

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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15p

## SAVE STEEL



National action is vital if other steel areas are to avoid the fate of Corby, Shotton and Consett

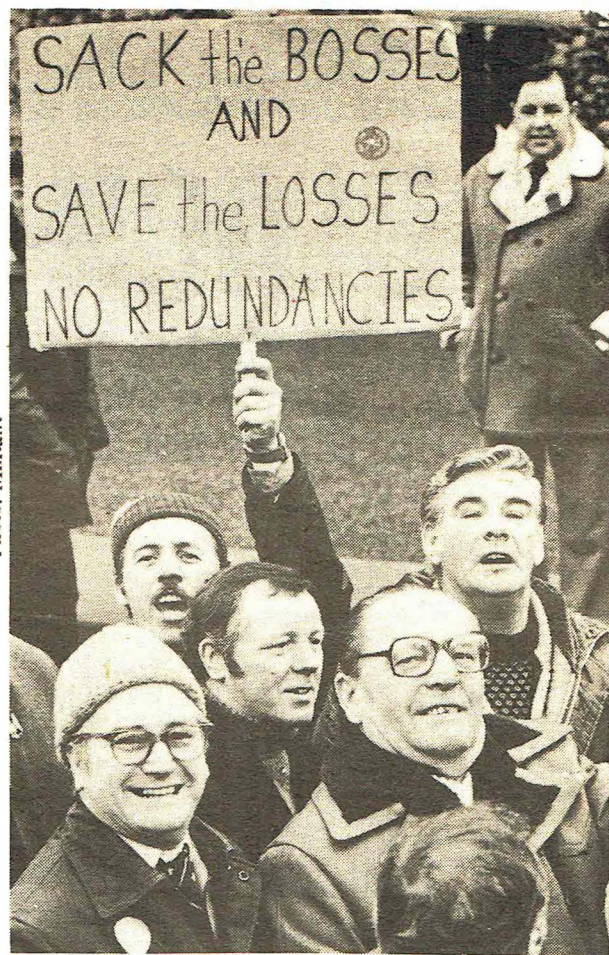


Photo: Militant

Photo: Militant

**Militant wishes  
all workers a  
happy Christmas.  
Tories out in 1981!**

## Tory closures threaten - • Steelmen • Miners • Railworkers

The British Steel Corporation have handed us another Christmas present —and steelworkers are furious.

Here at Normanby Park in Scunthorpe, one of the plants threatened by MacGregor, the mood is bitter.

Last year we had the insulting two per cent pay offer. This year: a no-per cent increase with a bonus of closures, the threat of liquidation and 20,000 jobs

laid on the altar of unemployment.

We must learn the lessons from the Corby and Consett closures. Failure to strike means failure to survive.

By Bill McCoid  
(ISTC Normanby Park)  
& Pete Watson

Productivity deals and thinning down exercises won't save the other Scunthorpe steel works. BSC's boss MacGregor states that if the new strategy does not work by July, he will use yet more drastic surgery.

This will mean yet more job losses. Which works will be next for closure?

Relieved acceptance of redundancies; union leaders murmuring 'it could have been worse,' will not guarantee the future of Scunthorpe. Only a bold and aggressive fight to defeat management plans and to defeat the Tories will bring any security for jobs in BSC.

The whole labour and trade union movement must unite in a mass struggle

against the de-industrialisation of Britain. The steel union leaders must this time take up the gauntlet—we cannot hope to win without a national lead, national co-ordination, national action.

The British Steel Corporation management have organised a conspiracy of silence about the closures, which have been mapped out for months.

'Militant' published details of the Normanby Park closure plan four weeks ago. When this news circulated around Normanby Park, management immediately denied the 'rumours', though they must have been

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## Misery law blocked by Print Unions

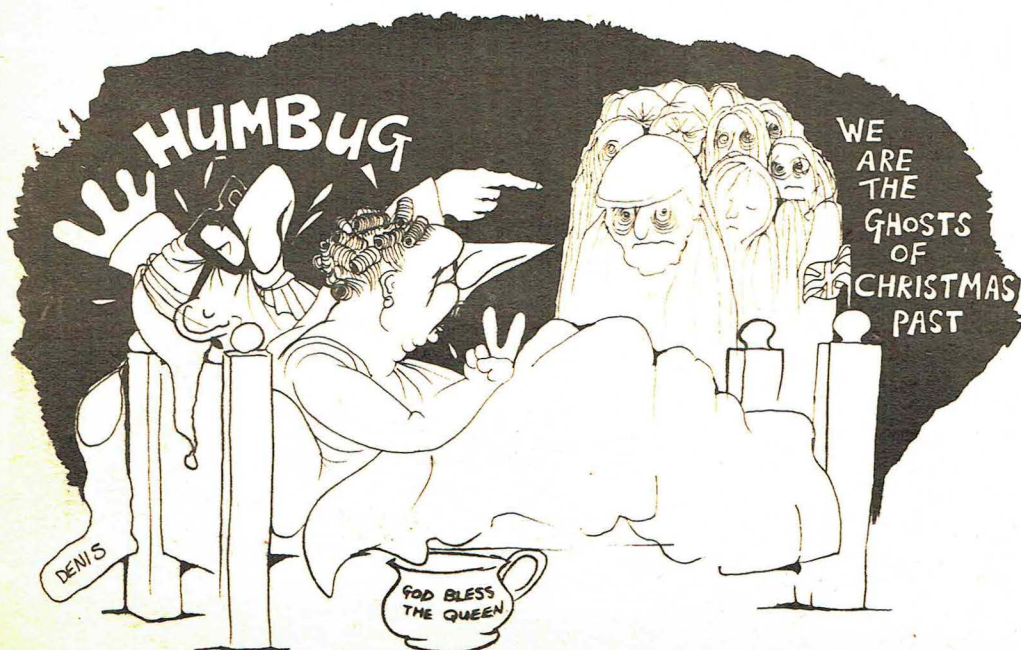
**WARRANT SALE**  
Household effects of James Black  
200 Albert Road, Glasgow G40  
1 December 1980 at 10 am

The name and address here since the middle are fictitious, but the misery resulting from the archaic and humiliating Scottish practice of recovering debts through warrant sales has haunted working-class debtors

here since the middle ages.

Warrant sales are the forced public sale of goods owned by someone in debt so that money can

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BACK PAGE



# Militant

## H-BLOCK-LABOUR ACTION NEEDED

The physical condition of the seven republican prisoners in H-Blocks who have now been refusing food for over 50 days is now seriously deteriorating.

One of them, Sean McKenna, who is suffering from vitamin deficiency and losing his eyesight is clearly approaching a critical condition.

The death of one or more hunger strikers in the coming days will inevitably lead to a new explosion in Northern Ireland.

"The government and the security forces..." according to 'The Times' [16 December] "are bracing themselves for a sharp increase in violence if one of the hunger strikers dies." But the responsibility for a new round of sectarian conflict and clashes with the army and militarised police will lie with the Tory government. Thatcher and her cabinet are intransigently refusing to take any steps to improve the atrocious conditions in the H-blocks and Armagh.

Faced with the Tories' stubborn refusal to make any concessions, the scale of the prisoners' struggle has been increased, with 30 more H-Block prisoners joining the hunger strike this week.

There are also three

Republican women prisoners in Armagh on hunger strike; and recently six Loyalist prisoners in the Maze prison started their own hunger strike.

The tactics of Thatcher's cabinet will provoke a major escalation of the conflict over this issue. Previous proposals for improvements in the H-Blocks, put forward by the Northern Ireland Office would probably have been accepted by the prisoners at that time.

But they were apparently vetoed in London.

The Northern Ireland Office now repeats that it remains "committed to its policy of increasingly improving prison conditions while refusing to give special status to particular prisoners."

But there has been no sign whatsoever of any real move to change the regime in the Maze and Armagh. Conditions in these jails are the worst prison conditions of any advanced capitalist country.

Irrespective of the way in which the prisoners' campaign developed, it is clear that their desperate tactics are the result of extremely brutal, de-humanising conditions.

The labour movement must now take urgent action to put pressure on the Tory

government on this issue. Resolutions should be moved in the bodies of the trade unions and Labour Party.

The labour movement can in no way support the policies of the Provisional IRA. In particular, it is intransigently opposed to their methods of individual terrorism, which [as we explained in our editorial last week] have intensified sectarian conflict and played into the hands of the state, allowing it to strengthen its repressive apparatus.

Nevertheless, the labour movement has a duty to defend the elementary human and democratic rights of prisoners. No prisoners, irrespective of their crimes or alleged crimes should be subjected to barbaric, inhuman conditions.

Many of the prisoners, moreover, are there as a result of "trials" under the non-jury "Diplock" courts. Over 80% of their convictions were based on "confessions," either uncorroborated or backed up only by anonymous police "witnesses."

The National Executive of the Labour Party has recently endorsed the following demands which must be taken up by the movement: the right of the prisoners to

wear their own clothes; to receive two food parcels and two visits a week; to negotiate a choice of work, training and to proper educational facilities; and to belong to trade unions and receive trade union rates of pay.

If these improvements were introduced, the hunger strike might be called off.

Demonstrations in both Northern Ireland and the South show the widespread sympathy for the prisoners' demands for improved conditions. But there are signs that support for these rallies has been falling off as the campaign, particularly the National H-Blocks Campaign, has been more and more overtly identified with the Provisionals.

There is sympathy for the prisoners, not because of the Provos' policies, but in spite of them. The desperate tactics of the prisoners, now a hunger strike "to the death," have themselves arisen from the isolation of the Provos from any mass movement of support in the Province.

It is only the labour movement, through the united class action of the working class on the basis of socialist policies, which can find a way out of the present quagmire.

# Save Steel

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

well aware of the closure plan.

The Department of Health and Social Security in Scunthorpe seems to have known in advance: they have been employing more staff at a time of cuts elsewhere, equipping a second dole office in preparation for redundancies. Four days prior to the statement, workers at the local bus company were told that normal services would be running to Normanby Park during the closure period.

The announcement was very carefully timed. The Normanby Park workforce have broken up for an extended Christmas holiday. The government wages subsidy scheme is running out, so management can serve 90 days' redundancy notice just as the workers come back from holiday.

But these are minor problems when our whole livelihood is at stake—a fight can and must be organised now.

As a start, a big rally must be called in Scunthorpe. We must organise a local campaign against closure; build a solid front of all local unions threatened by the closure. Rail workers, South Yorkshire miners and many other workers will be affected—now is the time to turn promises and speeches into determined united action.

A joint mass meeting must be convened, bringing together both sides of the Normanby Park works for a joint fight.

If Scunthorpe steelworkers do not fight now, it will be an open invitation to BSC to come back for more. And they will—this onslaught, like the last round of closures and redundancies, will not solve the industry's problems.

The dole queue is no answer. Unemployment is soaring and investment in industry is declining rapidly. The new industry promised by the Tories will not come to the advanced factories in Scunthorpe: bosses everywhere are sacking, not expanding.

The only answer to unemployment is a programme of no redundancies, a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, work sharing. This must be our alternative, spelt out at mass meetings, on picket lines, in demonstrations. Our union leaders, from the top down, must make it clear we are fighting all the way:

- No closures!
- Ban overtime!
- Withdraw all co-operation on continuous working agreements!
- Re-convene the strike committee!

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM Mr MacGREGOR

These are extracts from a letter sent by BSC chairman Ian MacGregor to all BSC employees—except, so far it seems, those at the Normanby Park work in Scunthorpe threatened with closure.

Behind the fine talk, the scurrilous attempts to offload on to BSC workers responsibility for successive managements' ineptitude in planning investment, the lack of modern plant where and when it is needed, MacGregor makes it plain that the problems of the steel industry are international—a capitalist crisis of poverty, dole queues and unsold goods.

His answer—more closures, more sackings. He calls it a 'survival' plan...

Dear fellow BSC employees,

Survival does not depend upon me. It depends upon you...

I am not going to pull punches any more and try to buy you with promises I cannot keep. By any ordinary reckoning, British Steel is bankrupt. If we were a private company and not an important basic industry, we would now be out of business. Let me tell you the reasons:

First, those reasons which are not our fault. There is a world recession, which is cutting down worldwide demand for steel.

Too many countries are producing too much steel, so that there is a glut. Most steel producers are cutting prices (and each others' throats in the process).

There are more than two million unemployed in Britain and, as a result, the demand for our steel in our home market is down because industries are not using as

much steel. Some of our best customers—British Leyland and British Shipbuilders, for example—are in serious trouble and needing much reduced tonnages of steel.

Let us now talk bluntly about the problems of our own making: for reasons we all know and regret, we lost important segments of our market...now we are trying to regain lost ground by trying to produce cheaper steel and undercutting their prices. It has cost a lot of jobs.

Then there is our inefficiency. Despite the fact that we have lost nearly 50,000 jobs, we are still not competitive with our foreign rivals. It still takes us too many man hours to produce a tonne of steel compared to Germany or France...

Last year, because of the recession and before our strike, we thought we could get by by slimming ourselves down from 182,000 to around 130,000 and to a capacity of 15.2 million tonnes. This is no longer possible.

To survive and to become healthy again, we have now to look for higher productivity and lower costs, pay increases which have been earned, and a workforce down to less than 108,000 by March 1982...

Originally we thought we would have to close down major integrated works. Let me tell you frankly that it may still come to this if we cannot make the plan for survival work.

But I thought we would have a damn good try to get by with less harsh and tragic steps.

So what we are planning to do is increase our efficiency, mostly by slimming down operations in all our works and offices, but also by some closures.

## MOSEDALE-PICKETING FOR JOBS

The workers at Mosedale brick works in Flixton near Manchester could be spending Christmas on the picket line. The workers, some of whom have worked at Mosedale for more than thirty years, are picketing to get their jobs back.

They were sacked following the dispute which arose when they discovered that non-union members were being paid higher rates of bonus than the trade union

members.

A very successful mass picket was held on 11 December at the company's other works at Rixton. About 250 turned up for the picket, including many workers from Gardners who have been very helpful in the Mosedale fight.

One shop steward, Steve Hilton, said, "After the mass picket, management have offered to negotiate. The picket was magnificent.

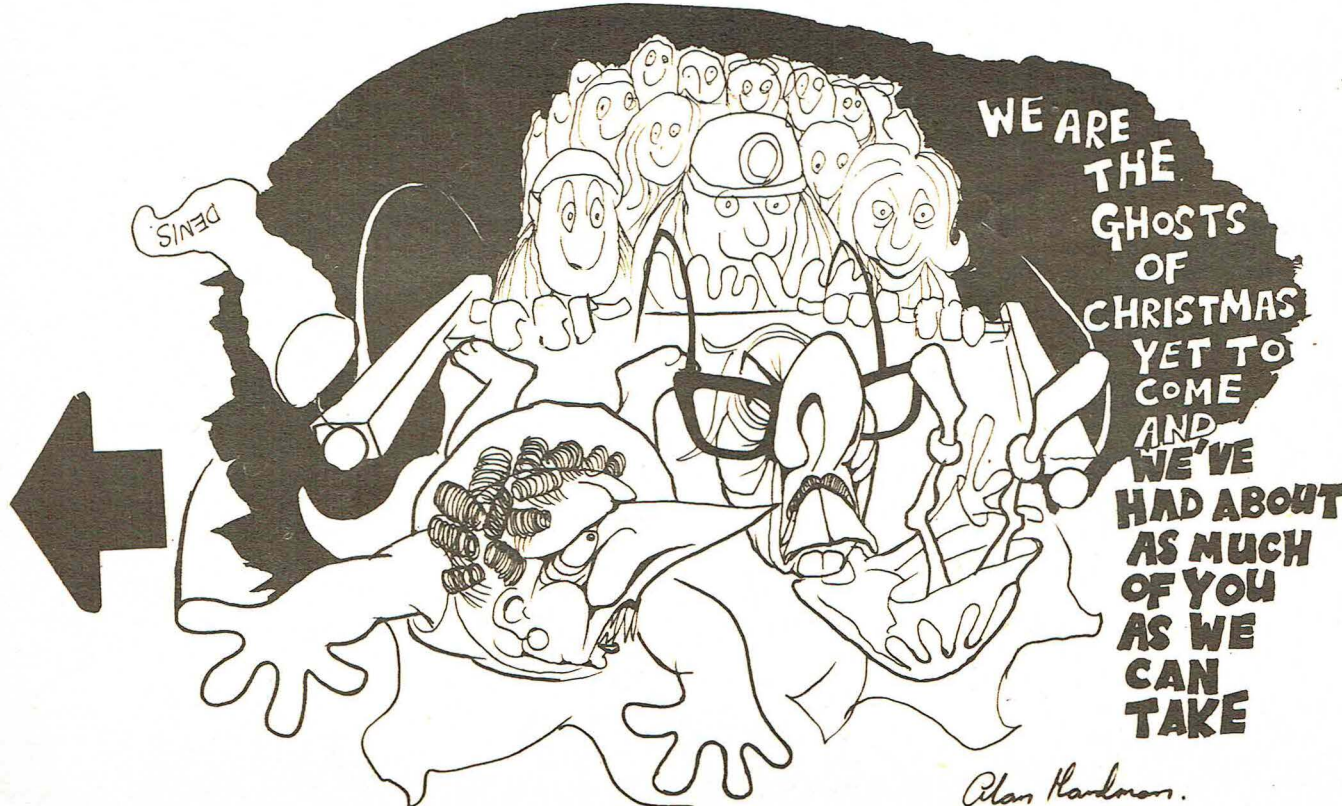
The 19th century capitalist cracked after thirty minutes of 20th century trade union activity.

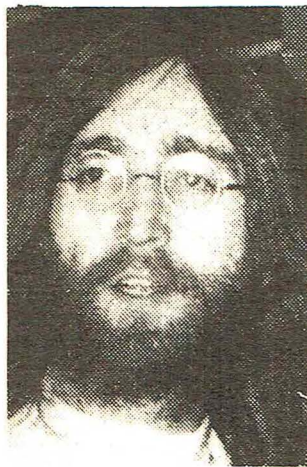
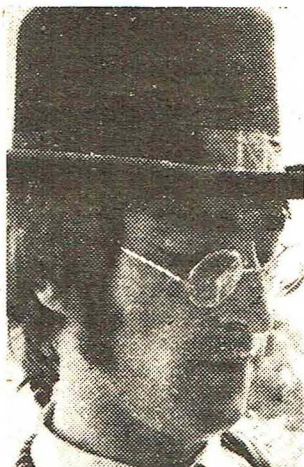
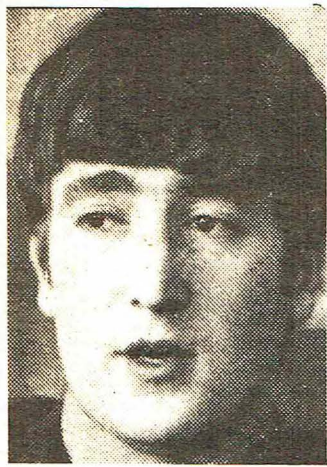
"It could well be a long and bitter dispute and they might try to split us but that won't work as long as the support keeps coming in."

Alan Madigan, another shop steward, added, "The support has been really encouraging. They probably intend to shut the place down, but we want to put on

enough pressure so that they re-open. They have mentioned compensation, but we want our jobs back. As far as we're concerned, it's the jobs that matter."

These T&GWU members need all possible support. Messages and donations to J. Brown, Mosedale Strike Committee, 216 Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester.





# John Lennon: How the Rebel Changed

**The death of John Lennon, killed violently in New York on 8 December, represents a far greater loss than the premature death of any other present-day pop performer.**

**By Tony Aitman**

**This is so not just for those of us who were young in the 1960s, but also for young people today.**

Lennon had not degenerated into the cabaret world of Los Angeles night clubs, as Elvis Presley did. He retained his rebelliousness, the anti-Establishment attitude that had first made him, more than any of the other Beatles, a major influence on the youth of his generation.

In his own original, individualistic way, he tried to voice a spirit of revolt against present-day society: "Our idea is not to comfort people, not to make them feel better, but to make them feel worse—to constantly put before them the degradation and humiliations they go through to get what they call a living wage."

Lennon expressed a mood of revolt, primitive and not very conscious politically, but with an obvious appeal to youth: "I like to incite people to being disobedient in school, to stick their tongues out, to keep insulting authority..."

Before John Lennon and the Beatles, pop music had been bland, to say the least. Rock 'n' roll had declined into the West End world of evening dress crooners. It had become almost exclusively the preserve of middle- and upper-class musicians, big bands, orchestras, or the mindless pap put out by singers who had once been rock 'n' roll stars.

The Beatles changed all that. Borrowing the music of black Americans, they showed young working-class kids that music was not just the preserve of the rich. It was possible for everyone to play and enjoy music that echoed their own experience and emotions.

John Lennon gave new hope to working-class youth. His attitude towards authority, his contempt and open flouting of the hypocrisy and double standards of capitalist society was an inspiration to many thousands of kids.

The Beatles' music helped stimulate a questioning of the standards of established



**A change in lifestyles. Above with Paul McCartney and George Harrison in Liverpool. Below, Lennon's New York home, 50 rooms of the Dakota apartment block, which cost £24,000 a month in maintenance alone**



society. It made many realise that they too could make music, and fight against the cultural dead end that they had been consigned to by the system. The 'Merseybeat revolution' was no accident. It was carried along by the struggle of working-class youth to overcome and break out from the stifling atmosphere of their cultural and economic backgrounds.

Yet, Lennon's life—and his death—showed the impossibility of doing this merely through the medium of music.

Lennon talked about the "rock 'n' roll revolution," and his early political commitment led him to support the struggles in Northern Ireland: "The rule is to divide and conquer; thus the

bosses will reap profits from the Protestants and Catholics and the immigrants and the working class."

Lennon made a donation to the workers at Upper Clyde ship-builders during their "work-in". However, though he used socialist ideas, his views were never really socialist in any worked-out way.

His opposition to capitalist society was really liberal or radical. His idea of "revolution" was somewhat self-centred. He once staged a stay-in-bed for peace.

His life-style more and more cut him off from the working-class roots that had created his political awareness. His enormous wealth led to isolation, a feeling of futility, sometimes of deep depression.

The working class and the struggle for socialism had no place in his "fight for peace." The fight was to be won through sleep-ins at the Hilton Hotel, or conversations with Pierre Trudeau, the Canadian Premier.

"Imagine," he sang, "imagine no possessions..." But in contrast to the ideas of the song, John and Yoko Ono (whom he married in 1969) lived in a luxury apartment, in a block which they owned, and there was a special room with the air-conditioning set just right to protect their furs.

The temptations of vast wealth had taken their toll on the man who began at The Cavern in Liverpool for £7 a night, and who had returned his MBE in protest at Britain's support for the American intervention in Vietnam.

But it will be for his music and the effect it had on thousands of us in the '60s that John Lennon will be remembered.

His songs came as a revolution to the complacent blandness of the late 'fifties, and an inspiration to youth facing nothing but dead-end jobs, bleak housing and a world of continual conflict.

Seduced by the temptations of the life of a super-star in America, it is a tragic irony that Lennon should die, killed by the violence inherent in American capitalist society.

Yet his music will remain, a testimony to the genuinely creative possibilities, and in stark contrast to the mass-produced mindlessness that still dominates much of the pop music charts even today.

## Stop the Monsters



**Residents of Graham Road, Hackney protesting against use of their road as a through-route.**

'Lorries, People and the Environment,' the recently published report of the Armistage Commission, may appear to be just one more of the many 'independent' reports which are produced on certain sociological questions. But this issue, for people who live near the congested arteries of Britain's roadway system, is somewhat more crucial.

The report's recommendations, that even heavier lorries (or 'juggernauts', as they are famously called,) should be allowed, and also that there should be higher speed limits, mean greatly increased misery for thousands of working people.

The report calls for stricter limits on size and noise-levels, but the increase in maximum weight from the present 32.5 tonnes to 34-44 tonnes, will mean an even worse pounding to the houses, shops, pavements in areas like Holloway in North London, where 7,000 lorries pass by every hour of the day.

Not only do these monsters cause damage to property. There is noise, the poisonous exhaust fumes and serious danger to children and old people crossing roads.

These proposals, if implemented, would serve to strengthen the big fish in road haulage, squeezing the small

lorry firms out of business as the market requires larger and faster lorries. The strengthening of private road transport ties in nicely with the Tory cuts in rail network, pushing more traffic on to the congested roads at the expense of the tax-payer.

Despite the fact that one diesel-electric locomotive on the railways can carry the equivalent of 50 juggernauts, only 16 replacement locos were built last year to sustain a fleet of 2,000.

The logic of the report is quite clear: private road transport can carry goods faster, at a greater cost to the community but at a greater profit than a much more efficient, environmentally safer, nationalised railway system.

The labour movement must come out strongly against these proposals which benefit only big business, and fight for a nationally integrated transport system, which would involve the nationalisation of the road transport industry and the expansion of the railway system as a co-ordinated part of a planned economy.

This is the only way to end the nightmare of the juggernauts.

**By Dave Farrar**  
(Millwall Labour Party)

# Irish Labour Youth

## READY TO TAKE ON THE BOSSES



Labour Youth banners on the massive PAYE demonstrations in Dublin earlier this year

### The second Annual Conference of Labour Youth, the youth section of the Irish Labour Party, took place over the last weekend of November.

When the 120 delegates and 60 visitors met in Liberty Hall in Dublin, they overwhelmingly re-confirmed their support for the policies and programme adopted at Labour Youth's founding conference in 1979.

In doing so, the organisation clearly set its feet on the path of fighting for a decisive break with capitalism, and fighting to win the youth of the country to the programme of Marxism.

This was reflected in the election to the positions of Chairman and National Treasurer of two supporters of 'Militant Irish Monthly', Michael Martin and Norma Prendiville. Other 'Militant' supporters were elected to the National Youth Committee.

The most important of the debates took place around the 'Charter for Youth', presented on behalf of the outgoing National Youth Committee.

While this contained many correct demands and ideas, the document overall failed to spell out a programme and policy to deal with the problems of over 10% unemployed, 20% inflation, and a prospect of over 200,000 (or up to 20% of the workforce) on the dole in the next couple of years.

The document talked of "transferring the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange from a small elite to the masses of the people." However, when it went on to deal

### By a 'Militant Irish Monthly' reporter

in detail with the economic steps to be fought for, it confined itself to the demand "for the extension of public ownership over banking and the control of credit," and the "creation of a National Development Corporation which will spearhead massive public investment and productive employment."

### Nationalise the banks

Speaker after speaker pointed out the inadequacies of the programme and the need for Labour Youth to spell out the need for the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses, all major industry and all mineral, oil and gas wealth, as the only way in which a socialist plan of production and a socialist society could be established.

"Labour Youth must be committed to end capitalism and not tinker around with it," was the way one delegate put it. The Charter was referred back to the incoming national Youth Committee to be strengthened and to be based more on the decisions and proposals passed at both the 1979 and 1980 conferences.

Fewer than 20 delegates voted in favour of the Charter.

The Conference went on to pass resolutions calling for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, for a £80 per week minimum wage for all workers over the age of 18, and for a 35-hour week. Other resolutions passed dealt with the problem of young workers, called for no compulsory overtime for apprentices, for block- and day-release for all young workers and for industrial training to be under trade union control.

Conference pledged itself to campaign to drive Fianna Fail from office, to expose both Fianna Fail and Fianna Gael as capitalist parties, and to return a majority Labour government to power pledged to implement socialist policies.

The debate on Northern Ireland centred around two motions, one of which spelled out in a detailed manner the role of imperialism and its divide-and-rule policies, and called for the withdrawal of troops and the creation of a trade union defence force. It also called on the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to convene a conference to establish a mass Labour party in Northern Ireland.

The other motion also called for a mass Labour party and pointed to the urgent need for a devolved government in Northern Ireland which would have the consent of both communities there. In the debate on these two motions the main point at issue was the question of a trade union defence force.

Many speakers stressed the inability of the British army or the Royal Ulster Constabulary to end sectarianism and violence, and pointed to the role of the security forces. The role of the para-military organisations was also condemned.

It was evident that there was a clear majority in favour of the motion for a withdrawal of troops and in favour of the trade union defence force. However, in view of the seriousness of the issue, and the relatively short time for the debate, the movers of this motion moved a reference back of both motions, and called for a one-day seminar to be held by the incoming National Youth Committee on the whole question of Northern Ireland. This suggestion was carried.

The most impressive aspect of the Conference was the high level of debate and discussion that took place. The majority of the youth delegates are involved in transport, communications, service or manufacturing industries, and are active in their trade unions; some of the major trade unions affiliated to the party also had delegations present.

The Conference adopted targets for Labour Youth, calling for a growth of the present active membership (about 150 to 200) to 500 to 1,000 in the next one to three years. The motion also stated that Labour must aim its campaigns in the main at the workplaces, and at trade-union youth. It also pointed to the key role that Labour Youth must play in the coming election, with the possibility of winning a host of new members in the election campaign alone.

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## ARMED POLICE RAID YS

A Young Socialists' public meeting in Newry [Northern Ireland] was interrupted recently—by armed police, who took the names and addresses of those who were present. This continues harassment which has gone on before [see 'Militant' no.528].

This incident was mild when compared to much of what the army and police do. But British comrades must

remember that they do not have to put up with raids by armed police on Young Socialist meetings. It is only by learning the lessons of Northern Ireland that they will make sure that will never have to face them.

By Anton McCabe  
(Labour & Trade Union Group)

## STUC youth conference SUPPORT FOR LPYS GROWS

The growing influence of the LPYS was shown at the Scottish TUC Youth Conference on 6 December.

There was unanimous opposition from the 80 delegates against the Tories' cuts and in favour of a "Labour government committed to socialist policies." And LPYS members spelt out what this would mean. Chris Herriot stated that it must take over the major 200 companies and banks and insurance companies.

Other delegates disagreed. The Youth Advisory Committee argued that import controls were "a realistic and practical solution to prevent the further decline of British industry."

Anne Petrie [Tailor and Garment Workers Union] however pointed out that whilst many in her industry thought of import controls as an easy answer, some were now beginning to question it. Import controls led to retar-

liation from other countries and higher prices for the working class in Britain.

Although the majority supported the resolution calling for import controls at least one-third of delegates voted against.

The support for the ideas of the LPYS was reflected when two LPYS members, Davie Chapman [ASLE&F] and Gordon Wilson [T&GWU] were elected on to the seven-man committee. The coming year will see great opportunities for the LPYS and STUC youth to work together, and the first step must be to campaign for a massive turn-out of young trade unionists and unemployed on the demonstration called by the Scottish Council of the Labour Party on February 21, 1981 in Glasgow.

By Ivor Forsyth  
(Glasgow TC delegate)

## Maesteg

Over 400 people attended the largest meeting organised by the Maesteg Labour Party since the 1930s on Friday 5 December. Tony Saunois (LPYS NEC rep) was repeatedly applauded as he showed how the horrors of the 1930s were returning to every section of Britain. The loudest applause, however, came when Tony said, "Get rid of the Tories now and elect a Labour government truly committed to the working class which is not afraid to carry out socialist policies."

Having set the tone of the meeting, the other speakers, Win Griffiths and Neil Kinlock, both followed Tony's call for getting rid of the Tory government now, by using the industrial might of the trade unions and for the carrying

through of a socialist programme for Labour to get rid of the working class of the Tory parasites once and for all.

The atmosphere at the meeting was very optimistic and enthusiastic after the magnificent success of the recent demo in Liverpool, which all three speakers stressed must be the first part of a systematic campaign to get rid of the Tories. This electric atmosphere was reflected in the sale of 85 'Militants', 30 people signing up to the Labour Party and in addition 15 youngsters joining the LPYS.

By Ken Smith  
(Chairman, Welsh LPYS)

## COVENTRY

A recommendation from Coventry Council's Labour Group to raise rents by £2.50 a week from January, was defeated by the casting vote of the Chairman of Coventry District Labour Party, councillor John Hughes, at the December DLP meeting.

The Coventry DLP went on to pass both the Coventry SE CLP resolution and a report from the DLP cuts committee, which taken together, called for:

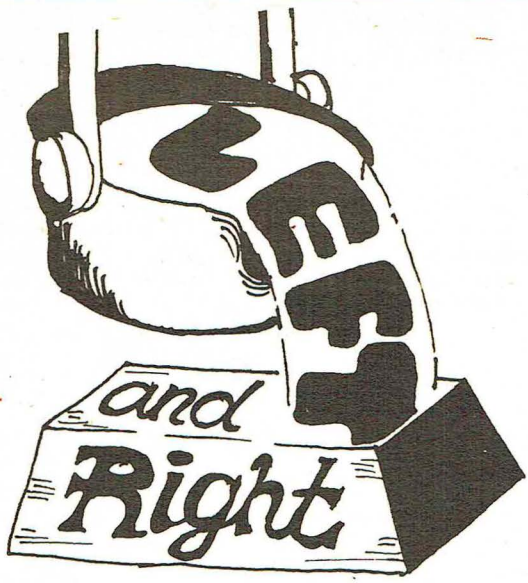
★ A conference of stewards from council unions, in

co-operation with Confederation unions and trades councils.

★ DLP opposition to cuts, or rent or rate increases to be put to that conference.

★ This conference to discuss a programme of industrial action, including a one-day general strike.

★ A massive publicity campaign by the local Labour Party on the demand to "bring down the Tory government and replace it with a Labour government committed to socialist policies."



How does this sound. Tea and toast for breakfast, steak and soft boiled eggs for dinner, followed by cakes and custard. That's the daily menu. The apartment isn't bad either. Rooms are complete with armchair, and there are individual, heated boudoirs and a tiled patio. All for £35 a week. Not bad, eh—just the cheap and cheerful holiday you've been searching the brochures for? Well tough, because the offer is only open to dogs. Yes, dogs. The exclusive Elm Wood Kennels in Buckinghamshire are offering luxury accommodation for the pets of the rich, so when the upper classes jet off to the sun they can leave rest assured that little stinkpoo isn't going without. It is an evil society where thousands of children in this country spend their whole childhood without a holiday in the sun, sea and sand, yet dumb animals get treated like royalty.

You're not going to believe this. The following appeared in the 'Financial Times' last month: "At last, a solution in a can for those owners of Range Rovers and other fashionable four wheel drive vehicles who do not have time actually to get them out of London. A German company, aptly named Muhd, is marketing spray-on dirt to give the urban range rider a good, down-to-earth, ethnic image." The aerosols come under various titles such as Tundra, Scotland, Sahara or Amazonas, depending on where you want to pretend you have been. And if this is not good enough, then Muhd can give you the complete safari look, with dents and scratches, dead birds, insects and exotic leaves—and they do it dirt cheap [sorry] for only £1,250. You see, in the parasitic world of the debutantes, this "looks marvellous parked outside the Royal Opera House, or any of the more expensive restaurants." Rumours that a group of South Wales steelworkers are following Muhd's lead and trying to sell their 'Keith Joseph look' [i.e. splattered on eggs and tomatoes] appear to be untrue.

The shallow values of the capitalist class when it comes to the appreciation of art were exposed this week at the top auctioneers, Southeby's. A marble bust of Pope Gregory XV was up for auction. It had been sold two years before at Christies for only £85. However, since then it had been discovered it was the work of the famous sculptor Bernini—although after this discovery the statuette remained looking much the same, in the eyes of the ruling class it took on new meaning. And so it was sold for £132,000. Now this fine piece of art enters the domain of the rich, and it is unlikely that you or I will ever get a chance to observe at close quarters the fine skill of Bernini.

Labour Party members watching the recent television interview of Sir Harold Wilson by Robin Day will have been shocked by his remoteness from developments in the party and the problems facing workers. The Annual Party Conference in Blackpool, said Sir Harold, was "a disturbing and unedifying event." Clearly, Sir Harold lives in a different world from most Labour Party members—a situation underlined by his current attempts to sell one of his homes, Grange Farm, near Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. His agents said they were seeking a price of more than £125,000. As is well known, Sir Harold also owns a bungalow on the Scilly Isles and a flat in Victoria, London. Workers in Wilson's constituency, Huyton, Liverpool, will certainly wonder how a man with [among other assets] three homes can really have much concept of the problems facing the unemployed, or the homeless, on Merseyside.

# Diagnosing an illness

**Earlier works of Stefan Heym have had a powerful appeal for socialists.**

There was the depiction of a US miners' strike in 'Goldsborough', the satire on the Stalinist re-writing of history in 'The King David Report', as well as the anticipation of recent events in Poland in his novel about the 1953 workers' strikes in East Berlin, 'Five Days in June'.

*Collin* does not have the same direct appeal. It is Heym's most 'difficult' book, without the political analogies of his other books but with a more real portrayal of character than previously. The conflicts of the wider world seem to be excluded from the book, which has more analysis of feelings and emotions.

Even the setting reflects this. Nearly all the action takes place in a special clinic for the elite of East German society. To this comes the aging Hans Collin, described as the sort of classic writer whose "books are handed out to deserving workers together with a bouquet of little flowers and a diploma with a seal of real wax." He is a part of the bureaucratic Establishment, with long-standing loyalty to the Party; always ready to defend it with his pen.

His malady is diagnosed as heart trouble but the problem is more psychological, as his sympathetic doctor Christine Roth realises. Collin has been encouraged to write his memoirs, but the resulting

"writers' block" is more hazardous to his health than the heart ailment.

Into the clinic is brought Comrade Urack, a leading official of the German Democratic Republic. The two men torment each other with subtle and malicious threats, until each believes that he can survive only through the other's death.

The depiction of Urack is one of the best in the book. The hypocrisy of a Communist Party leader is shown. He is quite prepared to rifle through Collin's papers, shows a contemptuous atti-

tude to the working class, and even has his own grandson watched by the secret police for the 'deviation' of liking jazz.

The conflict between the two men brings out Collin's dissatisfaction with his own past role. His own survival and prosperity were the result of ability to toe the line.

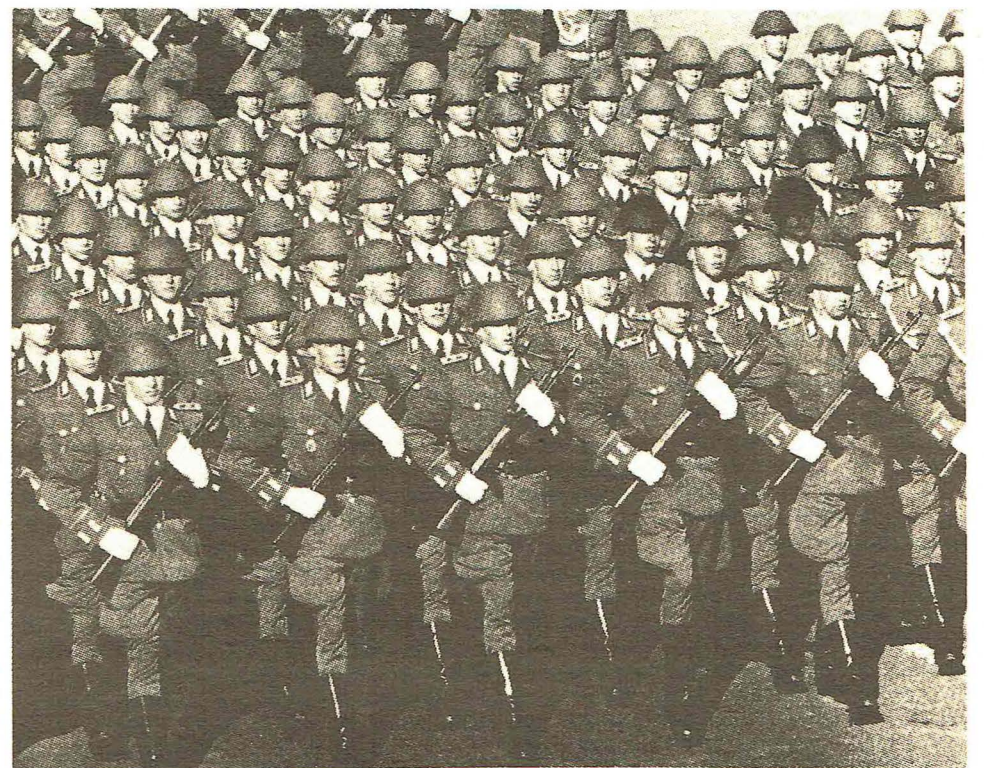
Interned after the Spanish Civil War he was released through Party pressure because of his ability to write. After 1945 his honoured position had been due to his willingness to put a gloss on less favourable aspects of the GDR.

He had remained silent when trumped-up charges were made against his close colleagues in show trials, and when the Hungary uprising was suppressed by the Soviet

Union in 1956. It is this guilt which blocks the writing of his memoirs.

Although less direct than his earlier books, *Collin* is a powerful indictment of East German society, where prosperity has been achieved but individual freedom remains elusive. The criticisms of the bureaucratic mentality and of the conformity it encourages are also there.

*Collin* is worth reading. It illustrates Heym's own development, from an officially approved author to celebrated writer who is forbidden to publish in his own country and has been fined for publishing abroad. And this novel touches on some of the crucial problems which face socialists in the struggle for democracy in the deformed workers' states.



A military parade in East Berlin. In Heym's novel, the main character, Hans Collin, becomes tormented by the role he played in defending the Stalinist bureaucracy of the GDR

## BLASTING THE ANDROIDS

**Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl have produced another LP in their tradition of songs portraying the workers' struggle.**

But this latest offering—'Kilroy was here'—has far more of an anti-Tory message than any of their previous records: "Lord Soames and Keith Joseph and others, They'll help you discover that all men are brothers, But some are more brothers than others."

'Kilroy' is the countless numbers of workers who have struggled for centuries, building the world that we know.

Yet all they now face, under the Tories, is gloom, inflation and unemployment.

The silicone chip which should free workers from the drudgery of dead end jobs is only used to enforce unemployment and further misery for working people.

The record also highlights the role of women in society, with an interesting song looking at the women behind great poets. They have spoken grandiously, lovin-

gly, longingly of their subject's tresses and beauty, whilst the women themselves are left washing the socks!

A number of songs look at the dangers of nuclear power and the fission method, and the dangers of transporting plutonium waste through towns. The songs point the finger at the profit mongering behind nuclear power, and the danger that the bosses will leave behind them a world only of 'cinders and slag'.

I liked the song called 'The Androids' not just for its catchy bluesy tune, but for its attack on 'Mrs T.' and her cabinet. The idea is that it is doubted these characters are human beings—they are androids, "strangers to the human race".

This record is a collection of their own songs and others. Musically it is varied and often very catchy, using a variety of different instruments from guitar to dulcimer, banjo, concertina and saxophone, set off by the versatile voice of Ewan MacColl.

**Claire Bradley [Erith & Crayford LPYS & NC] reviews Seeger and MacColl's latest record.**



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# THE DAYS OF SHOCK AND HORROR

**On the 21 March, my father fell off his seat on the 7.15 to London. He had just read in the 'Daily Telegraph' that his son was 'political organiser' for the Militant tendency in Bradford.**

As he had just had breakfast with me at our home in Brentwood, Essex, he was perplexed as to how I managed to commute over 500 miles there and back every day.

The simple answer was I didn't. In fact I have never been to Bradford in my life. But then, these were the days of the unprecedented attacks against 'Militant' earlier this year.

The right-wing of the Labour Party could see the coming battles as the rank and file of the party pushed for democratisation and a return to socialist policies, not to mention a growth in the ideas of Marxism. And so the right wing, with a little help from a few thousand inches of news print in the millionaire press, attempted to whip up a witch-hunt against us, using the suspicious 'Underhill Report' as 'evidence'.

'Militant' must go or the Labour Party will die' they shrieked. Well, we're still here, and like the Labour Party itself we are going from strength to strength. Meanwhile, the extreme right wingers, who were so enthusiastic about Lord Underhill's latest addition to the literary world, now sit with bags packed ready to move off in the search for new careers.

**By Bob Wade**

(NUJ)

It was a serious attack on the ideas of Marxism and its rightful place in the party of the working class, but because of the clarity of Militant's ideas and the support we have in the labour movement, it was fought off. However, these attacks will continue with greater ferocity as the class battles hot up in the future.

Editorials, front pages, and lengthy features were devoted to us. Not once, though, would the Tory press let us put across the policies we stand for, or even attempt to answer some of the lies they put out. To discover this, you had to read 'Militant'! Let us look at some of the nonsense that Fleet Street wrote.

The height of political intellect, the 'Sun' (known by even Fleet Street journalists themselves as the 'Beano') stayed true to form. Jon Akass (January 14) delivered a crushing blow against Marxist ideas when he rambled on about the word 'tendency'.

This word he proclaimed, usually came up in court and was associated with tendencies that "lead...towards stealing ladies' underwear from the neighbours' washing line or lurking about in the bicycle shed of the local girls' school."

'The Telegraph' (January 16) were more concerned however that Peter Taaffe, the editor of Militant, had "gone out of his way...to ensure that very little is known about him, his immediate family or ancestors."

The world of debutantes and upper class twits with aristocratic family trees that the 'Telegraph' drools over in the social pages has obviously softened their brain!

Give credit where it is due though. The 'Sun' (January 21) said in its editorial "the LPYS should be allowed to put out a party political broadcast on television"; "We should have our little say" they condescended, as it would make us "laughing stocks".

As it turned out the broadcast brought in a record number of applications to join the Labour Party—over two thousand in the first month alone! Who's laughing now?

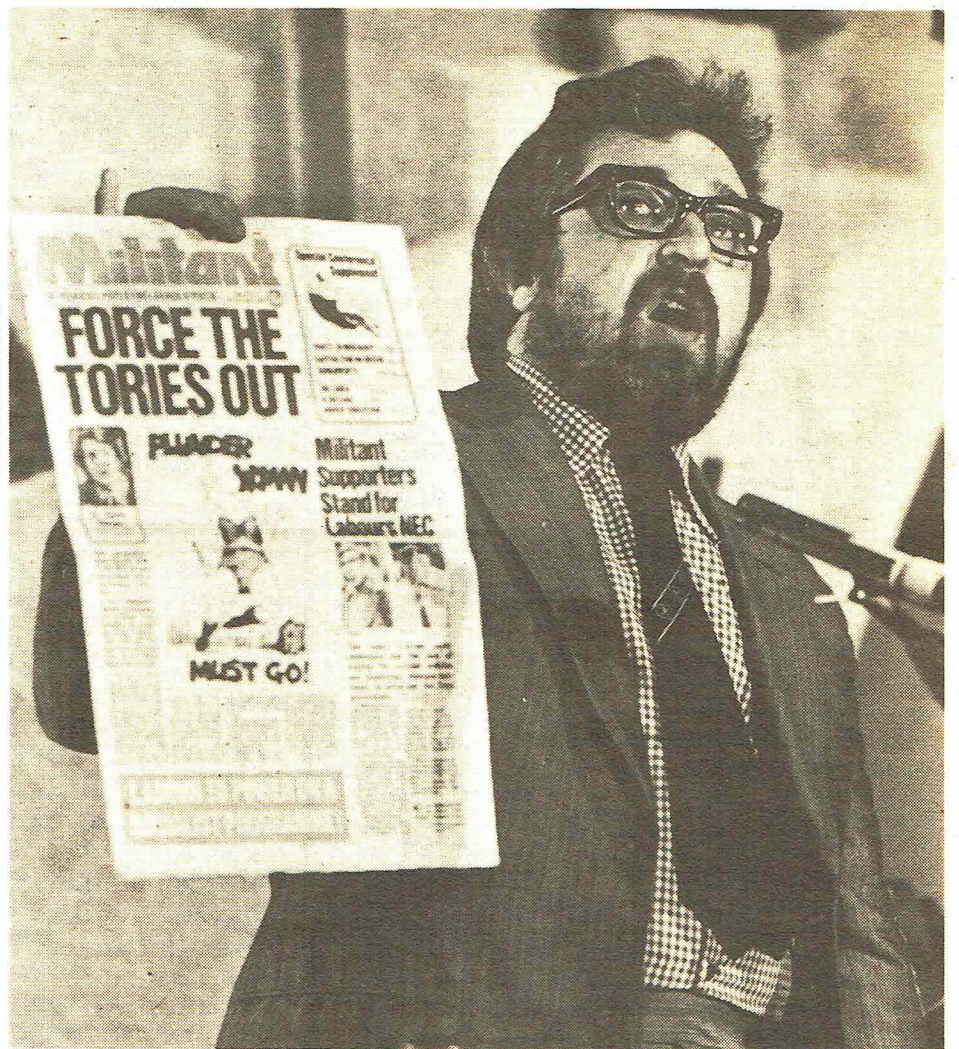
The regional and local rags, taking the lead from their national peers, also seemed to compete with each other as to who could write the greatest horror story. First prize goes to Liverpool's 'Morning Post' (24 January).

They quoted a former Labour Party agent, who believed "the pressures they put on Sir Arthur (the area's former MP) were a contributing factor in his death."

Meanwhile the Scottish 'Sunday Mail' (February 3) uncovered one of the sinister methods we use to raise our fighting fund. It warranted front page news; it seems we raise money "from Tendency parties, where the party-goers are expected to pay an entrance fee."

So that's what they mean

Photo: MILITANT



Right-wing Labour MP Mike Thomas complains about the influence of 'Militant' at a 'Campaign for Labour Victory' meeting. The distortions of the gutter press were just another part of the attack on the ideas of Marxism

by a 'party within a party'. Disgusting!

However, as we had just about fended off the millionaire press then came the January edition of the 'left-wing' 'New Statesman'. It was political dynamite. In what must be this year's—no, this decade's—greatest contribution to investigative journalism, Patrick Wintour dealt us an earth shattering blow.

He exposed how 'Militant' supporters had told people not to make a noise after midnight at the LPYS summer camp as people were trying to get to sleep:

our supporters, disguised as young workers, had given Ted Grant a 15 minute ovation at a readers meeting; some of our female supporters wore mini skirts at a social—the list of these vicious anti-working class crimes just reeled off Patrick's pen.

How can we ever look the labour movement in the eye again?

But the article that really set the ball rolling appeared in that bastion of the liberal world, 'New Society'. Written by Tom Forester, it was the grand daddy of all later horror stories about Mili-

tant. But why should a Labour Party member like Tom Forester have it in for us. Perhaps a report in the Brighton 'Evening Argus' (January 30) may shed some light: "Three leading Labour councillors could lose their seats on the GMC in the coming year."

"Dave Hill, Tom Forester and Brian Fitch, who all stood as Parliamentary candidates in the last general election, have spoken out strongly against the Militants."

P.S. Tom did lose his seat on the GMC as well.

## 'We'll fight our school closing'

The Tories' cuts in education are convincing an increasing number of people of the necessity to struggle to save our schools and colleges.

Last month, 800 school-children, teachers and Labour Party members turned out at Hendon Town Hall to oppose yet another school closure. The Tories are planning to close Graham Park school in Barnet, North West London.

Two of the protesters in the front line of the campaign, Debbie Hilton and John Hambrook, explained the situation.

The school has excellent facilities for both its pupils and for the local community,

both young and old, providing youth and old people's clubs.

The closure of the school [which was built only eight years ago!] would have catastrophic effects for the youth in the surrounding area.

Parents would find themselves having to pay extra bus fares and buying new school uniforms if their children are to attend the nearest alternative schools, which are two to three miles away. The added number of pupils from Graham Park would increase class sizes to 40 or more.

Ironically, though, the Tories' excuse for the closure is falling numbers. But as Debbie pointed out, Graham Park's number of pupils has remained constant.

And anyway, parents wish to send their children there

because of the school's excellent facilities, and the fact that it is in walking distance for most pupils.

It is more likely the Tories have chosen Graham Park for the axe because they want to make their cuts where there are the most working class youths. They are doing this irrespective of the needs of the local community.

Fearing the protest which would arise, the Tories gave only one month's notice of their plans. Even so, a defence committee has already been set up comprising teachers, pupils and parents. They are determined to fight it all the way.

**By a Hendon North LPYS member**

## A SICK ANALOGY



"COME ON NOW, SHAKE OUT OF IT. I KNOW YOU HAD AN OPERATION YESTERDAY. BUT IT'S TIME YOU PUT YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND AND TOOK A FEW STEPS" [Mrs Thatcher, 30 November]

Following Thatcher's attempt to cast herself in the role of the "nurse who gets results," our branch decided to have this cartoon drawn. We have put copies of it up on our notice boards, and the response has been great.

Nurses and other hospital workers are incensed at the sheer lack of insight on the part at this reactionary Tory leader. A woman so totally lacking in compassion and all the other human qualities that make a good nurse, has the audacity to drive her

economic bulldozer into the very heart at the NHS, while dressed as a nurse—what a sick analogy she has come up with!

### Antique buildings

Here in Kidderminster, we are having to evacuate a building full of old people, because it is structurally unsafe. The building was over a hundred years old when the NHS came into being!

Our branch was repre-

sented on the magnificent Labour Party march in Liverpool. It gave us a tremendous feeling of solidarity and determination.

The only future for the NHS is within a socialist planned economy, run and controlled by workers as sincere and dedicated as those who marched on the 29th. Forward to workers' power and socialism!

**By Clive Gravell**  
(Kidderminster COHSE branch secretary)

## SORRY, NO VACANCIES

I've been unemployed for three months now, ever since I left school.

At first you think 'Great, no more school'. Now what? Find a job. Try the local job centre.

Local vacancies: 'Home help/Companion for old lady. Must be 55 or over.' That's no good—too young.

'Draughtsman, must be fully qualified or with two years' experience.' No qualifications, no experience. 'Temporary secretary, must type at twenty words a minute.' Can't type....

After three months of that, you begin to feel the whole thing's pointless. Still at least it takes up some time—you walk three miles to the job centre, stay ten minutes then walk home (can't afford the bus fare).

At home, you watch TV, listen to some records, read the paper, go up the wall. In

By Philip Bishop  
(Bath)

the afternoon you try phoning a few people to see if there are any jobs going.

"Sorry, no vacancies. Call again, next week maybe..." Try the job centre. "We'll get back to you. Sorry."

No more five pences left. Ever felt rejected? Maybe that's worse than being bored.

Somehow you feel guilty too. Someone asks you—"Got a job yet?" "No, but I've got a few things lined up...." It's better than admitting you can't find anything.

Back home, you find something to do, keep busy, this and that, keep busy. This is the world after school. I almost wish I could go back; at least it's secure.

But I mustn't give up hope. We've had recessions and unemployment before. It can't last forever. So they say.

## FROM HAND TO MOUTH

"Living from hand to mouth" was how the Child Poverty Action Group described life on supplementary benefits in a recent report.

Christmas is a particularly difficult time of the year for such families. Many parents said that it was difficult or impossible to buy presents for their children. In order to do so they often went into debt.

Throughout the year though, the report found that the standard of living of families dependent on such benefits were below the level stipulated by Supplementary Benefits Regulations.

Almost all the families surveyed had had to borrow money to make ends meet and got into debt. Adults often missed meals, as did the children in 4 out of 10 cases.

Houses were often not kept warm in winter, obviously having bad effects on health. Clothes, footwear and bed-clothes were in short supply, and more than three quarters of parents got their clothes second hand.

Education was affected. Many children had had to stay away from school during the previous term, mainly because the parents could not afford the clothing children needed. School meals were often a lifeline to these families—and great problems were faced in school holidays.

By  
Roger Shrives

The report was compiled before the recent social security cuts. But the Child Poverty Action Group claim that social security claimants are under attack in a more subtle way. People on social security will get less help in future.

Instructions have gone out from the DHSS that information about the most useful form of benefit, often a very complex calculation, together with guidance about special lump sum payments, will only be given if a claimant specifically asks for it.

These rights have never been well publicised. The government can spend £600,000 advertising the "right" to buy a council house, but advising people living on the breadline how to survive is considered a luxury.

Slowly the DHSS aim to lower the standards of social security so it no longer acts as a cushion against sickness or unemployment.

The prospect should make us more determined that by next Christmas the real scroungers of society—the boardroom sharks and the Tory Lords and ladies of the upper crust will pay for the failings of their system; not the men women and children jettisoned by a dying capitalism.

# CHRISTMAS DAY—



For the benefit of the cameras, Thatcher talks to a handicapped child in the East End. Yet her government is savaging social services spending—and pressuring councils to drop their standards.

Photo: MILITANT

## AT THE WORKHOUSE?

By Anne  
Beales

(NALGO)

**As you put a fiver in the collecting tin for the local children's home at Christmas, have you ever wondered why? Ever thought about the people who collect the money, staff the homes, give up their family festivities to ensure the holiday means something to those in council homes?**

**A residential social worker at a hostel for the mentally handicapped in London's East End, tells their Christmas story.**

For many people this year, Christmas will be a bleak reminder of how their living standards have fallen; a gloomy affair with little hint of festive spirit.

For the people I work with, Christmas will be a happy time; the staff will make sure of that. On Christmas Day itself, the mentally handicapped people in our home have a good time, lovely food and lots of presents.

With all the cuts, you may wonder how we do it. The

10.00 pm each day, sleeping in the home in between. I will not get any extra money, but two days off later in the year.

The residents in the home may have a different view. After all, at least I get that sense of fulfilment.

All they get is £10 extra. The DHSS pay them £23.30 per week disabled allowance and the council give them a further £1.50 dinner money and approximately £2 per week for clothes. But at Christmas they get their £10 bonus.

All the clients I work with attend a training centre where, according to their abilities, they work at padding goods or chain making. Everyone gets the same wage, quite rightly; I don't see that because some are more handicapped, they should be punished.

So I'm pleased to say they all get the same wage of 30p. Yes 30p!

To help them fully appreciate money, they're charged 50p per week for the cups of tea they may drink at the training centre. They fully appreciate the 20p deficit and the humiliation of not even earning enough to pay for five lousy cups of tea.

1981 could bring a new view on things, however: there are rumours they'll get a wage cut.

Still, looking on the brighter side of things, they do get £23.30 a week from the DHSS—of which they pay £18.65 board and lodging—which leaves them £4.65 pocket money per

week—minus 20p for tea of course. Each week with dinners paid for and looking real smart in their new clothes, all £2 worth, they're armed with £4.45.

Added to the £10 Christmas bonus, they will live it up for a week on...£14.65! What should they do with it?

The oldest is 31; should she buy a round of drinks and a couple of records, or maybe a few extra pairs of tights she badly needs, or a trip to the pictures?

Of course, she could get that new pair of shoes. Still maybe she'll get some more clothes given her from the public, so best wait and see.

Yes, we'll have a grand time at Christmas this year. So from myself and the clients I work with, I should like to wish our Father Christmas of a local authority a happy New Year and thank them for giving us that sense of fulfilment and giving my clients that embarrassment of choice.

We look forward eagerly to 1981, the year of the handicapped person, with a threat from management that we must 'drop our standards', that common sense must now give way to a money-conscious outlook.

1981, we're told, will see a cut in staff—we're confident that our instructive and resourceful qualities will be stretched even further, to make sure next Christmas is as fulfilling as this one!

New pamphlet  
on Northern Ireland  
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**DIVIDE AND RULE**  
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Cost 75p [inc. p&p]  
from World Books  
1 Mentmore Terrace  
London E8 3PN

# When the soldiers went on strike

In Militant [11 July] we published a review of Andrew Rothstein's book "When Britain invaded Russia" which exposed the cynical and secretive plans of British imperialism to crush the newly formed workers state in Russia after the October revolution.

Rothstein's latest book 'The Soldiers strikes of 1919' shows that the reaction of the workers of Britain to Russia [before the days of Stalinism] was totally opposed to that of the reactionary scheming ruling class Foreign Office tops.

These 'diplomats' planned to rush money, armaments and troops into crush ruthlessly the threat to capitalism internationally.

Rothstein's book describes how the soldiers themselves were affected. In particular it portrays the mutinies in 1919 where war-weary soldiers, sickened by the slow process of demobilisation of troops went on strike.

Their revolt helped to prevent the British government's invasion plans. The troops were tired from a war, in which the lives of 1.8% of the country's population had been destroyed in battle between rival imperialisms. They wanted to get back home.

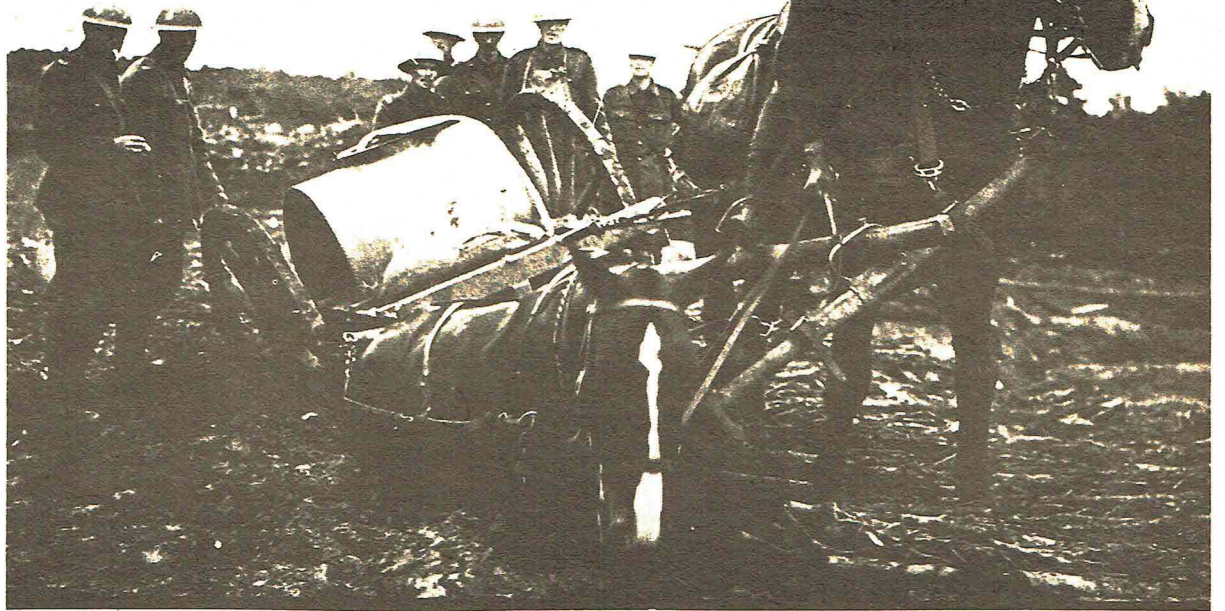
By Barbara Humphries

The mutinies took place against the background of revolutionary movements of the working class throughout Europe. In Britain in 1918 there were widespread strikes against the deprivations which World War 1 had imposed on working people whilst the profits of industry soared.

Plans for an invasion of Russia were greeted by a 'Hands off Russia' campaign throughout the labour movement and a conference of trades unionists in Leeds had called for the setting up of soviets in Britain.

Secret plans to invade Soviet Russia were hatched weeks after the October revolution. The terms of the armistice signed with the German government allowed the Allied troops access to the territories east of Germany and to the Baltic.

Churchill in particular, said that it was now



After four years of facing horrific conditions such as these, and coupled with the Russian Revolution and industrial unrest at home, the strike soon spread.

Bolshevism which was the enemy, not Germany. The press jumped to attention and switched to an anti-Bolshevik campaign—"it should be the business of every democracy to redeem Russia from the present tyranny."

## Strikes begin

However, under the pressure of increasing industrial unrest at home and mutinies in the army, the British ruling class split on the issue, with some its more astute members such as Lloyd George, pointing out that a military occupation of Russia, which would require a million troops, would be

the best way of spreading Bolshevism to the west.

The army strikes began in Folkestone in January 1919 and very rapidly spread to the rest of the country as well as to the forces overseas. It was particularly feared that troops stationed in Russia would become open to Bolshevism ideas.

The main grievance was the delay in demobilisation of the troops, but there were also complaints about conditions, pay and discipline. Committees were elected from the soldiers, marches were held, along with lobbies of local town halls.

Only in Southampton was there any attempt to crush the rebellion by the government. This failed.

One incident is related in the book, by a member of the British Socialist Party [later to become the Communist Party of Great Britain] who was stationed in Salisbury.

When his regiment was asked to volunteer for the North Russia Expeditionary Force he found himself making a political speech for the first time in his life, explaining to his colleagues why the workers and peasants of Russia supported the Red Army and why it was wrong for Britain to intervene.

When he had finished he was assured that they were all sick of the war—and the army. They would not volunteer. Appeals by war

office officials produced only one volunteer as a result.

The failure of this approach led to attempts at conscription. This only made matters worse for the military top brass. The plan met with great resistance, and resulted only in the strike of soldiers spreading to the Salisbury Plain!

The book provides yet more evidence that the rank and file of the armed forces can be approached on the basis of their grievances and won to the side of the working class.

Unfortunately, this book which is of interest to socialists, is rather expensive—try getting your local public library to buy a copy!

## STOP SPIES IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Last week Tony Benn disclosed that the security forces had twice approached him years ago to work for them.

They were especially keen to recruit people active in the labour movement. And my experiences as a former researcher at the Labour Party headquarters, shows that that is still a vital aim.

Tony Benn's account comes in the foreword to the 'Review of Security and the State, 1980!' He tells of how he was first asked if he "would like a

By Jim Christie

job" by a Colonel, introduced to him by the headmaster of his old public school. The old boy network came into operation.

He was offered a salary of £1,000 (equivalent to nearer

£20,000 nowadays). When Tony Benn explained that he wanted to be a Labour MP, he was told: "Oh that is no problem. You could do both jobs."

Tony Benn refused the offer, but a few years later, after he had become an MP, the Colonel approached him again and "repeated his invitation to do some work for the Foreign Office and said if I wanted to know more about it I should ask a certain Labour MP, whom he named, who had served as a minister in the 1945-51 Labour Government. I thanked him courteously and declined again.

"It was many years later that I came across the name of the Colonel again in a newspaper story about the security services. I cannot help wondering how many other people in the Labour Party, in Parliament, in the trade unions or outside, were recruited on the same basis and are still on the government pay-roll, unknown to all the colleagues with whom they are still working."

When I began working at Labour Party headquarters in 1972, I was told by a senior Party official that if the Defence people wanted me to work for them "it was alright by him." No direct approach occurred, but I found myself invited to secret conclaves to



Tony Benn

discuss how to resist Tony Benn and the left-wing.

At the meetings were important Party personnel, including two current MPs, one a former Minister in the 1974-9 Government. References were made to substantial sums of money being available and private international conferences. But after a while I was no longer invited, presumably they had found out what my political views were.

The activities of the secret police against the labour movement go much wider than this. In his account Tony Benn reports how an ex-Lab-

our Prime Minister admitted to him that activists had their phones tapped and that kind of surveillance was redoubled during industrial disputes. He also told of how the military are brought in to advise Ministers on occasions such as the 1978-9 oil tankers dispute.

The power of the security forces is real enough. But it is wrong to suggest as Tony Benn has reportedly stated that "we are slithering into a pre-fascist situation" (M. Star 11, December). That is not the immediate future ahead. The labour movement is too strong, and a fascist

regime could only come about after a series of crushing defeats for the labour movement.

Labour governments have allowed the power of the secret police to go virtually unchallenged. By a hundred threads the tops of the security forces are linked to the industrialists, bankers, press barons and Civil Servants.

Tony Benn mildly states "the idea that Labour is an alien hostile force is deeply embedded in the minds of at least some top people in the civil and military establishment in Britain." These activities must be brought out into the light of day, and any moves to help bring this about must be supported.

But that is not enough. This secret surveillance of trade unionists and workers must end. What has the labour movement to gain from the activities of the military and police intelligence network?

They try to claim that they are acting against the Soviet Union. But in reality they operate against the labour movement in its struggle for socialism. It is insufficient to will for democratic control of their activities. The next Labour government should abolish all the different secret police organisations.



# OSWALD MOSLEY



## An aristocratic clown who aimed to be a dictator



Above: Mosley parading with his Blackshirt thugs; below: a barricade at Cable Street, where Mosley's party was blocked by 100,000 workers.

Politically, Sir Oswald Mosley had long been as dead as a dinosaur. However, the creator of the Blackshirts and the British Union of Fascists actually died in exile near Paris on 3 December.

In burying this exotic political fossil the capitalist press has been lamenting, in almost affectionate terms, the "squandered years" of this great "might-have-been".

It is good-bye to the black sheep of the family. Mosley's ruling-class friends are ready to forgive and forget, glossing over his totalitarian, fascist aims—and his decisive defeat at the hands of the working class.

Mosley was in many ways a typical product of the ruling elite: "public" school, Sandhurst, aristocratic connections... In 1918 he seemed all set for a rapid rise to a top position in the ruling circles of his class.

But after four years as a Tory MP in the crisis period 1918-24, Mosley made an opportune switch to the Labour Party, just in time to become a junior minister in Ramsey MacDonald's first government.

During the second Labour government, however, Mosley split from Labour over MacDonald's refusal to consider his radical-sounding proposals to cure unemployment.

This was 1929, when the great world capitalist slump hit Britain. An acute social crisis was opened up, provoking a split in the Labour Party with the formation of the National government.

At first his "New Party" included lefts like John Strachey, but it moved rapidly to the right, transforming itself into the British Union of Fascists in 1932.

This, according to the Tory obituaries, is where Mosley went astray. "His greatest flaw, impatience, led him [says the 'Mail'] into a style of politics completely alien to the British tradition." The implication is: Britain could never have gone fascist.

The theatrical trappings of fascism, it is true, were in many ways alien. But what the press now omit to say is that when the BUF was first set up it had big-business backing, and there were not a few Tory MPs who sympathised with Mosley.

Lord Rothermere, the press baron, used his 'Daily Mail' as a recruiting rag for the fascists, as its obituary coyly hints.

In the 1930s, moreover, Mosley was not regarded at all unsympathetically by Winston Churchill. This is hardly surprising when it is remembered that the man later lauded as the leader of Britain's war against fascism was at that time a fervent admirer of Mussolini.

"If I had been an Italian," Churchill told Mussolini in 1926, "I am sure that I should have been with you from start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism." As late as 1937, Churchill was applauding the Italian dictatorship's occupation of Abyssinia.

By Lynn  
Walsh

If the social crisis in Britain had gone to the same extremes as in Italy, Germany and Spain, there is little doubt that the British capitalists too would have turned to fascism to settle accounts with the working class.

Mosley's misfortune was that he cast himself in a role which, as it turned out, was not needed by the ruling class.

The British capitalists still had several layers of rich fat, accumulated from the Empire, on which they could draw. They still had room for manoeuvre, sufficient reserves to cushion sections of the middle class.

Above all, they could still rely on the reformist leaders of the labour movement to restrain the movement of the workers. When the National government under MacDonald, the Labour renegade, was successfully imposing Draconian cuts in workers' living standards, what need was there for Mosley and his Blackshirts?

Without mass support, Mosley was revealed for what he really was, an aristocratic clown with dictatorial pretensions.

This was not simply the result of his "flawed character". His turn towards fascism reflected the splits in the ruling class and the confusion of some of its leaders in the face of a potentially revolutionary challenge from the working class.

Mosley's evolution also reflected the pressure of the unstable middle layers of society, who were caught between big business and the working class, and faced catastrophe.

Mosley's agitation on unemployment was not so much a programme as a demagogic means of mobilising the support of the demoralised middle layers. Despite vigorous campaigning the BUF never won support in working-class areas like South Wales, Scotland and the North.

His support came from small businessmen, street traders, taxi drivers, porters, clerks and despairing workers on the fringes of the industrial working class. This is why it was particularly in areas like East London that the Blackshirts were able to recruit. Yet the BUF never won more than a fifth of the vote, even in its most favourable areas.

But it was the determined, organised resistance of the working class which crushed Mosley and his Blackshirts.

The Blackshirts' tactics were sufficient warning that, if he got the chance, the British 'Führer' would emulate Mussolini and Hitler in smashing the labour movement, and set up a totalitarian police state.

There were goose-stepping parades of Blackshirts; vile anti-Jewish propaganda; vicious attacks on Jews and

labour movement activists; and the ruthless beating up of hecklers at the BUF's big rallies, at which the fascists' totalitarian aims were openly proclaimed.

The crunch came with the BUF's attempt to march through the East End of London on Sunday, 4 October 1936. About 3,000 Blackshirts with police protection were faced by a mass of over 100,000 anti-fascists, with barricades thrown up around Cable Street.

The police were obliged to order Mosley to call off the march. Nevertheless, many fascists were "acquainted with the pavement," and there were numerous arrests.

One legacy of Mosley's movement is the 1936 Public Order Act. This was supposedly introduced to curb the fascists, prompted particularly by the notorious Olympia rally at which protesters were beaten senseless by Mosley's uniformed thugs.

But it did little to impede the BUF, and from the beginning was turned against the anti-fascists. In the last few years, we have seen this "progressive" Act used time and again against those demonstrating against provocative, police-protected rallies of the National Front, British Movement, and similar grouplets.

After 1937, Mosley's forces declined. The late 1930s saw a new swing to the left in British society, with the Labour Party gaining and trade unions recovering some of their lost members.

The ruling class itself, having ridden out the storm of the slump years, did not favour the fascists goading the workers into renewed action.

Increasingly alarmed by Hitler's war aims, moreover, some of the British capitalists also began to fear that Mosley's fascists could become a "fifth column" for their German rivals.

When Britain declared war with Germany, Mosley and his wife were interned.

After the war, Mosley's attempts to revive a fascist organisation in Britain came to nothing. With the relative prosperity and political quiet of the post-war period, there was infinitesimal support for fascist sentiments.

Experience of the war against Nazi Germany put Mosley beyond the Pale, not only for workers but for the vast majority of people.

In 1954 Mosley moved to Ireland, and in 1963 went to live in even greater obscurity in France.

Mosley was a failure from the beginning. In the end, however, Mussolini and Hitler were failures, too, and with them the capitalists badly burned their fingers. In the future, the danger of reaction for the labour movement will come through the tops of the military and the police, under the direct control of the ruling class.

Big business will certainly allow fascist and racist groups to carry out individual provocations and attacks, attempting to intimidate and split labour's ranks. But they will never again allow a free hand to fascist adventurers like Mussolini, Hitler...and the unsuccessful Mosley.

However, the demented, racist grouplets now trying to resurrect the defunct ideas and methods of Mosley are having to be taught the same lesson all over again. The labour movement will not allow the freedom of the streets to totalitarian movements out to smash the workers' organisations and destroy all democratic rights.



POLAND

PORTUGAL

# Bureaucrats welcome holy alliance

This week the 'Morning Star' [15 December], paper of the British 'Communist' Party, published without criticism an appeal for "national unity" put out by the Catholic church in Poland.

Calling for an "alliance of all reasonable people" in Poland, which should be based on "socialist renewal", the letter from the bishops urged that "no actions must be taken that could put in jeopardy the freedom and statehood of our homeland."

By Tim Moodie

Throwing the support of the Church hierarchy behind the Polish bureaucracy, the bishops' letter also launched into an attack on the activities of the Self-Defence Committee (KOR), the committee composed of dissident intellectuals who have worked closely with the strike leaders.

This appeal from the Church, which is in effect urging caution and restraint on the Polish workers, was printed without a word of criticism from the "Morning Star".

But what is the real role of the Church in Poland?

Since the formation in 1945 of the new Polish state, based on the model of Stalinist Russia, the Church, because of its relative independence, has provided a channel of expression for opposition to the ruling bureaucracy.

Historically, the Catholic church has been bound up with Polish nationalism. With the awakening of Polish national consciousness in the nineteenth century, Catholicism reinforced the struggle against Poland's dominant neighbours, Russia with the Orthodox Church, on the one side, and the predominantly Protestant German states, on the other.

But the Church hierarchy has always been prepared to come to terms with the temporal power—provided that its own interests were secure.

When as a result of the concessions gained following the general strike which began in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk this summer, the church was allowed more facilities, particularly with the broadcasting of mass on Sundays, etc, the Church leaders were only too pleased to throw their weight behind the bureaucracy.

From the beginning, the Church leaders began to urge caution and restraint. As much as the bureaucracy itself, they fear a workers' movement which would lead

to the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the establishment of genuine workers' democracy.

As far as the bureaucrats themselves are concerned, a few sermons condemning the Godless atheism of communism are a small price to pay.

A recent episcopal letter, for instance, condemned the secularisation of the country by the regime: "Secularisation is still the official programme of the state," it said. "Its idea is to be a stage in a process, whose goal is the total atheism of the nation." And so on. But not a word of criticism from the "Morning Star".

It was not that surprising, therefore, when Kania recently appointed Mr Jerzy Ozdowski, an economics professor, as the first Catholic deputy prime minister in an East European state. Ozdowski, now responsible for family and social affairs, is a member of a small group of Catholic deputies in the Polish parliament known as ZNAC.

Commenting on this appointment, the press agency Reuters said: "Observers saw the appointment as a sign of gratitude for the Polish church's moderate role during the labour unrest last summer."

Concluding recently that a Russian invasion of Poland was unlikely, at least for the time being, the 'Financial Times' (11 November) attributed this largely to the moderate, restraining role of strike leader, Lech Walesa, whose circle of unofficial advisers includes representatives of the Catholic Church.

Walesa knew the limits to which the struggle against the Polish government—and standing behind them the Soviet leadership—could be taken. "The limits [continued the FT] are known also to the Polish Catholic Church...One of its thinkers, Mr Tadeusz Mazowiecki, recently wrote words of advice to the independent unions. They should heed the example of the church whose independence was respected, and which in its turn, 'respects certain limits to its activities,

does defend human rights, but always remembers that it is not a party'."

But within the "limits" of the bureaucratic state which rules over the nationalised economy in Poland, the gains of the workers cannot be permanently preserved.

The 'Morning Star' and the British Communist Party want to have it both ways.

Uncritically, they support both the statements of Solidarity and the statements of the Polish leaders. In reality, this means that they continue to uphold the bureaucratic, totalitarian state that exists in Poland.

The Polish workers have made enormous gains as a result of their magnificent strike action. But step by

step, the bureaucracy will attempt to take these back, because its very existence is at stake.

The only programme that can guarantee real democracy and realise the full potential of the nationalised economy in Poland is the programme of the political revolution: the overthrow of the parasitic ruling caste and the setting

up of genuine organs of workers' power to run the state.

The British 'Communist' party's uncritical acceptance of the sugary language of the Polish Church hierarchy is just one sign of its inability to adopt such a Marxist viewpoint.



Both the Church and the forces of the state fear workers' power

## NO STABILITY FOR PORTUGAL

On 6 December, huge crowds turned out to mourn the death in an air crash of Francisco Sá Carneiro, right-wing Premier and leader of Portugal's "Social Democrats".

In last October's general election, the alliance led by Sá Carneiro won an increased majority. The Social Democratic Party, formerly the Popular Democratic Party, is really a Tory party which adopted a more "progressive" label after the revolutionary events of 1974/75.

Sá Carneiro had been energetically campaigning against the re-election of General Eanes as President, threatening to resign as Premier if he were returned.

Despite this, Eanes won a first-ballot victory, with over 56% of the total votes. This was more than he got originally in 1976, when he had the backing of all the major parties. His support this month also included nearly half a million who voted for the government coalition, the Democratic Alliance, in October's general election.

Eanes' victory means a continuation of the unstable equilibrium, the deadlock between revolution and counter-revolution, which has existed in Portugal ever since the fall of the Goncalves government in September 1975.

General Soares Carneiro (no relation to either Mário Soares or Sá Carneiro) stood

on a vague-sounding programme of "a return to tranquility and stability". In reality, the victory of this extreme right-wing general would have meant taking the brakes off the creeping counter-revolution which has been taking place in Portugal since 1975.

### Creeping counter-revolution

Soares Carneiro promised to revise the 1975 constitution, which formally defines Portugal as a socialist country, and safeguards the nationalisation of the banks and most major industry.

Soares Carneiro's election would undoubtedly have initiated a more open assault on the gains made by the workers, particularly attempting to recover the big estates taken over in the Alentejo and the extensive trade union rights established in industry.

One left-wing daily paper aptly described Soares Carneiro as an exorcist, a new Torquemada (the head of the Spanish inquisition) out to purge the "evils" of the 1974-75 revolution. In his view, the whole country is just a barracks—badly in need of the restoration of iron discipline to put things back in order.

The mass rejection of Soares Carneiro (who got only 40% of the votes), despite the recent growth in support for Sá Carneiro's Democratic Alliance, however, shows the enormous resistance to any

attempt to return to the dictatorial methods of Salazar/Caetano. The general's links with the policies and leading personalities of the old fascist regime were all too clear.

During the Presidential campaign, General Eanes was presented as a "left-winger", especially by the international press eagerly looking for a turn to the right in Portugal.

It is true that Eanes had the support of both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, but this was mainly because of their lack of any clear alternative. Major Otello de Carvalho who stood again as a left socialist candidate got a tiny vote).

But when Eanes was first elected President he was widely seen as a threat to the left. It was he who dismissed Soares from the premiership, and was feared at the time to be opening the way to an undermining of the nationalisation measures over which the Goncalves government had presided — measures which had been carried through on the initiatives of the bank workers and with the support of the whole working class.

In fact, under Eanes, though there has been constant pressure from big business to eat into the gains of 1974/75, so far the nationalisation of the main industries remains intact. Despite bitter battles on the land, most of the land taken over by the agricultural labourers remains in their hands.

But this uneasy balance of

forces cannot last indefinitely. Since the sudden death of Sa Carneiro, for instance, there has been a bitter jockeying for power within the parties of the Democratic Alliance. A number of right-wingers of the so-called Centre Democrats, a party that provided a new home for many who were ministers under Caetano, are in the front ranks, indicating reactionary capitalist forces behind the alliance.

The workers and agricultural labourers, as these election results confirm, will fight tenaciously to preserve the gains of the immediate post-Caetano period. But such a struggle cannot remain purely defensive.

### Clear leadership needed

To mobilise the masses of the workers, the agricultural labourers, and other exploited strata for a renewal of the struggle following a period of relative quiescence and setbacks, will require a programme of fundamental socialist change—and clear leadership, so far tragically lacking as far as the two mass workers' parties are concerned.

Portugal's dire economic crisis itself rules out the long-term preservation of the workers' gains within the rotten framework of capitalism.



W GERMANY PAKISTAN ZIMBABWE

## JOBS AND LAND DEMANDED IN ZIMBABWE



Signing the Lancaster House agreement, l to r, Nkomo and Mugabe

Nearly a year after the Lancaster House settlement, all the basic problems facing the people of Zimbabwe remain unresolved.

Despite coming to power with radical expectations from the masses, Mugabe has tried to solve the problems on the basis of capitalism.

The private enterprise system and the capitalist state machine have not been destroyed merely altered to accommodate Africans. But the pressure from below for fundamental change and especially for jobs and land remains.

Mugabe and the ruling ZANU party are having to reflect this pressure. The balance between the two class forces is even seen in parliamentary exchanges where MPs are referred to as "The Honourable Comrade Mr ..."

The economic prospects for the mass of Zimbabweans are poor, despite a growth in the economy of 4% this year, after six years of decline. Next year the government is predicting a further growth of 5%-7%.

This is partly due to the ending of sanctions, which were a burden on Rhodesia's economy. But future growth will be dependent on the world capitalist economy and there can be little grounds for long term comfort there.

And even these levels of growth will not help the problem of rising unemployment. The tobacco industry is one of the mainstays of the economy and it is planning to shed 25,000-40,000 workers.

Yet every year 100,000 youth enter the job market, and not all are getting jobs. Unemployment is currently 40% of the adult population.

And those in work are still struggling for a decent wage. African wages remain on average only 10% of those of non-Africans, but the bosses claim they can't afford a rise.

At present Mugabe is placing his faith in capitalism. He told a conference of private businessmen in September that private enterprise had a key role to play. This was not the programme that won mass support during the guerrilla struggle.

So in order to pacify the rank and file and give an indication that the present reliance on capitalism could be changed, one week later Mugabe said the opposite. He stated that the government's policy was "Marxist-Leninist

By Colin Barber

socialism" and that capitalism was only transitional.

This balancing act cannot continue indefinitely. At present whatever the rhetoric, the reality is one linked to international business. This strategy cannot work. It cannot provide jobs, nor solve another basic question, land.

The hunger for land is desperate. Half the population live on the over-crowded Tribal Trust Lands (TTL). A legacy of the racist capitalist Rhodesian regime the per capita income there is amongst the lowest in Africa. Under the white regime the TTL were a labour reserve. Commercial farming was reserved for the rich white farming areas. Nothing has changed.

Mugabe has been hoping that western governments will give funds to help some Africans purchase land from white farmers. Little money has come through and the pressure for land is desperate.

In September Mugabe reflected that pressure when he spoke of perhaps taking over white land without compensation. This was later qualified to mean absentee white landowners, but there can be little doubt that large areas of white farming land will be taken over as the pressure from the landless grows.

The tensions within the country and within ZANU have been reflected by the radical, demagogic speeches of ZANU's Secretary-General Tekere. When he was acquitted of killing a white farmer (because he was acting under a Rhodesian Front legislation against terrorists (!)), he proclaimed it was triumph for the spirit of the people's revolution.

And as Mugabe and international capitalism fail to deliver the goods, it is clear that the current demand for radical change will intensify. This process will be speeded on by the growing revolutionary struggle in South Africa. Only a socialist programme of taking over industry and land and having society truly in the control of the working people of Zimbabwe offers a realistic way out of the present impasse.

## W.GERMANY-THE FAT YEARS ARE OVER!

The West German "economic miracle" has become proof that "miracles" don't exist. Even at its healthiest the West German economy could not provide jobs and apprenticeships for thousands of young people, or decent pensions for many old people.

It relied on millions of underpaid foreign workers who are finding that their "services are no longer required" or that their children will not find work.

West German workers are discovering that being a "model workforce" has benefited the bosses more than it has them. Now they are told by Count Lamsdorff (the liberal Economics Minister) to "work harder and demand less." He was answered by placards carried on a mighty Dortmund demonstration on 28 November—"We don't need Counts. We need jobs."

This demonstration of 70,000 arose from a decision by Hoesch to postpone the building of a new steel plant in Dortmund although the regional government afforded a loan of 250 million DM (with very low interest rates).

Dortmund already has 5.7% unemployment. Since spring of this year, 3,000 steel jobs have gone and Siemens



Dortmund workers on demonstration for a 35-hour week

By Sue Powell

[Hamburg-Altona  
Altstadt SPD]

have announced a closure which will result in a further 4,000 to 10,000 jobs disappearing.

27,000 steel workers stopped work for a day's protest, supported by the regional government and their union. Church bells tolled to start the stoppage, all public transport stood still, other factories closed too and housewives and women workers thronged onto the streets.

This is a sign of struggles to come. In the struggles ahead there will be defeats as well as victories.

Postal workers have been on strike to improve conditions for shift workers. Despite a magnificent strike action the union negotiators accepted an appalling offer—little better than the original.

During the election some union leaders maintained a neutral position; now they are having to protest that the liberals are acting as a brake on the Social Democrats. Economic experts are warning that wage increases will

have to be kept down and government spending is being cut.

The trade crisis, the falling profits of West German industry, in chemicals, steel, automobiles and electronics are paving the way for onslaughts on the workers' living standards.

One magazine recently ran a series, "Are the fat years over?"—well if the lean years have begun the German working class will show that just as they were industrious in building the miracle so they will be in defending the little they got from it.

## Pakistan-Eye witness to massacre

The following account of the murder of 133 workers in a Multan textile mill comes from an article by Y Teneer Gondal in the Pakistan socialist magazine, 'Struggle'.

The masses of Pakistan have now suffered the nightmare of the Zia dictatorship for over three years. Imperialism and its shadows in the national capitalist class, terrified of the movement against them, can see no other way out than rule by the sword, with brief intervals of so-called democracy. An indication of this is seen by what happened to workers at the Colony Textile Mills, Multan.

The strike of the workers had moved into its fifth day. The resentment amongst the workers was growing day by day.

The workers started coming out of the workshops and started moving towards the main gate of the factory to stage a meeting to protest against the ultimate starvation and misery they were

being pushed into. I was amongst the students who had gone from the city to show our solidarity with the workers.

At the same time a few kilometres away in a 4 acre luxurious bungalow celebrations were going on for the marriage ceremony of the daughter of the factory owner, Mr Mughees A. Sheikh. Thousands of rupees were being dished away to impress the participants in the ceremony. The daughter was being given a dowry of about Rs 2.5 million from her kind father.

The marriage ceremony was being attended by General Ejaz Amin, the Martial Law Administrator [MLA] of the Region and other high ranking military and civil bureaucrats. Drinks were being served and celebrations at their height when the manager reported to the factory owner that the workers were

accumulating at the gate to form a procession for the disruption of the marriage ceremony.

The capitalist immediately reported the situation to the MLA and telephoned Pakistan's military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, a personal friend of the millowner. The dictator ordered the local administration to finish off anybody who would dare to form any kind of procession.

The police and the army units from the local corps had already surrounded the mill premises. The army on emergency instructions moved into the premises and the commander ordered the workers to resume work immediately and not move towards the gate.

Then without warning the brave army of Pakistan and police opened fire as if they were trying to ambush an enemy by surprise. It was horrifying. Blood was flowing like water, the factory walls and yard was littered

with streaks of human flesh and blood.

The firing continued for about fifteen minutes. On stoppage there was complete silence. The only sound one could hear was the footsteps of the state forces moving towards the cantonment. Far in the south towards the workers colonies one could hear the faint shrill of the families cries of the workers, the women and children running towards the mill.

Many families were lucky enough to get the corpses. Others were even denied that opportunity as most of the 133 corpses were thrown into the gutters, buried in the desert a few kilometres away or proclaimed missing. The army had struck only to show its real role—the defence of capital and capitalism. 9



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

**MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN**

## Getting the Message from November 29th

Dear Comrades,

The Liverpool demonstration was an absolute refutation to all those cynics who believe socialist ideas will never appeal to ordinary working people. More to the point, if the labour movement doesn't take up the battle cry and launch an offensive against the Tories, campaigning around the

ideas of socialism, there is a real danger that the frustration felt by many workers and youth will lead them into the blind alley of terrorism.

One man watching the demonstration pass by refused to buy a copy of the 'Militant', saying it was not 'left wing' enough. I said, "What do you mean by that?"

"You give me an automatic rifle and I'll show you

what I mean."

"To shoot the Tories with?" I asked.

"Yea, that will do for a start." There was that much anger and hatred in his face that I believe he would have done it too.

Later on a trade unionist expressed similar sentiments, although happily, with far less seriousness.

Sitting in a cafe after the rally, we got chatting to two men who asked where we

were from. We said we'd come up from London.

One replied that he didn't like 'Cocks' as a rule, but nevertheless he gave us a pound because he was so impressed that we had made it all the way from London. We agreed to put it into the fighting fund and returned a copy of the paper.

Immediately we left the cafe, still with our banners and placards, we were approached by two workers

who had seen the demonstration and wanted to tell us how much they appreciated us coming to Liverpool and making it all a success. We all decided to discuss it over a pint in the nearest pub.

Both of them were active trade unionists and told us how multinational companies were closing down factories in Liverpool and taking their business elsewhere. One firm even had

the audacity to re-open under a new name which was an anagram of its previous name—probably paying half the wages as well.

We all agreed it was a fantastic demonstration. It took me two days to get my voice back! Let's hope this one marks the beginning of many to speed on the struggle for socialism!

Yours fraternally  
Ben Eastop  
Peckham Labour Party

## The return of Casey Jones?

Dear Comrades,

If anyone still felt that the demise of British industry and living standards were caused by forward-looking Japanese industrialists, slaying 24-hours a day to undermine our economy, a nasty shock was delivered recently by the BBC radio programme 'Today'.

Their story concerned the

operating inefficiency of Japanese commuter trains. Apparently accident rates have risen recently and the authorities decided to find out why.

The causes turned out to be quite familiar, while the suggested solution would have done justice to a nineteenth century mill-owner and his whip-bearing overseers.

Commuters were puzzled to know why late night trains often went through

stations without stopping and on occasions even crashing into other trains. This was being caused by driver fatigue.

The effect of driving a train and having only a headlamp shining out on the track a few yards ahead was having a hypnotic effect. Drivers almost unanimously claimed to have fallen asleep en-route on at least one occasion during a weekly stint of night-shift duty.

So what was the solution?

**A shorter working week? More built-in safety devices? Computerised signalling and track control?**

**Not on your life! The ingenious answer is simplicity—simply wind down the cab window and if the blast of cold air is not sufficient to keep you awake then, the authorities suggest, the driver should sing loudly and occasionally give a toot on the whistle. Is Casey Jones really dead?**

Fraternally,  
Kevin Gent  
NW Durham  
Labour Party

## Search for a cynical laugh

Dear Editor

Activists in the labour and trade union movement have little time to watch television. However, last Saturday while having a meal I was watching 'Search for a Star', looking at an act by a comedian called Fogwell Flax.

One thing was obvious—he was going to win and he did! Mr Flax was telling disgusting anti-trade union jokes. What a prize tool for the ruling class in their unending series of scurrilous attacks, mounted daily upon the trade union movement by the guttersnipe press of Fleet Street.

Let this scab take note: those who scream the most about trade unions are the capitalist ruling class who are continually driving down the wages of the working class in pursuit of profits, at the expense of working people's living standards being devastated.

The labour and trade union movement is forever subjected to the most vicious hatred and fury the venom of Fleet Street can reach. The organisations of the working class will never get approval in the sweet murmur of big business.

The rantings and wild shouts of fanatical Tory rage will forever be sweet music in our ears as working people move against the Tories, fighting for the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Only then can the problems working people face be solved, never again returning to the rotten system of greed and profit which Mr Flax wholeheartedly supports in his pursuit of careerism, with a vindictive cynicism for the struggles the working class face daily under the brutal logic of capitalism.

Yours fraternally  
Jake Magee  
Uxbridge Labour Party  
Hillingdon, Middx.

Dear Comrades,

Being unable to attend the demonstration in Liverpool against unemployment on 29th, I was somewhat subdued on Saturday morning until I picked up the newspaper.

The front page headline of 'The Times' announced that Shirley Williams would not be standing as the Labour Party candidate in the next election as she "couldn't honestly defend present party policies." I was equally pleased to see 'The Times' moaning about how bad this was; that it could only damage the Party in the long run.

What a contrast! Here was Shirley, with the support of 'The Times', criticizing the state of the Labour Party, while in Liverpool that day over 100,000 people were marching in the biggest demo against unemployment since the war, for a socialist alternative to unemployment.

It appears that Shirley has more in common with 'The Times', traditional opponent of our movement, than with the thousands marching in Liverpool. Her ideas certainly get more echo in that paper than they do in the Labour Party.

Why? The answer is simple: Shirley Williams supports and advocates policies which under the last Labour government led to large cuts in public expenditure and 1½ million unemployed.

Her decision is therefore not a loss but a bonus for our movement. At last she has realised that her time is up and her and her policies have no future in our movement.

Let's hope others with the same policies don't take so long as Shirley to get the message—the next step is the back door, and their presence will not be missed.

Yours hopefully  
Eddie Donaghy,  
W. Stirling LPYS

## Jack London's remedy for racism

Dear Comrades,

A recent letter from Kevin Broxton (Militant 529) raised the question of Jack London's racialism. This is a recurring issue which needs to be settled.

Textual scholars have frequently pored over London's early works to detect and grossly exaggerate out of context any racialist references. They have done this with the deliberate purpose of discrediting his socialist works.

I defy any of these gentlemen to examine "The Iron Heel" and "The War of the Classes" with their microscopes and find a single trace of any backward racialist ideas. In these works Jack London was at the height of his socialist consciousness as well as his literary and polemical skills.

These experts have completely failed to explain away Jack London's own remedy for racialism—"First of all, I should say, stop the stupid newspapers from fomenting race preju-

dice. This, of course, being impossible, I would say, next, by educating the people of the United States and the people of Japan so that they will be too intelligent to respond to any call to race prejudice.

"And finally, by the realising, in industry and government, of socialism—which last word is merely a word that stands for the actual application in the affairs of men of the theory of the Brotherhood of Man."

These were the words of a man who had turned his back on racialism—that is why they are never quoted by the so-called experts.

Jack London himself regarded the class struggle as the acid test for socialists. Remember all those right-wing Labour MPs—without a trace of racialism in their history—who failed to support the Grunwick strikers? Can anyone doubt which side of the picket line Jack London would have been on?

Yours fraternally  
Derek McMillan

## Another killer for Wirral

Dear Comrades,

It should not surprise you to hear that "Wirral is now hoping for a second Torpedo base." (to quote the local press).

Not content with assembling and testing the Stingray killer missile Torpedo at

Niston, Wirral, Marconi's Portsmouth-based subsidiary of GEC are hoping to win the government contract for a new heavyweight submarine-borne Torpedo, and, if successful, its assembly could be based at Niston or at least in Wirral.

Unfortunately, no-one is standing in the way of these developments, although there is Labour Party dis-

sent. This is because the project is seen as a palliative, however small, to Wirral's chronic unemployment problems.

Nevertheless, such an odious way to alleviate these problems can only be likened to the sticking of Elastoplast over the gaping wound of mass unemployment!

The only solution is the

complete disarmament of Britain, to rid us of these weapons; the factories used should be converted to produce socially useful products. The first step to this must be the early election of a Labour government truly committed to changing society.

Yours fraternally  
Alan Keating  
Wirral Labour Party

## How to win the battle of the hospitals

Dear Comrades

Arthur Hautot's article on St Benedict's Hospital ('Militant', 5 December) gives plenty to think about but I think his remark, "It was our failure to get support and action from other hospitals which lost us this battle" could do with a bit of examination.

South West London covers a lot of ground, and low paid ancillary workers at one end of it do not necessarily have a deep feeling of unity with fellow hospital workers at the other end of the territory, when a hospital closure or change of use is the point of issue. I think we have to be realistic about this. Even more unrealistic to my mind therefore have been the attempts to get "all-London" combines together.

What is possible, however, is to rally the community spirit as has been shown time and time again. Hospital workers usually live in the community. Their own

families use the hospital and themselves belong to other trade unions outside the health service.

The trades council covers local industry and a day of action is not too difficult to envisage, involving industry, schools, tenants' associations and local government workers. The apparatus for such an approach doesn't always seem to be working properly, but it can be made to work.

Why diversify your energies in the self-elected committees that spring up all around campaigns, run by well-meaning people who are using the working class as an adventure play-

ground?

It seems to me that St Benedict's had far more official trade union backing going for it than we had at Bethnal Green Hospital in East London. The next struggle, wherever it takes place, will have even more.

Chucking management out, as Arthur suggests, has immediate appeal. But I cannot believe it would have won the campaign for him in the long run, any more than a South-West London Hospitals Defence committee would.

Area Health Authorities in the present situation hold the key, but AHAs were expressly set up to be the

instruments of government and in 99.9% of cases this is exactly what they are.

Approximately two-thirds of their membership are appointed through government or university agencies. The other third is made up of appointed local authority councillors (appointed by the councils, not directly by the electorate). Even if you are lucky and they take a real interest in health, they are always outvoted when the chips are down.

To my mind, Arthur comes to the correct conclusion at the end of his article. The way to work is through the Joint Shop Stewards' Committees. By

the time all the noise died down he probably found that everyone else had gone anyway!

It's a long hard slog, with no short cuts, but the only way to get a health authority democratically elected and with an in-built majority of those who actually work in the health service or use the local services provided is to bring into office a real Labour government committed to a socialist change in the use of resources. That is the only real answer to how to win a campaign!

Fraternally  
Myrna Shaw  
Tower Hamlets  
health worker

# ads

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

Don't miss the London 'Militant' social, Saturday 10 January, 7.30 pm to 11 pm.

Great entertainment and raffle draw. John Marshall Hall, 27 Blackfriars Road, SE1 [nearest station Waterloo]. Further details from your 'Militant' seller. All welcome.

MILITANT CHILDREN'S PARTY Sat. 10th January 2pm  
John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Road, London SE1. Please contact C. Doyle at Militant offices.

Militant Christmas Cards featuring Alan Hardman cartoon  
10p each, cash with order from: E McParland  
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CHRISTMAS PARTY:  
At Red Lion Pub [upstairs]  
Leytonstone High Road, E.11.  
[Close Leytonstone tube]

Saturday 20 December, 8pm until midnight  
Cost £1.50 includes entertainment and food

1981 Fightback Calendar of cuts struggles and campaigns. Handy A4 size, opens double per month. £1 (add 25p p&p). Fightback, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

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## The ideal Christmas present! The 'Plunder Woman Must Go' cartoon book

41 of Alan Hardman's best 1980 cartoons collected in an attractive 11in. x 8in. book with red, black and white cover.

Send only £1 plus 20p post and packing [orders of 5 or more post free] to Cartoons, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Cash with order please. All proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund

## As demonstrated recently in Liverpool

"DUMP THE TORIES" posters. Approx 15in x 23in with bold red and black slogans. Special price while stocks last £1 for 20 post free. Send cash with order to Dump Tories, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Ideal for meeting-rooms, banners, paper selling etc.

## NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS IN 'MILITANT'

Send greetings to the labour movement in the New Year's edition of 'Militant'.

Rates:  
Semi-display, 3 column cms...£3 (up to 15 words);  
6 column cms...£6 (up to 25 words).  
Display: one-sixteenth page...£10; one-eighth page...£20;  
one-quarter page...£40.  
Cash with copy please, to arrive by Saturday 20 December. Cheques/POs payable to 'Militant'. Send to Circulation Dept., 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## Subscription offer!

Take advantage of our special subscription offer now. Unfortunately, postal charges will be going up in the New Year, which means higher sub rates for the paper.

But if you renew your subscription now it will still be at the old rate. Why not take out a 'Militant' subscription as a present for someone? What better present than a copy of 'Militant' through the door every week!

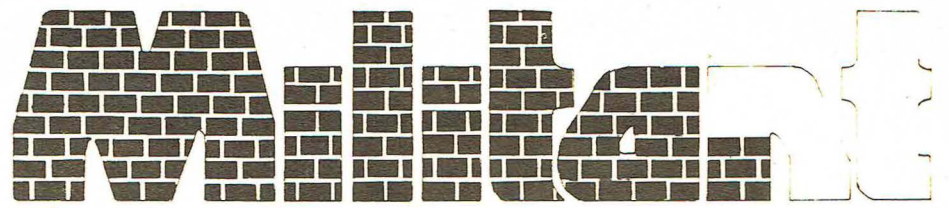
## MILITANT WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

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.

# Build



Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	4266		5,000
East Midlands	3801		3,800
Hants & IOW	4271		4,600
Humberside	1653		2,500
London East	5681		6,200
London West	3210		4,700
London South	4805		4,700
Manchester & Lancs	3005		5,100
Merseyside	3963		6,000
Northern	4550		7,300
Scotland East	2298		3,200
Scotland West	4209		5,000
Southern	4977		5,900
South West	2271		3,200
Wales East	1981		2,800
Wales West	3027		3,100
West Midlands	6880		9,000
Yorkshire	4651		7,300
Others	10360		10,600
<b>Total received</b>	<b>79859</b>		<b>100,000</b>

## TARGET FOR YEAR-£100,000

# GIVE US A PRESENT THIS WEEK

# £1,687

Readers of 'Militant' know how much they need our paper. It is an enormous help to our readers with its clear arguments for socialism.

By Steve Cawley

We can't help you, though unless you help us—with finance. This week's total of £1,700 is up on last week, but we need a lot more than that. See how your area is doing. If you're doing well keep it up—if you're some way behind give us a helping hand.

Eastern have gone up by £387 to £4,266, leaving them another £734 to reach £5000! Thanks to M. Holmes (Billericay), Southend Barbecue Organisers, and all the other readers who responded.

East Midlands have now achieved their target, but we're sure they won't let up! The £165 received included a collection of £83 at a week-end school, £17 from Leicester South LPYS, and £20 from Derby reader T Warby.

Hants & IOW are in a strong position—only £329 short. Most of the £57 in this week came from a social, badges, calendars etc. Thanks to P Atkins (Southampton LP) for his fiver.

Humberside's line has gone up by just £19, thanks to student J Richards (Hull) for his fiver. If every reader in the area copied this example the £847 left to raise would be drastically reduced!

London East are creeping week by week towards the £6,200 mark, but with a bit of extra effort and Christmas spirit, the £103 this week can be enlarged in the next three weeks to go over the £519 needed.

London West have moved up at only half that rate,

which means they've got £1,490 left to get. An Ealing reader sent in expenses of £40 this week, which shows the kind of effort and imagination needed. London South, having reached their target, have had a week off. But if they continue as they have been doing all year, they'll go so far over the target as to show how very modest these figures actually are in the present political climate.

Manchester & Lancs have gone up by £21. The only way we will get near £5100 is by asking every reader of the paper for a very generous Christmas present. Merseyside added £57 to their score, with the promise of at least £100 already in the post. Thanks to D Barret (T&GWU) £4.50 and K McNeil (£1.20). Another £2037 to be raised. The comrades will no doubt capitalise on the mood from the November 29th demo!

Northern have a big job to tackle since £36 has been added this week, bringing the line to £4550, or £2750 behind the target of £7300. However, one supporter, D Gunby has passed on to us £20 voted to him by his union branch for his work in a recent dispute. He says he wouldn't have been prepared to accept it for himself, but it's different accepting it for us!

Thanks also to the Newton Aycliffe LPYS member who gave us, as promised in the summer, £10 of his first pay when he was able finally to get a job, and for his fiver to I Campbell, Carlisle. With examples like this what's the problem?

Scotland East benefitted by only £14 this week, but we're sure that's going to change shortly! £902 is the target by January 10th.

Scotland West are within striking distance, having raised £4209 out of £5000, £87 of this in the last week. Two LPYS branches, Pollock and Strathaven have helped us, and individual donations include M Walker and S Biro of Rutherglen (£3.50 each).

Southern had a good week the week before last, but nothing (well £7) has come in since). The area needs another £923.

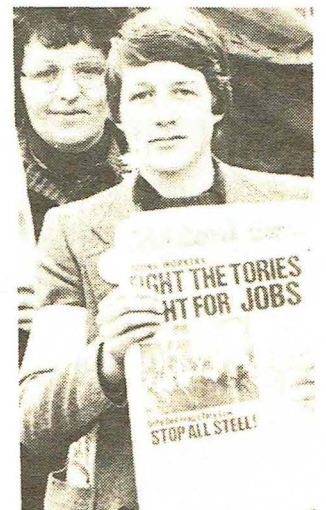
South West have sent us £12 this week and need £929 to get their target. Thanks to D Moss (Brixham) and D Evans (Patchway) amongst others.

Wales East have moved up from bottom position, thanks mainly to a collection of nearly £450 (inclusive of IOUs) at a recent Militant Readers Meeting. Only another £819 to go now. It just shows that seemingly huge sums are not impossible if it is clearly explained to readers how much we need their support to keep and improve our paper!

Wales West should be the next area to go over the target line, but only £37 came in from there last week. See how far you can go over the target, to practice for next year!

West Midlands sent in £116 and now have £2120 more to raise. Comrades who made over £30 from donations and sale of food on the way to the Liverpool demo deserve to have their initiative copied by other readers in the West Midlands.

Yorkshire supporters donations of £69 bring them to



Support the paper you need

nearly 2/3rds of the way to £7300. £2649 is Yorkshire's aim over the Christmas period. Although one reader (in York) sent us his Christmas tenner last week, we need many, many more.

National Events were helped by Militant supporters at the National Union of Students conference to the tune of £46.

Whatever area you live in, make sure you put by some time over the Christmas period to invest in the future with the Militant Fighting Fund. Use all opportunities to sell our raffle tickets, cards and cartoon books. We need 20,000 readers to give us £1 each to reach £100,000—or perhaps 200 to give us £100 each, or any combination in between.

Lastly, why not organise a get-together for January 10th. Have a collection for us and telephone us before noon on Sunday 11th January to tell us what's in the post. Not only will you be able to help Militant help the cause of socialism in the New Year—you may even find you've won the first prize in the Draw the night before!

# Industrial

## in brief

Of the four Tandy workers and Labour Party members arrested during the recent strike at Tandy's warehouse in Birmingham during a mass picket, three were found guilty and one was acquitted. Five witnesses gave evidence that none of the pickets committed any acts of violence. However, the three found guilty now face fines and costs totalling £642. Full report in later issues.

NUPE's area officer in Essex has urged all union members to 'get involved' in the fight to democratise the Labour Party. Dave Smith told his members, "We are not prepared to leave the leadership struggle solely in the hands of MPs. Trade unions and local Labour Parties must demand the right to have their say." He urged NUPE members to fight for the return of a Labour government—"one that will carry out policies which will benefit ordinary working people, rather than the International Monetary Fund."

All pickets know how the gutter press whips itself up into an anti-union frenzy during an industrial dispute. So when the editor of the 'Eccles Journal' ended up at Gardners during the recent occupation, pickets let him know what they thought of the treatment given to them by his paper. The argument ended with the editor kicking over a brazier spilling boiling tea onto a picket's leg, scolding him. The editor was escorted off the premises. Had it been the other way around, no doubt the headlines would have screamed on the 'Journal's' front page. As it was, the incident only merited 2½ inches of newsprint in the 'Journal'.

The Leeds AUEW Broad Left have described the engineers' national wages settlement as a 'sell-out'. As their journal 'Engineer's News' points out, this agreement "means £79 as a skilled rate in 1980/81, when engineers went through a 12 week strike for £80 and a 35 hour week in 1979."

Workers at the Royal Ordnance Factory in Blackburn are fighting Tory attempts to transfer their works into the private sector. They have called on Labour MPs to support the following: "On the return of a Labour government we will undertake to return to public ownership without compensation any Royal Ordnance Factory in part, or whole, that has been lost to the private sector under the present government."

# Defend trade union rights

**The sacking of Conway Xavier is a blatant case of victimisation for trade union activists.**

By Ian Barber  
(NUPE area officer)

As such, the trumped up charges are not just a glaring injustice. They hit to the heart of the right of trade union members to freely and democratically elect their own representatives to act on their behalf.

## Join the mass picket

Conway Xavier is the chairman of the NUPE branch covering Great Ormond Street and the

Queen Elizabeth hospitals in London. He is also chairman of NUPE London area committee, the body

representing NUPE's 35,000 members in the capital.

Conway has always been conscientious and thorough as a branch negotiator—that's why management sacked him.

It was for taking part in meetings to explain the dispute at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (see details in last week's 'Militant') to NUPE members and trade union stewards that Conway was subsequently sacked.

Management claim that as deputy head porter he showed 'insufficient loyalty and commitment' to management. Yet all he did was explain what was going on, and take part in a strike called by the joint shop stewards' committee after a vote by his members. Conway's 'crime' was that he abided by his members' decision.

This all amounts to a right of veto by management

on who can act as a branch official.

There are sinister implications—a secret circular from the office of Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Health, has come to light. This advises senior administrators on how to limit trade union activity of staff 'with managerial responsibility.' It now seems that at Great Ormond Street 'managerial' staff now includes the junior ancillary post of deputy head porter, in their attempts to sack Conway.

The sacking of Conway Xavier is a threat to the rights of every trade unionist. **The NUPE Divisional Council has called a mass protest on the day of Conway's appeal against dismissal, on 13 January, at 1 pm outside Great Ormond Street Hospital.**

We have to make sure that the response to this is equal to the issues involved.

# EETPU - Broad Left defeat



The leader of the EETPU, Frank Chapple, seated with the leader of the AUEW Terry Duffy at a meeting of the right-wing 'Campaign for Labour Victory' at this year's Labour Party conference

The Broad Left in the electricians' union, the EETPU, suffered a defeat recently, when their candidate lost in an election for a position on the union's national executive.

The candidate, Frank Hammond, explained to 'Militant' why the Broad Left put up a candidate and what lessons they have learnt from the defeat.

We feel that the power over policy and decision making is now with the executive council, and the membership have no real say in any of it.

I think that is one of the

By a  
**'Militant'**  
reporter

main reasons that there is apathy amongst the members; as the result shows the vast majority of people don't bother to vote. That really is an indictment against our union.

The result shows how very difficult it is to overcome the massive machinery that the present leadership have at their hands. The candidate they put forward obviously has a far easier job.

If we could actually have access to the membership to put over our policies, speaking on an open forum, we

believe that we would have a greater success.

But it is union policy not to allow direct access to the membership. The executive have the press, they have their contacts, they have their full time officials and all the support of their executive council, where all we have is access to the branches.

There is no special issue of 'Contact', our union journal, in which candidates could write articles, use the journal to tell you information on where the candidates are speaking and where you could meet them, and so on.

Instead, usually the newspaper comes out late, so it is about right for when the ballot papers are issued. And of course there are great

anti-left articles by Chapple, by the sitting candidates, which in our opinion did definitely have an effect on the ballot papers.

It is our aim to try and continue to put forward our policies. I think that whilst the election was a defeat for the Broad Left, we have to look at the overall picture and the apathy there. Somehow we've got to get people active again. My worry is that the Broad Left might still stay splintered. I hope that we unite after this and learn the lessons, and go forward united to try and create a genuine trade union activist group, based in no one political grouping.

short time working, saying this measure would prevent redundancies taking place.

But on 5 December the management announced a gradual run-down leading to closure.

The joint shop stewards' committee have refused to negotiate in terms of redundancy payments which will be used to stave off any fight against the closure. Callously management

now intend to pick off the workers, department by department and are even offering "...a completion bonus for orderly run-down of production" in order to weaken any fight-back by the trade unions.

A factory meeting involving factory and shop floor workers has unanimously decided to fight all closures by whatever means possible.

## Vauxhall

Ever since we were beaten back to work after a 12 week struggle at Vauxhall Motors' Ellesmere Port plant, we have been subjected to a vicious iron heel rule by management.

Shop stewards have been sacked, active members victimised and the work force generally threatened and bullied.

Under this atmosphere, productivity has leapt up: even the local papers called us "miracle workers, the best in Europe!"

But by June, management had amassed 30,000 cars they could not sell and they started to talk about short time working. And now we are told the Tories are changing the short time working agreement. At present we are paid 75% on our lay-off week, but this will drop to 50% in March.

The Tories also intend to make the bosses pay the insurance stamps of the workforce, which the government pays at present. So now it seems the 3,339 redundancies declared by management previously, look nearer than ever.

At our last shop stewards meeting, one brother reported his manager had told his area Mechanical Assembly was overmanned by 700. Unfortunately however, the AUEW shop stewards committee here do not feel the same urgency that many of the shop floor workers feel over this issue.

At present the British motor industry is down on its knees—firm after firm declaring redundancies or short time working, whole plants closing down.

The need to nationalise the whole of the motor industry has never been more obvious. But we don't want the nationalisation now seen at British Leyland, still being run by the bosses in the shape of Edwardes and co—we want proper democratic workers control and management.

By T.B. Baugh  
(Shop steward,  
Vauxhall Motors)

## BICC, Leyton

"Seven months ago the company sold us a double-day shift system but they're not going to sell us a shift onto the dole."

Thus a young worker summed up the mood of the workers at the BICC (Reliance) cable factory in Leyton, East London, on hear-

Peter Mumford [Leyton LPYS spoke to a BICC shop steward

ing of management's decision to close down the Leyton plant.

Last August the management put one department on

# Reports

## Victory at Bramah's!

**After seven weeks of struggle, workers at Bramah engineering have won a total victory!**

For six weeks, 332 workers were on strike, maintaining 24-hour a day, 7-day pickets (see issue 531).

Because of the determination of the workers, management changed tactics in an attempt to break the strike in Sheffield. They sent out dismissal notices for all strikers, but this only resulted in workers at a sister company joining the dispute and increased the number of strikers to 450!

Furthermore, 25 apprentices who had been allowed to work were given notices of redundancy. Management obviously intended to face the strikers with a total shut

**By Rob Jones  
& Alan Anderton  
(T&GWU)**

down.

However, the Bramah workers' determination increased, especially when appeals to the labour movement bore fruit from the Labour Party, LPYS, and trade union branches sending money and messages of support.

Finally, management sought further talks and three intensive days of discussion resulted, on Friday, with a victory for the Bramah workers.

Dismissal notices were withdrawn and a bonus scheme will now be implemented over the next seven months (rather than the two years at least that management claimed it would take).

This dispute is important to workers all over the country as it highlights the strategy of management in attempts to break strikes in the current economic situation. More and more workers are being faced with plant closures and redundancies and sackings. Bramah's, one of the top one hundred companies in that it has full order books, cannot afford to close its profitable plants.

But the lessons of this victory are clear. The whole movement should support any struggle for better conditions and against redundancies. Workers cannot fight in isolation, and the Bramah victory is a victory for the whole labour movement.

## BURROUGH'S

**By Arthur  
Donaghy**

(AUEW convenor,  
personal capacity)

Employing 1,600 workers, Burroughs is the largest employer in the Cumbernauld area of Scotland. Now management at this prosperous computer manufacturer want to make 355 redundant early in the new year.

They blame the worldwide recession for a fall in markets. But the four unions in the factory (AUEW, TASS, APEX and ASTMS) have rejected this argument and have formed a joint action committee to organise a fight to save their jobs.

They point to the fact that Burroughs have recently opened new factories in places as far apart as Florida, Bombay, and even nearby Livingston, less than 20 miles away. The Livingston plant is designed to make the successor to an

encoder which has been one of Cumbernauld's most successful products.

The fact that the new machines are to be built at Livingston makes us suspect that all the government grants, which were received when the new factory was set up, make it a more profitable site. It is also the case that wage rates for hourly-paid workers are 10p-20p an hour lower at Livingston.

The unions have also pointed out that the machines they are making are for banks and other financial institutions, who have not been affected by the recession, and can well afford to buy Burroughs' goods.

It is surely no co-incidence that management have

chosen this time to try to tighten up disciplinary procedures and to offer only an 8 per cent wage increase. However these have both been decisively rejected by the whole workforce.

Management even banned the AUEW, which has over half the workers, from holding a mass meeting inside the factory. We went ahead anyway, causing one manager to refer to an "occupation".

355 redundancies at Burroughs would be a major disaster for an area like Cumbernauld. We are determined to fight, and have already brought in local MPs and the Scottish TUC to help us. We shall also be in touch with workers at Burroughs' other British factories, at Livingston, Glenrothes and Cramlington.

## METAL BOX

A bombshell has been dropped in Neath. The Metal Box company which dominates this town has declared that almost a third of the workforce, 500 people, are to go!

Already devastated by the steel closures in nearby Port Talbot, the area now faces a situation worse than the 30s.

Over the past 12 months 900 jobs have already been axed at the plant.

And yet despite the fall in their profits for the six months ending in September, Metal Box made over a staggering £10 million profit.

Why should the workers have to pay for a crisis not of their own making? The unions must fight these

redundancies tooth and nail.

Yet the statement of Frank Evans, the full time AUEW official in Neath, that the workers have to be realistic and accept the majority of redundancies plays straight into the hands of management. It gives them the message of encouragement to carry through their ruthless proposals.

The trade union movement must oppose these redundancies with a fighting programme. This programme must include: no redundancies; work sharing with no loss of pay. Open the books of Metal Box for trade union inspection. Let's see where the profits have been squandered. The trade

unions should organise an occupation of the plant to defeat the redundancies. Finally, if the bosses are unable to run their plant in the interests of the workers, then it should be nationalised under workers' control and management, with compensation on the basis of proven need.

**AUEW: The case  
for a Fighting  
Socialist Leadership**

Militant Pamphlet 40p  
(inc. P&P) from  
World Books,  
1 Mentmore Terrace,  
London E8 3PN.



Scottish workers demonstrate on the TUC's march on March 9—the Scottish TUC should rely on its members; not the bosses and the churches

## STUC - a strange brew

By

**Bob Wylie**

The Scottish Trades Union Council called a major conference on 8 December to consider unemployment. Unfortunately very little of the anger and frustration of Scotland's quarter of a million unemployed was reflected in the proceedings.

Instead we had the flowering of a 'broad democratic alliance' in all its glory. The Roman Catholic bishops were there, along with ministers from the Church of Scotland.

Trade union leaders were there, along with bosses' leaders from the CBI and the Institute of Directors. We were graced by the presence of the Liberals, the Scottish National Party and even Michael Ancrum, chairman of the Scottish Tories.

fight the avalanche of redundancies or a clear statement outlining a socialist solution to the present mess of capitalism.

Important questions arise from this conference:

★ **What is the best way to fight unemployment—class solidarity and industrial action or gatherings such as this, 'democratic alliances' of good intentions?**

★ **Which way should the STUC go now—forward to lead a campaign for socialist change or involvement in the politics of the hodge-podge?**

A fuller analysis will appear in future issues.

Congratulations to the STUC for bringing this impressive gathering together echoed from the conference floor. Jack Ashton, secretary of the Scottish Communist Party, praised the assembly as "so representative of the Scottish people." But concrete policy decisions were few.

A Commission of unemployment is to be established to make representation to Thatcher and Co about a 'change of course'. What "alternative solutions" which are acceptable to the bosses will be acceptable to the workers? The result will be a mass of words - but no action - and no real fighting alternative.

Crucially, there was no discussion on a strategy to

# The Last Year of the Tories...

**1980 has been the first full year of Thatcher's government. Their horrific record should convince any worker that another would be an absolute disaster.**

**If like Lord Vestey, you are a multimillionaire paying no tax; if you are a major share-holder in a large bank or oil company, you may be happy enough.**

**By Roger Shrives**

If however, you are a steelworker who started the year fighting an insulting 2% pay offer and ended the year fighting 20,000 redundancies; if you are one of the additional 800,000 workers who joined the dole queues this year, you will of course be far from happy under the Tories.

Remember the Tory election promises of good jobs and good prospects for young workers? Two million officially out of work and common estimates of 3 million by 1982-3 make these promises a mockery.

The Tories' priorities are shown by the £675,000 transfer fee they paid for steel boss MacGregor to dismember the industry.

Apprenticeships are 10% down on last year (13% in engineering) What plans can the bosses have for recovery when they don't even train skilled workers?

The vast increase in unemployment has itself meant a rise in public spending as even the Tories have to pay some dole money to the two million jobless.

The Tory "solution"? Take it out on the unemployed. Bring earnings-related benefits down to 10% by January and abolish them by 1982.

They also introduced the taxation of short-term benefits, which have also been raised by less than the current rate of inflation.

A quarter of a million of those on the dole, well over 10%, are building workers. At the same time, a House of Commons Select Committee predicts that there will be a housing "short-fall" of half a million houses by the mid-1980s. Shelter predicts two million applicants for council housing by 1984.

But where are the council houses to come from? This autumn, Heseltine imposed a complete moratorium on council house building. Now he has backed this up with a further 15% cut in local government housing spending for 1981-82.

Even before this, however, there had been fewer housing starts than any year since the early '50s. Only 47,000 houses had been started in the public sector, in the first nine months of 1980, a reduction of 25% on the same period of 1979.

the number built publicly in Britain in the post-war "austerity" year of 1946.

The present "austerity" has also been caused by a war—a vicious class war waged by the Tories in a desperate attempt to defend the wealth and power of the profit-seekers who run this crumbling system.

Heseltine this week announced further rent rises averaging £3.25 a week for council tenants, and far higher in London.

The Tories talk glibly of the private sector "taking up the slack". But who in crisis torn Britain can afford to buy a house? There has also been a catastrophic slump in private building.

"We have no intention to raise prescription charges," said Thatcher in 1979. This month prescription charges went up to £1—five times the cost eighteen months ago. Britain already had about the lowest level of health provision in Western Europe. But that has not held back the Tories from closing hospitals.

Prices, too, have soared. Remember Thatcher's food basket in the election? How much would that basket cost now? Food prices rose 17% in the first eighteen months of the Tories, far more than Labour predicted in their election material!

Living standards have officially been falling, 1.5% in the first quarter, 0.3% in the second quarter. Jobs and services cut—but to what avail? The money has not gone into investment in manufacturing industry, which has fallen 10% from an already very low figure a year ago.

Not surprisingly, then, manufacturing output slumped to its lowest level for 13 years, 10% down in one year. This from a government which pledged to put 'life' back into British "free enterprise" industry!

Tory policies have solved nothing. Even their own backers in the CBI have watched aghast as money supply continues to leap forward, profits are squeezed, and industry is ruined. But the reaction of the working class will be the crucial issue.

The courage and determination of workers at Gardners and the firemen show the Tories can be beaten.

Don't give the Tories another year in which to continue with their devastation. Make 1981 the year when the Tories get the boot!



## Misery Law

**By Bob Wylie**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

be raised for creditors. Earlier this year Denis Canavan, Labour MP for West Stirlingshire, tried to introduce a private members' bill to outlaw warrant sales, which are a public humiliation and punishment rather than constructive attempts to get debts repaid.

One of his constituents had been subjected to the full works because of a £2.50 debt to a local authority for removal of a wasps' nest from her home.

The constituent refused to pay, and a court order was made against her. The creditor then engaged the sheriff officers to recover the debt.

The sheriff officers then visited the debtor's home to value her goods. By law, they can make a forced entry to any house if they have visited twice and failed to gain admission.

In the case of Denis Canavan's constituent, her debt was over £30 by the time the sheriff officers valued her goods. They put up for sale her carpet, vacuum cleaner

and colour television—for a combined sale value of £37!

Of course, these things had cost the woman more than £350 to buy. But valuing for warrant sales is not based on market value, but decided by the whim of the sheriff officer.

Traditionally, the goods are offered at a low price to encourage sale.

The real purpose of warrant sales is clearly not actually to raise the money owed. The aim is to achieve a settlement through forcing the debtor to obtain money by any possible means to avoid the humiliating experience of valuation and public sale.

Before the sale, which can be attended by any member of the public, the time and place are advertised in local newspapers.

Unfortunately, Denis Canavan's attempt to abolish warrant sales failed for lack of parliamentary time. On Friday evenings, in the Glasgow evening newspaper, you could read the list of future warrant sales.

That is, you could until the

Scottish Graphical Division of the print union, SOGAT, stepped decisively into the breach.

Acting in pursuance of a policy recently adopted by the Scottish Trades Union Congress, the Scottish graphical Division have instructed their members to refuse to have any part in the production process leading to the advertisement of warrant sales in any Scottish newspaper.

This had the immediate effect, from November 28, of stopping these adverts in more than 100 newspapers.

In strong terms, Alan Watson, the financial secretary of the Scottish Division of SOGAT told 'Militant':

"This move will not guarantee the prevention of warrant sales. But it will make it more difficult for the parasites who frequent the sales to continue their dirty business feeding from the flesh of other

people's misfortunes."

This action, taken by the trade union, has done more to alleviate the sufferings of impoverished working-class people in Scotland in a matter of days than years of deliberation by the Scottish Law Commission, debates in parliament, and well-meaning liberal academics.

SOGAT members have responded well. Not one chapel has declined to implement the ban.

"My members are no longer in the market to add public humiliation to the burdens being forced on working class families by this disgraceful Tory government," says Alan Watson.

"The trade union movement would not be in existence today had it not been prepared to defy laws specifically designed to protect the interests and privileges of the establishment."

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