

Militant

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Euroweld Belfast Workers -

OCCUPYING TO SAVE OUR JOBS

In a fight to prevent closure and save their jobs, the workers of Euroweld, East Belfast, are occupying their factory.

They are refusing to allow the government's Receiver into the plant to wind up the firm.

By Mickey Duffy

(Labour and Trade Union Group, Belfast)

They were told last Friday [30 January] that 175 of the workforce were to be laid off immediately [40 others would be kept on just to finish current orders].

On the same day, the latest government figures showed that unemployment in Northern Ireland had shot up to nearly 100,000.

This is 17.2% or a horrifying one in six of the insured population.

Threatened with the sack, the Euroweld workers replied with an occupation. All work has since been stopped. A 24-hour picket of the plant is being maintained to ensure no equipment is moved out.



Euroweld workers outside their workplace

"Bosses take state hand-outs and run"

The workers are determined to save the company and to reclaim their jobs.

Their anger is understandable. Only last autumn the company opened a large new extension, accepting huge gov-

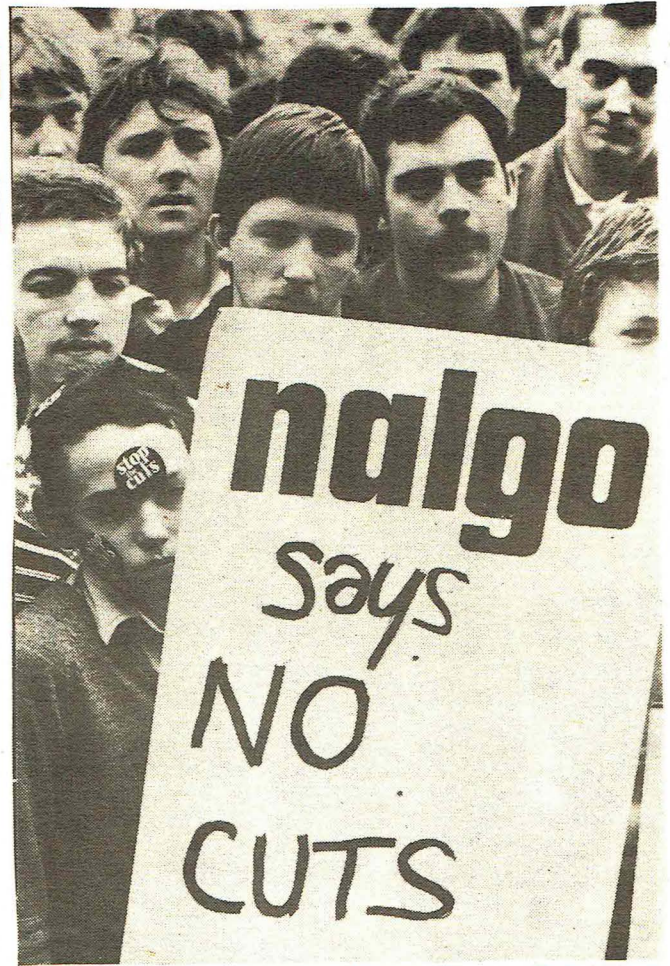
ernment grants. Its American owners, P X O'Neil, flew in to Belfast for this opening ceremony. "The sky's the limit," he told the workforce....

The Minister of State recommended that other

engineering firms should note Euroweld's success, and emulate its example.

But what has this great "success" done for Euroweld workers?

(CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)



No redundancies, no cuts in services say Solihull workers Photo: Militant

Solihull- Workers angry at savage cuts

By Maureen Hinks

(NUPE)

"Not one job will be lost!" That is the unions' answer to the Solihull Tories, who threatened to chop hundreds of council jobs.

A huge demonstration of over 3,000 council workers last Tuesday, however, forced the Tory council to take a step backwards.

Originally, the Tories intended to slash the budget by £5 million. This would have meant 800 jobs losses, and yet they still intended to put up the rates by 40%

After the angry demonstration [3 February] the finance committee modified their plans a bit. Now they plan "only" a 30% rate increase, but still with big cuts and massive job losses.

The immediate impact of the cuts would have been the sacking of 153 teachers and a cut in the already under-staffed social work team, from 67 to 34. This would put even more stress on social workers, some of whom already have case-loads of 120!

The Tories plan the

total destruction of the school meals services. Last year they got rid of 400 cooks. Now they plan a "sandwich service" instead. This would do away with cooks and canteen assistants!

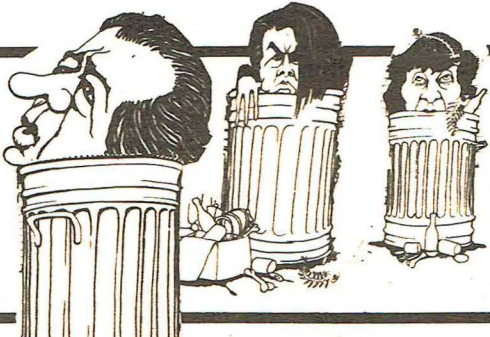
There has been a tremendous reaction against the Tories plans. "Well-off Tories can afford to put up these vital services—but we can't. and we can't afford to lose jobs, so we must fight!" That is the general attitude among working-class people.

The unions in the local authority have taken up the battle, with NALGO leading the way.

At a meeting of over 1,000 branch members, the executive called for a one-day strike and opposition to any redundancies. The decision was eventually for a half-day

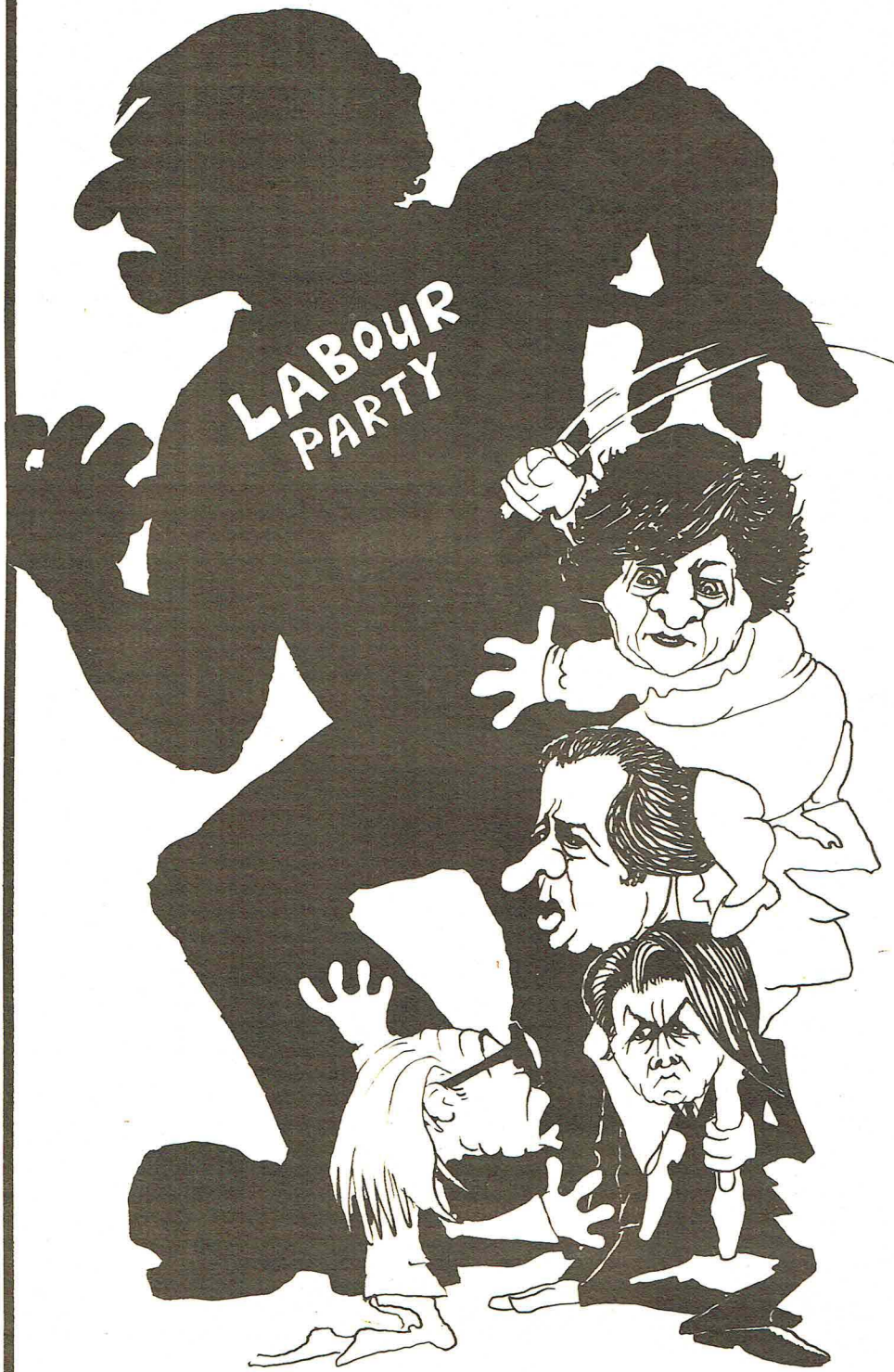
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inside



What future for the 'Social Democrats'

Page 2 and Page 7



**DON'T GO! DON'T GO!
YOUR PARTY NEEDS YOU**

A STAB IN THE BACK

Big Business will back Social Democrats in an attempt to block a Labour victory

After the Limehouse declaration of Shirley Williams, David Owen, Roy Jenkins and other Labour right-wingers, it is now all but certain that a section of the Parliamentary Labour Party will split away to form a rival "Social Democratic" party.

The "Gang of Four's" enthusiasm for their new venture, however, may have been somewhat dampened by ITV's "World in Action" poll [2 February].

This showed that in eleven constituencies surveyed [by the MORI opinion poll] the prospective social democrats would not win a single seat if they stood against Labour, even if there were no Liberal candidates.

It also showed—confirming what we have always said—that most of their electoral support would be taken from the Tories [31%] and Liberals [43%], not Labour.

For most Labour Party members this will reinforce their opposition to the efforts of Michael Foot and others to persuade these right wingers to stay in the Party. The would-be social democrats are out to stab Labour in the back—and the sooner they are out, the better!

This development is not simply the result of battles and manoeuvres within the Labour Party. It reflects the crisis in society which arises from the catastrophic decline of British capitalism.

The right wing's idea that it was possible to regulate the capitalist economy, eliminating recessions and slumps, and introduce lasting reforms within a "mixed economy", has been shattered by the experience of recent years. The last Lab-

our government was reformism without reforms—indeed, it began the implementation of counter-reforms against the working class.

That is why the right wing, the so-called "social democrats", have been completely isolated within the Labour Party and in much of the wider labour movement.

The crisis in the Parliamentary Labour Party [PLP], moreover, is paralleled by a crisis within the bosses' own party, the Tory Party. Although they won't admit it, the last week has seen a U-turn in the Thatcher government's economic policies.

This partly reflects big-business opposition to monetarist policies which have exacerbated the slump.

But it also reflects massive disillusionment with the Tories, particularly amongst those who swung to the Conservatives in the last general election. In the inner-councils of the ruling class they are drawing the conclusion that the Tories' chances of winning the next general election have been drastically undermined.

At the same time, there is a split in the Liberal Party, as the Liberal MPs and Party activists argue over whether to form an electoral alliance with the break-away social democrats, or to try to steer an "independent" course.

What, then, are the prospects for a new Social Democratic Party?

Some on the left are clearly underestimating the support which a Social Democratic Party could temporarily gain. In the next period, for a number of reasons, the Social Democrats would not just fade away like earlier right-wing splitters such as Dick Tavener and Desmond Donnelly.

Labour's activists must be warned that initially a new party could get 10% or 15%, or even 20% or 30% of the votes in a general election. For a time, it could present a barrier to the victory of a majority Labour government.

The television and press publicity given to the "Gang of Four" in the last few days is a fore-taste of the massive support that will be given to the Social Democrats.

Big business has evidently concluded that it must back the growth of a Social Democratic Party. To ensure its success in an election, big business could initially give it even more support than the Tory Party itself.

Whatever they claim in public, the ruling class recognises that the popular support of the Tory Party will be shattered.

The first function of a new Social Democratic Party would be to act as a safety-net for disenchanted Tory voters, to prevent them swinging across to Labour.

The recent opinion poll conducted by the "Sunday Times" showed that William Rodgers, if he stood as a Social Democratic candidate against Labour, would not win a majority in Stockton-on-Tees. In Scotland, the North, South Wales and other solid Labour areas, the Social Democrats would find it difficult to win seats.

But in the South East, the Midlands and some other areas lacking a solid Labour tradition, the Social Democrats could gain seats. There is a volatile mood amongst the sections who swung to the Tories in 1979. If the Social Democrats make gains, it will be largely in these areas.

Paradoxically, Labour's right-wing splitters will be trading on disillusionment with their own policies. While already bitterly angry at the Tories' ruthless economic policies and vicious cuts, many middle-class voters, together with some working-class voters, still remember their disappointment with the last Labour government.

Shirley Williams, David Owen and Co. will attempt to cash in on this—in spite of the fact that they were themselves responsible for

the policies implemented under Labour.

In spite of the great advances on Party democracy, the Parliamentary Labour Party and particularly the Shadow Cabinet is still dominated by the right wing. In appointing his shadow spokesman, Michael Foot has attempted to appease the right.

The presence of Denis Healey, Roy Hattersley, and other former right-wing Labour ministers in a future Labour government would certainly act as a brake on the implementation of the radical policies adopted by recent Labour conferences.

However, big business fears the return of a majority Labour government because of the enormous pressure that would be exerted on it by an angry and aroused working class. They fear that such a government could be pushed into making inroads into their wealth and power.

The strategists of big business also fear the growing influence of the Marxist wing of the Labour Party. "In an ideal world," asserted 'The Observer' [1 February], "the best realignment in British politics would exclude the Militant tendency, and its too numerous fellow-travellers, and leave David Steele, Shirley Williams and Peter Shore on the same side, as the acceptable alternative to the Conservatives."

They are clearly terrified at the prospect of the organisation of a mass left wing on a rounded-out socialist programme. They do not mind an "acceptable alternative" to the Tories which does not challenge the capitalist system—but a real alternative is a different matter!

NEC report see page 7

However, while a new Social Democratic Party might temporarily block the return of a Labour government, in the long run it would be a purely ephemeral development.

Given the continued crisis of British capitalism and the deepening class polarisation of society, there is no room for the long-term survival of a new Centre or Social Democratic Party.

What would be the role of such a party, after all?

Opposing Labour as a splinter group, the Social Democrats can uphold the illusion of liberal reforms within the framework of capitalism. But it will soon become clear that it has no solution to the crisis, and nothing to offer working people, or even the middle class.

This would particularly be the case if the Social Democrats were tainted with office. In a coalition government with a section of the 'liberal' Tories, or some other combination of Tories, Liberals, etc., it would soon become apparent that they were simply Tories in disguise.

A possible future coalition between the Social Democrat splitters and the Labour Party, on the other hand, would only be possible given a new split in the Labour Party. Such an alignment would be fundamentally no different from Ramsey MacDonald's National Labour Group, formed as the basis of the National

government in 1931—to implement policies of capitalist crisis.

However the situation develops, the split-away of the right-wing Social Democrats cannot but push the Labour Party further to the left. Moreover, while it is vital to recognise the possibility of the Social Democrats temporarily gaining support and to combat their influence amongst workers, the growth of a new party with 15, 20 or more seats in parliament is by no means a certainty.

Even the temporary growth of support for the Social Democrats could be cut across by the further radicalisation of the working class. This would particularly be the case if the Labour Party conducts mass campaigning activity on the basis of bold socialist policies.

While there has been a swing to the left in the Labour Party, as well as in some of the trade unions, on the industrial plane the working class has generally retreated under the vicious onslaught of the Tories' and the bosses' attacks.

But it would be wrong to conclude that this will continue indefinitely. Big industrial battles could flare up at any time, sparked off by individual struggles or by a particular move by the Tory government.

Any recovery in the British economy, moreover—and even sickly British capitalism will probably experience some slight recovery, given a general world upswing in the coming months—will certainly lead to renewed struggles by the workers. When the trade unionists see the bosses recovering sales and chalking up new profits, they will soon be demanding "their share" of the cake.

New battles, and the return of a more confident, combative mood on the part of the organised workers, will intensify the process of radicalisation taking place in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. This could cut across the growth of support for a Social Democratic Party, as the active workers would draw less conscious sections of the class, together with middle-class layers, behind them.

Whichever way events develop, the course of the labour movement is clear.

The right-wing policies of the Social Democrats must be boldly answered. Attempts to conciliate these people and keep them within the party will only further damage Labour. The majority of Labour Party members and active trade unionists want these "fifth columnists" out of the party.

The reforms on Party democracy, particularly the 30-30-40 electoral college for the election of Labour's leader, must be consolidated by Labour's ranks. In the face of threats from right-wing trade union leaders and some sections of the PLP to reverse this decision, the new procedure must be explained throughout the labour movement to ensure that it is maintained and implemented.

Above all, the party must launch a mass campaign on the basis of bold socialist policies to ensure that the Labour Party is given a solid base in the factories, in the trade unions, on the estates and in the streets.



Last Saturday's demonstration by 'Renfrewshire Against the Tories'

Photo: R Mitchell

UNITE WITH TENANTS AGAINST TORIES

Anger at continued attacks on living standards finally boiled over in Paisley last week.

When the local district decided to put up the 40,000 council house rents by 50%, many council tenants decided that was the last straw.

Hundreds of tenants, trade unionists and LPYS members lobbied the meeting of Renfrew District Council. Although Renfrew has relatively one of the largest Labour majorities in Scotland (34 of its 40 seats are Labour), the councillors had not bothered to consult the local Labour Party or trade unions about their decision.

Many of the placards on the demonstration called on the councillors not to be Tory puppets, and the most common chant was "50% no way." They called for a meeting in the town hall so that the councillors could explain their position.

But the council refused to channel this anger in a united confrontation against the Tory policies. Finally the anger could not be contained, and the tenants burst through the police cordon and into the council chamber, causing the meeting to be abandoned.

Now Renfrew Labour Party, the engineers District Committee, the TGWU at Talbot and ASTMS at Babcock have called on the

By Willie Griffin and Hugh Henry

councillors to reverse the 50% increase.

But the councillors cannot fight alone. The Labour group should now call a meeting with the Labour Party, trade unions and tenant organisations to organise a fightback around the demands of no rent or rates increases and no redundancies. Already local tenants' groups have initiated plans for a rent strike.

Most local Labour councillors are trade unionists and council tenants, and some were involved in the struggle of the low paid workers against the last Labour government. Some have said that they are prepared to fight, but they want a lead nationally.

Certainly there has been a lack of leadership provided from the National Executive of the Labour Party and the Scottish council. But this must not be used as an excuse not to resist the Tories locally. Labour councillors must recognise that they were elected with a mandate to protect the interests of the working people and that does not

include huge rent increases.

That a mood for a fightback does exist could be seen by the tenants' demonstration and a march a few days later on unemployment. This later demonstration was over 1,000 strong and included a large contingent of Talbot workers who face a threat of redundancy.

Called by Renfrewshire Against the Tories, (a committee which represents Paisley Trades Council, local Labour Parties and the LPYS), this demonstration was a real answer to those who are sceptical of workers fighting back against Thatcher's policies.

At the rally, local Labour MP Adam Adams, showed the political logic behind the Tories position: "The Tories are creating unemployment to break organised labour in Britain and there is a need to build a movement to oppose redundancies."

This was taken up by John Divers from the LPYS, who pointed out that with over 1 million people under the age of 25 without work it was essential for trade unions to resist all redundancies. Locally a Strathclyde shop stewards Committee would enormously assist a united struggle for jobs.

John linked the question of redundancies to the rent increase and got very loud applause when he stated "the council's position must be no cuts, no redundancies no rent and no rates increase. If the Labour council made a stand, this meeting demonstrates the

Labour Party Demonstration against Tories Saturday 21 February Assemble 11 am Blythwood Square, Glasgow

tremendous support they would achieve."

And such a lead would have a real galvanising effect in Dundee, Glasgow, and other local authorities in the struggle against the Tories.

Liverpool

The Labour Group in Liverpool will not be providing recruits for any new social-democratic party. At its latest meeting the following statement was signed by the leader, deputy leader, all group officers, and the vast majority of the group:

"The Liverpool Labour Party Group of Councillors recognise the democratic traditions of this party, which allows for free discussion of ideas. We condemn the Council for Social Democracy's declaration of its possible departure from the Labour Party, and its role in acting as a rallying point for party members who are applying to leave.

"We deprecate also their intention to stand candidates against official Labour Party candidates, if they leave and form an alternative party. We accept the new method of accepting the party leader as being the democratic decision of party conference.

"We recognise that this is the right, within the party constitution, for any party members to campaign for any alternative policy, on this or any other question. It is the intention of the undersigned to remain as members of the Labour Party, and will not seek membership of any proposed new party."

Where one in six is on the dole

Being unemployed in a town where one in six is on the dole is no fun and there's no sign of it getting better. In East Kilbride, the current official number of under-18s out of work is 421.

Recently, 200 vacancies were advertised by the civil service in the town for general clerical work, and the minimum qualifications

were two 'O'-levels. Two-and-a-half thousand young people from the West of Scotland applied, many of whom had way above the required qualifications!

January saw the biggest monthly jump in unemployment in Scotland for over 50 years. Scotland now has 286,602 jobless, which means virtually one in eight

[12.7%] on the dole.

Today's youth are looking for an alternative. "If you're 100% anti-Tory, then I'm 100% behind you," said one 14-year-old boy buying a copy of the 'Militant' from me.

By Jackie Galbraith (East Kilbride)

February 11-24

Use Week of Action to build LPYS

Bristol Tories will be getting a death certificate on 24 February. That's when this month's unemployment figures are announced and Bristol LPYS are handing them a certificate recording the loss of 2½ million jobs. Cause of death?—capitalism and the Tory government.

This demonstration is just one of scores that are being organised for the LPYS Week of Action, 14-21 February and the National Day of Against the Tories, Tuesday 24 February. Trade unions, youth clubs, etc. should be informed now of planned activities and asked to participate.

New and imaginative ways of putting across LPYS policies pay dividends. Some branches are organising a trial of Thatcher.

At the London LPYS weekend school at Folkestone last month, such a trial was held, resulting in Thatcher being sentenced to a manual job and housed in one of London's worst estates. But with a job and a house it shows that socialists are far more compassionate than she is to working people.

Another idea LPYS branches could take up is instead of having a lead-off on the cuts; assume you're the council that's overspent and

is threatened with having your rate support grant cut. At the weekend school, figures for such a council were given and some comrades played the role of advocating cuts, and helped provoke a lively discussion.

Taking the LPYS policies out to youth needs organising. In the Thames Valley area, two LPYS branches have hired a mini-bus for 21 February to "hit" different towns with a recruiting team for a couple of hours each.

In Neath determined efforts by comrades have resulted in 47 people attending the last LPYS meeting—and the branch was only established in November. Ten are already coming to LPYS conference at Easter.

In Scotland LPYS branches have produced 1,000 special posters and 5,000 leaflets for the Glasgow demonstration on 21 February. No doubt many LPYS branches in the Northern and Yorkshire areas will follow Bridlington LPYS's example of filling a coach to take to this demonstration.

If all comrades participate in an intensive week of campaigning, followed up by lively meetings and socials, other branches will soon be able to hold meetings like Neath. The opportunities for increased growth in the LPYS have not been brighter.

By Kevin Ramage (Chairman LPYS)

"We know capitalism doesn't work"

"I know what unemployment means—my dad is facing redundancy after 17 years' work, the small rag-trade place my mum works in is probably going to close, and the TV shop where my sister works—one of the jobs there has got to go."

John Considine, Tower Hamlets' delegate to last weekend's London Labour Party Young Socialists' Conference, was expressing the disaster facing youth in London today.

The conference, with 56 branches represented and about 250 attending on both days, was the biggest ever. It reiterated support for the ideas of the LPYS nationally, with 'Militant' supporters Kevin Ramage and Sue Kohn being elected to the National Committee.

In his conference speech Tony Benn showed how the

right-wing social democrats have no answers to the economic crisis. He explained, "I know that capitalism doesn't work—I spent most of my life trying to make it work, and failed." He explained that only socialism offered a real answer.

Summing up the conference, the outgoing chairman Martin Elvin outlined the tasks ahead. "We must go from this, our best ever conference, out on to the streets, into the shopping centres, into the schools and factories, and recruit the thousands of youth who are looking for socialist policies to fight the Tories. We must do everything we can to see the Tories are driven out of County Hall and Westminster, and Labour is returned, committed to socialist policies to transform society."

New "Save Jobs—Sack the Tories" leaflet available. Printed in red and white, with room to add details of local LPYS events from Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, PO Box 104, London E9 5TP. Cost £5 per 1,000 [plus P&P].

USDAW - SUPPORT CONFERENCE DECISION

The role USDAW played in securing victory for the 40-30-30 proposal at the recent LP conference may have come as a great surprise to some people in the labour movement, not least amongst the right wing of the USDAW leadership itself!

At the November meeting, the USDAW executive decided in an unprecedented move, to propose, as an amendment, the 40-30-30 arrangement.

There are various reasons for this. Some members of the executive, knowing elections were pending, supported this option hopefully to undercut their left opponents. No doubt others believed the option had no chance of being passed, and so supported it hoping that it would fall, enabling them to support whichever proposal the right-wing of the Labour Party subsequently came up with.

However, some supported it because having just made a special donation to the Labour Party of £20,000 to help its acute financial problem, they believed that the unions should be given the major share.

At the January meeting of the executive council, the proposal was re-affirmed but by this time it was clear that the main right-wing proposal would be the 50-25-25 option of the GMWU.

It was decided to vote for the USDAW proposal until it was voted down, and then swing behind the GMWU option.

However, this intransigent position led to the right-wing's undoing. Other

By
George Williamson

(USDAW, London Metropolitan, branch)

left-wing union delegations at conference (such as NUPE) ensured that USDAW's amendment subsequently won.

Since the conference, many supporters of the right-wing grouping in USDAW, the Progressive Labour Group, are clearly horrified by the result of the conference and are now openly talking of reversing the decision in October.

What irony! The Labour Party was formed by the trade unions; it has historically been the political wing of the trade unions; it is funded by the unions; yet here are some trade union leaders backing off from democratic control of the Party! The truth is they do not want this position because they wouldn't know what to do with the power placed in their hands.

There must be no reversal of the conference decision! It is imperative that all supporters of the Broad Left mobilise maximum support in the union for the Labour Party conference decision. By passing resolutions giving full support to the conference decision at branch and divisional level to the Executive Council, the leadership will take notice, and the matter will be properly raised with the union's rank and file activists. The matter will undoubtedly be discussed at the union's coming Annual Delegate Meeting.

The right wing have shown they are not interested in Party democracy. Now is the time, by supporting the Broad Left candidates, to put representatives



The decisive vote at Labour's Wembley conference—the ranks of the Party and trade unions will not take kindly to attempts to gerrymander the new electoral college

on the executive who genuinely believe in having a mass democratic socialist Labour Party.

These are very important reasons for voting for Audrey Wise for president, for supporting the supporters of the Broad Left for

Executive and Divisional Councils, and electing Broad Left candidates to the Standing Orders Committee and Labour Party and TUC delegations.

Like the Labour Party, USDAW desperately needs a fighting, campaigning

leadership, a leadership which believes in defending and improving living standards and jobs, and a leadership committed to fighting for the early return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

FASCIST EXPOSED

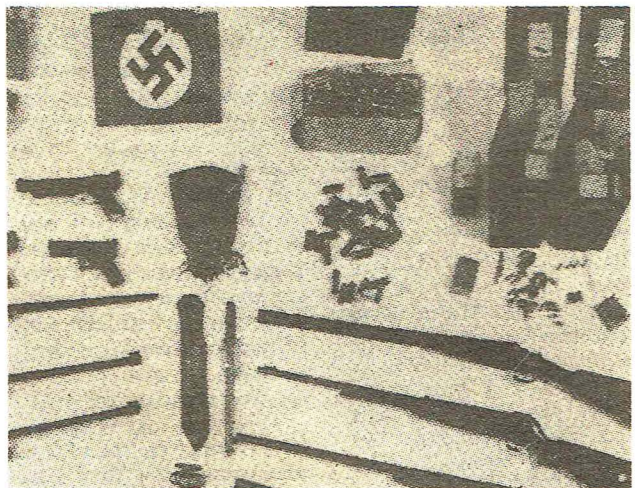
Socialists do not have any great confidence in the judicial system and the capitalist courts for dealing with the menace of fascism.

But no socialist in the West Midlands could hide a certain satisfaction at the imprisonment of three local fascist thugs, on arms charges, arson and 'incitement to racial hatred.'

The trial exposed a British Movement gang of Nazi fanatics—unbalanced, dangerous and one even a sexual pervert. This sordid crew included amongst their hobbies strutting around in SS regalia and collecting pictures of Hitler and Nazi flags.

Of course the British Movement achieved some notoriety in Birmingham in the past, when former Labour MP Brian Walden's agent Peter Mariner, was exposed as a member. Mariner emerged again at the trial, only to be taken away by police after a scuffle with a photographer.

But with all the splits amongst the extreme right, if other groups try to portray a more respectable image than the neo-Nazi British Movement, then it should be noted that Roderick Roberts (sentenced to 7 years) and Harvey Stock (suspended sentence) were ex-National Front members, while Harold Simcox, a Front member and one of their parliamentary candidates, was found in possession of arms and ammunition.



Part of the British Movement armoury of rifles, automatic pistols and ammunition

The votes for these fascist groups in elections throughout the West Midlands have plummeted, so more and more the groups have been reduced to just the thugs, who seem particularly attracted by the British Movement. Roberts was reported by the 'Birmingham Post' to have admitted "he was frustrated at the lack of success at putting his views across." The labour movement should be aware of the threat these vicious bully boys can be to small meetings or individuals.

This case developed from a smoke bomb attack carried out by Stock and Roberts on the Birmingham Careers Centre, which was daubed with the slogan 'Jobs for Whites'. When police raided their homes they discovered thousands of obscenely racist stickers, and eventually the arms cache as well.

But why has the state machine descended with

such a heavy hand? After all the capitalist class and their state deliberately handed power over to Hitler, to smash the German workers' organisations.

However, the British bosses at the moment have no need of armed fascist lunatics roaming the streets. In fact they are more trouble than they are worth. Their violent provocations can stir up too much activity among the working class and the black population. The meaning of the fairly stiff sentences was to deter others from going too far.

But this must not let the labour movement ignore the potential danger the fascists could present in the future. The lengths to which they are prepared to go are obvious if they are already amassing arms. The campaign against racialism and fascism must be continued throughout the Labour Party and trade unions.

Stop racist attacks

In the early hours of October 29 an Asian home in Hackney was set on fire by racist attackers. Luckily the Singh family, which includes 5 young children were out at the time.

For the last 6 months, the Singhs have been the victims of racial harassment—they had in fact received threatening phone calls before the fire.

So much damage was caused to the house, that the family now live in their kitchen, the only room not badly charred. They spend cold nights in fear of further attacks.

Despite the Hackney Council's environmental health officers declaring the house unfit for habitation, the Council Housing Department refuse to rehouse the family! Hackney Asian Association held a picket of 50 people, supported by the LPYS, at last week's Council meeting, to protest at the treatment of this family.

The Council leadership were pressurised into meeting the family to discuss rehousing them. At the time of writing, it is still uncertain whether any action will really be taken.

It should be the duty of a Labour Council to rehouse all families living in such decrepit conditions. This should particularly apply to those families who have been the victims of vicious racial attacks, and who still live in fear.

This is not an isolated case. There are many more families who've been on the receiving end of racial violence. The labour movement must take this up as a test case. The Singhs should be rehoused into decent accommodation. Local Labour Party branches should instruct their councillors to take action to bring this about.

The local labour movement should make sure that racial violence is not allowed to continue—that black workers have adequate protection of their homes and their lives.

By Kevin Fernandez

(Hackney North and Stoke Newington LPYS)

LPYS PUBLIC MEETING

'Fight Racist Attacks!'
Tuesday 10th February 8pm
Hackney Labour & Trades Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, E8

Militant Pamphlet FASCISM
—what it is and how to fight it
By
Leon Trotsky

Price 50p plus 15p postage from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

WARE THE PAPERS GO

Ware, a small town with population of 20,000, is in a traditionally Tory area—it was once noted for having the lowest unemployment in Europe!

This blank description certainly does not reflect the response that the local YS received during its 'day of action' last Saturday.

In two hours, we hit record sales of 35 papers, with a petition of 200 names, and over 1,000 leaflets given out.

The enormous anger of people was reflected with young people shouting "Maggie Out" as they walked passed.

In the afternoon, a public

meeting was organised, with over 20 people attending.

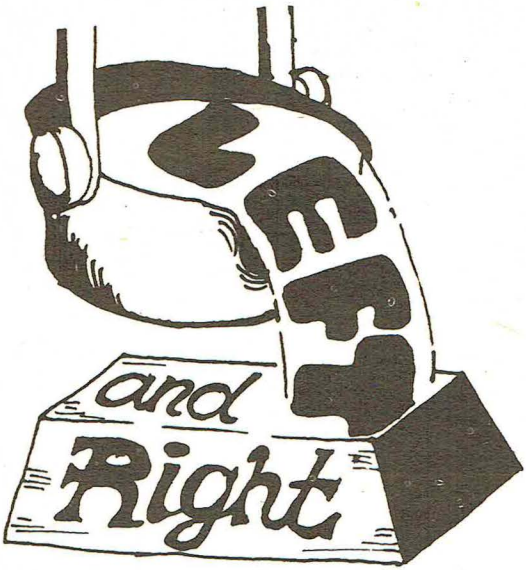
A group of local youths attended the meeting, relating their own experiences of no jobs, poor housing, and no facilities for young people.

At the end of the meeting one comrade sold his whole collection of badges, and leaflets to join the YS were demanded.

To end the day, a social was organised and a raffle raised £3 for the Militant fighting fund.

By Janice Clare

(Ware and Hertford LPYS)



Readers wanting to find out more about the 'policies' of the 'Gang of Four' may be interested in a new book called 'Face the Future'. One reviewer commented that "Dr Owen's writing on the all important question of economic policy...is perhaps the least clear part of the book and the one which offers least practical suggestions for new policies." Want to find out more about the thoughts of Dr Owen? It'll only cost you £12.50 to buy. Clearly a book aimed at the millions of 'ordinary Labour voters'!

Unemployment, says Kent's director of social services Rev. Nicholas Stacey, could be a blessing in disguise. Preaching a sermon at Canterbury Cathedral [he has two jobs himself] the Reverend declared: "We need to take people from the labour market and give them more creative and exciting lives. One way would be a national social service whereby young people could work with less fortunate people"—like all the rest of the two and a half million unemployed. It's like getting the hungry to feed the starving—so they know there are others worse off....

The new pound coin won't be wearing too many holes in your pocket. For one thing, it won't be in there very long: a pound today will buy what you got for 29 pence in 1971. The Royal Mint think the new coin should 'command respect', but you're not even likely to know it's there. It will be lighter than the current ten pence piece and smaller than a five pence.

Firms with coin-operated machines are, of course, delighted at the prospect. Petrol isn't likely to come down to £1 gallon for convenience, but there are cigarette machines, electricity meters, even bubble gum slots....Rest assured, someone will find inflation's silver, or in this case gold alloy, lining.

In this column last week we reported that Mrs Thatcher's old firm, Storey Brothers, is being forced to the wall. When asked to comment, the directors were unwilling to say how much they thought her policies were to blame. The advertising manager was more forthright: "Quite frankly, I wish she was still here and could be made redundant herself." Who said managers were always wrong?

Gloom covers British manufacturing industry, with profits, output and investment at a new low. But occasionally a chink of light appears. 'Engineering Today', the industrialists' trade paper, produces a list every year of the companies which make the most profit. Proud winners this year were United Scientific Ltd., with a 30.9% return on capital employed. Their useful trade is in armaments.

Next come Ingall Holdings, a short head behind on 30.4%. Not surprisingly their main business—components for axles and gear boxes—has suffered a bit due to the problems in the motor industry. But the best entrepreneurs never give up. The company's profits come from a big boom in their secondary line—coffin handles!



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Plunder from the Thunderer

'The Times,' the Thunderer, the most prestigious paper in Britain, is read by the 'top people' in company board-rooms, the Stock Exchange, the courts, and Cabinet offices.

By Roger Shrivs

It is ironic that this paper, the opinion former for the whole ruling class, should find its 'salvation' in Rupert Murdoch—proprietor of the 'Sun' and the 'News of the World.'

If Murdoch can get the agreement of the unions within three weeks, his News International group will control 'The Times', 'Sunday Times' and the 'Times' education and literary supplements.

He already owns a large string of papers and broadcasting stations in the USA and in Australia where his latest attempted purchase is being opposed on the grounds of monopoly.

One of his major concerns is to get extra printing capacity for the 'Sun' and 'News of the World.' With a new printing plant in East London being built, a move of offices to the 'Times' building would leave their present premises free for redevelopment.

Murdoch's rise from owning one evening paper in Adelaide to a vast empire has not only resulted in some very tough deals. It has also changed the nature of many journals.

The liberal 'quality' paper, 'The Australian', changed from sympathy for Labour to a vicious campaign to oust Gough Whitlam in the mid-70s, causing a journalists' strike in the process. The 'New York Post' changed from 'liberal' to pro-Reagan views.

In Britain the 'Sun' which he bought for £¼ million to give his 'News of the World' press some work to do midweek, changed from the right-wing Labour successor to the 'Daily Herald' to one of Thatcher's most loyal supporters.

If News International take over, the first casualties will be redundant workers at Times Newspapers. Murdoch estimates redundancies will be 'considerable.' He thinks he has the unions over a barrel as 'Times' workers are under notice.

He has tried to blackmail trade unionists by saying that if agreement is not

reached in three weeks, then "the bets are off." The print unions must fight these threats, which are the thin end of a very big wedge the newspaper proprietors want to put under jobs and conditions in Fleet Street.

Unfortunately, Joe Wade, general secretary of the National Graphical Association, has typified the union leaders' response by saying he is 'delighted' that Murdoch is taking over. In the same way, union leaders in the motor industry saw it as deliverance when Edwardes took over at British Leyland. Murdoch, like Edwardes has a reputation as a job-slashing boss.

Workers' jobs are under risk—but why have many representatives of the ruling class also expressed misgivings about Murdoch's take-over bid? The qualms about the owner of the 'Sun' taking over 'The Times' are largely hypocritical. If the proprietors of the up-market papers took over the 'Sun' they would maintain the same saleable mixture of sex, sensationalism and political drivel.

They condescendingly reckon that is sufficient for the 'masses'. For themselves it is different. They want a reliable, informative paper for all layers of the ruling class. Murdoch, they fear, is a maverick who



might try to impose his own viewpoints.

There would be enormous pressure for him to respect the impeccable capitalist wisdom enshrined in 'The Times' editorial staff and its directors.

The national directors are supposed to safeguard 'standards'. All of them are Lords—even the token retired trade union leader, Sid Greene (formerly of the NUR) has a peerage.

There are merchant bankers: one of them Lord Keith, is also vice president of the Engineering Employers Federation and instigator of the Rolls Royce lockouts in the 1979 engineering strike. The moral pressure to conform will be great.

If two papers merge and the combined circulation is over half a million, the case is supposed to be referred to the Monopolies Commission. This one won't. Not that they would have had much to worry about. Out of ten cases considered only one, the take over of a very small paper in Somerset, was stopped!

The other firms in the running to take on the 'Times' would have been no better though. A national newspaper is a costly venture—it can't be started on printworkers' redundancy money. Apart from the cost of the purchase there are the costs of paying off the

sacked workers, introducing new technology and making it a 'viable', i.e. profitable concern.

All the bidders considered were hugely rich, as indeed were the Thomson organisation who floated their newspapers on a sea of oil.

The Rothermere-owned Associated Newspapers repeated the offer made in the 1978-9 lockout, like Murdoch to provide capacity for their paper, the 'Daily Mail'. Atlantic Richfield, oil baron owners of the 'Observer,' the "ugly face of capitalism", Lonrho and Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press were the other giants bidding for the prize.

Their criteria—lots of money to sink into Times Newspaper, experience of Fleet Street and of dealing with (i.e. clobbering) the unions. Murdoch fills the bill as well as any.

Our criteria are different. Why should any of the four or five Fleet Street moguls decide what 'news' and views to spread in society? To protect jobs and gain a real freedom for the press the labour movement must campaign for the nationalisation of press facilities on the basis of workers' control and management.

Access to the press could then be on the basis of support for ideas and organisations in society—not on which cut-throat merchant can most afford to buy it.



LABOUR CAN'T FIGHT BACK FROM THE MIDDLE GROUND

TUC march against cuts last year

Coventry District Labour Party's policy conference, to be held on 7/8 February, will be considering the prospect of £3 million cuts in council spending, a 40% rate increase, and partial rent strikes by Council tenants. Dave Nellist, Chairman, Coventry South East Labour Party, explains the decisions conference must face:—

The detailed examination prepared by eight working groups, of the major areas of Coventry's Labour Council policy (including social services, education, housing and finance) present the policy conference with a stark decision: either build a campaign uniting tenants, public service unions and other trade unionists behind the banner of total Labour Party opposition to Tory cuts—or take responsibility for allowing Coventry's working people to suffer unprecedented hardships in 1981.

Coventry, once the boom town in the industrial heartland of the West Midlands, now has an unemployment rate of more than one in eight. Unemployment in the Coventry 'travel to work' area is 31,475—vacancies in the area have plummeted to 301. There are one hundred and four workers for each notified vacancy!

The West Midlands Chamber of Commerce produced a survey for the third quarter of 1980 showing that 74% of Coventry firms were working below full capacity. In Coventry and surrounding Warwickshire an estimated 50,000 people are on short-time working.

The social consequences of family break-ups, poverty and suicides are likely to increase as a result of capitalist decline. Working people will be forced to look for increased assistance from our social services—but the Labour council propose to accept the Tory demands for £3 million in cuts.

The lack of a fighting approach by the Labour Council has provoked growing opposition over the last year. Ten Labour councillors were kicked out of the Council Group six months ago for voting against a 10p increase in the price of school meals.

One month after the Labour Party's National Executive ordered their re-instatement, twelve councillors (with one more abstaining) voted against a Labour Group's decision to make an interim increase in Council house rents averaging £2.50. A decisive vote of the January District Party (50 to 28) gave full support to the "twelve rebels".

The December District

Labour Party meeting backed a resolution from Coventry SE CLP opposing cuts, rent or rate rises. It called for a conference of tenants' associations, shop stewards representing local authority and other trade unions, and the Labour Party. This conference should plan a campaign including industrial action to fight the Tories.

United action to defeat Tories

Coventry's Labour Council will increase rents for council houses by an average of £2.50 on February 16th—in direct contravention of decisions of the District Party in December and January.

At least three tenants' associations (Upper Stoke, Spon End and Chapelfields)



Photo: MILITANT

have so far supported the call from Coventry Tenants' Federation for a rent strike against the increases.

The Council's determination to proceed along this path, will inflict additional hardship and further alienate the 26,000 families living in council property from supporting the Labour Party.

Rate rises of between 40% and 50% are predicted for April. The idea of higher rate rises to prevent cuts in council jobs and services, though not the policy of the District Labour Party, still retains some support amongst public service trades unionists and Party members.

But with two major local

firms already threatening redundancies as a response to higher rate bills, there is a danger that working-class rate-payers, encouraged by Tory propaganda, will become increasingly suspicious of 'favouritism' for council employees, resentment which could open up a fatal division.

The only alternative open to the District Policy Conference is to build a bridge of common action between tenants, public service and other trade unionists—opposing cuts, rent or rates increases and fighting to kick out the Tories.

We could mobilise the sympathy and active support of working people if a fighting

campaign pointed the finger of blame where it belongs; with councillors explaining that of the £28.5 million paid in council house rents and rates, this year, £23.8 million in interest charges goes straight into the profits of the big banks and financiers.

Nationalisation of the banks and finance houses, the cancellation of council debts and loans at a nominal rate of interest, could halve all rents and rates in Coventry, and still leave nearly £10 million each year to renovate schools, build new homes for the 13,000 on the waiting list and create jobs for the unemployed.

Artificial divisions, fostered

by the Tories, between rent and ratepayer, between local authority and industrial workers, could be bridged by a socialist campaign to force out the Tories and elect a Labour government pledged to socialist policies.

Why cuts?

The Tory government has made savage reductions in the Rate Support Grant to all local councils—and at the same time, provided money for tax reductions to the rich. The June 1979 budget tax cuts gave a married couple on £60 a week a 4% increase in take-home pay. A couple on £1,900 got a 77% a week increase.

The Tory programme is Robin Hood in reverse.

The banks and finance houses have a stranglehold over Coventry Council—as they do over all local authority finance.

In 1979, Coventry had outstanding loans amounting to £214.9 million. £35 million was paid off the debt during 1979/80, (£11 million repayment and £23.8 million in interest charges) yet by March 1980, the outstanding loans had grown to £224.5 million—equal to £662.89 for every man, woman and child in the city. The interest paid last year alone is eight times the cuts the Council now propose to implement.

"It is our task to start the process of building this movement now."

- ★ No cuts in jobs or services
- ★ No rent or rate rises
- ★ No sale of council houses
- ★ For a labour movement conference to plan industrial action against cuts and the Tories
- ★ For a mass Labour Party committed to the socialist transformation of society

HOW TO STOP THE TORIES

The Tories' attitude, and the future they hold out for working people, was well expressed by the Chairman of the West Midlands Police Committee, Councillor Ronald Wooton. He said that "candy floss" spending on education and social services must be cut to pay for extra policemen, to deal particularly with industrial disputes and political demonstrations.

The cuts in council finance have to be actively fought. Our weapon in this fight can only be an informed and mobilised working people, particularly through the trade union movement and the Labour Party.

The present campaign of the Tories is part of its general offensive against working people using anti-trade union legislation, redundancies in publicly-owned industries and so on. These have to be fought together, using the same means: industrial action, mass demonstrations and non-cooperation.

The major objection of the right wing in the Party to such a campaign is that the Tories

would appoint their own commissioners to take over the Council and implement the cuts if Labour refused to.

Aside from demonstrating lack of confidence in working people, this view over-emphasises the power available to a commissioner. If NUPE locked the Council House gates or NALGO refused to provide any information—how could any commissioner function?

The real answer to the question is contained in the concluding paragraphs of the Finance Working Party's report to the Policy conference:

"...to answer this we have only to look at the last Tory government of 1970/74. In 1971 the Tory government introduced the Industrial Relations Act and attempted to force the trade union movement to register under its terms.

"At this time, some within the movement argued that it was futile to resist the Tory law and if unions didn't register and appear before the Industrial Relations Court, the Tories would implement their proposals anyway. What

events in fact showed was that the Tories' laws, courts and commissioners were completely powerless before the organised strength of the trade union movement.

"In July 1972, when the Industrial Relations Act jailed 5 dockers, it was the Tories themselves who had to produce the Official Solicitor, like a rabbit out of a hat, to free them.

"If mass industrial action, locally and nationally, was mobilised against the cuts, and a policy of mass non-cooperation with any commissioner appointed to by-pass local councils was carried out, the Tories would be unable to implement their measures..."

"...The 120,000 marchers in Liverpool on November 29 1980 at the Labour Party's unemployment demonstration gave an indication of the mood that has already arisen. Coventry District Labour Party and the City Council should demand that a national campaign and policies, as outlined above, be taken up to provide an alternative to the Tories.

**"Stop the Cuts
—A Socialist Programme
to fight the cuts'
New 'Militant' pamphlet
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THE OBSERVER BACKS ITS RIGHT-WING FRIENDS

The editorial in the 'Observer' on January 25 squealed with anguish at the result of the Labour Party special conference, which marked a great step forward for the rank and file of the labour movement.

Like the rest of the kept, capitalist press, it demanded that the left in the Labour Party be stopped, otherwise, it admitted, in the next elections with capitalism in a continuing crisis "the country will turn to a left dominated Labour Party."

But in making their demands to Labour leader Mr Foot, they called on him to "tackle head-on people like the Militant Tendency, whose belief in parliamentary democracy is a sham." In the letter below, which has been sent to the 'Observer', editor of 'Militant' Peter Taaffe replies to this remark:

"The Observer" claims to uphold democracy, particularly "freedom of the press". Yet after a direct attack on 'Militant' in its editorial, this champion of "press freedom" has allowed us only a token right of reply, printing our answering letter with crucial points cut out. The deleted parts are shown in the full letter printed below. To add insult to injury, they repeated the attack on 'Militant' in last week's 'Observer'. Their editor's cuts [Connor Cruise O'Brien, the Observer's "Editor-in-Chief" was formerly right-wing Labour MP in the Irish Parliament] show that they are not prepared to print out comments on their role. They do not want their readers to see our full reply. They are not interested in printing the truth. So much for press freedom!

Dear Sir

The 'Observer' (25 January) claims that 'Militant's' "belief in Parliamentary democracy is a sham." Yet no evidence is produced to justify this charge. You merely echo your right-wing Labour friends.

'Militant', unlike the capitalists and their press, unequivocally supports all democratic rights, the right to strike, freedom of assembly, a free press, and above all the right to vote. We have called for a Labour government to introduce into Parliament an enabling bill to nationalise the 200 monopolies and introduce a socialist plan of production.

In a socialist Britain, pro-capitalist parties like the Tories and the Liberals would

have every right to exist, to fight for their ideas, and to form an alternative government.

But the undemocratic ownership of the press by a handful of millionaires would, of course, be ended. All press facilities would be nationalised under democratic workers' control and management. Then all parties, in proportion to their support, would be allowed access to the press.

What could be more democratic than this?

It is the capitalists and their press, including the 'Observer', whose belief in democracy is a "sham".

We do not have freedom of the press in Britain. Five millionaires, soon to be four,

control most of the press. They are overwhelmingly biased against Labour and particularly its left wing. They spew out the kind of poison against the labour movement as shown by your editorial.

It is the capitalists and their servants in the press who will challenge democratic rights once they see that their system is threatened. The 'Observer' and other capitalist newspapers cheer on the Tories in Britain in their attack on the trade unions, while hypocritically denouncing limitations on the trade unions in Poland.

Similar distortions are shown in your treatment of the issue of democracy in the labour movement. You claim that the Labour Party conference delegates were against the idea of "one man, one vote."

On the contrary, the electoral college allows for the full participation of all active Labour Party members in the decisions of the Labour Party itself. Every member can attend their branch and elect delegates to the General Management Committee.

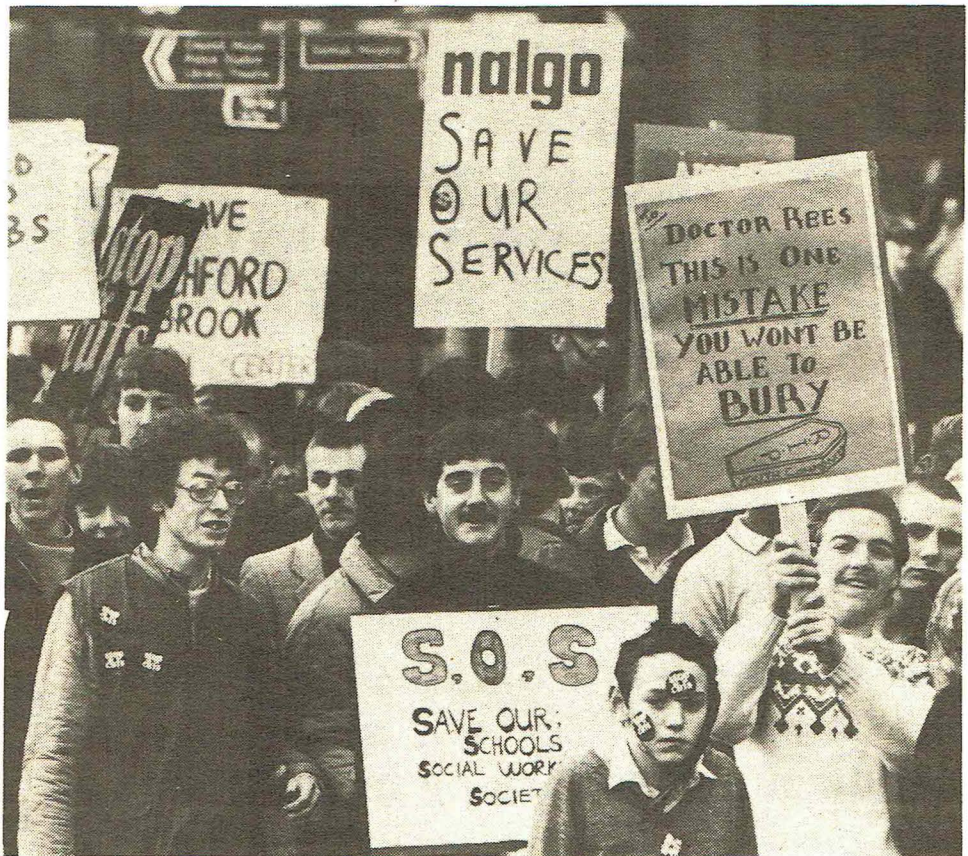
It is those who take the trouble to go to the polling booth who elect the government. Why not the same rules for political parties?

The right wing want to dissolve the Labour Party into the Labour voters. They want a parliamentary fan club and not a critically aware and participating rank and file. Far better, in their view, to have passive, dues-paying members who can be manipulated by the mass media, which in the last week has clearly shown that it favours Labour's right wing as opposed to the left.

Your attacks on 'Militant' and particularly your ridiculous claims about our opposition to "democracy," will cut no ice with the rank and file of the Labour Party.

The right wing have lost the argument on policy and programme. That is why they are preparing to stab the labour movement in the back and form a Social Democratic Party. However, despite any temporary victories they will not succeed. From the present struggle can come a revitalised Labour Party determined to implement socialist policies.

Yours fraternally
P. Taaffe (Editor)



Part of the huge demonstration in Solihull against Tory cuts. Dr Wynn Rees is Tory leader of Solihull council.

Social Democrats still voting on Labour's executive

The discussions at last week's meeting of Labour's National Executive Committee were reported in the most sensational terms by the capitalist press and television, which blatantly sided with the right wing.

The reported discussions, however, raise some disturbing issues for Party members.

Most serious is the continued membership of the NEC by Shirley Williams and Tom Bradley. Both, it seems, are prepared to stab Labour in the back. Neither has been prepared to deny their support for the formation of a new "social-democratic" party.

Yet they sat in last week's NEC meeting voting on important decisions affecting the future of the Party. On at least one issue, their votes were crucial.

By 14 votes to 13, the NEC referred back details relating to the mandatory re-selection of MPs. Shirley Williams supported further cuts in Party expenditure.

Mrs Williams also intervened in the discussion on a declaration calling for support for the return of a Labour government, but when it came to the vote she abstained on this.

Mrs Williams' reported comments could only be described as showing contempt for the Party's membership. The Wembley conference, according to her, was "a travesty". If the NEC was able to have control of the election Manifesto, she said, its programme would be "unobtainable".

When asked about her future and the Council for Social Democracy, she said she refused to answer any questions until they were also put to the 'Militant'.

However, the NEC has already sent a long list of questions to all groups in the Party, and (with the exception of the Social Democratic Alliance which has declared that it will stand candidates against Labour) the NEC has accepted the replies, including 'Militant's'.

Tony Saunois (LPYS Representative) was apparently told by Mrs Williams that he was lucky not to be sued for libel over a recent article of his published in 'The Times' (24 January).

She objected to the reference to millions of pounds of big-business backing for the formation of a new party. Yet at the time of Labour's Annual Conference last October, reports of multi-million pound funding for Roy Jenkins and the "social democrats" were blazoned in the capitalist press—without any denial from these right wingers.

"Frankly," Mrs Williams concluded, "I don't know whether I'll stay in the Party or not." She attacked the NEC for not being even-handed in its treatment of left-wing and right-wing unions.

Her evidence for this claim? She also conveniently ignores the methods used by the right wing when they had a majority on the NEC.

Fifth column

Mrs Williams' comment was presumably prompted by the NEC's earlier decision (16-8) to go ahead with an enquiry into the method of trade union affiliation. This arose from a call from Bermondsey CLP regarding the increased number of delegates recently appointed by the EETPU.

At this NEC meeting, the right wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party were clearly determined to try and thwart the Party, firstly

by cutting its expenditure and secondly by weakening the effect of mandatory re-selection.

There was a move to introduce a re-selection procedure which would allow a short-list of one (i.e. the sitting MP). Unfortunately, this was backed by a number of left-wingers like Neil Kinnock, Judith Hart, Joan Lester and Renee Short. Eric Heffer also argued for a short-list of one, although he voted against the reference back.

This procedure will not prevent a CLP from re-selecting its MP, but in some cases it will prevent delegates from hearing other candidates at the selection conference before making a decision.

The decision to cut the various budgets further (carried by 19 votes to 7) was largely initiated by the right wing. Referring to the party's financial problems, they proposed a cut-back in its activity and structure. Unfortunately, some of the arguments have won the support of left wingers.

The approach to this question should clearly have been on ways and means of raising money necessary to meet all the requirements of the Party. With bold campaigning against the Tories it would be possible to raise all the cash needed.

Labour Party members must be on their guard. Those preparing to split from the Party but remaining on the National Executive as a "fifth column", must be challenged.

The key to this is a fighting campaign against the Tories—and against any of their political shadows who may emerge during the next few months.

This would enable the party to build up its membership and funds. The NEC must now be urged by CLPs and affiliated unions to launch such a campaign.

MILITANT PAMPHLET

The History of the Labour Party

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STRUGGLE OR STARVE!

By Bob Wylie

Do you have the impression that the 1930s was a period of history lacking in struggle?

Did workers in Britain meekly accept the horrors and privations associated with two or three million on the dole? Were they all waiting to be marched off in droves to the battlegrounds of world war II?

Have you heard the case that the 1930's "prove" there will never be a revolution in Britain?

Well, the 300 pages of **Wal Hannington's "Unemployed Struggles 1919-1936"** tell a different story.

Hannington's history of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement describes the sacrifice, determination and unbreakable spirit of those who went on the hunger marches, of bitter conflicts between the marchers and forces of the establishment. These conflicts brought hysterical denunciations from the capitalists' press; and physical assault by their police. But the NUWM's marches and demonstrations, in localities all over Britain, drew support totalling hundreds of thousands of workers.

On occasions, the clashes went well beyond the realm of "civil disobedience" and raised the spectre of revolution.

The 1930's is the decade that the ruling class in Britain want to be forgotten. Conventional history seems intent on presenting the period as little more than a decade of high unemployment which preceded the second world war.

Consequently, it is important for present-day activists in the labour movement to be informed of the struggles of the 1930's and, drawing on an understanding of these events, to arm themselves with strategies for today's battles.

THE NUWM

The National Unemployed Workers' Movement was formed in 1922 and co-ordinated the first national hunger march in Britain in the same year. From that date until the end of the 1930s, the NUWM's activities became a focus for the protest of the unemployed against the poverty, the indignities and inequalities they suffered.

By 1929 the NUWM had a membership of 10,000 and this grew to 37,000 by 1931, peaking at 100,000 by the end of 1932. At this stage the NUWM encompassed between 350 and 400 local branches.

By the time that the NUWM wound up its affairs in 1939, it had represented thousands of workers at appeals to the Public Assistance Committees throughout Britain, organised seven national hunger marches and innumerable local demonstrations, and played a decisive part in forcing several governments to change their policies.

Most of the hunger marches had 2,000 to 2,500 marchers taking part. But their activities embraced thousands of others in the towns and villages they walked through. Without exception, they were met in London by mass demonstrations of tens of thousands.

The local demonstrations varied greatly, although local marches of 20-30,000 were commonplace. On occasion, however, the NUWM succeeded in building huge followings for local marches.

The "Guardian" 3 February, 1935 reported that the NUWM was influential in moving 300,000 to demonstrate in South Wales, whilst on 9 October 1931, 150,000 were mobilised to march in Glasgow against MacDonald's National government.

There are many issues in the history of the NUWM worthy of consideration. Amongst the most important are the consistently serious attacks made on NUWM marches by the police, the relationship between the NUWM and the established trade unions, the politics of the NUWM, and the influence of the Communist Party of Great Britain on the development of the movement.

THE NUWM AND THE POLICE

Reading the pages of Wal Hannington's book makes one thing clear: the boldness and pre-meditated brutality of the police forces, who continually harassed the hunger marches and frequently attacked the demonstrations of the unemployed.

By the end of 1931 over fifty towns and cities had seen major disturbances as the police clashed with unemployed demonstrators.

"On 1st October," Hannington relates, "50,000 Glasgow unemployed mobilised at Glasgow Green; the police tried to ban the demonstrations, and as the ranks were being formed for a march through the city centre, mounted and foot police charged into the multitude of

unarmed workers... The fighting spirit of the Glasgow workers had been stirred up by the unprovoked attack and they fought their way out of the Green on to the main road; the battle raged for hours, shop windows were smashed and extensive damage was done and not until after midnight did the struggle come to an end."

"In Manchester," he writes, "80,000 unemployed did battle with the police on 7th October [1931] when they attempted to march to the town hall. It was one of the fiercest fights that had ever been seen in Lancashire. Fire hoses poured tons of water into the crowd in an effort to disperse them. Mounted police repeatedly charged with their sword batons, clubbing down old and young. The resistance of the unemployed was such that the fighting lasted almost three hours."

In the last three months of 1931 there were serious clashes in the West and East ends of London, Bolton, Derby, Blackburn, Cardiff, Coventry, Liverpool, Wallsend, Leeds, Manchester, Stoke on Trent, Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Port Glasgow and Glasgow.

On many occasions the unemployed fought with determined spirit against police assault and took clear measures to prepare themselves for the likelihood of attack.

In Glasgow on 24 September 1931 an unemployed demonstration was guarded by 500 men who marched as a defence force carrying heavy sticks. However, there were numerous times when the severity of police attack overwhelmed the unemployed and serious casualties resulted.

In Birkenhead in September 1932, the police carried out what amounted to pogroms in the working class districts of the town. The severity of the police terror can be gauged from the fact that after the night of 18 September 1932 over one hundred workers were taken to hospital with severe injuries, including cases of broken pelvis, fractured ribs, broken arms and legs.

One woman graphically describes the terror: "When I tried to prevent them hitting

my husband they commenced to baton me all over arms and body; as they hit my husband and me the children were screaming and the police shouted: 'Shut up you parish-fed bastards!' My eldest daughter, aged 19, also tried to protect me and her father. She too was batoned."

The ruling class of the day must have been seriously concerned about the activities of the NUWM to have its marches and demonstrations so consistently and ruthlessly suppressed.

The ferocity and frequency of the police attacks are also instructive about the general social weight of the organised workers in society. The police in Britain today could never undertake such systematic physical suppression of a section of the labour movement, for fear of arousing the power of its twelve million strong membership.

That is not to say that the actions of the police in the 1930s will not recur in the years ahead, but the pattern and severity of the attacks could only take place in a Britain on the brink of revolution, where clashes between police and workers reflected a life-and-death struggle over the future of capitalism.

However, whilst the four to five million strong trade union movement of the 1930's was much weaker than the powerful movement of today, an additional factor which governed police tactics was the isolation that existed between the NUWM and the trade unions.

THE NUWM AND THE TRADE UNIONS

The role that the leadership of the trade union movement played in the later 1920s and 1930s was governed by the experience of the 1926 general strike. The defeat of the strike pushed the TUC leadership far to the right. They embarked on a policy of class-collaboration to prevent the frightening experience of working-class power, shown in the general strike, recurring.

This collaboration took the form of acceptance of the

Mond/Turner agreement, drawn up after the strike. It established negotiations between the leaders of government, big business and the TUC as a central feature of trade union policy. Consequently, the TUC general council rose above its membership and arbitrated on wage claims and conditions in league with the bosses.

"Mondism", combined with the coming to power of the National government in 1931, and its subsequent re-election, had the effect of dampening the struggle between the capitalists and workers.

In 1931 and 1932 there were over five million working days lost in strikes, but this dropped dramatically to only 127,000 days lost in 1933. The figures for each year for the rest of the decade remained below half a million working days lost.

In this situation, the trade union leaders did everything in their power to ensure that the agitation of the unemployed did not disturb the "social peace" that their arbitrations had achieved.

After a brief flirtation with the NUWM in 1925-27, the general council broke off all relations. Thereafter, they actively tried to sabotage the NUWM's activities by instructing trade councils and unions to have nothing to do with the NUWM. In particular, they told them to refuse to provide assistance in the localities to hunger marches.

It is difficult to believe the stark fact that, despite the plight of the unemployed in the Thirties, the TUC organised only one demonstration against unemployment, which took place in 1933. Even this was largely a ploy to try to undermine the successful agitation and demonstrations of the NUWM.

It is interesting to compare this to the present situation.

Already in 1980, with the Day of Action on May 14th and the Labour Party demonstration of November 29th, the official labour movement has registered more protest against unemployment in one year that it managed in the entire decade of the 1930s. This is a reflection of the fact that the political complexion of the movement is now

radically different.

Instead of moving to the right, the unmistakable general course of most unions, although there are exceptions, is a shift to the left. This has been most recently clearly shown in the affairs of the Labour Party.

Whilst the early years of the 1930s saw a left-wing split from a rightward moving Labour Party, in the form of the Independent Labour Party departure in 1932, it seems likely that the early 1980s will see the reverse of that process, with a section of the right-wing splitting away from a leftward moving party.

The monolithic power and authority that the trade union tops held over their members in the 1930's has been altered by the enormous growth in power and influence within the unions of the shop stewards' movement, as well as the unionisation of fresh layers of the working class.

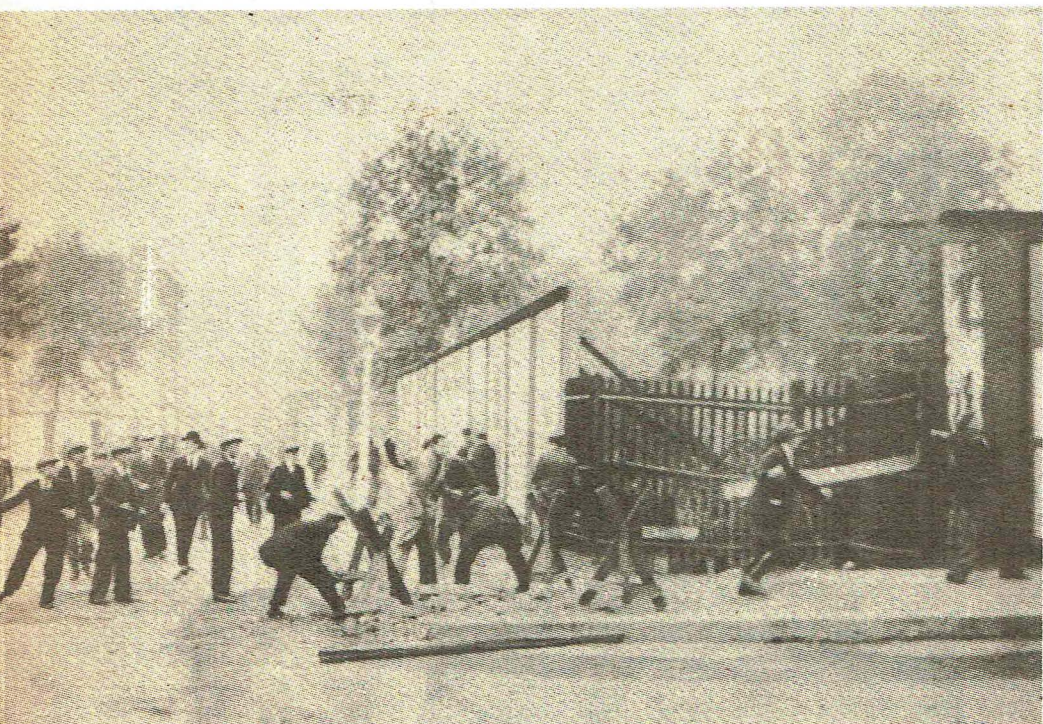
These points are demonstrated, for example, by the right-wing leadership being pressurised to support a national strike of their members in 1979 and by the organisation of new militant sections of the working class in unions like NUPE.

THE POLICIES OF THE NUWM

It is possible that the NUWM could have overcome the isolation forced upon it by the TUC leaders if it had had a correct political programme and orientation towards the employed rank and file in the trade unions.

Unfortunately the agitation and propaganda of the NUWM were almost solely conducted around the issues of the means test and levels of social security payments and therefore failed to take up the wider issues of a political programme to end the problems created by capitalism.

For example, the NUWM conference of 1931 instructed its members to conduct "day-to-day mass rallies, steadily mounting in force and intensity, primarily, centrally and unwaveringly directed to secure the beating back of the proposed cuts in the dole." The NUWM consistently fail-



Photos from left to right: 1] Marchers fight back against the police during an anti-Means Test demonstration in 1931. 2] Scottish hunger marchers pass through Lancashire. 3&4] Their reception at Hyde Park, London. As the last of the marchers entered the park, police and special constables moved in. Despite repeated charges by mounted police, the workers defended their meeting with baracades thrown up around the park

ed to link demands for a socialist programme to their immediate demands on benefits, etc, which could have forged a crucial unity between the unemployed and employed in their common struggle with the bosses.

In no instance were the limitation of the NUWM political programme more clearly demonstrated than in Belfast in October 1932. The disturbances began when men working on relief went on strike to draw attention to the poor wages they were paid for their work. On Monday 10 October a demonstration of protest was attacked by the police and on the following day the disturbances escalated as the police made general attacks on working-class districts throughout Belfast.

These attacks resulted in the shooting of two workers, as barricades were built in the workers' districts of Belfast. In response to these events the Belfast linen mills went on strike on Wednesday 12 October 1932, and the same evening the Belfast Trades Council called for an immediate general strike.

On Wednesday 12th seven lorry loads of Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers armed with machine guns had been drafted into the city, but even this had failed to wrest control of crucial parts of the city from the workers. These troops had to be augmented by troops from the Kings Royal Rifles.

Clearly, the position was serious for the ruling class with large numbers of unemployed and employed workers fighting shoulder to shoulder against the forces of the state. Desperate measures were needed to defuse the situation, and the Northern Ireland government implemented them, in the form of massive increases in relief rates. The scale for a man and wife was raised from 8 sh a week to 20 sh a week; for a man, wife and child from 12sh a week to 24sh a week, and pro rata up to a maximum of 32 shillings a week (an increase of 8sh a week on the previous maximum). Following these concessions the fires of revolutionary Belfast were doused.

These events show the short-comings of a movement built solely around welfare

benefit issues. But for the complexity of the NUWM's political history to be understood, the influence of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has also to be explained.

THE NUWM AND THE CPGB

The leadership of the NUWM came almost entirely from members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the CPGB used the NUWM as a vehicle for its work amongst the unemployed.

Leading figures in the NUWM like Hannington, Sid Elias, Harry McShane, Will Paynter, Joseph Rawlings and Jack Dash were all leading members of the CPGB.

This relationship must have crucially affected the general strategies of the NUWM in its years of tremendous growth between 1929 and 1933.

For the CPGB, these years represent a sharp ultra-left turn, to obey the dictates of the Communist International controlled by Stalin, who reflected the conservative outlook of the privileged, bureaucratic caste which, while preserving the centrally planned economy, had destroyed the workers' democracy established by the October revolution.

This period was when the Communist Parties of the world were instructed to conduct "independent revolutionary work" and break all relations with the left social democrats.

Social democracy became the "twin" of fascism, social democrats being considered as "social fascists".

The consequences of this disastrous turn in Britain were the complete breaking of relations between the CPGB and the left of the Labour Party and trade unions, and the instigation of a party campaign of abuse and hostility towards the Labour left.

The CPGB went as far as founding new unions to rival the existing trade union movement. The United Mineworkers of Scotland based in Fife and the United Clothing Workers in London were set up as break-aways. Attempts were also made to split the Communist-dominated Sea-

men's Union.

The social-fascist policy isolated the CPGB from the mass of workers and inevitably increased the hostility of ordinary workers towards the CPGB. As the NUWM's leadership was almost entirely drawn from the CPGB, the social-fascist policy must also have adversely affected the NUWM's orientation towards the unions, making the trade union rank-and-file generally suspicious of the movement's activities.

The failure of the NUWM to develop a political programme for socialism alongside its benefits agitation were undoubtedly compounded by the close association of its leadership with Stalinist policies of the CPGB.

Of course, by 1935 the social-fascist policy was turned on its head by the Comintern leadership and the "United Front", in reality "Popular front" (the disastrous strategy of forming strike-breaking alliance between the workers' organisations and capitalist parties).

This affected the work of the NUWM in the second half of the decade, but the mistake of the early years cost it dearly.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many lessons to be learned from the NUWM's history. Chief among them is the need for a political programme which unites the unemployed and the employed in common struggle for a socialist society to replace the bosses' system.

Therefore demands must be raised today within the trade unions for them to open their doors to the unemployed. Independent work amongst the unemployed should raise the issues of the need for unity with employed workers, and campaign for a socialist programme to end unemployment.

The trade union movement must take up the issues of welfare benefit levels, facilities, and jobs for the unemployed. Steps have already been taken in this direction in some areas, with the creation of day-centres for the unemployed sponsored by local trades or labour councils.

But this movement needs to



be extended beyond its present limited scope.

A decisive factor in whether permanent unity can be forged between the trade unions and those unemployed will be the manner in which the unions fight for jobs. A national campaign for the 35-hour week, led by the TUC and backed by industrial action, would do more to create unity between these two sections of the working class than the millions of words already spoken about the plight of the unemployed.

Finally, do not pay heed to the cynical voices of the reformers who suggest that the defeats of the 1930s will be repeated in the 1980s.

The labour and trade union movement is much stronger and more powerful than it

was in the 1930s. The passage to time has done much to undermine the illusions held by some sections of the working class in the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party and the reactionary role of the Russian bureaucracy on a world scale.

The argument runs that there can be no social upheavals, no socialist revolution in Britain, because the workers do not want to fight. But the pages of British labour history are filled with titanic struggles waged by the working class.

And those struggles will be eclipsed by the class battles of the stormy decade which has now opened.

The will of the working class to change society remains unbroken. Our task is

to learn the lessons of the past and arm the movement with conscious socialist aims-arming the working class with the weapon it needs to carry through the socialist transformation of society.

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USA

AFTER THE FIREWORKS

Reagan has started his term as President of the United States of America. The release of the American hostages by Iran has given the opportunity to present endless patriotic cavalcades on the television and in the streets of American towns to welcome them back home.

Their alleged mistreatment by their captors has given Reagan and the US capitalist class a fine chance to berate "barbarism" in foreign countries while discreetly drawing a veil over previous US government

support for the late Shah's hated Savak torturers.

The new President has made a bombastic start to his office with attacks on the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and veiled threats against revolutionary movements in Central America.

On home policy, the President has been a bit more reticent. "An economic affliction of great proportions" confronts the USA said Reagan on inauguration day. Unemployment at 7.4% and double figure inflation are the signs of

this. Reagan promises tax cuts to "stimulate investment" and reductions in government interference—promising a "healthy vigorous growing economy."

Ten of Reagan's seventeen cabinet ministers are multi-millionaires. It is obvious which class will be expected to pay for the crisis. Have the American people swallowed the Reagan myths? How long will workers accept attacks on their living standards? Betty Traun reports from New York:

The election of Reagan has deeply shocked Democratic politicians, labor leaders and the minorities.

They fear that the next four years will see a rollback of civil liberties, health and safety regulation, affirmative action for jobs for minorities, jobs programmes, and deep cuts in social services—with a sharp acceleration in military spending.

The Republicans captured the Senate for the first time since 1954, picked up four new governors, 33 House of Representatives seats, and 218 new state legislators. Reagan won about half of the blue-collar labor vote, and 35 per cent of the Jewish vote. Traditionally, these were Democratic voters.

The election results confirm the disintegration of the Democratic coalition, but it does not mean the emergence of a new permanent Republican majority.

Along with the Democratic landslide of 1964 and the Republican landslide of 1972, the Reagan victory shows a continuation of massive political instability which has destroyed the ability of both parties to build long-term majority coalitions. This instability is rooted in the crisis of capitalism and capitalist liberalism.

The current variety of liberalism dates from Harry Truman's 1948 promises of a continually rising standard of living in the leading nation of the world.

It grudgingly acknowledges a role for Federal Government in easing the effects of the business cycle of boom and bust, affirms government's role in building highways, and tanks, and defending American interests abroad.

That sort of liberalism won the support not only of the Democrats but of "liberal" Republicans like Rockefeller, and Arthur Burns, and Nixon. There are differences between the

two parties, but they share a broad consensus about government's responsibility for economic health, and imperial defence.

The success of the liberal programme produced by Truman depended on the absolute economic and military supremacy of the United States, as it profited from the post-war reconstruction of Western Europe and Japan and its domination of Third World markets and raw materials.

When this fell apart, and European and Japanese capitalism developed as formidable rivals to the US, the United States was defeated in Vietnam, OPEC rose as a cartel power, and the Soviet Union achieved nuclear parity, the US lost its absolute economic and military superiority. It became plagued by stagflation, a declining dollar, and a sharp decline in overseas prestige.

This is what created a crisis of capitalist liberalism. There was no way for politicians to keep their promises.



Costumes of the 18th century at the inauguration. The problems are of the 1980s.

In 1976 Carter had promised full employment, a balanced budget, and low prices, and had attacked President Ford for using recession to fight inflation. Four years later Reagan turned the tables on Carter and accused him, rightfully, of doing the same thing, and promised he would put America back, "balance the budget", and curb inflation.

Liberalism has become the only game in town, but it

has become a game in which all the players lose. And something else must take its place, in time.

A consequence of the crisis is that periodically the American voters revolt against their elected officeholders. Said a Chicago voter in the 1980 election: "Me, I'm a liberal, but you know what I did? I went out in the street and sang the first verse of the Marine Anthem.

"It was just in me. It came out. That's what came out of all the people on Election Day—frustration. A need for an outlet, and the voting booth gave it to us. We voted in a new President!" (Quoted in Chicago-Sun-Times, Election Day interview)

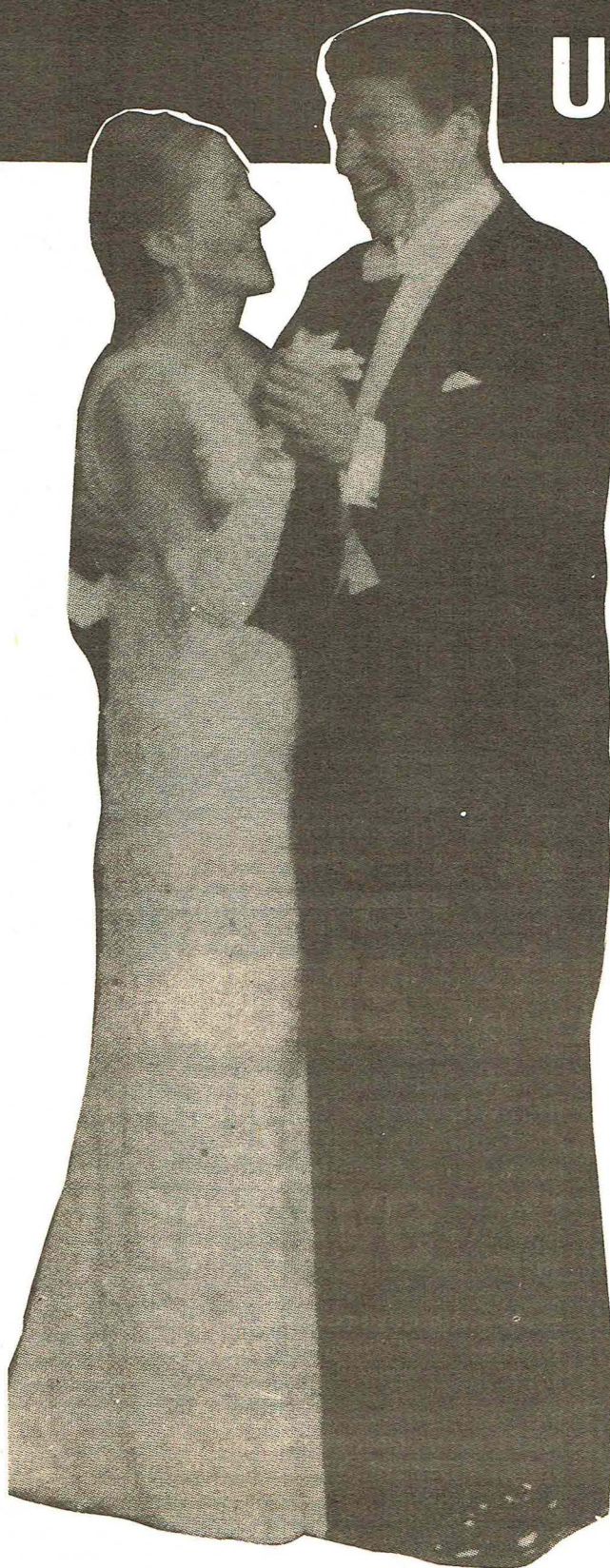
But there are other effects which showed up in the 4 November election: a declining turnout of voters, a drop from 61.8% in 1964 to 52.3% in 1980.

This disillusionment has been concentrated especially among lower-income, blue-collar, and minority voters

who have suffered most from the failures of liberal policies, and who, as yet, have no party to represent their interests.

Their defection means that voting is increasingly dominated by upper-middle-class electors. A candidate like Reagan need capture only about 26 per cent of the vote to win a 'landslide'.

The defection of lower-



Reagan and his wife at the inaugural ball. When the firework displays and dancing stop, the grim reality of recession returns.

income voters was particularly dramatic in northern cities like Cleveland, New York and Philadelphia. In New York State, voting was down by a half-million votes from 1976, and most of the decline was concentrated in New York's poorer districts.

John Judis of the Progressives says that "in periods of liberal crisis the absence of plausible economic alternatives tends to bring social issues to the fore—prohibition in the 1920s; abortion; busing; school prayer; pornography; respect for the flag; and gun control in our time.

"These issues came to be perceived as the overriding concerns of voters (especially middle-class voters). In the NBC-Associated Press poll, 25 per cent of voters listed 'values' as a key concern in their choice of a Presidential candidate."

With no tradition of mass socialist or social democratic parties in the United States, and having no real knowledge of it at all, except that it is automatically associated with the Soviet Union or Cuba, most Americans have blamed their elected government for betraying the promises of the liberal tradition.

This anger brings with it the bizarre notion that the "free enterprise system" is being held in check by the very same state that rescued

capitalism from self-destruction in the great depression of the 1930s. This notion lends undeserved support to the Republican right-wingers who seek to "free business from the shackles of government taxation and regulation."

A new militarism is afoot, corresponding to the crisis in America's international position. The Cold War propaganda spewed forth by the mass media which assumes an imperial role for the United States, the rise of OPEC, the Soviet achievement of nuclear parity, the rebellions against US-backed regimes around the world, have created deep disquiet among voters.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizure of American hostages makes the voters feel angry and frustrated. It was this anger which pulled many blue-collar and middle class Democrats away from Carter.

This partly explains why the Republicans were able to make such dramatic inroads among union members and blue-collar workers.

Labor will learn a harsh lesson when Reagan unleashes his attack upon their living standards and jobs. The working class will sing a different tune when reaction strikes at home and Reagan will not approve.

Meaner than a junkyard dog

At the President's inaugural ball, close friends and political associates of Reagan assembled to congratulate their man. John E. Swearingen, the chairman of the board of Standard Oil company of Indiana, was there.

His wife Bonnie, wearing a satin ball gown, an emerald and diamond necklace and matching earrings summed up the mood of the celebrants.

"All of the women here have husbands who have worked hard for what they have. What have we worked for if we can't enjoy it? If a little girl from Alabama whose father was a minister can appear in public wearing beautiful jewels and gowns, it should be a symbol to everyone that they can do it too."

The American dream—rags to riches, log cabin to White House—has always been a myth for the vast majority. The crisis in America will make such sentiments seem very sick in the next few years.

Federal spending has already been pulled down, and officials from Carter days have been replaced by executives who are "meaner than a junkyard dog when it comes to ferreting out waste and mismanagement" said the White House Press Secretary.

Reagan has considered de-indexing benefits, so hitting at the 8 million already unemployed and has cast his eyes on medicare schemes and other public spending budgets, meanwhile diverting money to defence spending.

Withdrawing aid to 'lame ducks' and public authority cuts will lengthen the dole queues, if cuts of 2% in the present financial year are introduced, bearing in mind that 'defence' is handed a big rise.

Government policies will damage already sorely hit industry not only pushing up unemployment but probably leading to pressure from industrialists for moderation of the Thatcherite policies.

But even a U-turn would bring no joy to American workers as different policies would be forthcoming from this millionaire's government to make the working class pay for the recession hit economy.

Battles over unemployment, battles over wages in the next upswing will add a further spur to class polarisation in the USA and new possibilities for a party of labour in the most powerful capitalist country in the world.

WORKERS MOBILISATION STOPS FASCIST MARCH SPAIN

The governor was certainly not happy but there was no alternative. He announced "the Guridi theatre was closed because it did not meet the minimum safety standards."

Mr Jaquete, governor of Alava province in the Basque country of Spain knew that the fascists of Fuerza Nueva [FN] were to meet there on Sunday 2 November.

The closure would obviously be seen as a ban on fascism—the Guridi was open again 48 hours later, so nobody believed the story about safety. But there was no way out!

His colleagues throughout Spain allowed such meetings to take place. Was it Mr Jaquete's conscience that made him different? Was Suarez's right-wing UCD government changing its attitude to fascism? No.

A fascist meeting was banned in Spain for the first time because of the mobilisation of the workers of Vitoria. Many organisations called for the meeting to be banned, but the most decisive action was taken by the trade union UGT in Alava.

Blas Pinar (leader of FN) referred to this—he was amazed that "a legal organisation could put out such a strong and offensive leaflet against the FN."

This leaflet which shocked Pinar was distributed at most factories in Vitoria. It analysed the class nature of fascism and showed how to fight it:

It showed that FN and similar organisations are the direct successors of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. They

By Domingo Echevarria

are the friends and accomplices of the murderers of the Labour lawyers in Atocha and others on a national scale, and internationally of the murderers of 80 travellers in Bologna (Italy) or 12 tourists at the Beer Festival in Germany... Like them, they will not hesitate to massacre Spanish workers if that guarantees the continued existence of their system, capitalism.

The leaflet also showed that the "tolerance" of the state towards these elements is all too evident.

On one hand the state presents itself as "impartial", fighting terrorism "from both sides"; on the other hand, the fascists do all the necessary dirty work.

Their financial backers are in the top councils of big business and the banks, in the same way as Rothschild and Krupp were behind Hitler and the March Bank behind Franco.

We can only rely on our own strength and organisations to stop the development and growth of the fascists. The capitalist state will never put an end to fascism. We must stop them now before it is too late.

This is probably the most important lesson. Only the organisation and mobilisation of the workers can stop them. If tomorrow the government authorises a new meeting, we shall mobilise again. This lesson should be taken up through-



PHOTO: Franco with Hitler and Mussolini. The working class are the only force who can stop the growth of fascism.

Translated from the Spanish Marxist paper 'Nuevo Claridad'

out Spain and the fascist provocations should be stopped.

We cannot recognise the democratic right of those who want to suppress democracy. They are the worst enemies of the working class.

We also see here the effects of the misnamed "left-wing" terrorism that attempts to put itself in the position of "Defender of the People" and to substitute itself for mass action. All they achieve in this way is to justify the existence of the

paramilitary fascist gangs.

The activities of Blas Pinar's boys began on Saturday. Insulting people in the streets, provoking in bars... A 19 years old student paid for all this: twenty "brave" thugs beat him, as he was peacefully returning home. The student will lose the sight of one eye.

On Sunday morning several coaches and private cars began to arrive from Madrid, Burgos, Logorno, Bilbao, San Sebastian. Even though they knew the meeting had been cancelled, several hundred fascists came to Vitoria to acclaim their leader, Blas Pinar.

Dressed in paramilitary uniforms they showed-off guns, clubs and chains which they later used, wounding several people and firing shots in the air.

Meanwhile, Blas went to the Town Hall, surrounded by a crowd of thugs. He demanded to see the Governor who came immediately. Pinar began to insult him. He has admitted that he was told he was 'shit scared' three times. It would seem that the toilet paper rolls that Pinar wanted to give him were meant to help!

What, though, would have happened if it had been a worker who went to the Town Hall, insulted and pushed Mr Jaquete and sarcastically offered him toilet paper?

Would Jaquete have said that had it not been for the circumstances it would have been an 'amusing incident'? Of course not! He would have been immediately arrested and tried.

Anyone at Vitoria that

Sunday who later read newspaper reports would have thought what is often said at the end of films: "Any resemblance to reality is purely co-incidental."

"The FOP (Forces of Public Order) dissolved the fascist groups" we were told. How? By telling them to move along!

"The FOP went to those who were or appeared to be armed." How strange then that when a woman told a policeman to arrest an armed thug he continually replied that he "couldn't see anything!"

"Six fascists were arrested." Not bad compared to other events. But considering the number of armed fascists who invaded Vitoria the figure is ridiculous.

"There were three policemen among those arrested." What a coincidence! Had all the coaches and cars been searched, the figure would have been much higher. But of course, that would have been too much. It is one thing to find a scapegoat, but a general raid against the fascists is quite different.

"Several weapons were found." Well, what a surprise! "The majority of them had a proper licence." What a coincidence! Not only have they got an abundance of weapons, but they are all legal as well.

The UGT's initial idea was to call for a trade union demonstration against the event. With that purpose, ELA was approached but they never showed up.

The leadership of CCOO (the workers' commissions) said that "the meeting and

the Party are both constitutional and therefore they would do nothing." Given these replies it was not possible to organise a well co-ordinated mass demonstration, so pickets for the defence of premises were organised instead.

Members and sympathisers of these organisations must seriously discuss this matter. The position of their leaders only helps to boost the confidence of the fascists and strengthen them.

Although the FN & Co. today demand their democratic rights, it is only with the purpose of doing away with them at a later stage. Like their ancestors, they will end up beheading and murdering the labour movement. When they see us hesitate, they advance. If they see we are determined to stop them, they will retreat.

Blas Pinar's threat against the UGT applies to all the trades union organisations. He makes no distinction between those who speak out and those who remain silent. We are all his enemies. The atrocities of the weekend will be repeated.

To defend our premises, meetings and demonstrations is our duty. Can we trust the FOP? No. The question must be discussed in the factories and housing estates and ways of defending ourselves against fascist attacks must be found.

It would be a great step forward if an all-trade union conference was convened to put all this into practice and create a united front for defence of our meetings and demonstrations.

LESSONS OF Spain



New Militant pamphlet

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BY LEON TROTSKY
A Militant Publication

Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Defending women

Dear Militant

Having been a regular reader of 'Militant' for some time now, and finding myself generally in agreement with the views put forward, I would like a few points cleared up regarding the article in issue 533 by Pete Watson on "Violence Against Women".

I would agree that a film or magazine glorifying a sex attack of any kind could play a part in stimulating

sex attackers. I would like to know what evidence there is that shows whether or not pictures of nude or partially nude women play any part in stimulating the minds of sex attackers, although it does show the low role of woman in capitalist society.

Indeed, I would say many great works of art are of nude women and men, for example, the statue of Venus. Surely a photograph could be considered to be a modern work of art?

I would support, as the article says, "the right of

women to carry sprays, sirens...", as weapons of self defence, but what does "other weapons" mean? Where do you draw the line? Would you support women carrying guns as weapons of defence?

My final point is on the part of the article, "a sick society in which economic collapse is accompanied by the breakdown of moral norms and of family and personal relations." Surely "moral norms" and "family and personal relations" will undergo a significant

change, for the better, after the transition to socialism?

Sex offenders of all types are generally products of a capitalist society, and with the advent of a socialist society, will disappear as individuals are freed of economic and social pressures created by capitalism.

In the meantime I agree that it is the job of the labour and trade union movement to defend the right of women to travel in safety and I would have thought that 'Militant' should have been calling on

the labour and trade union movement to escort women to and from work, meetings and social occasions. The solution to the problems of both women and the whole working class lies not with the forces of the state, such as the police, but in their own movement and ultimately in socialism.

Yours fraternally
Deryl Collins
Sheffield Park LPYS

Liven up your meeting!

Dear Comrades

I read with interest the letter from A Stevenson, East Hull LPYS [Militant 537], and felt some sympathy with the points made. It is important that all young people involved in the Labour Party Young Socialists do take up active roles in their Labour Party ward branches, bringing in fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

One of the major problems has been over the years that the ward and trade union branches have existed just to carry on the day-to-day work of the movement and have forgotten what the struggle is about. There has been a complete lack of socialist education from the top to the bottom of our movement. This is only now being changed by the work and activities of the LPYS.

Many ward branches have existed as election and fundraising machines for local councillors to report on how well they are doing on this or that local issue, all of which are important.

Things are now changing. The influx of new, young and enthusiastic members is bringing a new lease of life to branch meetings.

There are many ways ward branches can be shaken up: one is to get branches to invite speakers to each meeting. They don't have to be well known national figures, but local comrades, shop stewards and trade unionists, who may have a particular interest in one subject, which can range from the economy or work experiences to events in Poland.

Another point, when councillors give their monthly reports, is to pick out a major item, i.e. rates or rent increases, and raise a debate in the branch around these issues, which automatically raises the question of money lenders, banks and insurance companies. You will be surprised by the response you will get.

Within the layer of older, apathetic members will be a number of old class fighters, many jaded by the let-downs of the past, who can be quickly enthused by your very presence at the meetings. These comrades should be asked to speak to the branch of their own struggles of the past and we can relate them to what is happening now.

We must be patient and understanding. Our commitment to socialism will revive all sections of the labour movement to the tasks that lie ahead.

Yours comradesly
Rod Fitch
Chairman of Brighton
Kemp Town Labour Party

Students need a trade union

Dear Comrades

I am a student who has recently filled out an application form for Labour Party membership. The form required me to state my trade union and, of course, I named the NUS.

However, looking at things realistically and in retrospect, I question my right to have done so. The NUS is not an independent organisation and not affiliated to the TUC. Our dependence on the government for finance makes us susceptible to the petty tyrannies of the Rhodes Boysons of this world.

The Tories have proved themselves time and again to be the adversaries of both teachers and students in all but the privileged sector of education. I regard studying to be my particular occupation in society and therefore I believe myself to be entitled to a strong, independent and active union to protect my interests as a member of this occupation.

The last NUS 'autonomy' demonstration in London cannot be described as successful and it cannot be denied that successive Tory administrations have had little or no regard for the NUS in comparison to other unions.

The last Labour Party conference discussed the matter of giving the armed services the right to trade unions. It is about time the party seriously considered helping students towards a free trade union, thus enabling us to withstand and counter the persistent and ruthless Tory axe.

Yours faithfully
Peter Grosvenor
University College
Swansea

Creation on the fence

Dear Militant

I would like to express my feelings on two school subjects which confuse me a lot. These subjects are IS, which means integrated studies, and RE (religious education).

These subjects confuse me because IS is about the scientists' view of the earth being made and RE is about the bible's view of the earth being made.

Which one do you think is right, and why is it that we go to school to learn but they teach us different facts? Surely they cannot both be right?

It seems daft to me.
Yours fraternally
Karna Bennett
(aged 11 years)



Picket outside St Benedict's Hospital, London, to prevent closure [9.9.80] PHOTO: Tessa Howland IFL (II)

Grotesque treatment for the disabled

Dear Militant

I went to see the film 'Elephant Man' recently, and while my friends concentrated on the man, I also looked at the society he lived in, where the worst form of exploitation possible existed—making money out of showing off a man's physical deformities as a side show.

In the case of the Elephant Man, 'her gracious majesty' Queen Victoria 'persuaded' the hospital he was at to allow him to live there on a permanent basis, instead of in the gutter. For the vast majority of physically or mentally handicapped people an early grave was their solution from the misery of their lives.

Although now there are homes (institutions), sheltered workshops and training centres, the mentally or physically handicapped person is still an inferior citizen, earning ridiculous 'wages' and having to rely on supplementary benefits and disability allowances. The state never seems to

realise that these people actually need as much money to look after themselves as 'normal' people, if not more.

They have been particularly badly hit by cuts in back-up services for those trying to live in society, such as home helps and welfare visitors. Those in institutions will have been affected by cuts in the NHS. As any low wage earner, they are finding it difficult to cope with rising prices.

Mentally and physically handicapped people do need help but they also have a lot to give us, things which the capitalists can't make profits out of—friendship, happiness, love.

In a socialist society they would be able to play a valuable part. Hopefully in the world of the future medical science will be able to improve their lives tremendously, caring more about people instead of profits.

Fraternally
A Hughes
W Derbys LPYS

One of a thousand reasons

Dear Comrades

I am a student doing a City and Guilds Foundation Course in community care.

Recently our course tutor wrote to Clatterbridge Hospital asking if, for one day a week, one person from our group could visit the special department they run for physically handicapped children. They, in reply, said that with the cut backs, the unit would not be able to accept any more students, and the hospital unit would

inevitably be closing within two years.

This, of course, will be a great tragedy because it is one of the best units on Merseyside, able to appreciate the needs of these unfortunate children. As usual, the cuts have come to hit the needy and those least able to help themselves.

This is just one of a thousand reasons why we must get rid of this evil government and return to a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Yours faithfully
Linda Oulton
Birkenhead LPYS

Work experience —slave labour

Dear Comrades

I have been working for a small insurance brokers for the last three and a half years.

During this time I have trained six girls on the Work Experience Scheme. Not one of these girls has been offered a permanent job after their six months' expired.

It really sickens me, seeing these girls doing the same job as me and the same hours for £23.50 per week, only to go straight back on the dole.

I feel that something must

be done to stop this "slave labour". Surely if a firm has had two or more people on this scheme and not offered them the chance of a "proper" job for a decent wage, they should not be allowed to take any more people on the scheme?

How can the Tory government let firms abuse the scheme in this way, just using people for their convenience? I think it's because if small firms didn't have so many people on this scheme the unemployment figure would be even higher than it is now.

Yours
Lynn Fletcher
Edge Hill LPYS
Liverpool

Labour's conciliators

Dear Comrades

'Militant's' front page article "Right Wing 'Democrats' Reject Party Democracy" contained the message, "Some people within the Labour Party are now arguing that efforts should be made to conciliate and appease these right-wingers to prevent an open split."

Why so coy, comrades? Surely everybody knows that "some people" includes Michael Foot! I cannot understand how any real socialist can want to maintain "unity" with right

wingers.

It would appear that Mr Foot will be the only candidate for the leadership whom socialists can possibly vote for. But they should make it clear that they do so without illusions; he, after all, is the man who spoke of the "red flame of socialist courage" while supporting policies which were a disgrace to the name of socialism.

I do feel, however, that he may well be very susceptible to the pressure of a mass movement.

Yours fraternally
Jim Parkes
Walsall

What's in the pet food

Dear Comrades

Perhaps there is more than meets the eye to the TV fish finger advert, when 'Captain Bird's-Eye' tells us "You know what's in 'em."

In an article in the 'Sunday Times' (25.1.81) entitled "Kangaroo meat used for hamburgers," we are told of how "Hundreds of tons of contaminated meat including kangaroo and donkey flesh and beef from

cancerous cows" had been used in 'convenience foods' by the food giant Walls.

So when you're munching your way through hamburgers and chips, keep an eye out for the 'hair and pus from the cancerous cows' in a 30-ton batch of meat caught in a raid on Anthony animal products in Fulham.

The reason for using this 'meat' is plain. They could make more money selling their pet food as food for human consumption. God knows what goes into the pet

food, which many unemployed and low paid are sometimes forced into having to eat!

Only with the running of society by workers for our needs and not for somebody's profits can we guarantee a plentiful supply of good, wholesome and safe food which will eliminate the many diseases caused by examples such as this.

Yours fraternally
Des Heemskerck
N W Leeds LPYS

ads

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

NEWHAM Militant Readers' Meeting 'Socialist policies to Fight the Cuts'. Speaker: Eddie McParland (Executive Committee, London Labour Party) Friday 6 February, 7.30 pm, at the Labour Hall, 241e High Street North, East Ham, London E.6.

SOUTHERN AREA MILITANT SCHOOL on Sunday 3 May—Bank Holiday Monday 4 May. Three speakers & social (with food). Hotel Bed and Breakfast at the Danville Hotel (on sea front), Cliftonville, Margate.

Only £7.50 (same price as last year). Please book early as capacity limited. To book write/phone K Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Cliftonville Margate, Kent (0843-291293)

HARTLEPOOL Militant Readers' Meeting 'Fight Unemployment'. Speaker: Brian Ingham. 7.30 pm, Thursday 5 February, Room 2, Town Hall, entrance in Lauder Street, Hartlepool.

BIRKENHEAD Militant Public Meeting 'Labour's right prepare split—build a mass socialist Labour Party' Speakers: Tony Mulhearn (Vice-president, Liverpool District Labour Party). Wednesday 18 February, 7.30 pm, Birkenhead Labour Club, Cleveland Street.

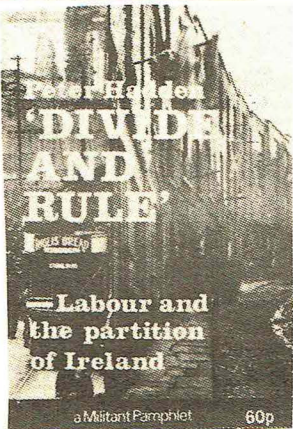
TOWER HAMLETS Militant Readers' Meeting 'Labour's Future—left, right or centre?' Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E.2. (off Bethnal Green Road). Speakers: Peter Taaffe (editor, 'Militant'); Eileen Short (delegate to Labour Party Special conference, in personal capacity). 7.30 pm, Wednesday 18 February.

'Militant' pamphlet

DIVIDE AND RULE

by Peter Hadden

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



OUT NOW!

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Articles on Britain, India and the Belfast engineering strike of 1919

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'LESSONS OF CHILE'

Read this Marxist analysis price 50p [inc p&p] from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Strathclyde Militant Trade Union Day School

Saturday 7 February

Morning: "Unemployment and the fight against the Tories" Ray Williams [NGA] Tony Mulhearn [Vice-President, Liverpool District Labour Party].

Afternoon: Seminars: The Employment Bill and the Closed Shop; trade union democracy; print unions and the freedom of the press; health and safety at work; the role of a shop steward; strategies for fighting the cuts.

Closing session: "Which way forward for the labour movement" Tony Sauniois, Labour Party NEC.

Venue: University of Strathclyde Students Union, 90 John Street, Glasgow.

Tickets: 50p from Bob Wylie 20 Loch Meadie, East Kilbride. Telephone E.K. 29082

Build

Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April	Target for year
Eastern	166		1775	7100
East Midlands	82		1375	5500
Hants & Dorset	236		1300	5200
Humberside	39		875	3500
London East	93		1900	7600
London West	249		1200	4800
London South	94		1375	5500
Manchester & Lancs	156		1450	5800
Merseyside	110		1650	6600
Northern	84		2150	8600
Scotland East	56		1100	4400
Scotland West	70		1875	7500
Southern	129		1775	7100
South West	220		875	3500
Wales East	28		650	2600
Wales West	33		1150	4600
West Midlands	117		2150	8600
Yorkshire	152		2250	9000
Others	21		3125	12500
Total received	2135		30000	120,000

Target for 11 April £30,000

Target for year £120,000

GET ON TARGET

THIS WEEK £764

The average pay for chairmen and chief executives of 50 companies surveyed by the BBC's Money Programme went up by 40% last year, with one of the participants being awarded 117%!

Unfortunately for the readers of this column, it's not in the "public interest" for a mere worker to have more than a few per cent, according to the ruling class, and of course this paper will never get subsidies from the top company boardrooms.

However, the real sacrifices of the sellers and readers of Militant can help us balance our books. An unemployed comrade, M Rattray, of Bristol South East LPYS has written pointing out that on his 18th birthday he will get £19.20 per week dole, instead of £15.25.

After considering whether to send a telegram to Mrs Thatcher, thanking her for recognising his coming of age ("I am now a more expensive piece of scrap") he ends his letter "...probably the best solution is to put it towards another big event—the socialist transformation of society. Therefore I will shortly send £4 for the fighting fund, the best birthday present for me."

The largest single donation this week came from an ABS member at the BBC White City, A Herbert, who donated £100. Not every reader can afford this, of course, but if you can, please follow this great example. Other means of raising money involves betting on certainties, such as

By Steve Cawley

the Wales/England Rugby International (J Golding, London, £5) and the match with Scotland this week-end.

Post office workers have been in dispute recently in an attempt to stop management trampling on their rights. Full support for their fight! As a consequence there have been delays in post from a number of areas, so if any money you have sent in hasn't been mentioned, this may be the reason.

London readers have been able to get their contributions through as normal. In particular, West London readers have collected together £70 at various meetings this week.

Thanks to T Drum (Wandsworth GMWU) for £4, M Pugh and R Jones (NUPE shop steward, Hillingdon) £1 each, Stevenage Readers Meeting £38, Bracknell readers £45, Cllr R Davies (Caerphilly) £10, V Gillespie (NUR) £10, W Sheppard (Croydon NE CLP) £15, and M Cansick (Loughborough £4) and A Dignan and A Spruce (£5 each, Leicester).

We need all contributions whether it's £30, such as the contribution from Y Munday (Munich) or 50p from Yvonne, Sue and Sharon (Tower Hamlets LPYS), or £1 from Lara King from Hove. Lara, aged 10, helps her dad deliver Militant each week, but can't read some of the long words. She says we ought to have a

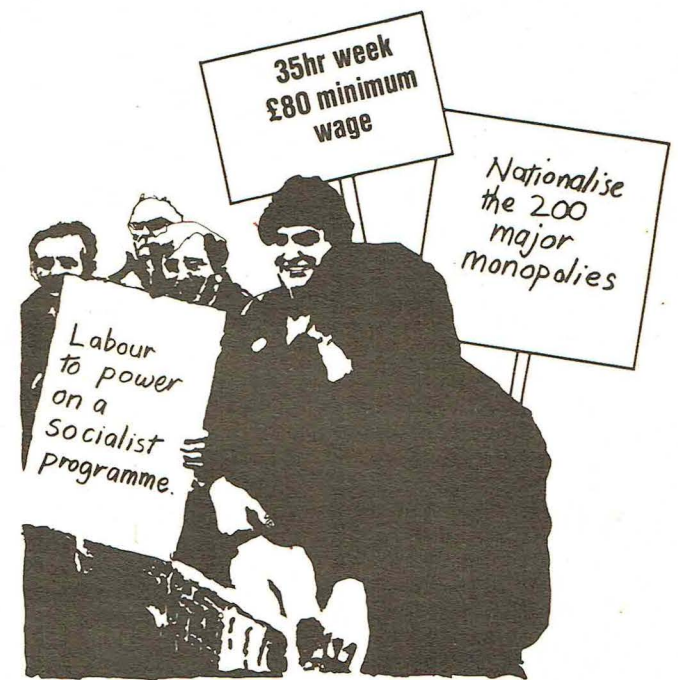
children's section. (What do other readers think?)

We need more than the £764 added this week, though, to build Militant into a paper with resources worthy of its readership. We need nearly £2,800 each

week to reach our target by April 11th.

Is there a future for you and your family under the present system of society? If not, you need to put any spare money behind the fight to change the system.

Militant fights for:



Militant

MARXIST WEEKLY OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Posters available only 5p each

Write to Circulation Dept. 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Industrial

in brief

A survey amongst companies in the South West reveals that 11% of the workforce was made redundant in 1980—over twice the national average! The findings of the Bristol and West of England Engineering Manufacturers Association (BEMA) revealed that 56% of the 600 companies surveyed had announced redundancies, and that a further 5% of the total workforce would lose their jobs by March 1981.

A week and a half sit-in strike by workers at T&A Constable, an Edinburgh printers, has forced the management to agree to concessions. On 9 January, the firm issued 95 redundancy notices, with no consultation with the unions. The main union, the Scottish Graphical Division of SOGAT, could not accept either the lack of consultation or the terms. Their members went on strike, but remained in the factory, making sure that no work could be taken out to other firms. After talks it was agreed that redundancies were to be voluntary and that the terms would be increased to a week and a half's pay for every year with the company.

The future of the Kilmalcolm rail line still hangs in the balance. Although the recent re-adjourned enquiry recommended that the line stays open, and that the February dead-line for closure has been extended to mid-summer, the fight is not over. The regional council have not included the £240,000 subsidy needed to run the service in their annual budget. The final decision lies with the Secretary of State to fund it through central government. This seems highly unlikely with the present Tory government policy.

234 workers at Howdens factory in Glasgow, went on a four-day week in preference to having 24 redundancies made. Although the workers get 50% of the lost days' wages from the government it still means a drop in take-home pay. A proposal from the shop stewards that the company make up 25% of the lost earnings from a 12 week period [which would have cost £12,000] was turned down by management. However, management are now going ahead with a week end stocktaking exercise, much to the consternation of the workers, at the cost of £5,000. As the convenor said of the management, "There's a lot of people about here with shiny cars and shiny trousers!"



The picket line at Watneys during last week's one-day strike
Photo: MILITANT

Watneys

The response to Watneys proposal of 253 jobs to go by July in the Whitechapel plant has been a one-day strike.

Mick Saily and Tom Kelly, T&GWU shop stewards, explained, "These 253 jobs mean something like 40% of the jobs in the plant. We've suffered 80 redundancies in 1978 and 300 in 1980.

"In the past the unions negotiated redundancy payment; this one could mean the very existence of the Whitechapel plant. This could be Custer's last stand!"

One of the placards reveals Grand Metropolitan Hotels (who took over Watneys in 1974) made £152,000,000 profits in 1980.

"This was revealed the day after the redundancies were announced." I was told. "Our plant has always

Ansell's

Over 1,000 Ansell's workers last month received a letter stating: "This terminates your contract of employment without notice and with immediate effect." And no money will now be paid!

The workforce are obviously angered at management's provocations. Only three workers at the overflowing mass meeting last Saturday voted against the escalation of the dispute.

Most Ansell's workers have received letters saying that they have been made redundant, their contract of employment has been changed, their shift pattern has altered, and they are sacked; and the only thing management forgot to send them was the matches needed to light a bonfire of the notices!

Ansell's say they will

had a record of militancy in the past. Some stewards feel that this is a factor for management moving against them." As part of their campaign to save jobs, they are contacting all Watney plants in London.

During the strike, the pickets came in for the usual police harassment, with pickets being told not to obstruct the pavements: by the plant they are about 30 feet wide!

"This is the second time they've harassed us today—and this is just a one-day strike!"

The answer to this by the men is just to move up and down the pavement in large groups every few minutes 50 yards or so from either side of the main gate, which anyway is closed.

The men are determined to win—the need is for unity of all Watney workers.

By Bob Faulkes
(EETPU)

replace the men by recruiting from the dole queues. Ken Bradley, T&G branch chairman said: "People wishing to go in there will have to face the anger of the workers whose jobs they are trying to steal."

One steward said of Ansell's intention to refurbish their main public houses: "They can decorate the pub, but they are not paying for the wallpaper and paint by cutting my wages."

The real wasters they say, are management with "500 company cars, costing £1½ million a year to maintain; a personnel department expanded from 3 to 23, and directors who for 85p a day can eat and drink as much as they like."

As Matt Folarin, vice chairman, said, "The people who are in charge could not even charge a battery."

UNITY CAN BEAT THE BOSSES

Vauxhall

By Richard Venton

At an AUEW shop stewards' meeting last week at Vauxhalls, Ellesmere Port the following resolution was passed unanimously.

"This shop stewards committee formally invites the TGWU shop stewards to a joint shop stewards committee. Agenda—the present jobs crisis and the future of Ellesmere Port plant.

"Also ideas to formulate a national combine shop stewards committee of all plants. Agenda—the future of Vauxhall Motors in the UK."

Tommy Baugh, who successfully moved this resolution, told me a few of the reasons why this represents

a tremendous step forward in the fight to save jobs at Vauxhalls, where the bosses have called for 3,000 voluntary redundancies.

"After the AUEW meeting adopted a 7 point plan of action, TASS adopted a similar position. This proves that if a lead is given, it will be followed and unity will be built.

"I made it clear in moving this resolution that when the crunch comes, when we have to take action, the AUEW can't fight alone. For starters, we'd have to appeal to the docks, where the T&G organise.

"I also made it clear that a shop stewards committee should not be restricted to AUEW and TGWU—all hourly paid workers should

be immediately involved. The days of one plant taking on a multinational company have gone.

But if we hope to build unity between the three plants, we've firstly got to show them that the shop stewards within Ellesmere Port itself are fighting a joint struggle.

The Joint Negotiating Committee, where convenors and officials meet management, is not enough. The bosses just withhold information at these meetings. A fight for these jobs must involve a combine committee at shop-stewards level, so that the stewards can then go to the membership and give a lead.

If the example of this resolution is followed in all unions and all plants, and we build on these ideas, we can stop management in their tracks."

Manchester P.O.

Last week postal workers in Manchester took action to stop management's attempts to end working conditions that have been painstakingly negotiated for in the past.

After two and a half days' negotiations, the workers at the letter office decided to support their fellow workers. The Union of Communication Workers are not renowned as the most militant section of the working class, but workers

today are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect jobs and conditions.

Since annual conference last May union officials up and down the country have been under increased pressure to accept the new 'voluntary' productivity deal called "improving working methods"—voluntary, that is, as long as you take part in the scheme!

On the picket line there is a great feeling that this dispute must be won and the

strength is there with about 30 pickets being on duty through the night.

The burning resentment shows through on the picket line when productivity is mentioned—for Post Office management have just received an £80 per week pay rise with no productivity whatsoever!

By Eddie Thorpe
(UCW)

KTM

AUEW members at KTM are continuing their strike (see last week's 'Militant').

A mass meeting took this decision, and the manager skulking behind the bushes must have been sadly disappointed at the failure of their attempts to intimidate us with threats of redundancy.

A further round of threats has come; another notice from management says, "a

notification of redundancies is now imminent...until there is a return to normal working things will get worse and the number of jobs lost will be greater."

But we have stood firm. It is not now just a struggle for a decent wage; it is a struggle to protect our hard-won union rights, and to retain the membership's faith in the union's ability to protect jobs and living standards.

But to win we need your help: rush in financial aid

and messages of support immediately. Invite us to speak at your meetings. If and when we decide to organise mass pickets respond to our call.

Messages of support and financial contributions to Mark Steele-Perkins, Secretary, Shop Stewards' Committee, KTM, c/o 179 Lewes Road, Brighton.

By Dave Horne
(AUEW, KTM)

USDAW members—vote for the Broad Left candidates in the coming elections. MICK WAINWRIGHT [Blackpool Woolworths, USDAW] who is standing for the union's North West Divisional Council, says:
"I am standing because I believe that it is time the leadership gave a lead and

fight every redundancy, and for a living wage for all members.

"The A.D.M. called for a national minimum wage of £70 for 35 hours, it also called for opposition to redundancies and for manning level agreements. This should be fought for now!"

"If elected to the Divisional Council, I will help all

USDAW members to achieve these demands including a decent living wage, and the fight against all redundancies.

"And we must campaign for the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies. The time for a change is now, for a fighting leadership of USDAW."

Reports

Belfast ready for all-out STRIKE!

An all-out strike could be called at Belfast and Liverpool ports by the National Union of Seamen unless the shipping bosses back down.

The shipping bosses at Belfast are refusing to pay the seamen for the 36 hours that ships are held in port through industrial action.

This has broken all previous traditional agreements, where seamen are paid when they are on shore. The union's local disputes committee have given an ultimatum to the bosses that unless they stick by the agreement an all-out strike will be called on Monday affecting Belfast, Liverpool and some Scottish ports.

Meanwhile in Belfast, two other companies, Western and Hullgate, have broken away from the General Council of British Shipping and have settled with the union.

So far 199 ships have been stopped for 36 hours in Belfast through the action, and three ships that sailed with scab crews have been blacked until the end of the dispute.

The basic pay for seamen is around £60—this is a pittance given the dangerous work the job involves.

Frank Lennon, on picket duty in Liverpool, who works on the Belfast/Liverpool line explained:

"Under 45 you have to have a 5 year medical, and over 45 you have to have a medical every two years, but people still drop dead at sea, even just after a medical!"

"The casualty rate is

higher than the miners. A bulletin put out by the Cardiff branch of the NUS gives some figures: draft and engineering room workers have the third highest mortality rate with a score of 233 against an average of 100. Coal miners score 141 on the same scale, with seamen top of the league for accidental deaths."

Seamen are also seven times more likely to divorce than average.

Other pickets pointed out the danger to lives. One picket explained, "Ships often go out not battened down properly even in gale force 11, the captains are too anxious to go out and make the money. Only a few weeks ago the Poole Fisher sank because it wasn't battened down."

Another picket, a deck hand who had just recently been on a tanker, said "there's oil on deck and sawdust, you get covered in it, there is virtually no protective clothing and few facilities to dry clothes."

Frank pointed out that the Merchant Shipping Act still stands from 1864; this means that regardless of any union agreements the captain's word is final.

At the bottom of the seamen's articles, it says "Captains' commands must be obeyed at all times"—to disobey is to mutiny. The captain in theory is still entitled to shoot you if you mutiny!

Nevertheless, despite the hardships, the pickets are confident of victory. Frank pointed out that it is the first time in NUS history that ships all over the world had been effectively instructed to join the dispute.

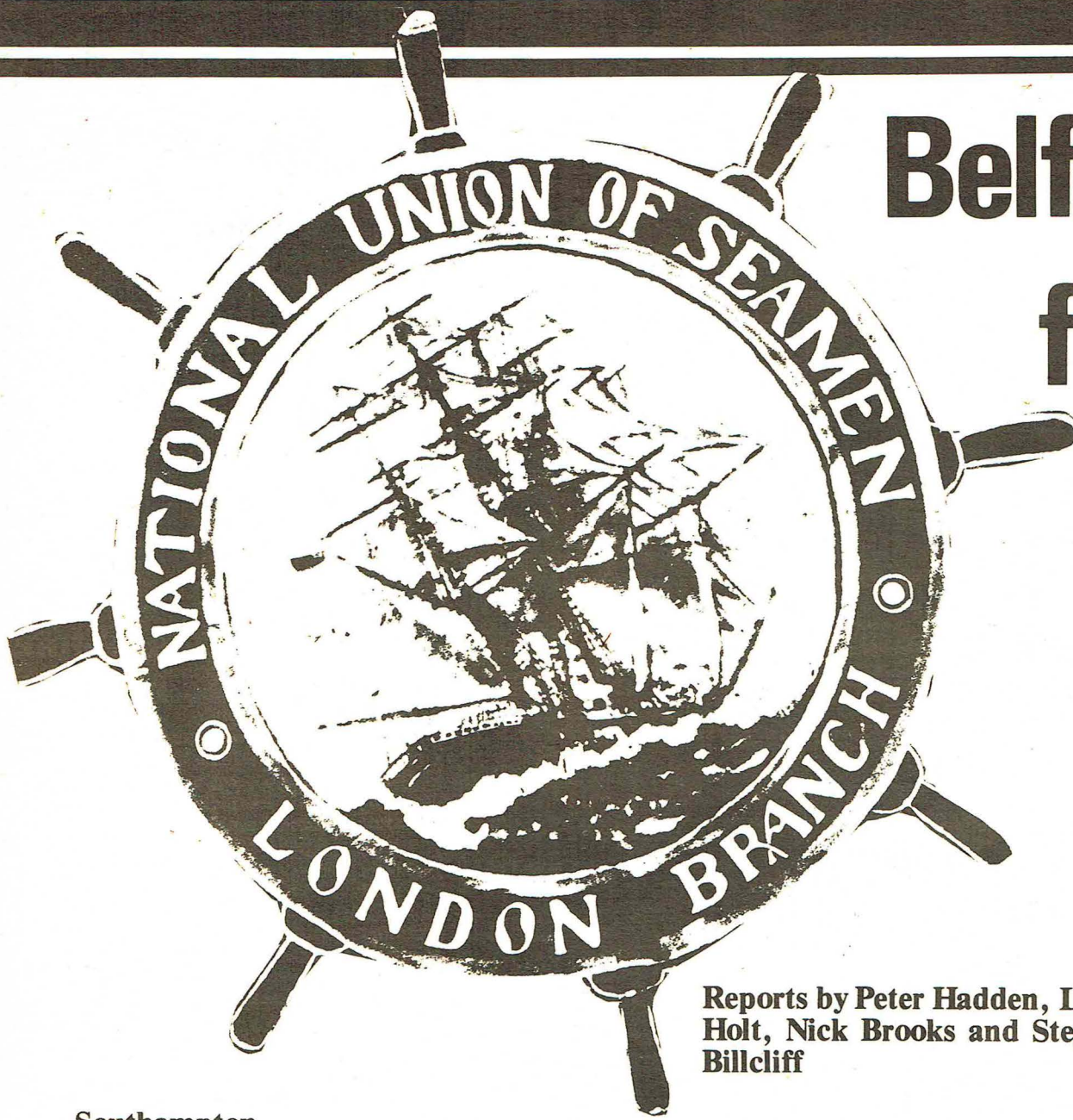
After further threatened lay-offs, it was decided that everyone should report for work regardless of this threat, and stop the flow of parts in the factory.

Management retaliated by switching off the lights in the assembly areas, and all work was stopped at once.

With a strong picket on the gate, countless lorries were turned back by vigilant workers.

One lorry broke the picket line only to find that there was no one to unload. Fully laden, it returned to the cheers of the pickets.

Listers are a subsidiary company of the Hawker Siddely Group; a multi national that makes huge profits. They must be forced to pay their workers a decent wage.



Reports by Peter Hadden, Lesley Holt, Nick Brooks and Stephen Billcliff

Southampton & Felixstowe

The press and the ship owners have been trying to say that British seamen are pricing themselves out of a job, and that their claim would bankrupt the industry.

Mike Sullivan from the disputes committee in Southampton, spoke to Nick Brooks:

"Last year I had 56 days leave, the rest I was away at sea. This is nothing unusual for men on deep sea ships. On average a British seaman works 3,000 hours a year. A British engineering worker works an average of 1,900

hours a year; and that is the highest of any engineering worker in Europe.

"A Norwegian able seaman, gets an average of £177 for a 56 hour week; we get an average of £124 for a 70 hour week. British seamen are the second cheapest seamen in Europe with only Greek seamen being cheaper."

More deep seamen are now coming home as a result of the action. It is now certain that if a ballot of the members was held an all out strike would be the result.

Felixstowe NUS are operating a 48-hour ban during weekends.

A joint committee has been set up by Felixstowe and Harwich NUS to co-ordinate activities. This committee has enabled all movement to stop in the smaller ports in the area: Colchester, Lowestoft, Mistley, and Great Yarmouth.

In Harwich, British Rail Freightliners are tied up by 24 hour and 36 hour stoppages.

The dockers and mooring parties in Felixstowe are giving support, as is the T&GWU nationally.

The national leadership, has been pushed into action by the overwhelming support for the dispute, espec-

ially that of the deep sea seamen, who they did not expect to fully support the dispute.

Maritime law allows industrial action by seamen only when the ship in question is in its own port.

But this law has been ignored and there are now ships tied-up all over the world; there are even some ships tied-up in Chile. The Australian dockers are supporting the seamen, and British ships are being refused entry into Sydney harbour because it is so congested by the British ships already tied-up there.

Fords

Over 400 lorry drivers at Fords, Dagenham, have been forced out on strike by management.

Over the last couple of years drivers at Fords have accepted certain changes in hours to safeguard jobs. They have even requested a form of work sharing that was rejected by the company.

Recently, the men agreed to give up some of their

European driving jobs. But they maintained a run to Bordeaux and were guaranteed trips to Fords' Belgium plant in Ghent when loads were available.

But Fords management tore up this agreement by giving the Ghent work to outside firms.

As a striker commented; "Our backs are against the wall, we have got to fight now. They just keep taking more and more."

The striking drivers say the outside non-union firms Fords use can sometimes do

a job for less money, but are running illegally. Instances of not paying tax and insurance etc. have been pointed out to the management, but they are not interested.

Also, one of the firms, Silcock and Collins have sacked five of their drivers who refused to cross the picket line. They are now on strike too.

Fords have a reputation of provoking internal disputes when it suits them, particularly in times of high stocks, so production can

cease without cost to themselves.

No lay-off money is paid out during internal disputes, and management then tried to use this to split the workforce.

As the drivers' bulletin states, they have been through all the correct 'procedure' and now feel they have got to stand and fight.

By Phil Waker
(Dagenham LPYS)

forced to take industrial action last week after a derisory 7% wage offer.

The workers are asking for 30%, and this insulting offer was quickly rejected, and a policy of non-co-operation was adopted. Key machinery was blacked, and an overtime ban was put into operation.

On January 24th shop floor workers received a letter telling them not to return to work on the Monday as they were unable to operate the machines.

However, the whole workforce did return and decided that if any member was laid off immediate action would follow.

Reckitt & Colman

The workforce of Reckitt and Colman Ltd—featured in Militant 536 as the firm which paid a personnel manager £836 net pay, while a worker got only £78 for a 47½ hour week—are out on strike!

All the 1,700 workers, members of the T&G, are out in a dispute over new technology. They fear that jobs will be lost over the introduction of new mach-

ines, such as packing machines—already 60 jobs have been lost over the years through natural wastage.

Management say they will not chop any jobs. However, they will not agree to the union's demand for a guarantee to this effect. When the new machinery arrived, a ban was put on it by the workers, and management say they will not meet with the union until the ban is lifted. The T&G say the ban will not be lifted until they have the guarantee. As we go to press the strike is solid with pickets at all the firm's plants throughout Hull.

Lister

The well paid owners of this country's newspapers love to prattle on about 'freedom of the press' and how they are 'independent'.

But the 'Evening Advertiser' in Swindon has exposed this lie. Reporting on a dispute at the Lister engineering factory in Swindon it headlined its vicious anti-trade union article "Just watch out you bully boys"—and they weren't talking about Lister's management!

Workers at Lister were

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH ISSUE 538 6 February 1981 20p

Euroweld Belfast Workers -

OCCUPYING TO SAVE OUR JOBS

In a fight to prevent closure and save their jobs, the workers of Euroweld, East Belfast, are occupying their factory.

They are refusing to allow the government's Receiver into the plant to wind up the firm.

By Mickey Duffy

(Labour and Trade Union Group, Belfast)

They were told last Friday [30 January] that 175 of the workforce were to be laid off immediately [40 others would be kept on just to finish current orders].

On the same day, the latest government figures showed that unemployment in Northern Ireland had shot up to nearly 100,000.

This is 17.2% or a horrifying one in six of the insured population.

Threatened with the sack, the Euroweld workers replied with an occupation. All work has since been stopped. A 24-hour picket of the plant is being maintained to ensure no equipment is moved out.



Euroweld workers outside their workplace

"Bosses take state hand-outs and run"

The workers are determined to save the company and to reclaim their jobs.

Their anger is understandable. Only last autumn the company opened a large new extension, accepting huge gov-

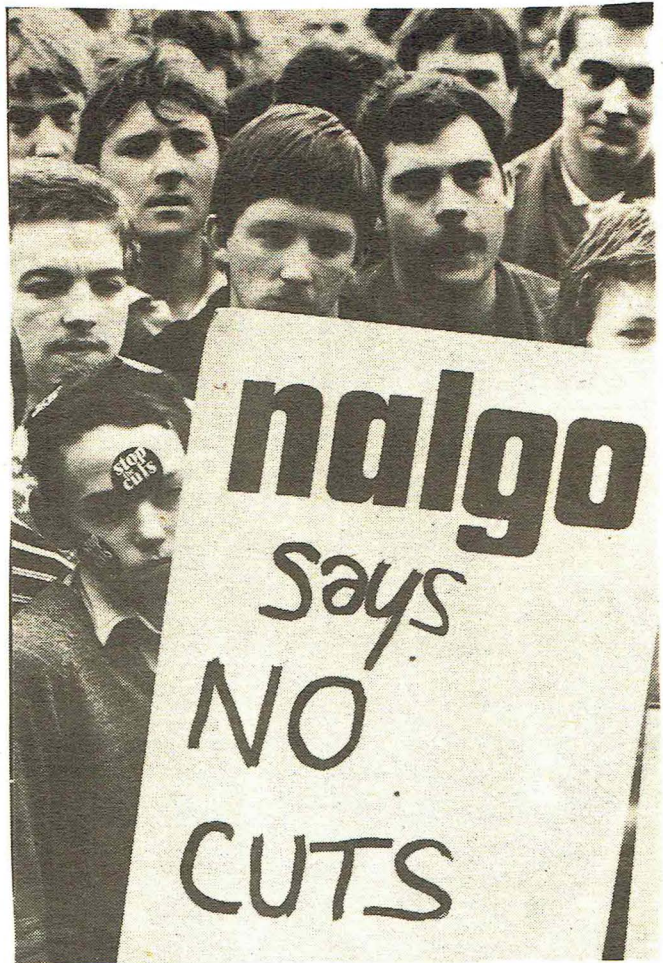
ernment grants. Its American owners, P X O'Neil, flew in to Belfast for this opening ceremony. "The sky's the limit," he told the workforce....

The Minister of State recommended that other

engineering firms should note Euroweld's success, and emulate its example.

But what has this great "success" done for Euroweld workers?

(CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)



No redundancies, no cuts in services say Solihull workers

Photo: Militant

Solihull- Workers angry at savage cuts

By Maureen Hinks

(NUPE)

"Not one job will be lost!" That is the unions' answer to the Solihull Tories, who threatened to chop hundreds of council jobs.

A huge demonstration of over 3,000 council workers last Tuesday, however, forced the Tory council to take a step backwards.

Originally, the Tories intended to slash the budget by £5 million. This would have meant 800 jobs losses, and yet they still intended to put up the rates by 40%

After the angry demonstration [3 February] the finance committee modified their plans a bit. Now they plan "only" a 30% rate increase, but still with big cuts and massive job losses.

The immediate impact of the cuts would have been the sacking of 153 teachers and a cut in the already under-staffed social work team, from 67 to 34. This would put even more stress on social workers, some of whom already have case-loads of 120!

The Tories plan the

total destruction of the school meals services. Last year they got rid of 400 cooks. Now they plan a "sandwich service" instead. This would do away with cooks and canteen assistants!

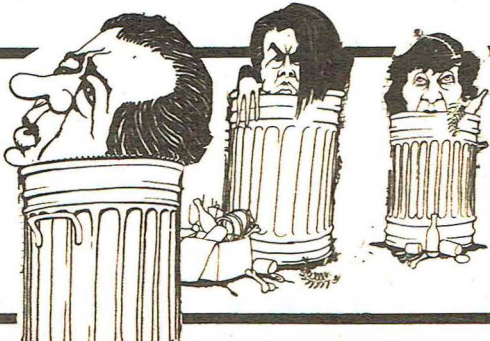
There has been a tremendous reaction against the Tories plans. "Well-off Tories can afford to buy these vital services—but we can't. and we can't afford to lose jobs, so we must fight!" That is the general attitude among working-class people.

The unions in the local authority have taken up the battle, with NALGO leading the way.

At a meeting of over 1,000 branch members, the executive called for a one-day strike and opposition to any redundancies. The decision was eventually for a half-day

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE)

inside



What future for the 'Social Democrats' Page 2 and Page 7