

# Militant

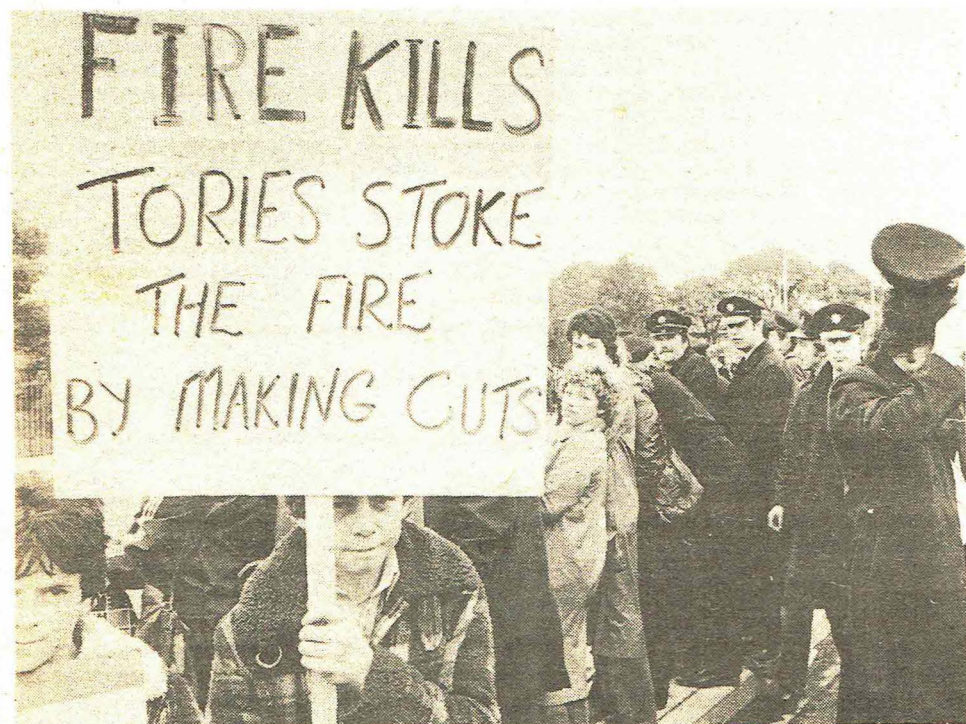
THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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15p

## FIGHT TORY PAY CUTS

### 6% limit means 10% real wage cut



This Tory government is trying to cut the pay of firemen and other public sector workers by ten per cent.

This would be the effect of a 6% limit on wage increases when inflation is running at 16%. The Tories have shown nothing but contempt for the wage agreement which arose

**Ken Cameron**  
(General Secretary designate, Fire Brigades Union)  
spoke to Brian Ingham

out of the 1977 strike. In the last strike we achieved an important victory, admittedly not an instant victory as far as the 10% policy was concerned. But this time round it is more than ever important that we win. The responsibility for endangering lives lies clearly with the government not the firemen. Our agreement was supposed to take us out of the arena of industrial action, but this government, which keeps lecturing the trade union movement on the need to stand by agreements, has now actively encouraged the local authorities to rip up the agreement they have signed with the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO)

## MOVE OUT, THATCHER

When Thatcher was asked what the unemployed in Wales should do, she replied that they should move to find work.

The Welsh Region of the Labour Party Young Socialists gave a better answer last Saturday. Our demonstration against unemployment in Port Talbot—over 300 strong—demanded that Thatcher and the rest of the Tories should move—out of government!

One thousand jobs per

By Dave Reid

week have disappeared from South Wales this year and that is before closures and cuts have been announced. In Port Talbot, one in eight workers are unemployed with new redundancies in the steel industry still to be announced.

The Tories don't give a damn about the lives ruined by unemploy-

ment. They've got precious few parliamentary seats in South Wales to lose; as one speaker at the rally put it, all they could lose was Nicholas Edwards, Secretary of State for Wales, and that was no loss!

The Tories do fear the power of the labour movement though, when it goes into action.

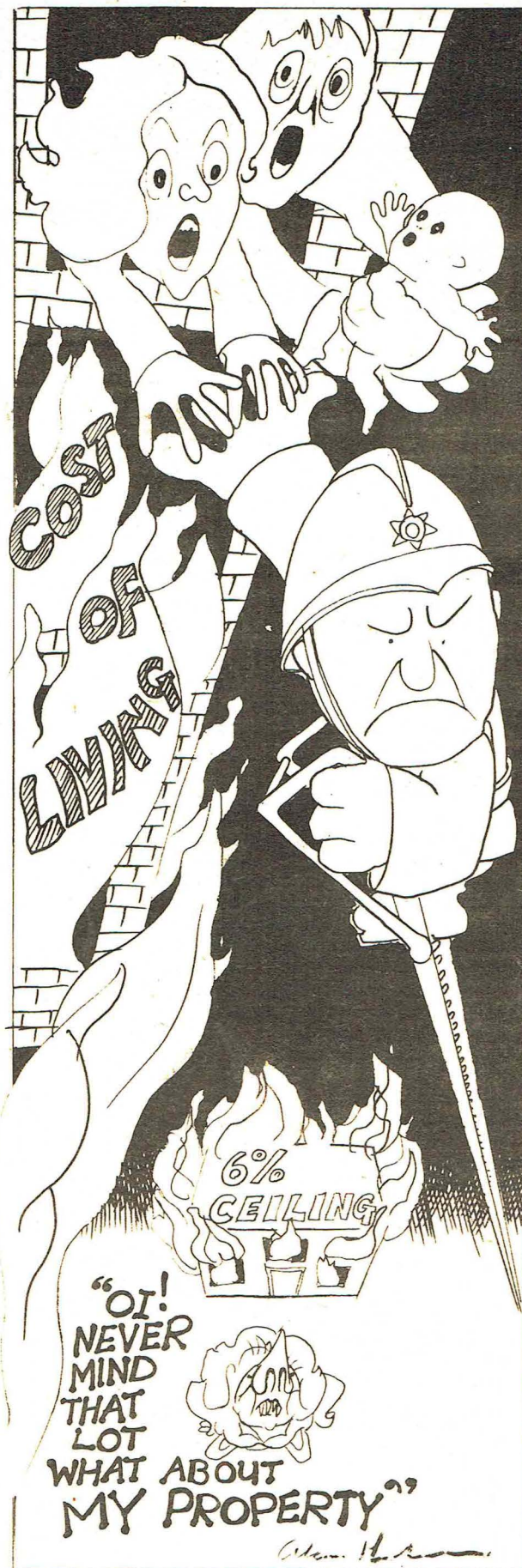
The burning anger at the Tories was shown by the turn-out—the biggest youth demonstration in South Wales in living memory. It got a marvel-

ous response from working people in Port Talbot.

As we marched through the estates, people came out of pubs, shops and houses to applaud or even join the demonstration.

One elderly woman said that in the 1930s her husband was on the dole and half the family had to move to London to find work. Now it's her children and grandchildren who can't find work—history has re-

(CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)



## FIREMEN LEAD THE WAY

When the firemen last went into dispute against the Labour government's pay policy in 1977 Thatcher made the following hypocritical comment. "My great complaint is that these people have been told they can freely negotiate and then they're told 'It's not free you can only get 10%'."

### For a one day Public Sector Strike

**EDITORIAL COMMENT**

The government has declared war on public sector workers with Thatcher's arbitrary 6% incomes policy.

Firemen, hospital workers, local authority manual workers and civil servants all face a real cut in living standards of at least 10%.

Heseltine, the minister responsible for local government, told a packed meeting of businessmen that "sacrifice is not an option. Someone is going to have to make it. It is a question of who and to what extent."

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March against unemployment - 29th November

# Militant

1 Mentmore  
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## Foot victory doesn't end right-wing threat

The election of Michael Foot to the leadership of the Labour Party in the parliamentary Labour Party's election represents a victory for the ranks of the labour movement.

The extent of the blow suffered by the right-wing and their backers in the Tory press can be gauged by the reaction of the 'Times'. The morning after the election over a headline which read: "An Unmitigated Folly" the Editor of the 'Times' commented "Mr Foot's election as leader of the Labour Party, is a terrible mistake for the Labour Party."

Rees Mogg, Editor of the 'Times', failed Tory candidate and slavish supporter of Thatcher's present ruthless economic policies is of course concerned to strengthen and enhance the cause of the Labour Party! Healey was the candidate of the 'Times', the 'Financial Times', the 'Economist', indeed the ruling class as a whole.

He represents to them a bulwark against socialist policies. A Labour government led by Dennis Healey

would have been more likely, they calculated, to have resisted the pressure for left and socialist policies in a future Labour government.

The election of Michael Foot therefore reflects the big shift towards the left which has taken place within the Labour Party over the last ten years and in the last two years in particular. Support for the right-wing has all but evaporated in many constituency Labour Parties. Neville Sandelson, extreme right-wing Labour MP, got just one vote in a recent meeting of the General Council of his Labour Party!

But the result of this election would not have been possible without the victories on re-selection of Labour MPs and the election of party leader at the last Blackpool Labour Party conference.

The prospect of Healey being elected by a right-wing Parliamentary Labour Party only to be rejected by the electoral college, undoubtedly had an effect on some centre and even right-wing Labour MPs. The

pressure from the constituencies and the prospect of reselection also had an effect on the way some MPs voted.

The right-wing and the press have been squealing in the past few days about the "unconstitutional" pressure exerted by the constituencies and the Yorkshire miner's union on MPs to vote for Michael Foot. Those who support, who work for the Labour Party and provide the finance, have every right to make clear to MPs the way they think they should vote on such a vital issue as the Labour leadership.

Healey is seen as the main advocate of the right-wing "monetarist" policies of the last Labour government. He, together with the cabinet, in effect carried through a policy of watered down Thatcherism which prepared the way for the present vicious anti-working class movement. In rejecting Healey and the right-wing, the ranks of the labour movement have rejected the policies of the last Labour government and are searching for an alternative. This

is what the election Michael Foot represents.

However, the press have portrayed Michael Foot as a rabid "left winger". It is true that he has been identified with the Tribune left and some of their demands, such as nuclear disarmament, opposition to the Common Market etc. However, he moved to the right when he joined the Labour cabinet of 1974.

He did pioneer the Employment Protection Bill which countered the Heath Industrial Relations Act and gave important concessions to the trade unions. This earned him wide support within the labour movement and bitter opposition from the employers, the Tories and the press. But at the same time he supported the measures of the Labour government in presiding over cuts in government expenditure, the rise in unemployment, and the general deterioration in working class living standards under that government.

This in no sense arose merely from personal deficiencies of Michael Foot. As long as the Labour government remained within the framework of capitalism, it was forced to do the bidding of the big monopolies. If you accept the system you must accept the laws of the system.

The rank and file of the labour movement will be demanding that Michael Foot's election represents a turning away from such policies. This in turn would mean an abandonment of the right-wing policies which led to the shipwreck

of the Labour government of 1974-1979. This is what the ranks of the movement are demanding.

However, the right-wing within the Parliamentary Labour Party which is still powerful, will be exerting enormous pressure in order to ensure that a socialist programme would not form the bedrock of such a campaign and of a socialist Labour government. It is clear that the right-wing hope to ensure their control of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the forthcoming shadow cabinet elections.

### Election reflects shift to left

It is noticeable that the right-wing "gang of three" in the immediate aftermath of the election are not threatening to split. Yet, before the Labour Party conference some of them threatened to split if the conference accepted the decisions on party democracy, on unilateralism and on the Common Market.

After the conference they amended their position and said their 'sticking point' would be the election of Michael Foot.

They are like the aspiring priest who accepts celibacy 'but not just yet!'

The right-wing will be fighting a stubborn rear-guard action in order to see whether they can roll the

tide back on party democracy and on socialist policies in general. They hope to water down the electoral college on the grounds allegedly of 'one man, one vote.'

What they hope to do in effect is to dissolve the active fighting mass membership of the Labour Party into the Labour voters. Therefore, it would be fatal to take the victory of Michael Foot as the end of right wing dominance in the Parliamentary Labour Party. It is not excluded that if they fail to get their way on party democracy and policy that in the aftermath of the January conference a section of right wing MPs of about 20-25, could split away and link up with Jenkins in some kind of centre party.

But even if this were to happen it would not mean the end of the right wing in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Some would remain and could possibly form a right wing Trojan Horse in a future Labour government. Therefore the ranks of the labour movement, while encouraged by the victory of Michael Foot, should step up the campaign for the rearming of the labour movement with a bold socialist programme and a democratisation of the labour movement from top to bottom.

Only such a programme would evade the pitfalls into which the last Labour government fell and arm the labour movement for victory, not just against the Tories but against the system that produced the monstrosity of the Thatcher-Joseph government.

## FIREMEN : Editorial

(CONTINUED FROM  
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The millionaire landowners, company directors and stock exchange speculators who make up the Tory cabinet exempt themselves from all sacrifice. So do the well-heeled businessmen who have applauded the 6% wages' policy of the Tories.

It is only the working class who are being called upon to make sacrifices. In particular, it is the public sector workers who are being singled out. The firemen are in the front line of the present attack.

Three years ago after a bitter nine-week strike the firemen agreed to a pay formula which would keep their pay in line with average industrial earnings. Now the government has reneged on that agreement.

Under that agreement, an 18½% increase in wages had been concluded by the local authority negotiators and the FBU. This was then snatched back by the local authorities following the announcement of the 6% rate support grant increase by the government.

The wave of action which then spontaneously swept the fire stations pointed to the fierce indignation of the

firemen. Most areas immediately instituted a policy of answering emergency calls only.

The Union executive has since met and issued a call for a series of one day strikes. This policy will be put to a special FBU conference. At least for the moment, therefore, our EC are advising against an all-out strike.

The EC are trying to put maximum possible pressure on the government while at the same time trying to save firemen and the general public from hardship.

Firemen were on strike during Christmas 1977 and the government has no doubt timed its attack in order to try and deter firemen from action by thoughts of financial worries during the coming Christmas period.

But unless this attack is successfully beaten back then the financial worries of firemen will not be confined to the Christmas period, they will be all year round, and they will become more and more acute.

This government has proved that it will only respond if workers show that they are

prepared to use their industrial muscle in defence of their rights and conditions. The recent action of the dockers clearly demonstrates this.

A series of one day strikes will have a certain effect, but it is unlikely that they will be sufficient to force this government to pay the agreed 18.8% increase.

With a bold lead firemen will respond. This was the case in 1977. We believe that firemen will respond with even more determination today, especially once they see how the local authorities are deliberately singling out firemen as whipping boys.

We have a document signed by Brian Rushbridge, the employers' secretary, which states that "there is no doubt that a successful disengagement from the pay formula would provide a very strong warning to other groups in local government."

But firemen must not be left to fight alone. In every area meetings should be called to bring stewards and union branch officials together to work out in detail plans for raising regular finance in

"The government have deliberately thrown down the gauntlet to the firemen like they did with the steel workers."

Ray Bryant  
FBU West Midlands  
regional secretary

"If the Tories get away with this they will cut the service even further and next year they won't give us any pay rise at all."

Dave Dee  
Liverpool Division  
FBU

"We are not going to give the government the opportunity to plan as well as they did before the last strike."

Jim Flockhart  
Scottish secretary FBU

order to sustain a firemen's strike. Possible supporting action should also be discussed.

Also the TUC must give a lead. In 1977 the TUC shamefully refused to give us their full support. This time there is enormous pressure in



Firemen have learnt a lot since their first industrial action three years ago

### Support Firemen

all public service unions for joint action alongside firemen.

The TUC should work out with all public service unions a bold plan of joint action. This should begin with a well-prepared one-day strike of all

public service workers.

With unity, solidarity and firm action by the trade unions, the Tory 6% policy will be torn to shreds.

[more reports page 14]

## PAY CUTS

(CONTINUED FROM  
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FBU.

Our argument is not with the public; it is with the government and the local authority employers!

We learnt a lot from the nine-week strike in 1977/78. Now, as a first stage, we will be calling one-day lightning

strikes. The employers won't be able to send the troops home and then bring them out again when the one-day strikes take place because, after the first one, we won't be giving them much notice.

The troops will therefore have to be deployed continually. This will cause both financial chaos and disruption for the local authorities. We believe that in this way the one-day strikes will be a

very effective weapon.

Of course, if necessary, we will look at the situation again. We don't rule out the possibility of all-out action at the end of the day.

In fact in their present mood the employers themselves could well institute a lock-out nationally or in certain areas.

We will not allow the local authorities to start picking off our people area by area.

It is also important that other workers join in the fight. I would hope that other local authority workers don't stand back and say, "Let's wait and see what happens to the firemen."

The manual workers are in the middle of negotiations. I would hope in particular that they will see what is happening to the firemen and join in any action that is required.

Waiting to see if the

firemen break through the 6% will not work, because the Tories are likely to try and be just as firm as ever on the 6%, even after a victory for the firemen.

The government wants to set workers against workers in the public sector. They have said, yes firemen can have their 18.8%, but it's going to mean the jobs of other public service workers.

There is therefore no

question about it: unless the TUC gets the public service workers together they are going to be picked off one by one. We hope that through the TUC there will be a very clear and co-ordinated policy of action.

Words alone are not going to stop the implementation of this 6% policy.

# Make Nov. 29th mass anti-Tory rally



Nearly 1,000 marched against the Tories last weekend in Cambridge

Photo: Ian Campbell

Moving the campaign against the Tories on to the streets has had enormous impact.

Last weekend saw three marches by the LPYS in Wales, Cambridge and Halifax and all of them had far larger contingents at the end of the march than at the beginning.

Such is the anger at what the Tories are doing to their living standards that many people quit shopping and joined the marches.

In Cambridge nearly 1,000 finally marched behind the Eastern Region LPYS banner. Initially 400 Young Socialists and Labour Party members set off, led by the Savoy Jazz Band.

But as it marched through the town centre, hundreds joined in—pensioners with

By Chris Ballard  
(Cambridge LPYS)  
and Mick Fallon  
(Halifax LPYS)

their shopping, mothers with their children and many more. Students leaned out of the windows of the 'ivory towers' of the town's many colleges and waved red scarves, blankets; any piece of material made do—so long as it was red!

As the march entered the city centre the band broke into the 'Red Flag,' and the few fur-coated Tories that dared showed their face scuttled into the nearest tea-shops.

Delegations on the march came from as far away as Norwich, Lowestoft, Brentwood and Stevenage and included a number of trade

union banners from workers in local government (NALGO) the public services (NUPE), building (UCATT), administration (ASTMS) and agriculture (NUAAW).

Speaking at the rally after the march, Jack Boddy, General Secretary of the Agricultural Workers Union said "unless we do something about this Tory government, there will be four million and five million unemployed." But the ultimate cause of this tragic situation, he explained, did not lie just with the mad men and women of the Tory cabinet, but with "the breakdown of the international capitalist system."

Nick Toms of the LPYS National Committee went on to argue for the policies the labour movement should campaign on. No policies were any good that allowed unemployment to continue.

There, as well as in Greenock and Falkirk.

The trade unions must open the doors to the unemployed and organise them into a fighting wing of the labour movement.

That was the major theme of the recent conference organised by the Central Region Federation of Trades Councils of Scotland. 100 trade unionists called for the Stirling, Falkirk and Alloa Trades Councils to set up unemployed sub-committees.

Stirling in particular is a disaster area with 2,300 out of work and only 24 jobs advertised in the local job centre. Now what the unemployed need is a socialist programme to fight around.

In Wallsend and Cramlington, LPYS canvassing over a weekend netted 25 new names for the LPYS and the party. One mother even signed up her sons to the YS in their absence!

Dunfermline YS's determination to get people to Liverpool has already motivated the local TGWU and NUPE to book 30 places on the LPYS coach. In Edinburgh where the POEU have given the LPYS a £25 donation, the LPYS are also helping to get the unemployed organised. An unemployed union has been established

## NO PROSPECTS ANYWHERE

"If this is the prosperous south, god help the north," declared Ray Allen, Secretary of the Kent Graphical Society, when he opened the first ever LPYS Young Worker's Conference in Kent.

With 40,000 workers unemployed in the county there was little chance of getting a job down here.

One southerner who has been hit by the collapse of British capitalism is assembler Michael McCarthy. He was an active Conservative trade unionist until a recent meeting with Tory Employment Minister, James Prior. He resigned in disgust and a week later found himself sacked from his job in Basingstoke along with 450 other workers. He claims he has been victimised. Perhaps he understands how two million others have been victimised by this rich man's government.

The forty young miners, engineers and LPYS members who met at the Kent weekend school were determined to step up the campaign to get a maximum turn-out for the Liverpool demonstration. Throughout the country there is no illusion that

## TAKING TO THE STREETS

That's why it is vital that we campaign for a 35-hour week without loss of pay and a national minimum wage of at least £80 per week.

### Socialist programme

But "our programme must go to the root of the problem, namely the private ownership of the factories and private ownership of the banks. The struggle must be linked towards the socialist transformation of society as the only way to guarantee a job and decent standard of living for everyone."

And as Dennis Skinner, MP for Bolsover, explained, it's not just a question of policies, but linked to the fight to democratise the movement—"a 35-hour week is already Labour Party policy. We need a leadership prepared to fight for it."

In Halifax such was the enthusiasm of the marchers and the anger against the Tories that by the time the march reached the Town Hall it had virtually doubled in size to 240. Speakers at the rally stressed that this wasn't the end of the protest but that a fightback should now be waged in earnest and as a first step workers and unemployed should come on the November 29 demonstration.

## Local government workers back march

NALGO nationally will be supporting the demonstration and march in Liverpool against the Tories.

General Secretary for NALGO, Geoffrey Drain, has stated... "As the objectives for march and demonstration are fully in accord with NALGO's policies as determined by annual conference, it is hoped that branches throughout the country will give their support and arrange to send members to the demonstration."

Already the North Western and North Wales District Council have given their support and one branch in Scotland, Strathclyde are considering sending two buses or supporting the already well-subsidised Trades Council train.

Every opportunity should

be taken by NALGO members to get their branches to organise buses. In Strathclyde collection sheets and leaflets will be given out asking for support for the march.

This occasion will not only provide activists within the union the chance of supporting on a massive scale this demonstration, but also the possibility of raising the issue of NALGO affiliation to the Labour Party itself. Meetings can be organised at all levels in the union and speakers from Campaign for NALGO Affiliation to Labour Party (CNALP) can be contacted through the secretary, D Purton, 9 Willow Field, Harlow, Essex.

By David Churchley  
[Strathclyde NALGO  
Branch Council]

## UNEMPLOYED ANGER

The anger of the unemployed burst into Brighton Borough Council's cosy chambers last week.

The leader of the Labour group presented the Tory controlled council with Brighton LPYS's petition calling for a day centre for the unemployed. The YS lobbied the meetings and took along our Maggie—(privileged megalomaniac)—guy.

But once inside the public gallery we found the Conservatives couldn't even be bothered to discuss our proposals. In protest Alan Huyton, a YS member, who had been on the dole for five months, got to his feet and told them what he thought of their attitude.

The nature of the Tories concern for the unemployed was revealed by their calling

the police to clear the gallery. We left peacefully but determined not to give up. On the spur of the moment we took the guy and leaflets down to the bus stops and station.

The response was marvelous. We collected over £3 with ease. After all a penny to burn Maggie is the best bargain of the year!

By Beth Miller  
[Brighton LPYS]

We're going  
to Liverpool  
—are you?

### Trains

London Labour Party, the Welsh Labour Party, Coventry DLP, N Wales NUPE, Glasgow Trades Council, North Central London POEU have also reserved 150 seats on a train.

### Coaches

### Trades Councils

Bradford, Oldham, Gateshead, Ellesmere Port, Cardiff, Harlow, Hull, Stafford, Stoke, Stockton.

### Unions

NUPE: Northern Region, Leicester, Bristol, Scunthorpe, Nottingham.  
TGWU: Stoke, Manchester busmen, Nottingham.  
AUEW: Leeds, Bury, Telford, Grantham.  
NUM: Maltby, Derbyshire.  
NALGO: Manchester.  
GMWU: Manchester, Rochdale.  
BAKERS: Brighton.  
UCATT: Manchester.  
POEU: Stoke, W Yorks.  
SOGAT: Newcastle.  
ASTMS: Bradford.  
SHOP STEWARDS: Manchester GEC, Shardlows [Sheffield], Hull docks.

### Labour Parties

Newbattle [YS], Dunfermline [YS], W Stirling [YS], Perth [YS], Sunderland N, Durham, Newcastle West [YS], Gosforth [YS], Chester-le-Street [YS], Northern Region [YS], Shipley, Rother Valley, Barnsley, Pennystone, Hull E, Hull W, Teesside Thornaby, Stockton, Gorton [YS], Gorton, Royton & Heywood, Ardwick, Ardwick [YS], Wythenshawe, Wythenshawe [YS], Moss Side, Withington, Rochdale, Stockport, Chester, Salford, Stafford, Telford, Birmingham [YS], Redditch, Scarborough, Bridlington, Grimsby, Scunthorpe, Leicester, Oxford, Reading, Bracknell, Bristol.

### Students

Bournville Tech, Hull University, Coleg Harlech, Southwark Poly, Cardiff University.

The Labour Party march against unemployment in Liverpool on November 29th has the full backing of the TUC. All trade unionists should be attempting to get their unions to send them. The LPYS are pushing for the biggest ever Labour Party demonstration.

### Further details

Andy Bevan, Labour Party HQ, 150 Walworth Road, London S.E.17.



A delegate at the 1978 Tory conference—wearing a 'Trade unionists for a Tory victory' badge! Eighteen months of Tory attacks have reduced this rare species to the point of well-deserved extinction.

# TWENTIETH CENTURY DODO

## Tory trade unions

**Tory trade unions? No such thing! This point was driven home at last Saturday's rally against the Tories in Reading. As one Labour councillor said, "It's like socialist bankers. They must be masochists!"**

**Tory trade unionists must be a very rare species indeed. Anybody could get into the 'Conservative Trade Union Conference'. Several delegates were neither Tories nor trade union members.**

Even one Young Socialist was offered a ticket. Of course, she refused.

**By John Ennis**

(Reading South LPYS and CPSA)

Hundreds came to show their anger at the Tory government's policies.

With eight people chasing every vacancy there is no hope at all for many youngsters. The week Thatcher came to

Reading two big local engineering firms announced closure plans—destroying hundreds of jobs in this once prosperous area.

Thatcher had the gall to tell the conference that trade unions were not prepared to take their medicine!

One woman summed up the angry mood of the crowd when she shouted: "This is no good. We can't hit her from up here." But the police had this rare species well protected.

Twenty YS members were on the demo, with 'Plunder-woman' posters, leaflets and petitions. One sold 35 papers and a group of ten school students wanted to join the YS there and then.

This attempted publicity stunt backfired on the Tories. With Thatcher's vicious attacks on the working class, not surprisingly very few trade unionists now dare call themselves Tories. As one YS banner put it—"Thatcher—not wanted."

## Make every young worker a Young Socialist

**Over 150 young workers, students and unemployed attended an excellent 'Young Workers' Conference' organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists recently.**

Ray Williams, secretary, Merseyside NGA, told the conference how the bosses in the print industry have stopped all apprenticeships. Many works have either closed or announced short-time working. But in the fight against unemployment it has been the young workers at the forefront of all action.

Eddie Loyden, Liverpool Labour councillor and ex-

**By Simon Swinnerton**  
(North West LPYS Regional Committee)

MP for Garston, outlined the disgusting levels of unemployment that the people of Liverpool face. He explained how the mis-named Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was no answer to the problems many young people face. "In many cases young people on the YOP do a full day's work for less than a third of the union rate, and employers use it as an excuse not to take on anyone full-time."

He went on to say that the last time capitalism was in such a crisis was in the 1930s and the only way they

got out of it was the second world war. At present, war is ruled out and there is no way out of the mass misery that millions face in this country and many others.

A SOGAT member, Paddy Dunn, from Bowaters, explained what was happening inside the threatened Mersey mill. He told how the LPYS and 'Militant' had gained a good response to the programme they had put across to save the plant.

During the discussion an appeal for funds was made and the sum of £95 was raised. In the beginning of the afternoon session it was agreed to split the collection: £15 for the unemployed to travel to Liverpool on November 29th; £25 to the Gardner's strikers; £25

to the Newsham General Hospital struggle and £30 to the LPYS campaign fund.

Derek Hatton, Liverpool NALGO and Labour councillor, opened the afternoon session on how the Labour councillors in Liverpool were fighting the cuts. He pointed out that the so-called "radical" Liberals were almost as reactionary as the Tories. They fought for larger cuts, and jointly the two parties were destroying the city.

The final speaker was the Labour Party National Youth Officer, Andy Bevan.

He outlined the anger and hostility that working class youth feel as a direct result of Thatcher's policies.

But all this anger is pointless unless it is channelled into political oppo-

sition. The LPYS should use its 'Charter for Young Workers' as a means of winning the youth to a bold socialist programme, a fighting programme that



could answer their problems.

Discussions then followed on every aspect of YS activity and Tory attacks. One comrade said how she had organised a YOP works committee because unions

were banned from the workplace.

By the time Andy Bevan had summed up it was clear from the day's discussion that the North West region of the LPYS has tremendous strength in the trade unions, schools and on the dole. This strength will grow by leaps and bounds as the Tories' policies bite even deeper.

### ULSTER POLY OCCUPIED

**Forty students from the Ulster Poly occupied the Education and Library board building in Belfast recently.**

The demonstration and occupation was a protest against the Tory education cuts, and economic and political policies. The protest was loud and drew the attention of the media.

The Poly Labour Club intervened and the 'Militant' was sold to students and workers who passed through the demonstration.

Students speaking to the public, through a megaphone, called for trade union action against the Tories and the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

The demonstration was just one other symptom of contempt the people have for the Tories. As the Tories attempt to bleed the working class dry, the conditions they are creating are awakening and pumping new blood into the political veins of the working class. The students of the Ulster Poly are showing that now is indeed, the time for action against the Tories.

**By Glenn Simpson**

## LIVING GRANT - YES STUDENT LOANS - NO

**If Tory students get their way, working class people can say goodbye to the right to free further education.**

The right-wing majority of the Federation of Conservative Students have just issued a policy statement for higher education students. They say students should get a mandatory £500 grant, with the rest made up from a loan, no doubt from the banks and finance houses who already milk the working people dry, with massive profits for themselves.

This must be a warning to the labour movement and particularly students over

**By Peter Lush**

future Tory policies—it is not only the FCS which has come up with this reactionary idea, but leading Tories such as Keith Joseph have long since supported this scheme.

The publication of this statement, which marks a significant move to the right by the FCS, has already been condemned by 16 of their leading members.

Already, the proportion of working class students in higher education has fallen during the 1970s. A loans system would further reduce the participation of working class students, as rich students would not need to rely on loans.

In a time of high levels of graduate unemployment, it would be a further pressure to study courses with a high guarantee of a job, which would lead to course closures.

It would leave graduates burdened with loan repayments or paying a "graduate tax" after they qualify. And how would they pay it back? Many graduates are already on the dole, and others spend years in specialist education only to find themselves in a low paid job.

The number of graduates employed has always been an indication of the "health" of a country's economy. What an indictment of British capitalism that they would not be prepared to invest in administrators for their own indus-

try but want these people to pay for their own education.

These proposals must be seen in the context of the Tories' overall attacks on education and working class living standards. The bitter experience of this government is that no reform won in the past is safe. There is no reason why the present grants system, which was established in 1963 by the 'Robbins Report' should be immune from the Tory axe.

Labour Clubs must lead the fightback against the Tory proposals. Challenge the Tory students to a debate. Commit your Students' Union to opposition to a loans system. Raise the issue in the Labour Party, explaining that it is part of the general attacks on

working class education. We must be clear that this is a political fight, and commit the NUS leaders to organise a political campaign in opposition to the Tories and their attacks on education.

Labour Clubs should fight for:

★ Opposition to a "loans" system!

★ For a living grant of £2,400 per year for all students!

★ For a grant of £25 a week for 16-18 year olds in full time education!

★ Reverse the cuts—for a decent education system open to all!

★ For a united fight back with the labour movement against the Tories—for NUS affiliation to the TUC and Labour Party.



Always keen to learn how to improve the 'Militant', the article in last Saturday's 'Daily Telegraph' caught the eye. Tina Brown, editor of 'Tatler' magazine, explained in an interview that "glamour is terribly important. It is definitely what we need to capture the market." The 'Telegraph' chortled that in her magazine "there is an obsession with carefree high-lift quite at odds with the general spirit of gloom produced by unemployment and the economic recession recalling the dizzy social days of the '20s and early '30s." Unfortunately Tina Brown explained there wasn't enough time to write political articles because they are aiming for "across the board appeal articles like 'Colin Tennant in Mustique' or 'The hottest villa parties to crash'." It doesn't seem as if the 'Tatler' will be covering the November 29 demo in Liverpool then. A year ago Ms Brown predicted that a new age of elegance and formality was upon us. And the 'Telegraph' thought that "the 'Tatler's' success may be part of this new social resurgence." Which must come as pretty sick news to the rest of us trying to get by in Thatcher's Britain. Marx commented that history repeats itself, first time as tragedy, second time as farce. As the ruling class sinks back into the indifference of the '30s we must make sure that the labour movement learns the lessons of that decade and gets rid of their system once and for all.

Former workers at the now defunct London 'Evening News' have designed a T-shirt for themselves. Remembering the slogan of the recent advertising campaign, the T-shirt bears the immortal legend "Jobs go faster with the Evening News".

The tumultuous events in Poland have been greeted by a wall of silence from the 'Soviet Weekly', the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy's mouthpiece in Britain. Over the past weeks the 'Soviet Weekly' has continually forgotten to comment on the general strike and demands for free trade unions by the Polish workers. That is until last week's issue, where the front page reports the 'USSR-Poland summit'. Yet in 21 3/4 inches of type-space, they make no open reference to the determined struggle by the workers—rather they give a couple of lines to the 'situation', and talk of 'the attempts of certain imperialist circles to carry on subversive activities against socialist Poland and to interfere in its affairs' [which it adds is 'counter to the Final Act of the Helsinki conference!']. Of course, the Stalinist bureaucrats everywhere pathetically continue to dismiss the mass upheavals in Poland as the work of 'imperialists', as they did the events of East Germany 1953, Poland and Hungary 1956, and Czechoslovakia 1968. But despite the lies and distortions, the East European workers will continue the struggle to rid themselves of the Stalinists, and the fetter they inflict on these societies, and struggle for a true socialist society and rid themselves of this parasitic clique.

"Shirley Williams sweeps to victory in a by-election, standing as an independent" was the fairy-story for bosses in last Saturday's 'Financial Times.' Standing against the Labour Party candidate, who was a 'Militant' supporter, Ms Williams wins the Richton by-election in March 1981. Supported by Dennis Healey, David Steel, Norman St John-Stevan and every newspaper from 'The Guardian' to the 'Mirror' and 'Sun,' she kept the seat safe for capitalism. And having served the purpose of dividing workers the bosses moved on, for in the 'Financial Times' fairy-tale the economy revived and the Tories won the general election. Perhaps an accurate assessment of the role of Labour's right-wing after all.

# DECENT BABY CARE NOW!

Over 100,000 babies die every year at birth in this country—yet hospital after hospital is being shut down by the Tories.

So Renee Short spelt out the situation facing women today at a meeting organised by the Liverpool Labour Party Women's Council, and sponsored by COHSE.

Appropriately, the meeting was held in Newsham Hospital where the hospital workers are fighting an attempt by the Area Health Authority to close wards.

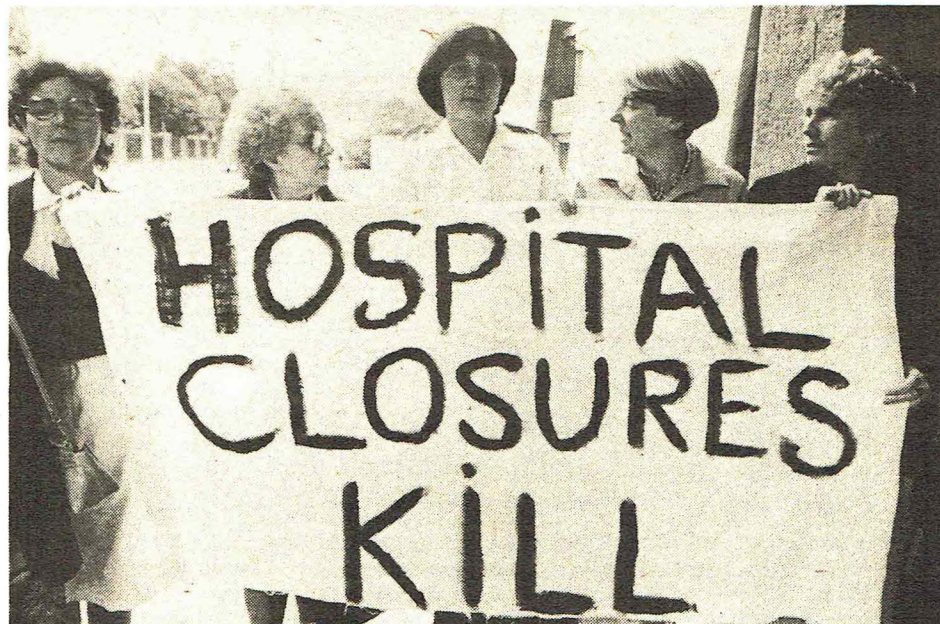
Renee Short who served on a parliamentary committee which examined infant mortality, told how this country has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Europe. Not surprisingly, those living on low incomes with poor housing and poor nutrition are more likely to lose their babies.

Ante-natal clinics, she said, have chaotic appointment systems with poor waiting facilities. There is no care for other children who have to be brought with the mother—a situation discouraging women from attending and leaving those who do attend with raised blood pressure!

Many women have to take two buses to reach their clinics, and her committee found that in rural areas some women had to travel 30 miles.

Hospitals were found to provide a better level of care than GPs and hospital is a safer place to be born than home (it's the most dangerous day of your life!).

Too much of the care is left to junior doctors. This problem is particularly acute when a Caesarian section is required as too often specialist anaesthetists are not available 24 hours a day—half the maternal deaths arise through these operations.



Hospital workers protest at attempts to close wards at Newsham hospital

Photo: MILITANT

She outlined many proposals in her committee's report, which included many important demands. Ante-natal clinic appointments should be kept to by the clinic staff, and women should get time off with full pay for visits—the latter is now law; make sure your union knows.

Women should see consultants at least twice during their pregnancy, and special centres for 'high risk' patients should be set up. The maternity grant should also be raised from the present ridiculous level of £25 (two dozen nappies and a bottle of baby lotion!). Generally, the service must be improved dramatically.

Julie Taylor, city councillor, painted a bleak picture of the run-down of health service in Liverpool—proposed closure of children's hospital, reduction in children's emergency cover, reduction in geriatric beds, cut in the number of beds in the women's hospital—a catalogue of Tory indifference to the needs of working class families.

And the burden of these cuts falls mainly on working class women; they have to look after an old person not admitted to hospital, or a child discharged too early.

## Socialist health service

Julie pointed out that some of the cuts were farcical even by the AHA's own logic—one of the wards proposed for closure is a short-stay ward for old people so their families can have a break—the net result of this closure is likely to be more admissions as families find they just cannot cope without some break.

Explaining the struggle of the Newsham hospital staff, she urged workers in other industries to take up the health workers' struggle—it's our health service fought for by the working class, paid for by the working class.

Pauline Dunlop, also a city councillor and member of the AHA, pointed out the health authority had only six elected

representatives; many on it had never had recourse to NHS treatment themselves.

She concluded that Labour must match the callousness of the Tories, with a ruthless attitude to implement a socialist health service when returned to power as part of a planned socialist programme.

About 45 people attended the meeting, despite pouring rain, many bringing young children with them. Some nurses from the hospital were able to attend also.

The meeting was urged by the chairman to take the discussion back to the Labour Party wards and the trade union branches and to translate into action the ideas we had been discussing.

This was the first public meeting held by the Liverpool Women's Council—the first of many we hope. Also many thanks to the LPYS, whose student and unemployed members organised the creche.

# ABORTION - the fight must go on

By Pat Henderson (Poole Labour Party)

With so many attacks on the rights of working people by this government, it is very easy to forget the campaign to achieve that most fundamental and basic right—that of a woman to make the decision herself for or against abortion.

Do you realise that many women in this country are still being denied this right? The availability of an NHS abortion depends entirely on where you happen to live. The 1967 Abortion Act went a long way in the right direction but is still being interpreted in different ways in different areas.

The attempt by John Corrie to wreck the Act was defeated to a large extent by the massive display, on October 28 1979 by trade unions, National Abortion Campaign, Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and many other groups coming together to demon-

strate their opposition to this blatant attempt to restrict women's hard-won rights.

Did you know that, even now, only (approximately) 50% of abortions are carried out by the NHS? The other 50% are forced to pay for what should be available free. Fortunately most can go to a BPAS clinic, or similar charitable centre, but recently there have been moves to severely restrict even these.

## Family planning cut-back

There are (obviously) no statistics available for those forced to continue with unwanted pregnancies. We also don't hear much about the rich women who go to the most highly priced day-centres of all—those situated in the vicinity of Harley Street.

Cuts in the health service generally are hitting at the



Lobby of House of Commons against Corrie Bill last February

family planning clinics, and some have already closed. At the same time unemployment is higher among women (already the lowest wage-earners) than men.

The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign is planning to bring in a Private Members Bill which will amend the NHS Re-organisation Act to make facilities mandatory in all areas of the country. It is absolutely vital that trade unions play a role in the decision making, and to this

end NAC and LARC are holding a trade union delegate conference in London on Saturday March 14 1981 to discuss future legislation and what form it should take.

They need the support of the entire trade union movement, men and women, so act now to give official backing and sponsorship to the conference. Spread the word to all union branches about this important issue affecting the lives of all working people.

# A challenge for Superman

**It seems incredible now but when I left school eight years ago there was a large number of careers to choose from. Electrical engineering sounded really impressive.**

A pittance for the first five years seemed worthwhile to get a trade. You could always get a job (or so they said anyway).

Now, there are many sparks out of work, trade or no trade. They didn't tell you at school that the bosses' system can't provide everyone with a job and a decent standard of living.

Apprentices are used as

**By John Kreft**  
(EETPU and Handworth LPYS, Birmingham)

cheap labour. If you're sent on a building site with a gang of sparks, you take it in turn with the other mates to make tea, clear up after meals and fetch food from the nearest café or luxury 'four-star' canteen provided by the

building contractor.

Most electrical contractors use 18-20 year old apprentices as sparks. The foreman says it's good experience for when you go on the tools (get graded). But obviously they're doing a spark's job on the cheap.

Sparks and their mates are often seen crawling around greasy girders 40 feet up in the air, working in live fuseboards or using unsteady scaffolding on the plant. Straight from school you are taught that these things are part of the job and that you should see them as a challenge.

Falling out of a roof and surviving is a challenge I think I'd rather leave to Superman. There are plenty of safety regulations—even safety officers on big sites—but you still do these things

because you've been brought up that way or you're in a rush to finish the job.

Small contractors often don't supply a shed to eat your food in. Sparks sit in a corner somewhere on a few bricks, eating sandwiches with dirty hands. The toilets on small sites are atrocious with no washing facilities.

A few 'perks' are thrown in like an extra ten minutes on top of your existing ten-minute morning break and half-hour at dinner. Once things get a bit pushed, though, these conditions are taken back.

Many contract workers at the age of about 35 start thinking about the maintenance side of the trade. You start feeling the pace of climbing up ladders and scaffolding or humping heavy

materials up ten flights of stairs.

The relationship between factory maintenance electricians and contractors is often a little tense. Maintenance men see contractors as a threat to jobs and overtime, while contractors often look on maintenance men as 'spoiled' due to better working conditions. Maintenance sparks, unlike contractors, are always in one place and are a lot more organised in their union, demanding better working and safety conditions.

Both sides often take the line in disputes, 'why should we help you? You never helped us in the last dispute.' This attitude has got to change to protect us all from attacks by the bosses.

Contractors tend to have little time for unions, al-

though less so with the younger ones, because they are separated from factory workers and their struggles. It is difficult to organise constantly changing gangs spread over many small sites.

When contractors do take industrial action gangster-type employers may well sack the whole gang and then approach individuals asking them if they want their job back, excluding the militants of course. Several well known contracting firms are known to keep blacklists.

With the factories you visit like ancient monuments, and the conditions in our industry, then it's obvious that the sooner industry is taken over and run by the workers the better.



Workers demonstrated earlier this year against the Tories, with the Employment Act—the scabs' charter—a major concern of trade unionists.

Photo: MILITANT

## Employment Act—Oppression Act

**By Steve Morgan**

(AUEW Llangynwyd branch, Maesteg)

Only a short time after the misnamed 'Employment Act' became law, Employment Secretary Prior has amended sections of the codes of conduct on picketing and the closed shop.

Parliament will be discussing changes proposed by employers who fear the wrath of trade unionists at the government's original guidelines.

The recommendation that existing closed shops should be under constant review might be dropped. There may also be modifications of the requirement for 80% support before a closed shop agreement is introduced.

On picketing, the police are likely to be given discretionary powers to decide how many pickets are on a line, while maintaining the upper limit of six. But this 'moderate' legislation still leaves trade unionists liable to prosecution if our reasons for withdrawing labour do not conform with the Act's definition of a trades dispute. The only answer we can have is all out opposition from the entire movement.

When implemented, the Act will mean that judges will have a free hand to define if a strike is in furtherance of a trade dispute. Where a judge decides against the dispute, the workers would then face court orders to return to work, claims for damages from their employers, and possible imprisonment.

Workers giving support to fellow workers in dispute, through blacking goods, refusing to cross picket lines, could find themselves facing the same legal action.

### No return to the dark days!

When it becomes law union members would lay themselves open to the same legal action as above if they:

1. Form a picket line with more than six members.
2. Give support to fellow trade union members by visiting a picket line.
3. Picket the head office of their employer.

4. Picket another workplace of their employer in order to seek support.

5. Picket premises involved in the distributing of their employer's goods.

6. Picket another workplace to which their work has been transferred.

With these restrictions even in a legal dispute, what would be the point of factory workers going on strike, when their employers can transfer the work to a sister factory where it would be illegal for the workers there to black it, or the strikers to picket the factory.

How could the miners possibly win a dispute when they would be confined to picketing an empty pit and not the massive stocks of coal that have been built up?

This Act is part of a campaign by the government to lower the living standards of the working people in this country, by destroying the rights of the average working man and woman, so that they return to the dark days of the beginning of this century when there was a queue of unemployed outside the factory gate, and the bosses would sack a man on the spot if his face did not fit, knowing they could get one off the dole at a lower rate of pay.

## Workers notebook

■ A recent report by a group called "Scottish Education and Action for Development" concludes that as many as 1.5 million out of the total 5.2 million population of Scotland live in poverty. All the income from oil which was supposed to make Scotland rich has had little effect. Not only does much of the wealth go in profits to shareholders outside Scotland but wealth in Scotland is very unevenly spread. 20% of Scots own 85% of the wealth while the other 80% have to make do with the remaining 15%.

There are 246,000 on the dole in Scotland. Of these at least 30,000 are building workers, yet Scotland has some of the worst slums in Europe. Such is the logic of the capitalist system! 100,000 houses are classed as substandard and there are 125,000 families on the housing waiting lists which, with the government moratorium on council house building will obviously grow even bigger.

■ Farmworkers are amongst the lowest paid of all workers in Britain, with a minimum wage of £58 per week for a job which is arduous and often dangerous. The farmers claim that they cannot afford to pay farmworkers a 30% increase. The Low Pay Unit's latest report shows that this is nonsense. Most farms in Britain are large, highly capitalised concerns and the vast majority of farmworkers are employed in these farms.

Farmworkers are the largest single group among

the workers who claim the Family Income Supplement. They are clearly victims of the "poverty trap" and they would need a large pay rise to get out of it.

Yet farmworkers pay proportionately more of their earnings in tax and receive less in state benefits than their wealthy employers. On average, the report claims, farmworkers pay twice as much tax as do farmers—on less than half the income.

■ The National Health Service, once hailed as the best in Europe, has been savagely hit by cuts and neglect in the last period. The European Commission's latest figures put Britain way down the list in terms of health provision.

Britain spends £159 per head per annum on health—only Italy and Ireland in the EEC spend less. In terms of the percentage of the gross domestic product, taken by health, Britain's figure of 5.5% beats only Italy. In practising doctors per 100,000 only Ireland

have a lower figure while in hospital beds per thousand only Denmark is lower. Denmark compensates for this by one of the largest overall health spending rates in Europe.

# Gloomy bosses blame their puppets

The world recession is having a disastrous effect even on the most affluent of capitalist countries. The USA, despite officially announcing the 'end of the recession', have discovered their joy was premature. West German capitalist experts talk of nil growth and tightening of belts.

If the crisis can send the heavyweights reeling, then it is no surprise that the British capitalist class, weakened and punch drunk, should feel pessimistic about their future.

The bosses' "union", the Confederation of British Industry issued a report on industrial prospects last week. Sir Terence Beckett, CBI director, said, "This is our blackest survey ever and we have not touched rock bottom yet. There is worse to come... We are now having to look to pre-war experiences for parallels."

Their cold, economic jargon spoke of companies "carrying out a labour shakeout at an unprecedented rate". Being 'shaken out' of course means being forced on the dole.

Seven out of ten employers have reduced staff in the past few months while only 4% have increased. Roughly the same is expected for the next four months so the helter-skelter slide of job losses will continue.

**By Roger Shrives**

They calculate that another 180,000 manufacturing jobs will vanish by January.

The survey figures on operating capacity of firms also highlight the desperate failure of British capitalism to plan for the future. About 84% of the companies the CBI surveyed said they were working below a satisfactory level of operation due to lack of orders.

## Industrial investment will drop

These are the worst returns ever since they first asked the question in 1958. 70% said their capacity was more than adequate for their needs—a paltry 2% could consider expansion.

What does this mean? Profits in manufacturing industry are already low despite paying about the lowest wages in Europe. The investment rate of most major competitors has been consistently higher than Britain's.

Even in the optimistic days of the post-war capitalist upswing industrial investment was minute compared both to British capitalism's rivals and to that in

the "candy floss" service industries.

In the future? Profits are low, firms are not working to capacity and world markets are no longer expanding. The post war bubble of capitalist prosperity has burst. In the crazy world of capitalist economics it is "logical" for the bosses not to invest when bigger profits are made by keeping their riches in the bank.

You could have bet that investment would be the last thing on their minds. And so it proves. The CBI forecast that manufacturing investment will fall by more than 10% in 1981 with most firms reducing their levels. The desperate decline in British manufacturing industry will accelerate.

The wizards of industry are furious with their own party, the Tories, for obstinately persisting with the harsh aspects of the monetarism they so applauded last year.

They repeatedly whine that the raising of interest rates to try unsuccessfully to stem the money supply has made credit for investment more difficult than ever and forced firms to run down stocks—which also causes orders to fall in the supply industry. Thatcher and her crew are accomplices in the murder of British industry.

## Indictment

Their indictment is merciless—but what of their alternatives? It was the CBI who put Thatcher in power

to help their ailing system. The CBI chief Beckett was Ford's management hatchet man in the 1978 strike, and he is no friend of the workers. They certainly have no intention of cutting profits or dividends to keep jobs.

## CBI solution—public spending cuts

They are merely appealing through the publicity given to this document for a relaxation of those monetarist policies which weaken them. They are definitely in favour of other monetarist measures, i.e. cuts in public spending to 'save industry'.

Beckett and Co's objection to Thatcherism is very different from ours—and their solutions are merely different forms of attacks on the working class.

## Tories out!

We don't just want alternative Tory policies—we want the Tories out and their big business backers with them.

Very few of the captains of industry are optimistic about prospects for investment, exports, output, orders—about the future generally in fact. The working class should put them out of their misery.



Sir Keith Joseph at Tory conference. Many businessmen think government monetarist policies are mad. But the madness belongs to the capitalist system itself. The CBI alternatives of cuts and wage restraint are merely different forms of attack on the working class

Photo: MILITANT

# STAND FIRM AGAINST CUTS

## Cheshire

**By Peter Quick**  
(Chester LPYS)

The vote by Tory-controlled Cheshire County Council in favour of crippling cuts in the education budget was not unexpected, despite a demonstration by 700 parents, trade unionists and school students outside County Hall in Chester.

Some of those protesting against the proposed cuts admitted that they were Tories. They thought cuts were necessary but should not be made where they affected their children—the usual Tory hypocrisy!

These people—a small minority among trade unionists, Labour Party members and Young Socialists—were obviously unhappy at the number of times it was suggested that the Tory government be given the sack in order to save jobs. There was warm applause for the speakers who voiced contempt for the Tory policies.

The vote to approve the cuts [dictated by the Policy and Resources Committee] was not universal amongst the Conservative councillors. Ken Maynard, sacked from his post as chairman of the Education Committee, voted against the Tory three-line whip.

Another Tory to lose faith was Councillor Anita Booth. On the day of the vote, she resigned from the Tory Party to become an "Independent": the working class aren't the only ones disillusioned by Thatcher and Co.

Some of those present may think they gained a victory. But a cut in staff levels, an increase in pupil-teacher ratio and a reduction in the availability of educational equipment—in short, a slashing of standards for working class kids—can only benefit the rich.

## Private education

State subsidies for private schools will mean the ruling class being educated at our expense. The Tories may have won this battle, but as the mood outside Cheshire County Hall showed, Tory policies offer no hope for the working class.

Socialist policies are the only way to achieve an education system geared to the pupils' needs—not to their parents' bank balances.

## Sheffield

Despite previous local election manifesto commitments, Sheffield District Labour Party and the City Labour Group have agreed to allow the sale of council houses in the City.

This decision is guaranteed to unleash a storm in the local labour movement, particularly as four of the six constituency parties have called for no retreat from previous policies of non-implementation.

Rob Jones of 'Militant' talked to Frank Milne, chairman of the Manor Tenants' Association, one of the largest in the city, about some of the issues arising from the sale of council housing.

"The tenants, in the majority, want the council to stand firm. Recently, when the Sheffield Federation of Tenants had a petition on rent and rate increases, people were saying that they would only sign if given assurances that we were dead against council house sales. Thousands were saying this—that was the mood. Around here, it is

seen as a criminal venture.

"Some are saying all we need to do is play a waiting game and clog up the system while waiting for the return of a Labour government. But this is weak and shortsighted. It will not tackle the problem.

## No to council house sales

"What we on Manor want is for local councils to stand firm and resist these moves. It is a political question anyway. This issue of council house sales is linked to the issue of council house building.

"In our area, part of council house property is, in statutory terms, unfit to live in. On the Lower Manor, the council promised to demolish over 850 houses, as it is impossible to refurbish them to get a reasonable life out of them.

## Unfit to live in

"Only good council house stock will be sold, while only the bad will be left, which are not really fit to live in now.

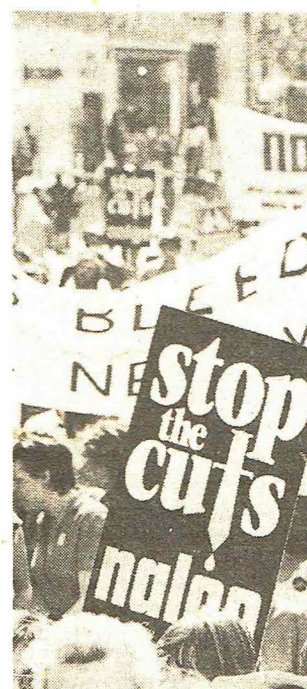


Photo: MILITANT

NALGO members call for opposition to all attacks. Labour councils must give the lead.

money for the sale. This further diminishes the money for new housing available, which comes out of the same, shrinking pot.

"Local tenants are highly aware of what the position is and we're very angry. In Sheffield the building programme is winding down. It is now less than the demolition programme so there is a smaller choice for people, and longer lists and delays.

"The local Labour Parties should be more obvious in the area, making statements on the issues and holding public meetings. It is a political issue—where is the money to come from to build decent housing?"

## Socialist housing policy

"Previous Labour governments have only been managers of capitalism. The only way to regenerate housing and industry is through socialist policies. If the next Labour government merely tries to manage the existing system, housing will remain at crisis point."

"The City Council, which is in debt for much of the council stock that it owns now, has the government saying that it has to sell such assets and, moreover, lend

# INDIA - BIRTH OF WORKERS' POWER

Indian Militant Subhash Sethi speaks to Roger Silverman

**'Militant' has consistently focussed attention on the unprecedented level of militancy displayed by the Indian working class over the last few years.**

The stormy events in Calcutta [West Bengal] a decade ago drove capital in panic to fresh pastures. Once the industrial and cultural metropolis of India, Calcutta's share of industrial production declined in the last decade from nearly 15% to about 9%.

Bombay overtook Calcutta to become the biggest industrial conurbation. The result was an outbreak of strikes and lock-outs that closed one-third of the factories and textile mills at any given moment.

Of late the capitalists have pioneered the trek to further relatively virgin territory where they can find surplus manpower without the traditions of organised labour.

One such area of meteoric industrial development is Bangalore. But investors cannot count on even the briefest honeymoon with the new labour recruited from among the hungry landless labourers of previously underdeveloped areas.

Their latest retreat has been into the suburbs of India's administrative capital, Delhi, an area that the ruling class had long been anxious to insulate from the ravages of the class struggle.

The biggest boom of recent years has been in the new industrial belt encircling Delhi: Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Sahibabad and other suburbs.

All that the capitalists have thus achieved is to bring the industrial proletariat at its freshest and most militant within striking distance of the administrative nerve-centre of India.

The most important of these industrial suburbs is Faridabad. At least 30 factories have sprung up there recently, including the giant Escorts engineering factory which dominates the town.

Tens of thousands of workers, underpaid and super-exploited, are concentrated here. Until three years ago, the only representation available to the workers were the official bureaucratically-dominated trade union federations.

The curse of the Indian working class, straining at the leash for an all-out fight with their exploiters, is the division of workers into a patchwork of rival trade union mafias, who use the workers like children playing with toy soldiers in a vast game of power politics.

The most heartening feature of the workers' upsurge in recent years has been the elemental drive of workers to seize hold of and transform their trade unions, to force them into a united front representing their real needs.

Where the official bureaucratic apparatus has remained obdurate and unresponsive, the workers have poured into new fighting organisations which have rapidly filled the vacuum. In some cases this role has been partially fulfilled by CITU, the trade

union federation affiliated to the Communist Party (Marxist), which split from the traditional Communist Party in 1964.

Despite the conservative and class collaborationist policies of the leaders of this party, the lightning growth of new unions under the umbrella of CITU has been an expression of the fighting mood of the workers. In certain areas there has been a modest growth of the UTUC, a small trade union federation linked to the Revolutionary Socialist Party, a centrist party standing nominally for a break with all capitalist allies and for socialist revolution.

These workers articulate most clearly the determination of all workers to find a direct road to a new society. In some important industrial areas, new trade unions have sprung up to become the most decisive instrument of the workers, some led by dissident left oppositionists from the traditional Communist parties—A.K. Roy in the Dhanbad coalfields, Kuchelkar in Madras—and some by pure gangster adventures with a shrewd feel for the plunder to be amassed from a dramatic display of militancy, for instance the powerful new union of Doctor Datta Samant in Bombay.

But in some areas the workers have transcended the limits of all bureaucratic trade union structures and formed democratic workers' committees, uniting the broad mass of workers and subjecting their leaders to the closest possible scrutiny

'Militant' has already published a description of one such workers' committee, the Swadeshi Workers' Front in the giant textile city of Kanpur in North India—a body which has harnessed the active participation of the entire labour force of Swadeshi's 8,000 workers and the

active sympathy of workers in all the other textile mills.

The Haryana Labour Union (HLU) plays such a role in Faridabad. Already it has completely replaced the ossified official trade unions and is the only dynamic force in Faridabad. Subhash Sethi, General Secretary of the HLU, has been hysterically denounced by Haryana's chief minister.

Sethi is loved and revered however, by the workers of Faridabad, who know him as a fearless and incorruptible champion of their interests. But there is no personality cult here. The workers are not prepared to put blind faith in even their most popular leaders.

The Haryana Labour Union stands in sharp contrast to any official trade union. There is immediate and automatic right of recall over all of its officials. (Even elections are unknown in the official unions!). There is stringent control over the expenditure of union funds—another marked contrast from the practice of the corrupt and extravagant official federations.

On 17th October 1979 the HLU took the initiative in organising a bandh (1-day strike) in solidarity with the employees of East India Cotton, who had been locked out for daring to affiliate to the HLU. All Faridabad came to a halt on that day, factories and shops alike.

In its internal structure guaranteeing the maximum workers' democracy, in its appeal to working people way beyond the limits of the factory walls, in its vigilant control over its own trusted officials, and in the immediate reserves of its own trusted officials, and in the immense reserves of enthusiasm that it inspires, the Haryana Labour Union, born in a crucible of fire and blood, will remind conscious workers everywhere

of the first Soviet established in the early stages of the Russian Revolution. Subhash Sethi explains how the HLU was built.

I started work in Escorts—it produces carburettors for Ford's motorcycles and tractors—in 1969 and was sacked following a strike in 1973/4. Immediately afterwards I was arrested under the draconian "Maintenance of Internal Security Act".

Then came the Emergency. For two years I was in hiding underground. I have never been reinstated in my job! My wage was paid by my union. Up until October 1977 there were six trade unions in Escorts alone. I was the General Secretary of the only unaffiliated union.

Three years ago I called for unity of all the trade unions in Escorts. The leaders of the other unions resisted my call, so I appealed directly to the workers. Eventually all the workers in Escorts of Faridabad joined my union, except for seven or eight! We have an annual ballot to elect the leaders of my union, which is called the All-Escorts Employees' Union. In the last election my vote went up from 94% to 96%.

In December 1977 we went on strike for recognition of our union, plus a wage increase of Rs125 per month. There was 100% support for the strike and within three days we were victorious.

There was no deduction of pay and no victimisation of strikers. The workers were so jubilant that they weighed me in coins and donated them to the union! The employers, who had previously refused to talk to Subhash Sethi, will now always agree to see me, even when they have no time

to see their own managers!

Our victory at Escorts inspired workers in all the other factories of Faridabad to form similar factory unions based on the rank and file workers on the shop floor. These unions have combined together to form the Haryana Labour Union, which encompasses at least 25 unions and 15,000 workers, and which is growing daily.

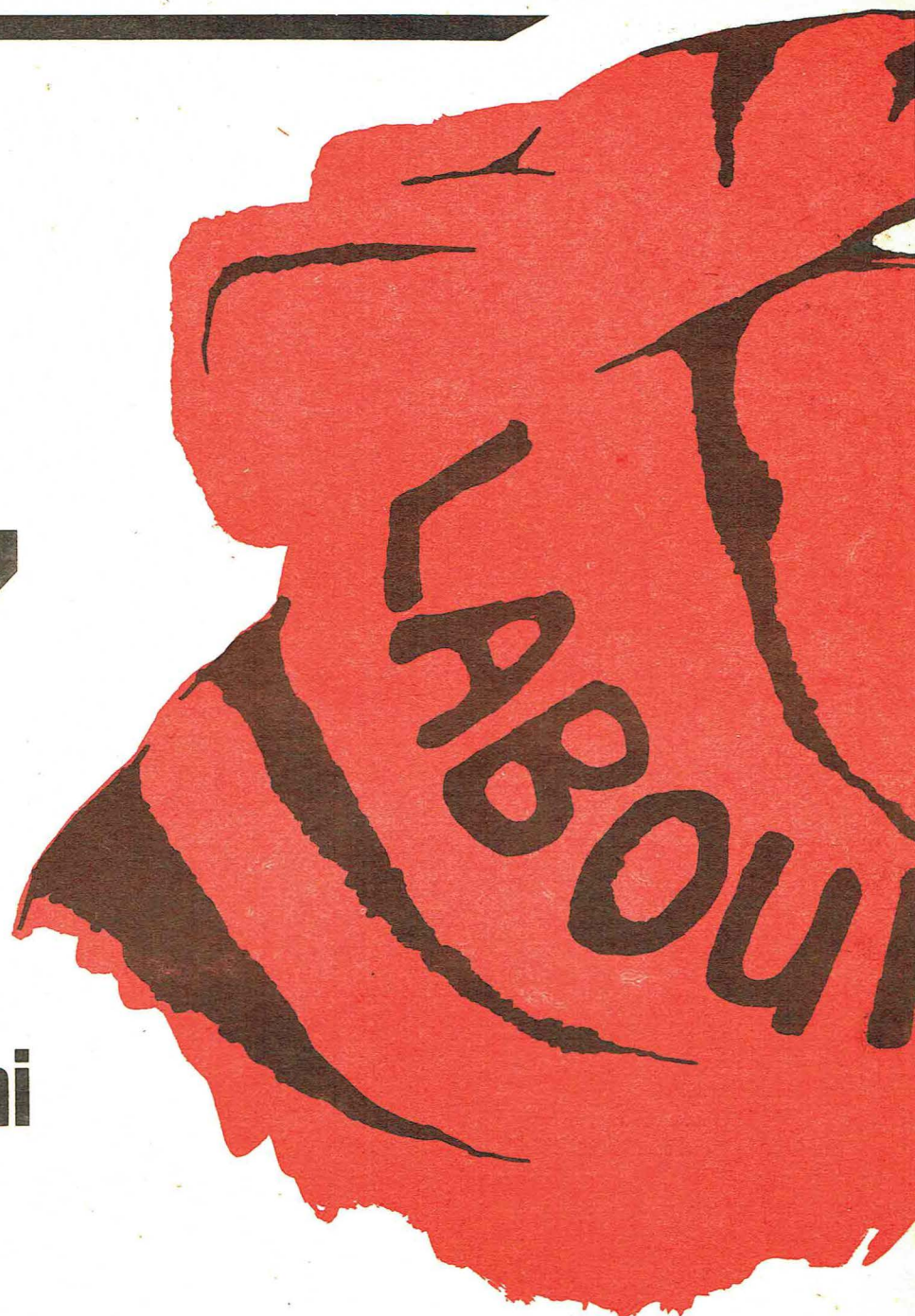
Only yesterday we formed five unions in another industrial suburb which is not even in Haryana. There are eight Escort plants, in Bangalore, Bombay, the Punjab and throughout India, and we are setting up an All-India Federation of Escorts Employees.

The HLU has 100,000 rupees in its account—none of the other unions can collect a fraction of this from the workers. In the course of the year-long struggle at East India Cotton, we spent Rs100,000—a record amount on any strike in Indian history. This struggle began when a factory militant in the BMS, the union attached to the reactionary Jana Sangh, who enjoyed the support of 95% of EIC employees, was sacked by the factory management and expelled from the BMS.

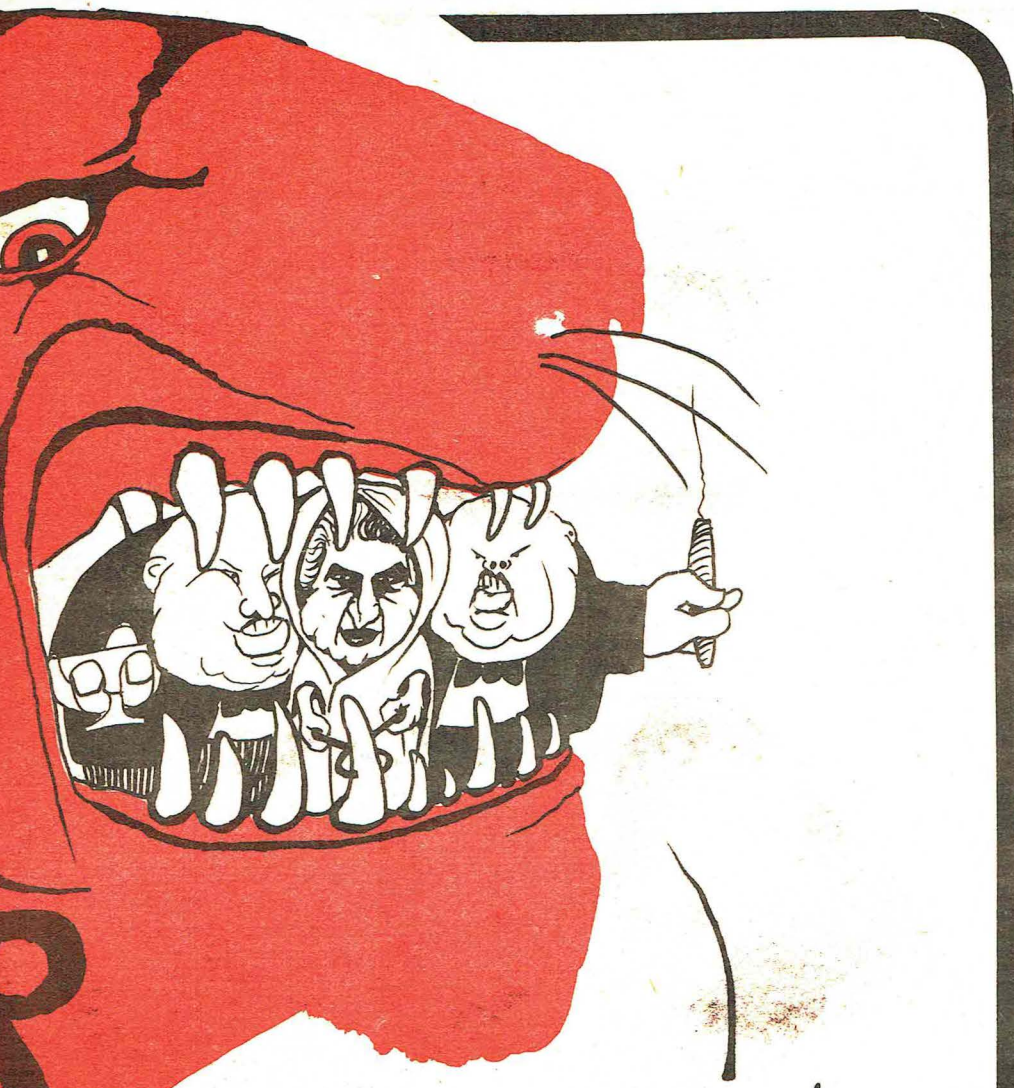
He came to me. I told him to stay in the BMS but form an EIC union. It was never my intention to break the existing unions but to transform them into democratic fighting bodies. The bosses refused to recognise his union and 50 workers were sacked.

There was a complete, 100% sit-in strike. Armed police evicted the workers from the factory and it turned into a lock-out. Then police and goondas (thugs) visited the workers' homes and physically forced 800 workers back into the factory at gunpoint where they stayed day and night for months.

In protest at this brutal policy and the general repression of the Faridabad working







**PERHAPS WHILE YOU'RE DOING THAT MRS GANDHI YOU COULD OUTLINE YOUR LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES!**

class, we took the initiative in forming an All Trade-Union Action Committee, together with the CITU and AITUC trade union federations.

Our numerical strength is equivalent to that of CITU, and the AITUC has 7,000 members. But where our rallies can mobilise 15,000 workers, the CITU can never get more than one thousand. We have won the workers' hearts.

The Faridabad workers believe in the HLU. Out of the money collected from our workers we have bought a union office, a motorcycle, a full-time clerk, a peon (office boy), and two full-time lawyers. The unions pay me Rs800 per month (£44). I am allowed Rs4,000 per month for audited expenses.

As General Secretary of the HLU I am not permitted to withdraw more than Rs1,000 per month without the counter signatures of 5 out of 7 appointed auditors. We will collect another Rs100,000 in the next month. We give a monthly account of expenditure to the workers.

At our rallies, 80% of my speeches are political in character. We have to show the workers who are their enemies and who are their friends.

On 17th October 1979, all the workers of Faridabad struck. Not a lever moved. Even the unions affiliated to the bourgeois parties, INTUC and BMS, came out. There has never been anything like it before in India.

Not a shop, stall or kiosk was open. From 6.00 in the morning, you could not buy a cigarette, a chilli, or a cup of tea. 50,000 workers assembled at Neelam Chowk after closing the factories.

Without informing the workers' leaders, the authorities at dead of night had invoked Section 144 which prohibited public gatherings. The police ordered 50,000

workers to disperse! We asked the police officials to approach their superiors and the District Magistrates and request permission for a one-hour meeting.

Permission was eventually granted. But meanwhile the police had already opened fire! A sub-inspector standing on the bridge overlooking our union office shot three workers dead and then ran out of bullets. Angry workers surrounded him and lynched him on the spot.

In the ensuing melee, the rank and file police surrendered their arms to the workers. Faridabad was in the workers' hands and peace and order prevailed. Then along came the Central Reserve Police. They went berserk. 40 or 50 people including women and children were murdered.

The CRP converged on a residential colony and shot at people in their own homes. The whole family of one government press worker, and the lodger, were killed. We called for a continuous bandh (strike). The CITU and AITUC leaders refused, claiming that a curfew would be imposed and hundreds more killed.

We said the workers should remain in their homes to avoid bloodshed. But the attitude of the other unions led to a defeat. We have had no relations with them since.

Police charges have been filed only against members of the HLU. I myself am on a murder charge and the secretary at Thompson's Press is on a charge of attempted murder. There are 50 more such cases pending.

The police openly threatened: "If we see Subhash Sethi here in the next three days, we will kill him and put his death down in the toll for 17th October." I had to go into hiding for two months, and only came back after being

granted anticipatory bail from the High Court.

My comrades were savagely beaten up by police demanding to know where Subhash Sethi was. Luckily I had not told them. I was in Delhi. Once or twice I visited Faridabad at night.

Bhajan Lal, Haryana's Chief Minister, has publicly threatened me: "We'll put a stop to Subhash Sethi's activities. He wants to make a Bengal in Haryana. He is public enemy number one—a menace to our economic development." But he is only in power because of patronage from Mrs Gandhi. He was Chief Minister under Janata, and then defected to Congress (I).

He has no popular base at all. He could not even be a Member of the Legislative Assembly if he was sacked. He is a big smuggler who has bought his job. Ten times I have challenged him publicly to come to Faridabad and show his face. Then we'll see which of us is more popular! He has never taken up the invitation.

Haryana's Labour Minister — another defector — has stated: "If I had the power, I would hang Subhash Sethi. Unfortunately the High Court has the power. It is out of my hands." Perhaps what is worrying him is that we are forming a union in his own factory!

I have told my members that if we do not collect Rs50 per worker, I will leave the union. We have to push ahead with our campaign. We intend also to form a trade union college in Faridabad to give political education to worker militants all over India.

All this time we have been working on exactly the same lines as advocated by 'Militant'. But there was no link between us. Now we are determined to keep in touch!

# Jamaica - No half way house for Socialism



Opposition thugs on the streets. Over 500 people, including a government minister, were killed in the most violent election campaign in Jamaica's history

**The defeat of Michael Manley represents a big set-back for the workers of Jamaica and marks the opening of a new chapter in the unfolding Caribbean revolution.**

The sweeping electoral victory of Edward Seaga and his Jamaica Labour Party [JLP]—in spite of its name a right-wing capitalist party—heralds a period of reaction.

Deep disillusionment with the People's National Party [PNP] government under Michael Manley led to the JLP taking 50 out of the 60 seats in parliament, with 57.46% of the popular vote compared to the PNP's 42.53%. There was a high poll, with 80% of voters turning out.

The local ruling class will now seek their revenge for the concessions they were forced to make under the PNP government. The violence of the election campaign, the murderous attacks by thugs on workers' meetings, is a warning of what may come.

As in Sri Lanka and other countries with right-wing governments, Seaga may now try to give himself increased presidential-type powers to strengthen his hand for moves against political opponents and the organised workers.

In the coming period they will attempt to break the power of organised labour, further undermine living standards, or, as the President of the Private Sector Organisation put it, "cut out this nonsense" of workers' "benefits", in order to claw back all the gains won by the working class over the last eight years.

The most advanced workers on the island understand the tasks posed by the new situation, and will already have begun the vital work of preparing the movement for the difficult period ahead.

**By Bob Lee**

But the tasks are not confined to organisation. They will also be embarking on the crucial political work to be done, discussing the lessons of the previous period, the errors and mistakes, so that the movement can be equipped politically for the coming battles.

How was it possible for the JLP to return to power after having been so decisively defeated less than four years ago? What are the lessons?

Some of the leaders, both left-reformist and Castro-ite, have already begun to claim that it was primarily the IMF and the American CIA who were responsible for the PNP's defeat. The reactionary role of US imperialism and its agencies should not be underestimated. Economic sabotage and disruptive intervention are to be expected—and any viable socialist strategy must be prepared to surmount this. It is the class struggle itself, not "plots" and "manoeuvres", which are decisive.

The main reason for the defeat of the PNP lies in the failure of the leadership to take decisive action to effect the socialist transformation of Jamaican society.

The experience of the Allende government in Chile, and that of many other "socialist" governments before it, demonstrates incontrovertibly that there can be no "half-way-road" to socialism. In Jamaica, like in Chile, the failure of the PNP leadership to take bold and decisive measures to transform society inevitably led to chaos and

economic instability.

Manley's government, having failed to learn the lessons of Chile, was doomed to repeat the same kind of mistakes. Reforms were turned into counter-reforms, and eventually the PNP leadership became hopelessly immeshed in agreements with the IMF.

In the three years preceding the election, unemployment increased and living standards fell dramatically. The world economic recession and the astronomical increase in oil prices intensified the chronic problems of Jamaica, throwing even greater burdens on the people.

The extreme conditions that developed led to widespread disillusionment, demoralisation and even despair, especially among the middle strata, politically backward workers, and peasants.

Thus the way was prepared for the return of the JLP. Seaga's victory was not a vote of confidence in "free enterprise" or capitalism, but a negative protest vote against the intolerable and seemingly intractable problems facing Jamaican society.

Many of the more politically aware workers may be temporarily stunned by the PNP's defeat. But any illusions among the wider layers of workers and other strata that the JLP will improve their conditions will quickly be destroyed. There is an organic social crisis in Jamaica, rooted in the ruling class's inability to develop an economically backward country in a period of world capitalist decay.

As Seaga moves to implement measures of reaction, those who voted for the JLP hoping for a solution, will come to see that they made a big mistake. Economic and political attacks will provoke new and bigger movements by the working class.

By absorbing all the lessons of this serious electoral defeat and by adopting a bold programme based on the ideas and methods of Marxism, the workers and exploited people of Jamaica will re-build their forces, prepare a new leadership and go forward to the socialist revolution.

# IRISH LABOUR CONFERENCE PLEDGED TO 'A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST WORKERS' REPUBLIC'

In its most left-wing conference since 1969, the Irish Labour Party adopted at Cork a new programme which marks a significant growth of support for radical socialist ideas, within both the Party and the wider labour movement.

In the elections for Administrative Council, the vote for Joe Higgins, a supporter of 'Militant Irish Monthly' at the same time reflected increased support for the ideas of Marxism.

A thousand delegates from party branches and the affiliated trade unions attended. This annual conference, held in Cork on 25/26 October.

The meeting took place against a background of deepening economic crisis at home and abroad. The economy in the 26 counties is suffering from 20% inflation, a zero growth rate in 1980, and unemployment officially around 10%.

A newly compiled party programme was the main item on the agenda. This was adopted with only a handful of delegates opposing, a big step forward for the party. The new programme restated many of the socialist objectives not articulated from 1970-77, while the party was committed to coalition with Fine Gael.

The new programme stated that the party was "dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist system", to "transferring ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange from one small elite to the masses of the people" and to establishing "an all-Ireland democratic workers' republic based on socialist principles."

The programme also declared the need for "the creation of a mass labour party in Northern Ireland to extend the existing industrial unity on the political plane." It committed the party to work for "a council of labour between a mass labour party in Northern Ireland and our own party, and the eventual establishment of an all-Ireland labour party just as there exists at present an all-Ireland Irish Congress of Trade Unions."

While these aspects of the programme made its adoption a big step forward, a move further to the left, the programme as a whole unfortunately also included many confusions. It failed to spell out clearly a way forward for the Irish labour and trade union movement.

In relation to the economy, while one part of the programme called for the means of production to be taken over, another section called for state aid to industry and joint ventures between the state and private industry.

In relation to the North, while standing for a 32-county socialist workers' republic, the programme did not deal with the role of imperialism and its history of divide and rule policies. Neither did it take up the question of the withdrawal of all aspects of imperialism: military, economic and political, from Ireland North and South.

## Mass movements

The significance of the programme's acceptance is that it takes the party to the left despite years of effort by the party leadership, trying to submerge any talk of socialist ideas in the interests of coalition.

In relation to coalition, while Frank Cluskie in his speech as party leader firmly rejected the recent suggestion of a pre-election pact with Fine Gael, the second conservative party now in opposition, he still held open the door to a possible agreement after the coming election, if no party has an overall majority in parliament.

This remains the approach of the party leadership, but the decisions taken at the conference and the right-wing shift of both capitalist parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, will make a coalition—while still not entirely ruled out—the least likely of possibilities after the next election.

In the weeks before the conference, the economists of big business were outdoing each other in demanding that the conservative Fianna Fail government make further cuts in spending on health, education, social welfare and housing, to reduce the public sector borrowing requirement from the present unsustainable 16% or 17% of gross national product.

The big business press were



Young trade unionists on the Waterford demo against unemployment Photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

forecasting the future entry of the IMF if further cuts are not made at once. These calls for further cuts are on top of the new so-called "national understanding on wages", which will mean a fall of at least 10% in workers' living standards over the next year.

The other aspect of the background to the conference is the increased working-class militancy over the last two years. As well as a mammoth half-day general strike and demonstration last January, against the insignificant taxation paid by the wealthy, 1979 saw the greatest number of days lost in strikes in the history of the southern state.

## Coalition must be ruled out if Labour is win a majority and implement socialist policies

Acceptance of the national understanding reflects the lack of any alternative from any section of the trade union movement. It also reflects workers' growing acceptance over recent years of the various national wage agreements or national understandings as a base for additional claims on hours, conditions, bonus payments and special increases.

The months ahead will see this process repeated with the trade union movement taking action to maintain their living standards. This will result in a sharpening of the polarisation developing between the crisis-ridden capitalist class

and a powerful and determined working class.

This polarisation was clearly reflected at the Labour Party conference, and the overall result was the most left-wing conference since 1969.

Labour is set to increase its support in the next election. But the confidence of the party's activists would have been strengthened, and many more new members would now be drawn into its ranks, if the conference had clearly ruled out a coalition or any form of parliamentary alliance with either of Ireland's conservative parties.

A clear statement of a determination to drive Fianna

measures were spelled out and the Labour youth section was urged to support the young socialists and the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group. Resolutions were also passed instructing the Parliamentary Labour Party to move Labour bills in parliament for the nationalisation of the banks and to allow for divorce.

Unfortunately, a resolution dealing with the conditions in H-Block and Armagh prisons and setting out the need for these and all prisoners to have the right to wear their own clothes and have a choice of work, unrestricted food parcels, letters, to elect their own representatives and have trade union membership and rates of pay, was declared lost after two re-counts.

This conference was the most optimistic for Labour since 1969. Delegates were obviously eagerly anticipating the coming general election, which must be held before June 1982. The party's newly adopted slogan, "The answer is socialism," was displayed across the front of the conference hall, and appears

Fail out of office, and a bold appeal to the youth to join this struggle, would have given Labour the assurance that it will be able to win the election and form a majority government.

Other debates at conference underlined the shift to the left. Resolutions were passed calling for a 35-hour week, a national minimum wage of £90 per week and the nationalisation of the financial institutions and all major industry under workers' control and management with compensation on the basis of proven need.

In a resolution adopted on youth, the above economic

By John Throne

on the front of the new recruitment leaflet.

An extremely important feature of this conference was the increased number of young delegates, many of whom spoke to the conference and in the majority of cases spelled out the need to adopt a Marxist programme. As the Labour Lord Mayor of Cork, Toddy O'Sullivan, said in an interview with 'Militant Irish Monthly', he is more optimistic than at any time since 1969, especially because of the young, articulate people now coming into the party.

## A.C. Elections

In the election to the Administrative Council (the national executive committee), support for the Marxist ideas of the 'Militant Irish Monthly' increased substantially since last year. Joe Higgins, standing on 'Militant's' programme, received the fifth highest vote. (35 candidates contested 17 positions).

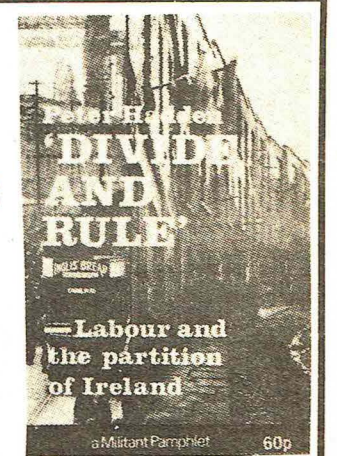
At the 'Militant' readers' meeting, which had to be held at 10.30 pm on Saturday due to conference's late sitting, 75 people attended. £350 was collected for the MIM's Fighting Fund.

The conference clearly demonstrated that it will be in the trade unions and the ranks of labour that the programme and strategy to end capitalism will be hammered out. Labour's increased votes in the European elections and the recent Cork by-election, the increase in party membership (1,000 more registered at headquarters than last year), and especially the increased youth membership, show that it will be the Labour Party which will win the support of the working class and the youth, and the middle layers in society, as they seek to end capitalism in the years ahead.

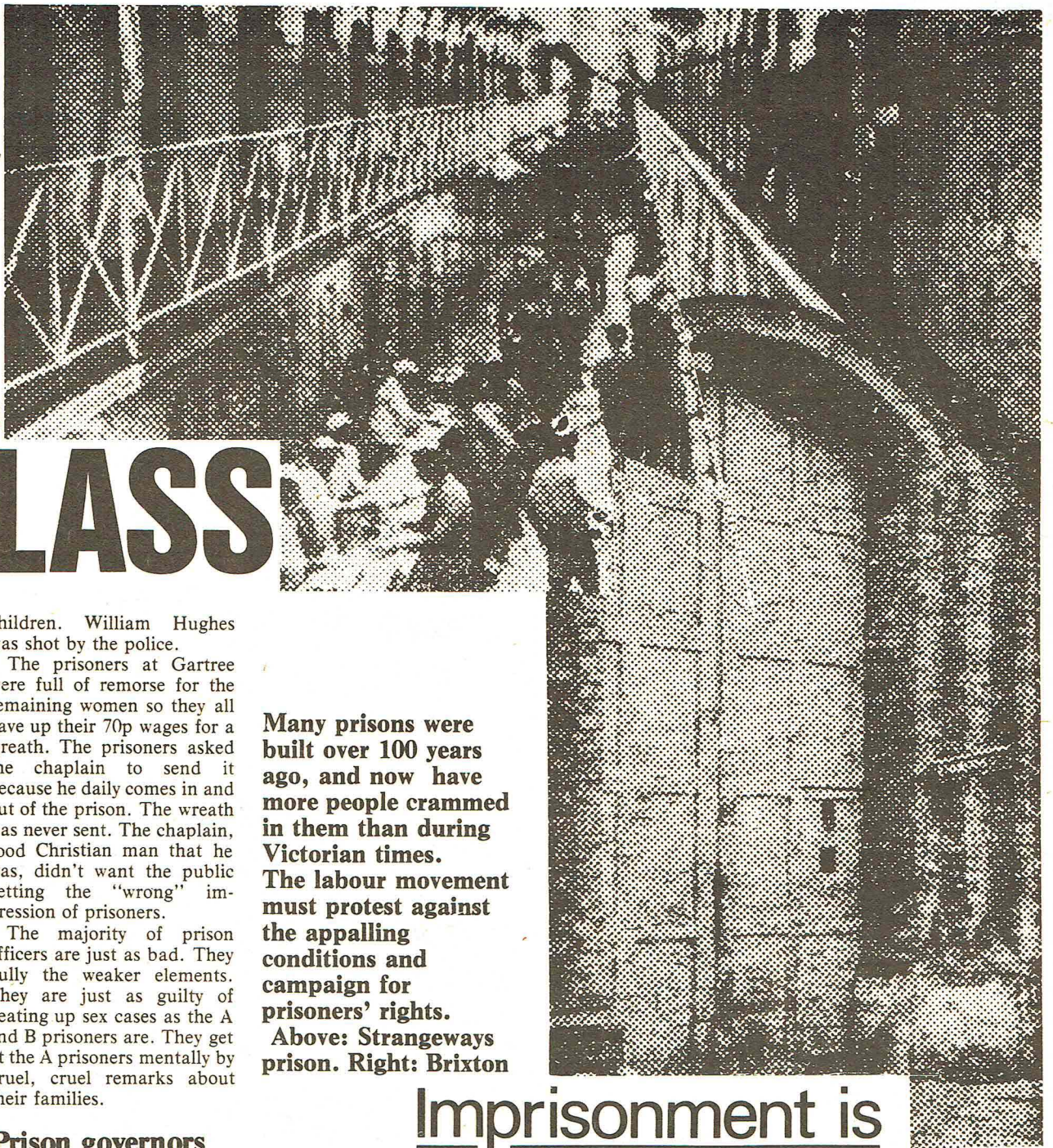
What is necessary now is to clarify the party's programme and win the party membership to a clearly spelled out socialist programme based on the analysis and methods of Marxism.

New pamphlet on Northern Ireland out now! **DIVIDE AND RULE** by Peter Hadden

Cost 75p [inc. p&p] from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN



# THE COLD CRUELTY OF THE RULING CLASS



**Conditions in today's prisons are totally inhuman. With overcrowding, decaying buildings, and limited facilities, the present problems are hardly surprising.**

Many of our prisons, e.g. Lincoln, Norwich and Wakefield, were built in Victorian times. There are now up to four men in a cell. Heavier sentencing means that the prison population is increasing rapidly.

Cells measure 6ft by 12ft, you are allowed a radio, but basically that is all. In the cell door there is the "Judas Hole", there so prison officers can check every ten minutes. It is completely intimidating.

You are allowed one visit every two weeks. But many families can only go once a month, because the free travel warrant is only monthly. There are always two prison officers there, and afterwards the prisoner is stripped and searched thoroughly.

Prisoners are categorised by the letters A-F. Letter A prisoners are totally segregated from the rest. They are judged to be the men most likely to try to escape and who would be a danger if successful.

Letter B prisoners are those who might try to escape, but would not be so dangerous. The remaining letters decrease in this manner.

**The idea is to break the prisoner, mentally and physically, to turn him into a well-behaved, well-reformed member of their society.**

The majority of prisoners are hooked on drugs. This is especially so with the D, E and F prisoners. It is so easy to get drugs, it's unbelievable. Many queue up daily like zombies for their Benzadrine and Barbiturates because that way time passes quicker. Many crack up. My father told me it is quite common to be in the TV room when suddenly a prisoner just falls out of a chair onto the floor in a coma.

**By an LPYS member**

Punishment is also gruesome. If you have committed an offence, e.g. sworn at an officer, you can be sent into the 'block'. This is solitary confinement—a room with nothing in it. Your food is pushed through a small hole in the door, twenty minutes exercise a day and no communication with other prisoners.

The brutal factor about the block is that a time is allotted, e.g. twenty-one days, but if that prisoner commits any more offences, more time is allotted.

Nobody knows what is happening, because no letters are allowed. The prison officers can and do have a field-day by provoking the prisoners. They may sprinkle dried faeces on the prisoner's meal—if he reacts, he gets more time.

Another punishment is stopping all privileges, like loss of remission. The idea is to break the prisoner, both mentally and physically, to turn him into a well-behaved, well-reformed member of their society.

Corruption is also a major factor of prison. This flourishes because the prison governor has the ultimate power. It is quite abysmal. Governors have discretionary powers, which they can use quite arbitrarily. If a prisoner does not conform, the governor can have them transferred to the criminally insane hospital at Broadmoor, even if he has no mental background. That's easily arranged.

The prison medical officers and psychiatrists are just as bad. A typical medical examination goes like this: the doctor raises a torch on the prisoner's pubic hair, asks of any history of VD, crabs or lice, or homosexuality.

The chaplains are also just as bad. This is true: about two or three years ago, there was a murderer called William Hughes, who went on the rampage. He slaughtered a whole family, father, grandmother, grandfather, and the

children. William Hughes was shot by the police.

The prisoners at Gartree were full of remorse for the remaining women so they all gave up their 70p wages for a wreath. The prisoners asked the chaplain to send it because he daily comes in and out of the prison. The wreath was never sent. The chaplain, good Christian man that he was, didn't want the public getting the "wrong" impression of prisoners.

The majority of prison officers are just as bad. They bully the weaker elements. They are just as guilty of beating up sex cases as the A and B prisoners are. They get at the A prisoners mentally by cruel, cruel remarks about their families.

**Prison governors have discretionary powers, which they can use quite arbitrarily.**

So, what is being done about it?

The lovable Tories are thinking about the "short, sharp shock" treatment. They are building more detention centres. Obviously, with the present rate of unemployment, there'll be more social frustration and conflict, so even more detention centres will be built.

The Tories are cutting down on facilities. Courses have been scrapped, making many prisoners bitter and resentful. All the Tories want to do is lock away the problems of capitalist society. Needless to say, most people inside are working class. Prisoners aren't lovable, but nobody should be treated like an animal.

**All the Tories want to do is lock away the problems of capitalist society.**

I think these points should be taken up: (1) Proper education and training facilities. When the prisoners are released after five or ten years they have come to rely on prison. Nobody wants to employ an ex-con, so eventually they drift back to the prison.

(2) Give full trade union rates of pay. (3) Give proper work instead of sewing mailbags seven hours a day, five days a week for seventy pence. Allow the earnings to be sent home, because family worries are the worst in prison. (4) Provide more hospitals for sex-offenders and child-killers: I have no respect for these people, but they should not be

**Many prisons were built over 100 years ago, and now have more people crammed in them than during Victorian times. The labour movement must protest against the appalling conditions and campaign for prisoners' rights.**

**Above: Strangeways prison. Right: Brixton**

**Imprisonment is punishment enough: there can be no justification for inhuman treatment**

allowed to mix with the A and B prisoners at mealtimes.

**Prisoners aren't lovable, but nobody should be treated like an animal.**

(5) Provide more open prisons for the D, E and F prisoners who are most unlikely to escape. (6) Give free and adequate legal aid: I know a woman who had to sell her house for a decent lawyer to defend her husband. (7) Stop the censorship of letters. It's horrible when you can't write personal and private things to your own father because the prison officers will be reading every word, and even photographing the letters.

(8) Stop the Book routine. Now, whatever a prisoner does or says goes into his own little book and follows him everywhere. (9) Get rid of the "Judas hole" and the "block" which are humiliating and inhuman. (10) Abolish the Visiting Committee. Before you are sentenced to the "block", a group of magistrates pass judgement. They are always in league with the governor. Whatever the prison officers say is believed, and the prisoner cannot defend himself at all.

These are things we should campaign for in capitalist society. In a socialist society,

prisons would be abolished. We would wipe out the oppressive conditions and misery which gives rise to crime.

But there is a crisis in the prisons now. The labour movement must protest against

appalling prison conditions and take up the fight for prisoners' rights. The prisons show the cold cruelty of the ruling class—which they are beginning to turn against the whole working class.

## An encounter with big brother

Harassment is a part of everyday life in Northern Ireland. Recently, the extent of police files on the civilian population in Northern Ireland was made clear to our Labour Group and Young Socialists.

We had been in Newry putting up posters for a meeting. So when we saw police watching us as we left a pub we were not surprised. Then we were "asked" to go to the barracks. A landrover full of armed police can persuade one to do many things, so we went.

After ten minutes, I was called for interview by a Special Branch man. Reading from an index card, he told me my age, my birthday, the university I attended and the year I left, my home address, and the addresses of a Belfast flat I had lived in over two years ago.

All this information about me was obtained in less than ten minutes! And late at

night! I work forty miles from Newry. My home address is seventy miles away. The policeman could hardly have known me by sight. He did not even ask me for ID.

Computer files on people in Northern Ireland are known to cover about one million people. Clearly, within minutes of being stopped, the police were able to use the computer to get this information on me.

We were also asked about the Young Socialist sympathisers in the Newry area, which we would not answer.

Incidents like this must be a lesson to the comrades in Britain. The methods are being perfected and made more sophisticated here. They are being got ready for use on you also, and they are dangerous. Here, some aspects of "1984" are with us already!

**By Anton McCabe**

# Letters

VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Star wars

Dear Comrades

It has been said that this year's Labour Party conference has left the majority of workers confused and only the active layers of the working class will be drawing political conclusions.

Maybe this is not the case. My sister, whilst at home one day overheard her own children as well as playmates decide to play at 'Labour Party Conference.'

Her youngest daughter (aged 4) climbed on the sideboard and arm outstretched announced "Com-

rades", to loud bursts of cheers and noises from the other children. Perhaps the rest of the speech was not coherent, but she was, beginning to mouth what had been said at Labour Conference that week.

Even if the right wing cannot (or refuse to) draw the lessons of this year's Labour Party Conference, here in Salford the youth at least are drawing their own conclusions as to what happened at Blackpool.

Best wishes  
Peter Gunn  
Salford LPYS

## Maggie's helping hand

Dear 'Militant'

The Hillingdon LPYS branches jointly organised a public meeting 'Socialism in the 1980s' with John McDonnell (Hayes CLP's GLC candidate) and Bob Labi (well-known 'Militant' supporter and member of the London Labour Party executive).

Local redundancies and closures of factories, hospital wards and schools highlight the economic decline London is suffering under the Tories and their bankrupt system. The coming

confrontations between a Labour-controlled GLC and a Tory government raised the issues of a massive campaign for socialist policies to be led by London Labour.

The LPYS had conducted the now usual build-up to the meeting: leafletting schools, dole queues, factory gates, train stations etc. Not to mention the regular days of action, street leafletting, paper sales (ie. obstruction of the highway) with a socialist patrol car decked in 'Maggie—not wanted' posters, rigged up with a PA system.

Despite all this publicity it was the 'Not Wanted'

poster outside the hall (the annexe to Hayes' biggest Catholic Church) that announced our meeting on the night to two girls originally coming to a 'Justice & Peace' group in another part of the building. They both joined the LPYS immediately afterwards: "We've seen the YS selling papers in Uxbridge before and thought about joining but weren't quite sure."

Days of action get you noticed—Maggie does the rest.

Fraternally  
Martin Craxton  
Hayes-Harlington CLP

## Deportation may mean death

Dear Editor,

I read with interest your article on Malawi (31 October), especially your reference to the way President Hastings Banda suppresses all internal opposition to his personal rule.

May I make an appeal to your readers to join with us in the campaign to stop the deportation of a member of the Socialist League of Malawi (Lesoma) back to Malawi.

Hugh Karos Ajassi is presently under detention in Coventry Police Station awaiting the outcome of his appeal against deportation. He was arrested for overstaying his visa residence by two years.

In court he pleaded guilty to breaking the law as regards his residence in this country and has asked to be punished. He does not want to be deported to Malawi, however, because this could mean life imprisonment or even execution. He has applied for political asylum in this country.

Dr. Mpakati, President of Lesoma, who is currently in London, has already written to the Home Office pointing out the consequences of the deportation. The Malawi Support Committee, through David Ward, has also contacted Joan Lester MP and Bob Hughes MP, to enlist their support.

Both MPs have a meeting next Thursday with Timothy Raison of the Home Office to protest about the deportation. We have also heard that the deportation has been delayed pending the outcome of these protests.

Coventry South East Labour Party members have been very active in initiating this campaign, but we realise that far more needs to be done as deportations are 30% higher this year than last year.

We therefore call upon your readers to make their protests to Timothy Raison MP, at the Home Office, to stop the deportation and grant Hugh Karos Ajassi political asylum. If we succeed we can save the life of a Malawian socialist.

Fraternally,  
DR Cozens  
Coventry SE Labour Party

## If they can't run the Savoy...

Dear Comrade,

The British Railways Board is threatening to sell off all profitable undertakings in their control, which include British Transport Hotels Ltd.

On 31st October the Savoy Hotel Group, which takes in Claridges, the Connaught and the Savoy, haunts of wealthy capitalists, announced that they had plunged into the red by more than £800,000.

If this is an example of private enterprise running three of the so-called "best" hotels in Britain, perhaps British Rail should think again about selling the state-owned, profit-making British Transport Hotels.

Yours fraternally,  
Jacky Mitchell (Miss)  
TSSA Edinburgh  
No 1 branch  
(personal capacity)

## What the '30s meant

Dear Comrades,

George Wright's reminiscences about unemployment in the nineteen-thirties made important reading for all socialists. I hope that they will be read and remembered when the Tories launch further attacks on the "scroungers" and "workshy". He mentions the means test but gives no example of how it had its effects. (George did in fact give examples, but his article was substantially cut for reasons of space—Editor.) Perhaps I can flesh it out from my father's experience.

Made redundant in 1920 as a 16-year old apprentice, he had joined the army, been sent first to Ireland and then to India and Burma and been invalided out onto the dole in 1927, having contracted malaria on imperial service. For the next six years, he spent more time out of work than in it before gaining the security of a railway porter's job in 1933. The year before, though, he had had to go before the means test tribunal.

He was on a dole of 17s.6d. (87½p) per week. That was supposed to be the household income on which he kept a widowed mother (no widow's pension) and a brother crippled in France in 1914. The tribunal discovered that his brother received an army disability pension of 37½p a week and were so outraged at such profligacy that they docked 12½p from his dole. That meant a dole and pension income of £1.12½p a week to keep a one-armed cripple of 39, a sickly man of 28 and an elderly widow.

My father never became involved in politics himself, but he never voted anything but Labour and hated the Tories to his dying day. As a young lad after the War, I remember vividly the apprehension I felt when the Tories won in 1951, because of the way Dad referred to the fat and comfortable men who sat on that means test tribunal and solemnly condemned him to utmost poverty.

Every day now I hear the echo of that voice again and the sound of marching feet as the Tories push us backwards and backwards. What is needed now is a hundred Gardner's and maximum activity on 29 November.

Yours fraternally,  
David Spilsbury  
Selly Oak CLP



Unemployment demonstration in the 1930s

## George Brown disappointed

Dear Comrades

Fearful of the consequences of letting the Labour Party take care of its own internal affairs the media coverage given to the 'gang of three' at Labour Party conference, as well as the tirade in the press against the left, leave us in no doubt as to what type of Labour Party these so-called impartial people want.

They want a party which wouldn't do anything to damage business interests and which it would be 'safe' to have in government from the viewpoint of the bosses, after the Tories get the sack.

Recently, on ITV's 'News at One', they really scraped the bottom of the dustbin. They dragged out none other than Lord George Brown and stuck him in front of the cameras to tell us how to run the Labour Party.

This political dodo, who left the party four years ago and urged people to vote Tory in the last election, had the cheek to keep referring to the Labour Party as 'us' and 'we' (or maybe he was referring to the ruling class). True to form, he called the activists who are fighting for more democracy in the party the 'undemocratic left,' and stood up for good old Jim, Dennis, Shirley, Bill and David.

Let's get cracking now to make sure that George Brown is disappointed! Let's campaign for a leadership committed to socialist policies as outlined in 'Militant' and accountable to the rank and file!

Fraternally  
Dave Warren  
Swansea LPYS

## Check your sales

Dear Comrades

Having carried out a regular paper-sale at a local pit for over a year, with an average of 20-25 papers sold per week, our LPYS and Labour Club members were puzzled to see sales drop to about 10 per week, or less.

This 'poor' sale had depressed our morale for quite a few months, especially considering the mood of trade unionists and Labour Party supporters at the present time. Last week one of the miners told us that the number of workers at the pit had been reduced

from 650 to 250, something that had not occurred to us.

Perhaps comrades in other areas have found similar mysterious drops in sales: if so, they should check that Thatcher's policies aren't taking effect locally.

Certainly, this will only be a temporary problem: as workers discover what a Tory government means our sales will increase rapidly. And so, to make up for our present drop in sales, we are looking towards other factories in the area for another regular sale.

Fraternally  
H. Sutherland  
Stirling University

## Which conference?

Dear Comrades,

I was very interested to learn that Ted Garrett, Labour MP for Wallsend, who was only seen at Blackpool conference on two days out of five—though it was the worst conference he had ever attended!

According to the capitalist press, the conference was most lively, and they tried to portray the right-wing as level-headed, hard-hitting protagonists. But from what I could see on our television, as well as hear, the left wing scored most points.

It was refreshing to hear most of the younger delegates putting forward socialist remedies for our sick capitalist society, while some of the right wing were talking of danger to "their" party, and threatening to form another—or even, like Roy Jenkins, joining the Liberal Party, otherwise known as shame faced

Tories.

But to say that socialists could learn a lot from Tory conference procedure could only lead to a managed procedure and not a democratic one. That seems to me to fit in with what the right wing have been trying to do for many decades.

One thing they have ignored for years, but never succeeded in eliminating, is clause four of the Labour Party constitution, which calls for the nationalisation and democratic control of the means of production. But in Ted's case, I would really like to know why he spent only two days at Blackpool and four days at Brighton as an observer at the Conservative conference! There are better trained and more informative journalists than he, and I don't swallow that one. Come off it Ted, there are other reasons, tell us the true ones!

Yours fraternally,  
Jack Rawling  
Wallsend.

## Go South

Dear Comrades

The following letter in our local paper shows the efforts workers will go to in order to try and get work. It shows the hypocrisy of the Tory propaganda that jobs are available if people are prepared to go and look for them:

On the important subject of moving to other areas to work, I refer to the letter you published from me [Postbox, Sept 19] describing my efforts to obtain employment by getting the Brighton Jobcentre to circulate my details throughout the country.

They subsequently supplied me with a list of some 100 transport companies in the Midlands and North of England. I typed a letter and had it photocopied 100 times, and I typed the addresses plus 100 ten-pence stamps, total cost being £18.50.

I have since that time received 52 replies and two letters returned from companies having gone out of business.

All the replies say one thing very clearly: NO WORK. To quote one: "Dear Sir, perhaps you are not aware that at this time we have a depression in this part of the country. You would be advised to try again in your area."

'Brighton Argus' 17.10.80

Fraternally  
Geoff Jones Brighton

## Heinz help themselves

Dear Comrade

Many people will have noticed the philanthropic gesture of the Heinz Company in helping schools to cope with the devastation of our education system due to Tory policies. Kevin Keegan invites us to collect labels of Heinz beans, soups, pickles etc to provide things that our kids need at school.

Before any comrades get carried away with the misplaced belief that British capitalism does have an acceptable face, let's see why Heinz are attempting this advertising stunt.

For a £22 football you will need to collect £900 worth of labels, for a £1.70 table tennis bat you will need 400 [£100 worth] and a Ford Transit [£7,000 cost] will require a mere 1,300,000 labels [£325,000 worth].

Last year Heinz made £15m profit; they spent £10m on advertising. As Neil Kinnock said, if they really cared about our kids they could donate some of this to the Education Department.

Yours fraternally  
Simon Heather  
Selly Oak CLP

# ads

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

**MIKE LEVENE'S 1980 flat-warming.** Saturday 22 November, 10.00 pm till late. 9 Dinant Avenue, Canvey Island (tel. 60187). Bring bottles. Meet 8 pm at the "Silver Jubilee", Link Road.

### YCAU RALLY

**Fight against unemployment**

**Speakers:**  
Tony Sauniois  
Roy Bennett (Victimised convenor, Alan Smith Group)  
Also a speaker from TGWU ICC, Mansfield Road, Nottingham  
2.00 pm, Sunday 16 November

### TOWER HAMLETS Labour Party Young Socialists

**'Organise—Hit Back—Join the Young Socialists To Fight Thatcher!'**

Meeting—Tuesday November 18th 7.30pm. Speaker: Andy Bevan. At Bethnal Green Labour Party Rooms, 349 Cambridge Heath Rd, London E2. Be There!

**KILNER HOUSE Squat against the sale of council houses.** Rally Saturday 15th November 2pm. Leading speakers invited. Kilner House Courtyard, Clayton St, SE11 (Near Oval Tube).

**OXFORD Tote Draw** (2nd series weeks 11-25). Week 11: No. 14, Philip Ayres. 12: No. 175 Mr Le Page. 13: No. 195, Peggy Dyer. 14: No. 43 (unsold). 15: No. 118 c/o T Kitchener. 16: No. 180 (unsold) 17: No. 113 c/o T Kitchener. 18: No. 130, Glenys Enticott. 19: No. 180 (unsold). 20: No. 187 c/o D Lewis. 21: No. 15 Malcolm Payne. 22: No. 123 Mike Carlisle (unpaid). 23: No. 129 David Enticott. 24: No. 169 c/o Ian Sugarman. 25: No. 191 John Browning.

**MANCHESTER Militant Readers' Meeting** 'Turmoil in the Indian Subcontinent'. Speakers: Akhil Anand and Gurusurthi Hegde, Marxists from India. Longsight Library, Stockport Road, Levenshulme 7.30 pm, November 17th.

**BLACKBURN Militant Readers' Meeting** 'Turmoil in the Indian Subcontinent'. Speakers: Akhil Anand and Gurusurthi Hegde, Marxists from India. Union House (formerly nursing home), St Peter's Street, Blackburn. 7.45 pm, Tuesday 18 November

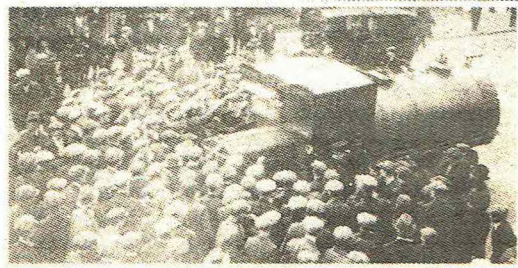
**SALFORD Marxist Discussion Group Ireland:** Divide and Rule 7.30 pm, Thursday 4 December Phone 061-793 5808 for details

**PUBLIC MEETING—Which way forward for Labour?** Speakers: Andy Bevan and Joan Maynard MP. 2 December 1980, time 8.45 pm, at Cedar Halls, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon.

**TELFORD Youth Against the Tories** public meeting with Andy Bevan (Labour Party National Youth Officer) at Dawley Christian Centre, Tel-ford Wednesday 19 November, 7.30 pm

**LEEDS Militant 50 Club winners.** Last week: Mr G Waite, No. 25. This week: Ms J Burrows, No. 15

**SWANSEA Public Meeting** 'Repression in Sri Lanka'. Tuesday 18 November, 7.30 pm Dynevor School, Swansea. Speakers: Siritunge Jayasuriya (Organising Secretary, Nava Sama Samaja Party), and Gunasena Mahanama (General Secretary, Government Clerical Service Union). All welcome.



## Militant Calendar 1981

New 'Militant' calendar for 1981 out now. The calendar, complete with coil binding and hook, portrays with photographs events from the history of the British labour movement. Limited edition. Send £1 [plus 20p p&p] with order [5 or more post free] to Calendar Offer, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## BLACKTHORNE RECORDS

KILROY WAS HERE

(BR 1063)

Has it ever crossed your mind to ask yourself why Mrs T talks funny?

The answer may be found on Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl's new disc

**KILROY WAS HERE [BR 1063]**

£4.30 [p&p incl.] from:

**Blackthorne Records**

**35 Stanley Avenue**

**Beckenham, Kent BR3 2PU**

# Build

# Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	3638		5,000
East Midlands	3269		3,800
Hants & IOW	4034		4,600
Humberside	1546		2,500
London East	5111		6,200
London West	2832		4,700
London South	4429		4,700
Manchester & Lancs	2759		5,100
Merseyside	3806		6,000
Northern	4370		7,300
Scotland East	2138		3,200
Scotland West	3864		5,000
Southern	4220		5,900
South West	2102		3,200
Wales East	1554		2,800
Wales West	2870		3,100
West Midlands	6322		9,000
Yorkshire	4247		7,300
Others	10236		10,600
<b>Total received</b>	<b>73347</b>		<b>100,000</b>

## TARGET FOR YEAR - £100,000

# 5 TIMES THIS NEEDED WEEKLY

Just over £73,300 after adding on this week's total of £638 means that we need nearly £3,000 each week to achieve our target of £100,000 by January 10th.

Every reader and supporter must do their best to give us the necessary boost over the festive season. And we particularly want actual money in from the comrades who've given us IOUs in the past few weeks!

Unfortunately, in this hard life, such benevolent institutions as the London Electricity Board and British Rail just don't accept IOUs in settlement of our accounts. On the other hand, just four weeks with the same total as last week's £6,400 would mean that we would be home and dry!

Donations at Readers' Meetings in this week include those from Basildon, Stockton, Chester and Chester-le-Street (where the comrades also sent in surplus from a disco and fares).

Two comrades in London and Birmingham have donated their sick pay, whilst one in Stevenage risked getting sick by braving the elements and taking a dip off the East Coast in November. Warmer methods of fund-raising were £3.10 tea and biscuits at a Yorkshire Weekend School, and a Rochdale social.

From trade unionists this week came £25 from the Birkenhead Childrens' Hospital Campaign Committee, a fiver from D White and members of SOGAT London Central Branch, and regular extras from S Earley, Secretary, Southampton Busmen T&GWU, and extras on the papers from workers at Barr & Stroud, Glasgow.

By Steve Cawley

Thanks also to Young Socialists and students on Merseyside who helped make up £42; N Woods, Rover, Solihull, £1.50; Readers Discussion Group £14; IRSF members £10; P Cole Reading LPYS £5.50; R Bell Gosport £5; G McPhie Glasgow £11; Leicester student £15; C Buxton Enfield £1; Yorkshire readers: D Bond £4, J Hancock £3.10, and S Ryder £4. Cash from South Yorkshire also included £2 from S Kaplan, a school student who put his pennies into a jar. This is an example that many older readers could copy to our advantage!

One of the easiest ways of seeing your area's line on our chart go shooting towards the right is to get out selling our Winter Holiday Draw tickets. The prizes are worth hundreds of pounds, and for just £1 you can get yourself ten chances of winning! All the tickets in the raffle have been distributed by now to local 'Militant' sellers, so if you haven't got a few books to sell, chase your local seller!

Above all—if you want an even better, bigger, more regular 'Militant' next year—give us the opportunity to provide you with it now! Sell the tickets, redeem the IOUs, collect weekly for the 'Daily Militant' fund! Events are speeding up, and a week's a long time in politics. We'd like to make a few New Year's resolutions about the scope and size of the 'Militant', but we must have your contributions in first.

# THIS WEEK £638

## Great Success in Paper Drive

Our sales drive in October has proved to be a great success. Up and down the country 'Militant' sellers have been giving a boost to our growing circulation; below is part of a report from four of our supporters in Tyneside.

'Beginning Monday we decided to start with the dole in Newcastle. Before starting, the comrades told us that on Sunday on an estate sale, they had sold 27 papers in one and a half streets. Just the start we needed. An hour's selling at the dole produced 15 papers sold and 2 new members for the Labour Party Young Socialists.

'That night the 'Militant' was asked to provide a speaker to a ward meeting in Sunderland, a ward that had only recently been formed. Out of 16 people at the meeting 10 bought the paper—and some of the others were part of the same family.

'Three of the comrades wanted the paper regularly

without even reading the paper. The discussion itself had been enough. Thursday morning we were back at the dole, we could only stop for an hour, but we sold 8 papers.

'Friday we sold papers at the housing demonstration in Durham. In general we have found a tremendous reception for the paper.'

This is just one example of the hundreds of sterling efforts that have given us record sales this year. In East Wales last week 150 papers were sold at a rally, and to top off another good week we had a record 5 extra bulk orders to sell the paper from Coleraine [N. Ireland], Warrington, Keele, Totnes [Devon] and Shoreham [Sussex].

All our sellers are now gearing themselves up for a monster sale on the Labour Party demonstration on 29 November. Make sure you get your extra orders for that week's issue in good time!

## MILITANT WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Win a winter holiday abroad for two worth £500—can be taken any time mid-January to mid-April!

Second prize: a weekend for two in Paris! Eight other prizes include record tokens and a portable TV.

Tickets only 10p from your 'Militant' seller. All proceeds to the 'Militant' fighting fund.



Photo: MILITANT

# FIREMEN—WE'RE READY FOR ACTION

Firemen on anti-cuts demonstration last year now forced to fight for the second time in three years for decent pay

## Birmingham

"I could not stomach the firemen being offered that amount of money. They have a very good life and are well paid for it—and I don't want all this talk of bravery in which a lot of other people are involved too."

This is the reactionary view of Tory county councillor Ronald Wooton, former chairman of the West Midlands Fire Committee and of the national joint council. Perhaps this venom has some benefit. His statement has been photocopied by the FBU Brigade Officials and circulated round West Midlands branches to convince

the men of the need to take action!

Ray Bryant, FBU regional secretary, summed up the feelings of members that with the employers even agreeing to the 18.2% the 6% was like having a wage increase snatched out of your hand.

He believes the Tories have deliberately thrown down the gauntlet to the firemen as they did with the steel workers. So now it is essential for the FBU to win the maximum support from other public sector workers for another battle against the government.

## Scotland

"Disgust and a great deal of anger" is how Scottish firemen's feelings were summed up by Jim Flockhart, the FBU's Scottish secretary. The government and employers have provoked this situation.

"There is to be a national conference on 21 November to agree the form of national struggle. We are not going to let the government plan as well as they did before the last strike."

## Strathclyde

The chairman of Strathclyde FBU, Ronnie Robertson, said the men were quite determined and ready for action. The government are attempting to take on all public sector workers so they decided to take action along with other public sector unions.

They welcome such initiatives as have been taken by some leaders in the public sector unions, but they feel

Photo: John Sturrock (Report) II



Demonstration during the 1977 firemen's strike

that the time for talking has got to stop and that action has got to be taken.

## Liverpool

We learnt a lot from the last strike and we are wary of going through all that again, but my branch know that if we don't fight now that will be it, we won't be able to fight again—we won't be in a position to.

If the Tories get away with this then they will cut the service even further and next year they won't give us any pay rise at all. We have no other option but to fight.

The 18% we were offered had strings attached as it was but this 6% is just not on, the Tories just ripped up the agreement made after the 1977 dispute.

All of us on the union side worked for three years honouring the agreement even though the area disagreed with it. Yet now the employers have ripped it up before our eyes.

Representatives of many public sector workers in Liverpool have given the Merseyside FBU support and a joint conference of Merseyside public sector unions on how to fight the 6% is being discussed.

[Dave Dee, Liverpool FBU, spoke to Bob Wade]

# King Henry Pies FOUR MONTHS ON PICKET LINE

By John Hunt

Four months on, the battle for union recognition at King Henry's meat pie factory in Manchester, continues.

Three strikers—Mrs Eleanor Davies, Deborah Bari and Sandor Toth—have stood firm. As Eleanor explains, "I want to be able to walk down the street with my head held high, knowing I haven't let my union down."

Unfortunately the pressures of a long dispute broke the resolve of most of the strikers. Eight have returned to work and six others have accepted meagre pay-offs from the company, behind the union's back.

The Bakers Union Executive Committee last week voted unanimously to continue to support the strikers, but King Henry's managing director Derek Hollins says he questions the "legality" of continued mass pickets. Fine talk from a man who collects court appearances for breaking safety legislation like trophies!

In 1978 King Henry's was fined £250 under the Factories Act. A fortnight ago Hollins received two further fines of £250 each for

allowing machinery to be operated without a guard and by a worker not sufficiently trained. Other cases are pending.

The campaign for total blacking of King Henry's is being stepped up. The T&GWU have been asked to make extra efforts to choke off flour supplies. The National Union of Licensed House Managers have been approached to black King Henry's pies being sold in North-West pubs.

The three strikers are making a stand against anti-union sweat-shop management. Sandor points out, "Hollins has got away with too much. We'll be eating our Christmas turkey on this picket line if necessary."

These workers have a right to the fullest possible support from the labour and trade union movement. Please raise money, arrange for a speaker and give support on the picket line at Ravenoak Avenue, Levenshulme.

Mass pickets are being held every Friday morning from 7.00 a.m. Send donations and useful information to BF&AWU, Room 4, Geroge House, 30 Dudley Road, Manchester 16.

# FORD MANAGEMENT ENCOURAGE SCABS

Three weeks ago, Ford management at the Halewood plant in Liverpool made a vicious attack in the papers and on television on Ford workers.

They said we were always going out on strikes which weren't necessary and that we were only producing half the goods of our sister plants.

Mainly production has had to stop because management have failed to order such necessities as petrol tanks, anti-freeze, back lights etc.

Yes, we have had our disputes, but loss of production isn't only caused by that. The new technology that management introduced into the body plant, has caused a lot of lost production. One robot broke down 50 times on one shift. Workers here are putting in a 40-hour week, but the new technology, the robots, in the body plant are only putting in 20 hours a week—the other 20 hours they've got maintenance men working on them!

Management, as usual, blame us. They have now come out with a new discipline code, which means that you either scab on your work mates, on your fellow trade unionists in the plant, or you'll be suspended for the rest of the day and the day after.

What they've actually

said is if there is a dispute on the line and a man refuses to do a job, he will be given ten minutes in which to change his mind. Even if the dispute is over safety, it doesn't matter why the man has refused to do the job, he will be given ten minutes.

If he refuses to do the job after then he will be sent home for the rest of the day and will be told not to report back the following shift.

So, then management propose to go up to someone else, and put him on that job—then if he refuses to scab on his suspended workmate, he too will be suspended. They say they will carry on this procedure until they either get someone to do the job or they will lay the whole plant off!

Steve Broadhead, the convenor of the Ford's body plant has called this discipline procedure a recipe for disaster.

The feeling of the men on the line is that once this starts, there could be an all out strike at Halewood. We've proved in the past the solidarity of Ford's workers.

No way will management be able to attack Ford workers and try to impose the kind of disciplinary action where you have to scab on a fellow trade unionist.

By Steve Pimlett

(TGWU Ford Halewood)

## Gardner's: "OUT FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES"

Throughout the country, both bosses and workers are closely watching all developments at Gardners.

Many companies are looking warily at the occupation before announcing redundancies—while workers watch to see if sackings can be successfully fought. Already there is growing

evidence that this sort of fight will spread.

The latest threat by Gardners' management is to try to ballot about a return to work. This attempt to by-pass recognised procedure will be resisted strongly but at this crucial time in the strike, the workers need all the support they can get.

Garry Marsh has worked at Gardners for six years. He spoke to Militant about the occupation. "I will continue for as long as it takes," he said.

"We've been getting excellent support particularly from trade union organisations. On the whole we get good results when we speak at meetings. With over two million unemployed, all jobs are in danger. That's why people support Gardners.

"Companies may talk of full order books, but they used to tell us that. Now with this so-called recession, no jobs are safe. Despite all that, the massive companies still make their profits.

## Support is vital

"Money is the major problem for us. Up until last Wednesday we had raised £18,000. Since then we've received about £15,000 from Scotland, but even this welcome sum won't go far between all the strikers.

"The Manchester district AUEW have balloted for a levy—we don't know the result of this as yet. Sheffield area are also

pushing for a levy and we hope other areas do the same."

A recent opinion poll showed that unemployment is the biggest political issue at the moment. Victory for the Gardners workers would be a major boost in the fight against unemployment and redundancies.

In Eccles, the support committee set up by the Salford trades' council is growing and a social is being held on Thursday 13th November for the benefit of the strikers but national support is also vital.

Donations and messages of support to Dave Marsden, 187 Barton Lane, Eccles, Manchester. Cheques payable to L. Gardners and Sons Joint Shop Stewards Account No. 2.

# CPSA 'Militant' supporter as Broad Left presidential candidate

**The Tory government's war on the working class has once again reached a new pitch with pay restrictions and cuts lined up for the public sector.**

At a time like this, public service unions need a firm policy of active opposition to government plans. It was in this light that 215 CPSA activists came together for the national Broad Left conference in Leeds on 8th and 9th November.

The Broad Left met under the shadow of the devastating defeat of the left in the leadership elections earlier this year. An NEC majority of 22 to 6 for the Broad Left was turned in May into a landslide 26 to 2 victory to the right wing 'moderate' group.

Similar results occurred in many of the section elections. Not surprisingly much discussion at the conference dwelt on an assessment of the reasons for these defeats and how we could overcome them.

First and foremost was the question of who was to lead the Broad Left into next

**By Pat Byrne**

(CPSA DHSS South East London branch)

year's elections and on what programme. The longstanding Broad Left candidate for president had been Peter Coltman, a member of the Communist Party from Glasgow.

In a significant vote, the conference decided by a large majority (116 to 74) to change the presidential candidate and to back Kevin Roddy a well-known 'Militant' supporter from DHSS Newcastle Central Office for the first time.

Kevin's election speech explained the basis on which he was standing—the building of the Broad Left to a bigger, more effective force in the union; and an election campaign consisting of rallies, leaflets and posters throughout the country.

Kevin showed the need for a programme balanced between advancing bread and

butter issues of the members and the need for socialist policies and to link up with other sections of the movement in opposition to this vicious Tory government.

Voting on the NEC slate and TUC delegations followed a similar pattern, with 'Militant' supporters elected in increasing strength across the board. On policy there were also dramatic changes.

The Broad Left reversed its commitment to the new individual balloting system which many now recognise was a tactical error opening up the union's election procedures to the influence of the press and weakening the branch and policy-making bodies of the union.

## No to individual balloting

The way now is open for a campaign to change the constitution and to return the control of the leadership to the branches.

Just as important was the carriage of a motion supporting the principle of a CPSA/SCPS merger, which if carried out on the correct basis would decisively strengthen trade unionism in the civil service.

Other resolutions were carried, ranging from the need to fight discrimination against women who make up the

majority of our members to a pledge of solidarity to the struggle of the Polish workers to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy.

## Fight the 6% limit!

On pay, conference committed itself to mobilising the membership against the 6% pay limit. The executive plan joint pay rallies with other civil service unions throughout the country at the end of this month.

We must use this opportunity along with the pay conference next January to commit the right wing leadership to struggle against any pay cut.

On sackings, the conference discussed the lessons of the Brixton Labour Exchange dispute which received national publicity when pickets were arrested. Then we heard the case of another branch officer Lynn Hutchins from the Institution of Civil Engineers branch who had been summarily dismissed the Friday before the Broad Left Conference for carrying out official union policy. Lynn was unanimously supported and over £200 was collected to launch a defence campaign.

Without doubt this Broad Left conference indicated the

**The CPSA Broad Left's new candidate for president, Kevin Roddy, at the union's 1978 conference. The savage attacks on the public sector make a clear fighting alternative more vital than ever.**

change in the balance of forces on the left of the union in favour of the policies and supporters of the 'Militant'. Moreover it began to draw the lessons of the recent electoral setbacks.

## Nation-wide campaign

The morale and fighting capacity of the left remains. It is the job of all CPSA members who look to the Broad Left as an alternative, to participate in a nation-wide campaign to give back to the

membership a union leadership that will fight for the policies that they support.

The adoption of Kevin Roddy as the presidential candidate and the strong NEC slate backing him will aid tremendously in this process. Future years will see a strengthening of the left in the union and no amount of right wing manoeuvring will stop that process.

# BOWATERS RUTHLESS BOSSES MUST BE STOPPED

**Bowaters' bosses "celebrate" their golden jubilee this week—50 years of newsprint production at Ellesmere Port—by abolishing 56% of all British newsprint overnight.**

Despite gigantic concessions from the government, Bowaters' management are ruthlessly determined to close the mill on the 21st with no thought for the suffering caused.

These revelations prove a number of points that Militant has argued throughout the fight to save the mill. Firstly, contrary to the claims of some action committee members and many trade union leaders, the company has set its mind on withdrawing from Ellesmere Port, and in the case of newsprint, in Britain, in order to concentrate on making super profits from the much larger, more modernised plants in Canada and the USA.

It also proves that all early pleas for joint action by the bosses and workers for government concessions have only been used to fool workers as we warned. Whilst workers waited for the government to make concessions on energy etc, to "their" bosses—reassured by trade union leaders that this was the best

**By Richard Venton**  
(Birkenhead Labour Party)

approach, the bosses secretly rejected concessions.

Chief Executive, Dr. Lenton has shown his real face. He was "angry that details of energy had been leaked. They were supposed to be confidential and I'd be a bloody sight happier if other people treated them the same." There speaks the hypocrite who called for help with the trade unions earlier.

A further mass meeting of SOGAT members at the mill has rejected industrial action and called on officials to negotiate the best possible redundancy terms. The reasons behind this are obvious—lack of a clear leadership.

## Urgent action needed

If trade union officials, locally at branch level and nationally had involved members from the start in a campaign to implement the decisions of numerous SOGAT branch meetings, the workforce would have felt confidence in a way out.

Urgent steps need to be taken to prevent the mill from

being wiped off the map. If a sit-in was organised to prevent machinery being moved, this could force the government to nationalise the mill or else find a buyer.

Nobody should leave the workplace on 21 November. In the short time left, meetings should be organised to warn workers of the total lack of alternative employment and the complete shortsightedness of relying on redundancy money. The partial retreat of the government shows that decisive action including a sit-in could embarrass them into real steps to save the mill.

If a sizeable section of the workers are prepared to take action, the trade union leaders have a duty to give them an opportunity and a lead. Others could be won over. If the trade unions organised an occupation, anyone still prepared to sell jobs would be shunned by their community whose jobs they'd be selling.

A major national asset faces extinction. 1,600 men and women face long term unemployment. Bowater's don't want to keep the Mersey mill. The trade unions should now organise decisive action to prevent asset stripping and force the government to take over the firm.

# SAVE STEEL—SAVE SCUNTHORPE

Reliable sources inform us that the British Steel Corporation have decided to close down the Normanby Park steelworks in Scunthorpe.

Like the other bombshells the BSC have dropped in towns like Corby, Consett and Port Talbot this would have devastating effects on the whole area. 2,000 jobs are at risk—and it is estimated that only 30 or 40 of those made redundant would be found alternative jobs on the Anchor site.

The trade unions must take the lead in the fight to save an entire community. This is not just a fight for Normanby jobs; the management must not be allowed to divide and rule the workforce.

There are already strong rumours of the closure of the Anchor site; this struggle is for the future of Scunthorpe and the future of steel in Britain.

Last week, 'Militant'

**By 'Militant' reporters in Scunthorpe**

pointed out the lessons of the unsuccessful campaign to save Consett steelworks. All workers in the steelworks and the town as a whole need to be involved in the campaign from the very start.

The Joint Works Negotiating Committee should immediately be convened to organise a mass meeting of all steelworkers in Scunthorpe, to explain that a fight must be waged to save all jobs. There is no alternative employment the area—and a job lost now is a job lost to the whole town.

It will be up to the trade union movement to prevent the destruction of Scunthorpe. The unions should organise mass meetings in the town to explain the

issues to the local community.

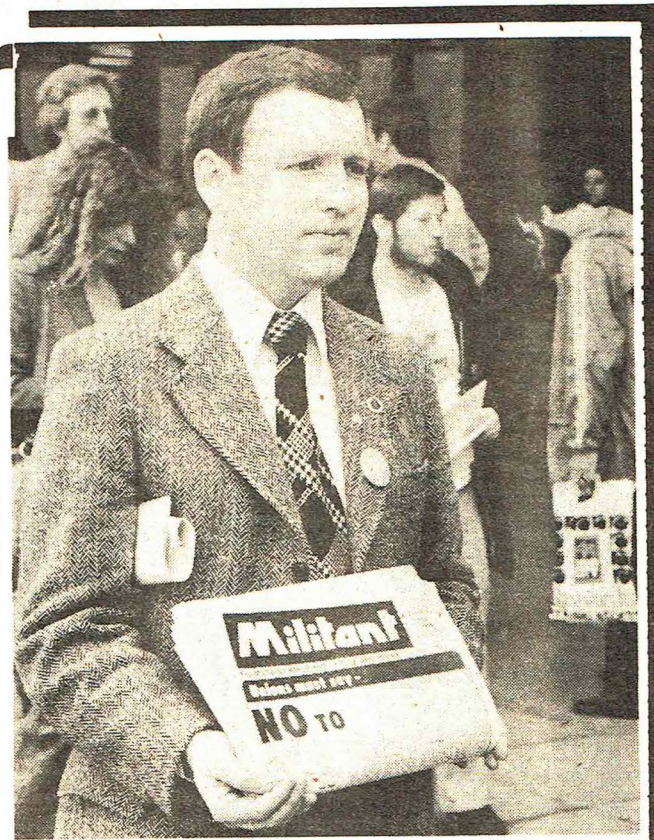
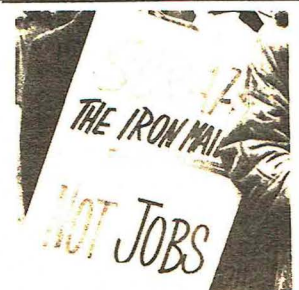
The management and the government will not listen to pleas about the viability of the plant. The BSC bureaucrats have over the years neglected and run down the steel works throughout the country while the present government are seriously considering scrapping the entire industry!

The only way they will be forced to keep steel alive in Scunthorpe—and in Britain as a whole—will be by firm action from the trade union movement.

An all-out campaign of mass meetings involving all workers in the town—and moves by the union branches towards co-ordinated industrial action throughout the steel industry—that is the only alternative to the murder of another industrial town.

## SPAMOUNT MILL

We regret that last week's 'Militant' gave the wrong address for donations and messages of support for the Spamount Mill occupation. This should have read c/o Omagh Trades Council, 34 High Street, Omagh, Co. Tyrone. Support is still urgently needed for this important battle to save jobs in the highest unemployment area in Western Europe.



# END ALL IMMIGRATION LAWS

Photo: John Smith (IFL) (II)

**Black people are increasingly at the sharp end of the crisis in Britain. Already they have to face massive unemployment and poor housing conditions.**

Now they are being used by racists as a scapegoat for the many and increasing ills of the bosses' system.

**By Tom Stott**

(Rochdale Labour Party)

Thatcher's talk of the dangers of swamping has falsely and hypocritically linked unemployment with immigration. Recently, fascist thugs have stepped up attacks on individual blacks, while the Home Office is increasingly picking up blacks and threatening them with deportation or harassment.

This is especially so amongst the most isolated section of the black community, Asian women. It is vital that the labour movement takes up the struggle against the racist immigration laws and attacks on black workers. Moves against black workers are part of a general policy of the Tories to restrict and take away all the past rights won by the labour movement.

### Labour movement must act!

This Saturday sees a demonstration in Rochdale in support of the campaign for Anwar Ditta's three children to join her here in Britain (see previous issues of 'Militant'). Only the organised labour movement has the power and strength to win this case and others.

Under immigration laws, immigrants have no access to the courts, just Home Office tribunals. Not surprisingly, the Home Office wins 85% of the cases which come up

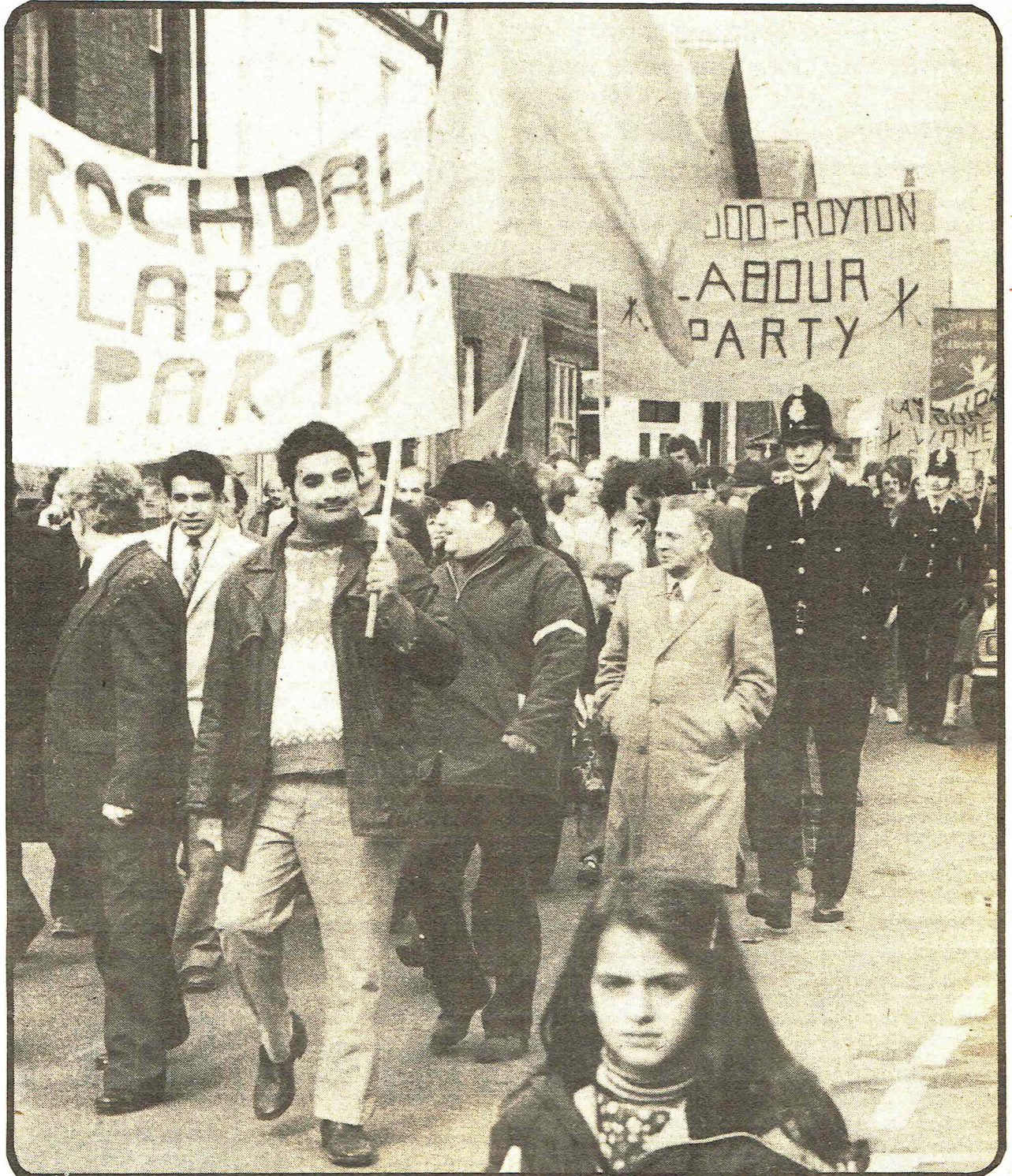
before such tribunals.

Even when the occasional case goes in favour of the black person, the Home Office can still appeal. When Nasira Begum won her case against deportation in July, the Home Office put in an immediate appeal against the judgement.

Other deportations are threatened. Mrs Nasreen Akhtar has been told to leave with two of her three children. Earlier this year an 80 year old grandmother, Mrs Said Bibi, was flown to Pakistan despite her poor health and despite the fact that she wanted to stay in Britain and live with her son.

When the capitalists need cheap labour they encouraged people to come to Britain, from Pakistan, India and the West Indies. Now the bosses regard all labour as 'superfluous', they now want to discard them and use them as a scapegoat to divide working people.

Locally the labour movement has taken up some of these attacks. But the struggle needs to be broadened out onto a national scale to fight for the repeal of the racist immigration and nationality acts and for class unity between black and white workers to get rid of the system that causes so much human misery.



A previous demonstration in Rochdale in 1978 showed the concern of the labour movement about the threat of racialism. The immigration laws are not only callous and inhumane, they are also used

to divide workers on race and colour lines. Join the demonstration in defence of Anwar Ditta this Saturday, 15 November at 12 noon at Church Stile [off Drake St.] Rochdale.

## Move Thatcher

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

peated itself.

On the estates hundreds of 'Militants' and 'Socialist Youths' were sold and a bus driver even stopped his bus to buy a paper.

Ralph Bevan from Caldicot, was demonstrating against the Tories for the first time. "I am on a manpower services scheme, working for the council. After twelve months' work I will be back on the dole—that's not a proper job."

He agreed with the LPYS demand for an £80 minimum wage. "I do a normal week's work like anyone else and I get £23.50. I think I've a right to a decent wage."

The rally at the end of the demonstration was addressed

by Andy Bevan, Terry Fields (Fire Brigade Union Executive), Joe Marino (General Secretary of the Bakers' Union) and local MPs and leading trade unionists.

Terry Fields and Derek Gregory (NUPE) pointed out that the struggles for jobs and

decent wages go hand in hand. Workers who accept low wages have no guarantee that they will keep their jobs.

Andy Bevan outlined the programme of the LPYS; he explained that the anger of the unemployed youth at the Tories wasn't enough. It had to be channelled through the power of the labour movement by the LPYS. The LPYS has a huge responsibility to organise unemployed youth around its programme.

In the discussion, Mike

Markey from Ebbw Vale LPYS, said the experience of Ebbw Vale should be a warning to all workers. The Steel Works had partially closed; now 900 school leavers are chasing 1 job registered at the careers office.

This demonstration marks the first step of the campaign of the Welsh region of the LPYS against unemployment. The gains we have made in the campaign will be built upon for the demonstration in Liverpool on November 29th.



### NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY PUBLIC MEETING

'THE SRI LANKA GENERAL STRIKE'

Speakers:

Siritunge Jayasuriya [Organising Secretary, NSSP]

Gunasena Mahanama [General Secretary, Government Clerical Service Union]

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