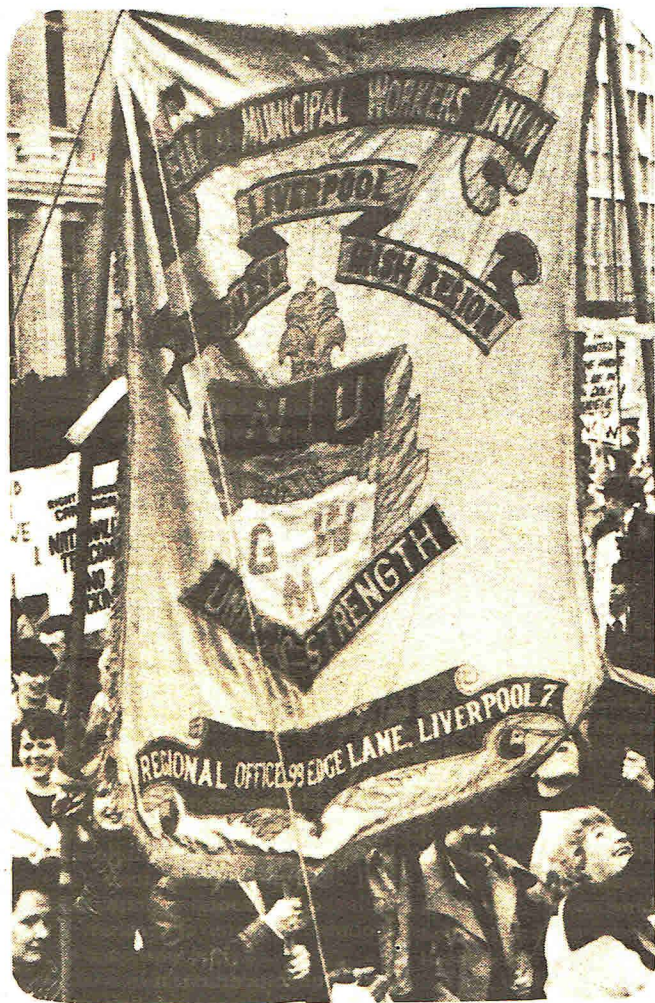
17 motions on the preliminary agenda urge action against unemployment. Another 6 insist that no form of wage restraint can be tolerated and 7 call for the trade union movement to fight for a minimum wage.

The agenda reflects growing militancy amongst the membership—not only in the struggles of public sector workers against cuts, low pay, outside contractors etc., but particularly on the need to implement conference policy, for example on the 35-hour week.

Members rightly express concern at the implications of new technology (micro-processors etc.). In themselves they could mean a tremendous step forward—a very much shorter working week, giving workers the time and opportunity to play a part in the running of industry and society.

This would only be possible in a planned socialist economy, however. With the anarchy of capitalism, the alternative is millions more on the dole.

This issue alone brings home the urgency of formulating and fighting on socialist policies like those outlined in



G&MWU members on telecommunications workers' lobby in London

resolutions from Liverpool 238, Wandsworth, Manchester, Cambridge and Perivale.

Whatever the Executive puts forward to 'deal' with the Tories, the fight back at Congress must be galvanised around these resolutions.

The half-hearted 'alternative economic strategy' of resolution 75 is no solution.

Too often Congress has been left without a fighting programme to rebuild the movement. Many resolutions reflect members' demands for the accountability of their 'representatives' and fuller democracy in their organisations—they call for fuller control over full-time officials, sponsored MPs, official strikes, shop stewards on negotiating bodies, and more powers for industrial conferences.

Particular anger is reflected in the protest at GMWU member Callaghan's state-

ments on picketing and at the GMWU delegation's abstention on the vital issue of wage restraint at Labour Party conference.

Other resolutions on homelessness, provision for under-fives, home-workers, kidney machines, well women's clinics, etc. show the desire of the membership for a just and humane society.

Delegates and visitors to Congress and members throughout the union are urged to join with 'Militant' in the campaign to transform the organisations of the labour movement in order to step up the fight for a Labour government with a socialist programme.

By Clare Doyle

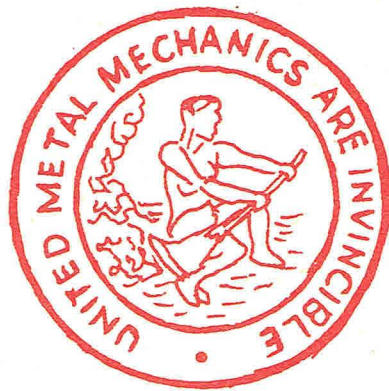
(Lambeth G&MWU)

### Militant GMWU Review 1979

Essential reading for all delegates to Congress and activists in the union. Price 5p plus 10p postage for single copies. Order from: 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

### MILITANT FORUM at GMWU Congress Torquay

Sunday May 20th  
6.45 pm, in the  
Conference Room,  
Torre Abbey  
(Back of Abbey Gardens  
on sea front.  
10 mins from Princess  
Theatre or Town Hall  
areas). All welcome



## METAL MECHANICS LEAD ON YOUTH

Most of the resolutions on this year's conference agenda have been stood on their heads by the Tory election victory.

The claims remain as a role-call of the short-comings and failures of the policies of the last Labour government and a further indictment of its programme.

The resolutions calling for a 35-hour week and a £60 minimum wage echo the programme of the Labour Party and TUC. We heard nothing of them during the election.

Now we face a Tory government pledged to attack our living standards, social services and the rights and internal democracy of the trade unions. The NSMM will be thrown into the battle to maintain and improve members' living standards.

The main attack will hit the younger members of the NSMM first. That's why this year's youth conference will be of great importance.

We need to work out a strong structure for the youth section, to be formalised at next year's rules' revision conference.

Resolution number 10 calls for the NEC to continue the campaign on youth representation as nothing came out of the remitted resolution at last year's TUC. The NSMM is giving a national lead on this issue. We should keep up the campaign by supporting this resolution.

The resolution calling for the lowering of the Youth Section's age limit should be rejected as a measure to undermine the section in its infancy. If Wolverhampton are against the youth section they should say so and not just try to weaken it by back-door methods.

The NEC set the age limit of 30 for all the right reasons and it should be kept there.

The full agenda for the annual conference still lacks a detailed programme of how to pay for the justified reforms

demand.

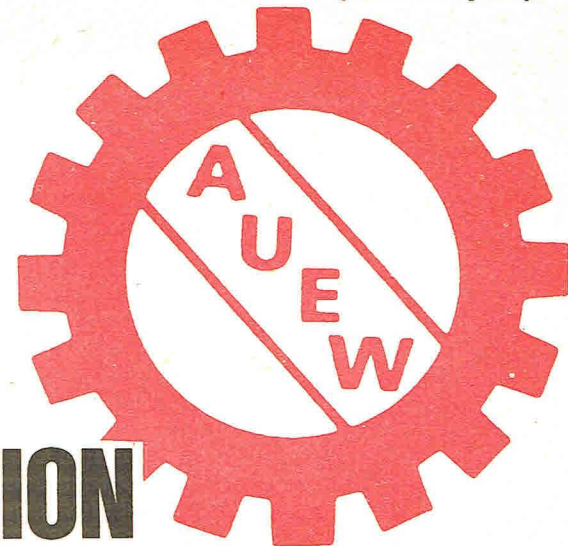
Our union has many links with the political arm of the movement, the Labour Party. Following the election defeat we have a responsibility to outline a programme that would arouse the enthusiasm of trade unionists and working people.

Nye Bevan once said, "Socialism is the language of priorities," and as he went on to say, the first must be the taking over of the commanding heights of the economy. This must become a part of our full programme to give our members and the majority of the population a real and continued improvement in living and working standards.

To meet the test of the next few years, the full strength of our union must be aligned to this programme, if we are to meet our members' needs.

By Steve Glennon, Glyn James and Rob Cadwgan (Stevenage and Bristol NSMM, personal capacity)

## AUEW - TASS FOR NAT- IONAL ACTION ON A NATIONAL CLAIM



At the 1979 AUEW-TASS Conference in Bournemouth, the EC's Annual Report will set the background for the debates.

Under the heading "The Industrial Crisis" the EC state: "Major closures have occurred or been threatened in the motor, steel, power engineering, shipbuilding, commercial vehicles, agricultural equipment and domestic appliances sectors."

"At the same time the development of micro-electronics and other forms of advanced technology will revolutionise production processes in many sectors of mechanical and electrical engineering."

Coupled with the election of the most reactionary Tory government since the war, this underlines the need to mobilise the membership around a programme to defend jobs and living standards and prepare the way to replacing the chaos of production for profit with a socialist plan of production. Unfortunately the EC re-

port misses the seriousness of the situation facing us over the next few years.

Motion 22 on "Pay Bargaining" comes nearer the mark with its rejection of wage restraint and its demands for improvements in members' real wages, the adult rate at 18 years for clerical workers and 20 years for technical workers, the eradication of low pay, a reduction of the working week and longer holidays.

It simply instructs the EC, however, to initiate a campaign amongst the membership at plant level (my emphasis) to achieve these demands.

All this means is that we carry on as before with the members in each plant left to their own devices to defend their living standards as best they can. This only dissipates the strength of the union. We need a national cam-

aign, in support of a national claim and backed by national action to achieve the 35-hour week without loss of pay, a national minimum wage of £70 per week, an increase of £15 for all members plus longer holidays.

Such a campaign could weld together the AUEW by taking up the demand for a joint claim to defend members' living standards. The left in the AUEW Engineering Section and the Confed. are rejecting plant bargaining in favour of national action to win their claim.

A national campaign by the whole AUEW would act as a beacon to other workers in the engineering industry and establish the benefits of one union for the engineering industry.

By Dominic Byrne  
(AUEW-TASS Stretford Branch)



# NUPE-AFTER THE LOW PAY STRIKE -WORKERS FIGHT ON

Delegates to the annual conference of the National Union of Public Employees, will undoubtedly want, as a first priority, to draw up a balance sheet of the public sector workers' strike early this year.

By Keith Simpson

(Edinburgh No 1 branch)

There are many resolutions, as at any union conference, calling for improvements in bonus schemes, supplements, sickness pay, holidays, pensions and so on.

On wages and political affairs however, the strike and its experiences have without doubt coloured the debate.

Only one resolution clearly outlines the idea of a 'no-strike' agreement in the Health Service, bartering the independence and strength of trade unionism in return for a reasonable payment. There are a number setting out demands for the elimination of low pay. Resolution no. 1 from Westminster Hospital calls for a minimum wage of £80 for 35 hours.

Branches also raise the weaknesses of the recent dispute.

The Nottingham Social Services motion points out

"That previous negotiations on wages have failed to achieve the full claim due to the lack of co-ordinated and comprehensive action by the unions representing public sector workers, the failure of the TUC to use the collective strength of the trade union movement to win the demand for a national minimum wage and the readiness with which the negotiators were willing to compromise."

Other resolutions, rather than shying away from the idea of industrial action, call on the union leaders to co-ordinate all NUPE members in the various sections to strengthen public sector bargaining power.

For many delegates, conference will undoubtedly be dominated by the debate on the union's relationship with the Labour Party.

Five separate resolutions call for affiliation funds to be withdrawn; a further two demand the cancellation of sponsorship for Labour



This winter's strike: a turning point for low paid workers

members of parliament.

The very fact that these resolutions stand on the agenda of one of the TUC's biggest unions is an indictment of the policies of the Labour government—supported by some trade union leaders—over the last five years.

'Militant' consistently criticised the Labour leaders' programme, which placed the economic burdens of capitalism on the shoulders of the working people. The government presided over massive cuts in the public services while it did little to alleviate the problems of low-paid workers.

Labour ministers who publicly boasted about crossing union picket-lines were trampling on the faces of the very people who have worked and fought for years to put those same ministers in power.

Within the Labour Party, 'Militant' supporters warned that the policies of the Labour government—which flew in the face of TUC and Labour Party conference decisions—were a sure guarantee of Labour's election defeat. Unfortunately, we proved to be right. The motions calling for disaffiliation, like the election defeat, are a sure sign of workers' complete disillusionment with those policies.

But despite the understandable anger and bitterness behind these resolutions, it would be a serious mistake for conference to pass them. It would be a step backwards, a negative reaction.

Where would our union be today if members had thrown in our cards instead of staying to fight for policies and leaders who reflected our needs? The fight for change will carry on in the Labour Party's ranks but these resolutions would turn our union, with its enormous potential influence, into a by-stander.

The other motions and amendments on this question no doubt reflect exactly the same sentiments and feelings, but with an entirely different approach. They call on the union to use its political affiliation to restore democracy and accountability in the Labour Party.

The amendment from Camden Central calls on NUPE to mount a campaign inside the Labour Party to introduce mandatory reselection of MPs, for the publicising of MP's voting records, the withdrawal of sponsorship from MPs who oppose the

union's policies. At least two other amendments echo a similar, positive approach.

NUPE members are no longer prepared to unquestioningly give money and loyalty to the Labour Party. They are demanding more of the Party and of sponsored MPs.

We cannot stand aside from politics—the Tories will make sure of that.

If the amendments from Camden and Queen Elizabeth Hospital were passed, it would represent a big step forward. Not only would the political link be maintained, but it would commit NUPE to an unstinting fight inside the Labour Party to transform it on more democratic lines, to bring the Party, and in particular its MPs, into line with the wishes and interests of the ordinary trade union members, who built and support it.

## LPYS CONFERENCE

The Labour Party conference and last Young Socialists' conference will now be taking place on Saturday/Sunday 28/29 July in conjunction with the Summer Camp.

The Summer Camp programme will begin at the end of the

conference and last until 4th August. It is now doubly important that there is a maximum possible turnout to make it the most representative conference yet.

LPYS branches will receive full details in the next few days.

1979, and are now getting a further rise of 7.8% also backdated: a 32% increase.

In money terms it means that a private [1st class] is on £4,359, a Lieutenant-Colonel and a Commander on £11,500.

Even so, it is not certain that the ruling class will succeed in buying the loyalty of the police and army in the stormy days ahead.

Whenever the army has been used for strike-breaking, there has been sympathy for the workers among the soldiers. After all, many young

workers are forced into the services by unemployment.

And it would take more than a pay rise to overcome the impotence of the police when faced with the organised strength of the trade union movement—demonstrated in the 1972 miners' strike.

But the Thatcher government's haste in paying the police and the army—the "armed bodies of men" on which the power of the state ultimately depends—is a warning of what this reactionary Tory government will mean for the working class.

# Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

Editor: Peter Taaffe, Business Manager: Dave Galashan. Published by Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Printed by Cambridge Heath Press Ltd [TU]

## EEC ELECTIONS... HELP IN A SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN

By Josie Aitman (LPYS NC-elect)

The Euro-Elections [7 June] are fast approaching.

Standing for Labour in Liverpool and Bootle is Terry Harrison, fighting on a socialist programme as an alternative to the capitalist EEC.

This socialist campaign on Merseyside will enable the Labour Party to win the support of working people. A campaign for the introduction of a 35-hour week, and the struggle against unemployment, not just in Liverpool, but in Europe as a whole will play a vital part in winning this support.

Terry has belonged to the Labour Party for over 20 years, and played a major role in building up the youth section in Liverpool. The Labour

Party Young Socialists in Liverpool are appealing to LPYS members all over the country to support Terry.

We are organising a national mass canvass in Liverpool and Bootle on Saturday June 2nd, to be followed by a march against unemployment and a rally.

In the evening there will be a social/disco. Accommodation is being arranged with local party members.

On Sunday 3 June we will have a further morning of canvassing.

Most areas of the country are already organising coaches. This is an ideal opportunity for every LPYS member, new and old, to help fight in a socialist campaign.

Give your support to elect a candidate pledged to socialist policies for Europe. For further details contact your LPYS National Committee member, or Josie Aitman, 67 Hillberry Ave, Liverpool L13 7ET. Tel: 051-220 4602.

This year's MILITANT MEETING at the CPSA's conference in Brighton last Tuesday was the most successful ever—attended by 160 people who demonstrated their enthusiasm for Marxist ideas with a magnificent collection of £850!

GET

# Militant

BRITAIN	26 Issues... £5.60
13 Issues... £2.90	52 Issues...£11.20
EUROPE [Airspeeded]	REST OF WORLD [Airspeeded]
26 Issues... £6.10	26 Issues... £7.10
52 Issues...£12.20	52 Issues...£14.20

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Make cheques payable to MILITANT and return to the Circulation Department, MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Bulk orders available, sale or return.

## CONFRONTATION

(Continued from page one) and the armed forces are intended to make them part of the system. They want forces who will automatically carry out orders, instead of thinking for themselves and questioning orders.

While the working class got around 15% on average over the last 12 months, the police got 40%-20% in September 1978, 20% in May 1979, and probably another 15% rise in

September 1979.

The 127,000 police officers will be on £3,600 [for a new recruit under 22], £20,500 for a Chief Constable. In London, the new recruit will get £5,269, and all the police officers will get an allowance of £1,000 for a tax free rent allowance or help with the mortgage.

The armed forces on the other hand, had a rise of 24.2% backdated to 1 April