

DANGER ... TORIES AT WORK

Turn
DESPAIR
into
ANGER
into
ACTION

By Margaret Middlemass



The Tories at work, the rest of us workless. 2,681,000 are now officially unemployed. 117,441 school leavers went straight on the dole. 32 people chase every vacancy. Fight back! Join the Labour Party Young Socialists! Protest in Cardiff on 4 July. (see page 3).

You won't throw us on the scrapheap!

I live in Castlemilk, in a typical Glasgow housing scheme. Over the past two years I have been shocked and frightened by the deterioration of living standards.

Castlemilk is blocks of tenement houses, many of them scarred with graffiti. There are massive areas of greenland which could be used for the good of the community, for things like adventure play grounds, bike and skateboard parks.

But in these days of recession such things are pie in the sky.

Castlemilk has its share of social and violent problems. But I think that much of the despair could be avoided. The Tories must accept responsibility for much of the violence in today's society.

The despair and heartache felt by mothers who watch their children grow up frustrated and bitter can turn into hate. It's a crime that the state of a

The threat of closure hangs like a black cloud over Chatham Naval Dockyard's 7,000 workers.

The yard is the biggest employer in the Medway Towns, which are already suffering from the highest unemployment in their history, over 11%.

Labour is a vote to close the Dockyard."

Now it looks as if the Tories are about to do just that.

The latest magnanimous gesture of these two MPs to help their constituents was to abstain on a vote on a Defence White Paper affecting the Dockyard's future.

The morale of the workforce has been at a low ebb for some time, because of rumours of cutbacks and closures, and the knowledge that there is very little hope of alternative employment in the area.

The Dockyard's non-industrial, white-collar workers have been in dispute with the Tory government for the last



Photo: Militant

Demonstration outside Chatham Dockyard last Saturday. Workers want alternative jobs for a highly skilled workforce.

By shop steward
Chatham
Dockyard

The Naval Base has been used for political blackmail by the two local Tory MPs, Sir Freddy Burden of Gillingham, and Peggy Fenner of Rochester and Chatham. For years they have trotted out such slogans as: "A vote for

CONTINUED ON
PAGE TWO

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

Militant

SOCIALIST RAIL PLAN NEEDED

"Retreat? Hell, no, we only just got here!"

Mrs Thatcher, general in the class war against the workers, quoted an American soldier from the First World War as proof that the government were standing firm and would not change course.

But on the same day, the government gave a clear indication of how its horrific policies could be stopped. The National Coal Board had its direct grants to the coal industry more than doubled to £550 million and their cash limits raised by £231 million this year. Earlier this year, the Tories had threatened mass pit closures.

The change of heart was far from voluntary. It was, of course, the miners'

threatened strike in February and the unofficial action in many areas which forced concessions from the Tories.

This week the government announced possible further state aid to a nationalised industry for electrification of lines on British Rail. BR had asked for their yearly investment ceiling to be raised from £306 million to £567 million and for a full electrification scheme costing up to £700 million over some 20 years.

With BR, though, the government was acting under far less pressure from the strength of the organised working class. In consequence, no figures have been agreed, and each electrification scheme will be decided "on its merits", i.e. on its profitability.

The government also threatened railway workers'

jobs. Thatcher recently said that living standards had to fall in order to save jobs—unless productivity was increased. The government have also made greater productivity a condition of their BR investment programme. And productivity here means increased unemployment.

The railways are expected to meet the 1985 target set in the BR corporate review of the destruction of 38,000 jobs. Every stage of the plan would be subject to close scrutiny, a piecemeal development dependent on workers sacrificing their livelihood.

This plan is not a concession to BR workers; it is a concession to a big business which is desperate for new orders. Many industrialists now see public investment as a magic solution to problems their own system has caused. The Confederation of British Industry are still howling for further public spending cuts, but they want these to be in wages and services rather than capital investment.

They are showing their total desperation. The crisis in capitalism has been made worse by the monetarist policies of this government. Manufacturing industry has been hardest hit with a big fall in output last year and another huge fall anticipated in 1981. The Cambridge Econometrics Group estimate that the figure for manufacturing output in 1990 will still be below that of 1979.

Manufacturing investment slumped 8% during

1980 and will probably decline even more this year. With enormous excess capacity despite the numerous plant closures, and a rate of return of about 2%, there is little incentive for investment in private industry. The neglect of investment, not the size of the wage bill lies at the root of low productivity in British industry.

The CBI look instead to a public investment "incentive" to industry through new work for supply industries mainly in private hands. The main benefits would go to the capitalists while the costs are borne by 38,000 redundant rail workers.

The government are also pressing for more rapid denationalisation. British Telecoms have been allowed to borrow more on the understanding that this process would be speeded up. Hiving off of the profitable sectors has already started in the railways (see page 7).

The Tories and the capitalist system have no solutions other than attacks on workers. The comparatively favourable investment programme for the NCB was a result of the militancy of the miners.

The rail unions must show similar determination. They have stated their opposition in the past to job losses, but nonetheless Sir Peter Parker, BR chief, felt able to praise the rail union leaders' "co-operation" in reducing manning levels by 7,500 in the last year!

The unions must fight all

redundancies, starting with the parcels services and marshalling yards under immediate threat. There must be a firm resistance to any denationalisation. While Sid Weighell, the leader of the NUR, has demagogically spoken of going to the barricades against the hiving off of hotels, investment by the NUR in Gleneagles Hotel puts the union in an invidious position. The demand is correctly growing for renationalisation without compensation of denationalised assets, but how can the union fight for this if it acquires shares in these private companies?

The unions must fight for a real programme of new investment. Only 20% of track in Britain is electrified, one of the lowest proportions in Europe. 3,000 miles of track are threatened at present because of lack of maintenance caused by previous cutbacks.

A campaign must be waged to secure a thorough modernisation of the rail network as well as demanding a 35-hour week which could create 23,000 new rail jobs according to NUR officials.

But the problems of BR and other nationalised industries cannot be solved in isolation. Britain has a capitalist economy, and the interests of the 20% of economy in public hands are subordinated to those of the 80% of private industry.

Nationalised industries have always been used as sources of cheap goods and services for private industry. Now the devastation of

British industry has reduced industry's demand for services such as steel, coal and rail transportation. At the same time, they have been bled dry by the banks. Debt repayments and interest charges turned BR's operating profit of £70 million in 1979 into a £400,000 loss.

British Rail should no more be used as a source of plunder for private industry or to carry out pro-capitalist policies. The British Railways Board should not be under the control of highly paid ex-capitalists like Sir Peter Parker.

The rail unions must fight for a board made up of one third from the rail unions, one third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole and one third from the government. Such a structure would ensure that the industry and workers would gain the real benefits from the railway system.

Rail unions must fight not only within the triple alliance but with other unions for a socialist programme of nationalisation under workers' control and management of the 200 major monopolies, banks and finance companies which dominate the economy.

This would allow a socialist plan of production rather than the present planless waste of capitalism, with the integrated transport system organised in line with the real needs of industry and passengers.

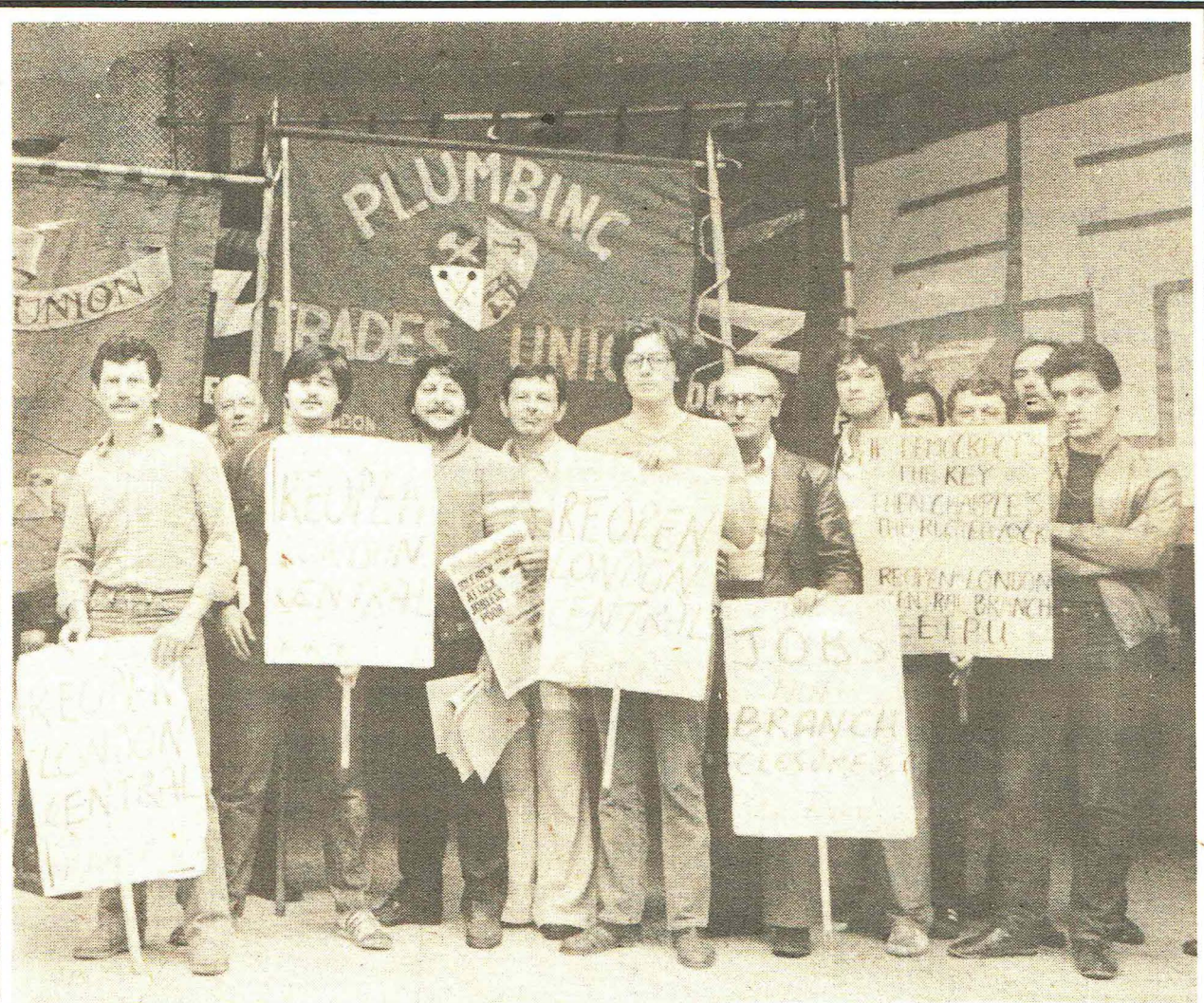


Photo: Militant

Electricians demand Union democracy

Members of the electricians' union, the EETPU, lobbied the TUC on 24 June in protest at their leadership's decision to close down London Central branch (above). This branch which has three delegates to the Bermondsey Labour Party, refused to accept the national executive choosing a Joe Lees to represent them. The branch felt that as Mr Lees had not attended a branch meeting for fourteen years he was not their choice to represent them. In response the national executive closed down the branch. A campaign to re-open London Central has now begun in the union and is appealing for wider support within the whole labour movement in the fight for democracy.

TORY DANGER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

country can inflict such feelings.

We must do something to stop the waste of our youth.

My husband pays his tax, and national insurance, which takes a hefty amount from his pay packet. After giving our hard-earned cash to the government, what do we get in return?

Cutbacks on all our social amenities, national health, education, and worst of all, higher unemployment!

We must let Thatcher know that she cannot take away what has been fought for. If we give the hatchet woman time she'll have us all back in the 1930s.

Why do we allow the threats of capitalism to push us nearer and nearer the past?

We are often told the future looks bleak. Thatcher says we must tighten our belts, we must accept lower standards, we must accept change for the worst, we must accept unemployment, lower wage rises and higher rents and rates.

Thatcher shows herself buying food in supermarkets now and then. She looks calm and relaxed with her basket full. I look exhausted, the same as most other women, walking from store to store to save a few pence.

I am sick to my stomach trying to budget the money I get.

In the past couple of years we have suffered under the Tories. If we



Castlemilk estate, Glasgow

wait until the next general election to change things, we deserve what we get.

It is a crime to sit back and do nothing. We must all come together, with our fellow workers, if not, we are going to be trodden on further by the greedy boot of the Tories.

I am sick of seeing all the criminal waste of talent, the destruction of ambitions and living standards.

I hate to see the area I remember as a child looking like an industrial shell. I hate to see the housing scheme I live in deteriorate drastically, and the attitudes and social behaviour fall.

I don't want to see any more. Aren't you sick of it all yet?

CARDIFF JULY 4 DEMONSTRATE AGAINST TORY DESTRUCTION

Wales has come in for special treatment from the bosses. In the last year alone unemployment has risen from just over 8% to nearly 14%.

The devastation of industries such as steel, means that there are virtually no jobs to go to. Fourteen thousand school leavers will soon be looking for work.

Nowadays you retire at sixteen, directly you leave

By Brian Lewis
(Swansea LPYS)

school. That's the price the Tories demand for maintaining their system.

But on Saturday July 4 the labour movement will be showing that there is an alternative. Up to 70,000 people are expected to march through Cardiff demanding that Thatcher goes.

The LPYS are calling for

this march to be linked to a campaign to get rid of the Tories and their rotten system, starting with a 24-hour General Strike. We don't want the bosses to control and ruin our lives.

We call on all trade unionists and youth—don't let the Tories get you down. Join us in Cardiff and make it a demonstration that the Tories will never forget.

LPYS members assemble from 10.00am by Cardiff Museum steps, Town Centre.

6 CLEARLY UNEMPLOYMENT
IS GETTING BETTER
BECAUSE ITS
GETTING WORSE
MORE SLOWLY
EVEN A RAVING
LUNATIC COULD
SEE THIS?



Scottish workers strike to stop cuts

By Pat Craven

Over 3,000 workers demonstrated in Dundee last Monday when Tory Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, visited the town. All over Scotland the battle to defend council jobs is reaching a climax.

Dundee workers were protesting against Younger's attempt to force the local Council to cut its spending by £2.75 million. Under new legislation he can now cut the rate support grant to councils which he thinks have incurred "excessive" expenditure.

The previous escape route of massive rate increases to stop cuts has now been blocked. Labour councils have the grim choice of either implementing the cuts and becoming the Tories' bailiffs, or of mobilising a fight to force the government to back down.

Dundee council workers are determined to resist the Tories. "We shall fight all the way" declared Greg Brown of NALGO.

The cuts would have meant the loss of 450 jobs in one year. But since the savings have been ordered to be made in six months 900 jobs would go, 14 branch libraries would close, Museum and Art Galleries would only be open on a part time basis and the leisure centre would close for half the week.

In Sterling 100 jobs are at risk because of a demand for £2.75 million in cuts. Council workers there have also pledged full support for the Labour councils' fight to maintain services and jobs.

The biggest battle will be in the Lothian region where cuts of no less than a massive £53 million have been demanded. The effect of such cuts would be catastrophic—huge rises in bus fares, closure of residential care centres, teachers sacked and home helps and meals on wheels reduced.

Lothian Council workers have decided to hold a one-day strike and day of action on 30 June, when the Council will decide on its response to Younger's ultimatum.

The action by workers in Dundee, Stirling and Lothian must now be urgently taken up by the whole labour movement. With a clear lead from the Scottish TUC and the Scottish Labour Party, a massive campaign could be mobilised.

It should spread south as well. Younger's new law the local government 'Miscellaneous Provisions Scotland Act' is being tested in Scotland for future use in England and Wales. Thousands of jobs throughout Britain are in jeopardy. This is a fight we cannot afford to lose.

ONLY THREE WEEKS TO MILITANT NATIONAL RALLY

The latest people to agree to appear at next month's 'Militant' rally are folk singers Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl.

Other entertainment will be provided by folk groups, a theatre group and a poet.

There will be three films shown: 'Look back at Grunwicks', 'Battleship Potemkin' and 'The War Game'.

It promises to be an excellent political and social day out for all the family.

Seventeen years ago when 'Militant' was first published, as a four page monthly, supporters of the newspaper were told that Marxism was irrelevant and out of date.

Nowadays the criticism is different; the bosses are scared that we are only too relevant.

Hardly a week goes by without some attack or comment in the media about 'Militant' or its supporters. After the failure of successive Labour governments to end capitalism and after two years of Thatcherism, many workers are seeing the need for a Marxist alternative to solve their problems.

The highlight of the Rally will be a mass meeting

where the policies and programme of 'Militant' will be spelt out. Amongst the speakers will be Peter Taaffe, Editor of the paper, and Ted Grant from the Editorial Board.

Get your LPYS, Labour Party and trade union branch to organise coaches to come to this event. It is only three weeks away.

A free crèche has been organised with planned activities and entertainments for the children. Refreshments and food will be available all day.

Admission for all the day's activities is £1 or only 30p for unwaged—a real bargain.

Buy your tickets now from your local 'Militant' seller or write, enclosing money, and whether you will be using the crèche, to, Rally Organiser, 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BUILD
A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EVENT
FOR SUPPORTERS, THE LABOUR
AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT,
THEIR FAMILIES AND
THE GENERAL PUBLIC
Militant
RALLY

AT
FRIENDS HOUSE,
EUSTON RD.,
LONDON

WHAT'S ON -

The event will include—a big meeting, films, folk, food and theatre, bookstalls, badges, banners, cartoons, exhibitions, discussions, seminars on major questions, multitudes of side stalls including literature and posters; crèche facilities are available, all day snacks too.



ENTRANCE £1.00 (10p unwaged)
START ORGANISING
IN YOUR AREA NOW!
TRAINS, COACHES...

AN EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED

NO RETREAT FROM LONDON LABOUR MANIFESTO

Since Labour won control of the Greater London Council on 7 May the new majority has been under continuous attack. The election of a radical leadership immediately earned the GLC the Tories' hatred.

The new Labour GLC is committed by its manifesto to a number of far-reaching reforms. But from almost the first day of office it has been clear that the GLC is facing huge opposition from the Tory government to carrying out its policies.

Since winning the 1979

general election the Tories have worked to cut public spending and reduce the powers of local authorities. Steadily, the Tories have been blocking off every loop-hole which Labour councils have used, to try to avoid carrying out the cuts demanded by the government.

Labour councils are faced with the stark choice: either follow the government's orders—or go into an all-out fight with the Tories.

The Labour GLC Manifesto foresaw this situation. It stated that "a Labour GLC and Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) will resist any cuts and demand that the

Tory government provides the necessary finance to maintain and improve all council services. Understanding that the Tory government does not listen to pleas but only responds to pressure, a Labour GLC and ILEA will appeal to the labour and trade union movement to take action, including industrial action, to support its stand.

"Mass opposition to Tory policies led by a Labour GLC could become the focal point of a national campaign, involving other Labour councils, against the cuts and for an immediate general election and the election of a Labour government."

Unfortunately, at the last meeting of the Greater London Labour Party executive, instead of discussing a plan of campaign against the government, reports were presented stating that two election pledges could not be implemented because of legal constraints. The pledges concerned the continuation of the GLC as a housing authority and the reduction of school meals to 25p.

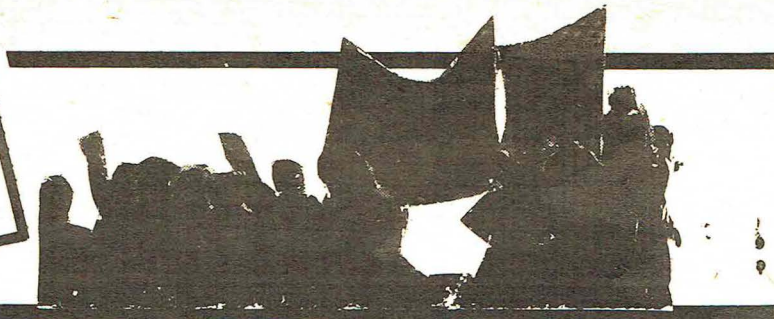
The Executive were told that, because these issues possibly involved the risk of surcharges, there was no guarantee they could be passed through the GLC or ILEA. Some new members of

the GLC spoke in favour of avoiding a confrontation by dropping some Manifesto pledges and seeking other ways to implement reforms.

The Executive, however, called on ILEA to reduce the cost of school meals to 25p. It decided to hold an emergency meeting on 29 June which will undertake "a full discussion of a GLC strategy in face of government attacks."

It is essential that the London labour movement ensures that the GLC takes a firm stand against the government and that it is supported by a mobilisation of the full political and industrial strength of the movement.

WORKERS IN ACTION



Organise strategy to fight cuts

Opening the Bradford Trades Council cuts conference, Pat Wall stressed that whilst it was necessary to attack the Tories and criticise, when they deserved it, the labour movement movement leadership, it was essential that the conference work out a programme and strategy to fight the cuts.

But how could a fight back be launched? Councillor Bernard Kearns pointed to the "chicken and egg" situation: which came first—a lead from Labour's National Executive and the TUC, which was absent at the moment, or action by a local council?

Ted Knight, former leader of Lambeth Council, pointed to the difficulties of a local struggle where within a week council employees could be without pay and the council declared bankrupt.

But Ronnie from the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades described how if SOGAT members at Fields, Bradford, had waited for national leadership there would have been 480 redundancies. With deter-

mined local leadership, no redundancies had been achieved and the same thing applied for local councils.

Keith Narey (Trades Council) made the point that those councillors who were not prepared to make a stand should be made to account for their actions at selection time.

The feeling of the conference was that the council should not do a 'Kamekaze' act by opposing cuts without support. It should build support by standing firm against the Tories without resorting to huge rate increases, whilst drawing together the strength of the local and national labour movement.

As a first step it was agreed to set up an anti-cuts committee to campaign for a week of action in the autumn. Such a campaign linked to a council prepared to take on the Tories could transform the local situation and give hope and confidence to the working people of Bradford, who are now suffering vicious attacks to their social wage.

By Pete Watson
(Bradford West LP)



LPYS members at last year's camp Photo: Militant

LPYS Summer Camp August 1-8

COME TO THE 'HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME'

**By
Helen Mullineux**
(Havant and Waterloo
CLP)

From only £15 you can have a luxury week in the Forest of Dean with sporting activities, political education, international cabaret, and a complete baby minding service. It's the holiday of a lifetime.

What's this wonderful offer? The Young Socialists' Summer Camp of course. I went last year and really enjoyed it.

During the day there were political seminars and discussions in the marquees on topics from 'Chile' to 'How to Write a Leaflet' and comrades from a whole range of other countries and there were also most enlightened debates with Labour MPs.

Apart from political discussions there were many other activities—trips to the Clearwell Caves, dancing and singing, canoeing, sports, swimming etc.

The sporting events culminated in a grand sports afternoon when the whole camp turned out to watch the finals of athletics, football, cricket, tug-of-war and so on to the LPYS National Committee beaten in the obstacle race by the children from the crèche.

Evenings were great too. After the political discussions there would be a bar, plus band, a disco, or a "Club Night" when comrades from around the country (and the world) performed, to give a wide variety of excellent entertainment.

To help parents there was a crèche. The children were

able to join in a wide variety of activities including horse riding, swimming, etc. so the youngest person had as good a holiday as the oldest.

The whole thing was set in a wooded river valley in the Forest of Dean on a Forestry Commission campsite (with proper loos and showers). We even had our own nurse to deal with the inevitable sporting injuries and minor ailments and there was a daily minibus run into the nearby town each day for shopping, sightseeing etc.

Basically it was a weekend packed full of a great choice of political and social activities. Every detail seemed to have been arranged to give the most enjoyable holiday.

Am I going again this year?—you bet! I wouldn't

miss it for anything. Get a tent somehow and come along. Pay only £15 if you can be bothered to cook for yourself.

Personally, I'm going to pay the full £40 to get all meals provided. I can't stand the thought of cooking and washing up three times a day, especially if it's raining—but I hear the National Committee have already begun negotiations for good weather to be provided! See you there, O.K.? Book your holidays now! Make your transport arrangements today! August 1st-8th. LPYS Summer Camp, Bracelands Campsite, near Coleford, Gloucester.

Cost:— only £40 meals provided or £15 self catering. (Reduced rates for children under 12). Send your £5 deposit NOW to Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Obituary: Fred Perkins

The recent death of Fred Perkins has brought great sorrow to all those who knew him in the Nottingham area as a stalwart of socialism. Fred had been active in the labour movement for more than 50 years, having first joined the Independent Labour Party in 1923.

He never lost his enthusiasm for socialism and was a constant source of encouragement, especially to the youth for whom he personified the real heart of the Labour Party. Time and time again at General Management Committee meetings Fred was able to silence those who attempted to portray Marxism as alien to the Labour Party and imply that Liberalism was fundamental.

In particular, at the time of the Lib-Lab pact, someone stated that the Labour Party was born out of compromises with the Lib-

erals, and that it was only natural to form alliances with our friends. Fred was soon on his feet to put the record straight, explaining how the Labour Party was in fact formed out of struggles against Liberalism, and craft narrow-mindedness.

Fred also recognised the great need to expand the influence of Marxism within the labour movement and to that end he was a regular donor to the Militant Fighting Fund, as well as being an avid reader.

Whenever Fred spoke in a meeting he talked softly and was always well informed. Mild in manner and bold in content, a lesson for us all. His death is a great loss to the Nottingham labour movement.

**By Nottingham
Militant
supporters**

International Readers Meeting

It was a readers' meeting with a difference when supporters of 'Militant' teamed up with the Marxist paper of 'Vorán' from Germany and 'Offensiv' from Sweden and a member of the Austrian Young Socialists for a public meeting in

Vienna.

It was decided to hold the meeting during the recent International Union of Socialist Youth camp after interest had been shown in the ideas of Marxism by rank and file members of the various socialist movements gathered at the camp.

Hans Gerd Offinger for 'Vorán' outlined the problems facing the European capitalist countries. He explained that in the world crisis of capitalism no

capitalist country, no matter how strong or stable in the past, could escape. Reforms gained in the past by right wing Social Democrat leaders would begin to be taken back as the crisis deepened.

Similarly, the supporter of the Swedish Marxist paper 'Offensiv' explained how the hey-days of Swedish capitalism were coming to an end. The Swedish economy had a deficit of billions, and 200,000 workers would be unemployed by the end of

the year.

But instead of building on this, the right-wing Social Democrat leaders had turned to witch hunts of Marxists within the party. Over 20 supporters of 'Offensiv' had been expelled from the Swedish Young Socialists, the SSU, and from the party as well. The leader of the Social Democratic Party, Anderson, is reported to have said, "We can't tolerate a development like that in Britain," describing the growth of support for 'Militant' and Marxist ideas within the Labour Party.

As the speaker explained, "This situation will cause us problems in the next few years, but we are not

pessimists. The right wing leaders can't expel reality or Marxist ideas."

Ken Smith, on behalf of 'Militant' described how "In 1848 Marx wrote that the spectre of communism is haunting Europe. Today, over a hundred years later, the genuine ideas of Marxism are haunting the ruling class."

Ken was followed by Bobby Schiffler from District 10 of the Austrian Young Socialists. He described how after Austria had nearly 30 years of economic upswing, the current recession was dragging the country into a new reality.

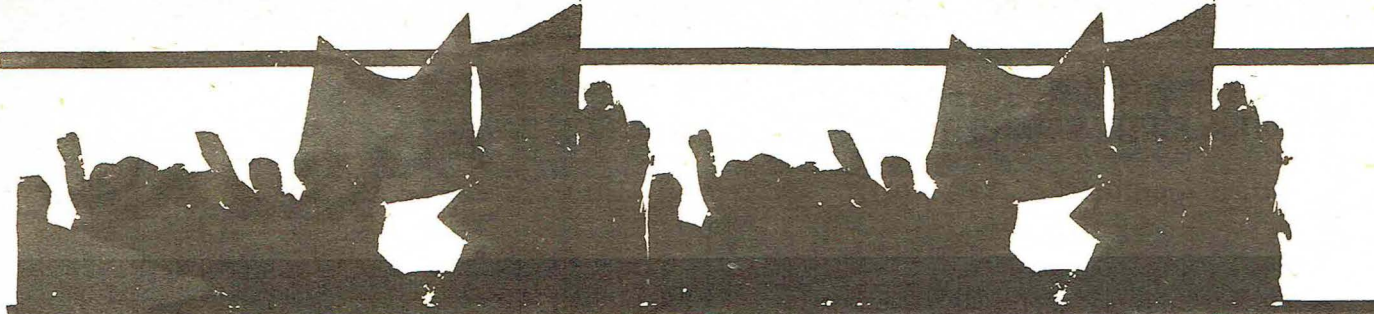
Unemployment was 3% and rising, and cuts were beginning to be made in

Austria's comprehensive welfare state. He said, "Our answer to those capitalists who say they cannot afford a welfare state is, if that is so, then we can't afford them."

A discussion followed, with some genuine questions and criticisms raised by some German Young Socialists, which were answered in full.

A collection raised a magnificent 12,584 Austrian schillings, about £380, which was shared out amongst the three papers.

By Bob Wade



**WORKERS
IN ACTION**

MAJOR STEPS FORWARD AT LABOUR WOMENS CONFERENCE



Labour Women's Conference last week

Photo: T Howland (IFL)

Anyone who imagines the Labour Party women's conference to be one of old ladies in hats getting together once a year for a chat is in for a surprise!

At this year's conference, the programme for fighting the Tories was hotly debated on the floor of the conference. Val Pearce from Bracknell, Berkshire, who has long been active in the labour movement, but who was attending her first women's conference, found the conference "a real eye-opener."

Val said: "I was surprised at the number of young people at the conference. The level of debate was higher than I imagined and I was pleased that a class position was put by most delegates, anti-Tory rather than anti-men."

"I couldn't identify with those feminist delegates who were trying to make the conference anti-men, which is divisive. Any idea that women care solely about the home and the family and what to have for dinner was dispelled at this conference."

Some delegates were putting forward demands for "positive discrimination," with measures like job quotas. These demands can be used to divide the working class along sex lines.

Whilst women need positive encouragement to involve them in the trade union and labour movement, such demands as job quotas for women in a time of recession and slump will not mobilise men and unify all workers. In struggle, the call must be for the fight to save every job and for work or full pay for everyone.

Lesley Holt, Liverpool Wavertree, pointed out that in Liverpool, this year, the Post Office had taken on only one apprentice compared with hundreds in previous years. How can you argue whether one apprenticeship should go to a male or a female?

Val Pearce went on to say: "Before this conference, I regarded the women's sections as the place where women were fobbed off with the tea-making and jumble sales etc. This conference showed me that the women's sections in the future will play

By Heather Rawling

a similar role to the LPYS in campaigning to recruit women to the Labour Party on such class issues as unemployment, housing and education.

One resolution tabled by feminist delegates called for five resolutions automatically to be on the Labour Party conference agenda, while another asked for 10.

"Militant supporters argued that there could be no organisational short-cuts to getting women's issues taken seriously within the movement. If resolutions are moved through wards, constituencies and trade union branches, and the issues explained, the whole question can be thoroughly discussed and their importance understood."

There were also calls for the women's section on Labour's National Executive to be elected at women's conference. During the recent battles over party democracy, however, the right has attacked the NEC women's section, seeing this as a lever for a change in the NEC structure which would give the right a built-in majority on the Executive.

"Militant" supporters argued that at this stage the existing structure of the NEC should be maintained.

When the Women's sections have been democratised, there would be a case for a representative on the NEC to be elected at the annual women's conference, as is the case with the Labour Party Young Socialists.

The labour movement does not sufficiently recognise the issues affecting working-class women, and women are under-represented at every level of the trade unions and the party. But this must be changed through campaigning on the issues among the rank and file, not through organisational steps to short-circuit them.

Demands were also raised for a woman to be on every parliamentary short list.

We stressed that it is a candidate's policies which is divisive, not their sex. If the party goes out to recruit more

women members and fights on women's issues, women will begin to take the leading positions they should have, including being MPs.

In the debate on violence against women, Lesley Holt (Liverpool) and Margaret Manning (Manchester Moss Side) said that brutal, anti-social behaviour was a symptom of a sick society. Capitalism encourages brutality. The labour movement must utterly condemn the brutal treatment of women. But we must explain that violence is rooted in the profit-dominated system.

A major victory was scored at the conference on organisation, when on the recommendation of the platform, conference passed resolution 128, calling for the women's organisation to be organised along the lines of the present LPYS structure.

This means Regional Committees of women with the job of building women's sections in their area, Regional Women's Conferences to elect National Committee members, and the National Committee to be answerable to the National Conference.

This is a major step forward over the present system of postal balloting and different methods of election in each region. We must make sure that these are rapidly implemented.

These measures will enormously improve the ability of the women's organisation to campaign amongst working women and recruit them to the Party, especially if these campaigns are linked to a socialist programme.

That is why the decision of conference (with the recommendation of the platform) to pass the resolution on the economy submitted by Liverpool Wavertree, calling for the nationalisation of the banks and major monopolies

and a socialist plan of production is so important.

In the debates on unemployment, the issues were sharply debated. How will the next Labour government tackle the problems of the economy and unemployment? Delegate after delegate got up to the rostrum to point out that taking control of the economy was the only answer.

In the climate of economic decline, the next Labour government will not be able to carry out the measures demanded by the rank and file of the labour movement on any permanent basis unless it owns and controls the means of production, the factories and finance houses.

Unfortunately, again on the recommendations of the platform, the conference voted against a resolution on unemployment put by 'Militant' supporters. One older delegate was really dismayed by the leadership's approach. She wanted to see a quick solution to the problems of unemployment. But she was

bucked up by the rest of the Conference.

This year's conference of Labour women reflected a shift to the left that cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of society. The process taking place in the women's organisation, which as a result will be transformed into a fighting organisation capable of recruiting droves of women into the party, reflects the general shift to the left in the rest of society.

The growing support for Marxist ideas augurs well for the future. About 40 delegates attended the 'Militant' meeting, where over £100 was raised for the Fighting Fund. The 'Militant' pamphlet "Women and the Fight for Socialism" was enthusiastically received, with 166 sold at the conference.

This year's Women's Conference represents a turning point. The call must go out to build the women's sections and turn them into active campaigning organisations.

Backing for Brixton People's Enquiry

At its last meeting North East Leeds Labour Party gave its full support to the initiative taken by the Labour Party Young Socialists over the disturbances in Brixton. The Leeds resolution stated its support for a labour movement enquiry and campaign for:

1. The withdrawal of the massive police presence and the ending of arbitrary stopping and searching.

2. An end to police harassment.

3. Dropping of all charges against those arrested.

4. Disbanding the Special Patrol Group.

5. A reversal of Tory cuts in public spending.

We also support the Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton which was set up to fight for these demands.

In view of the events that have occurred in Brixton we call on the Labour Party and trade union movement to set up a labour movement enquiry consisting of local trade union branches, shop stewards' committees, Labour Parties and black and youth organisations linked with regional and national bodies of the movement."

MILITANT READERS' MEETINGS

LEYTONSTONE: 'Benn or Healey, which way forward for Labour'. Tuesday 30 June, 8.00 pm. Harrow Green Library, Cathall Road, Leytonstone E11. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

SALFORD Marxist Discussion Group. 'Transitional Programme' Speaker: Margaret Crear. Wednesday 1 July 8.00pm For further details ring (061) 793-5808.

CHESTERFIELD: 'Democracy—where we stand' Hear: Pat Wall (President Bradford Trades Council). Wednesday 1 July 7.30pm Venue: Lecture Room, North Derbyshire NUM Offices, Saltergate, Chesterfield.

CARLTON: 'How can Labour rebuild?' speakers Arthur Palmer (Gedling and County Councillor) Brian Debus (Erdington CLP) Thursday 2 July, 7.30pm at Carlton Hill, Co-op (upstairs), Carlton, Nottingham.

BLYTH. All meetings start 7.30pm. Wed 1st July—What happened in Afghanistan? Wed 15th July—Import Control and the Textile Industry. Wed 29 July—Brixton—What happened and the lessons for the labour movement. Venue: 148 Disraeli St. Blyth.

BARROW: 'Militant—What we stand for'. For further details contact Ray Physick, Sunderland 653994.



Some of the characters turning up in the newly formed Social Democratic Party are causing them quite an embarrassment. 'Militant' 542 told the story of an NF member in Brighton who stood as a 'social democrat' during a local election. Now the SDP in Luton are having problems.

When Steve Harmer turned up at the local branch, so impressed were the members—or so desperate to recruit members—that they made him joint secretary. After all, Harmer has had a lot of 'political' experience: he is an ex-member of the National Front and the terrorist nazi group Column 88, he fought for Ian Smith as a mercenary in Rhodesia and worked with the Ku Klux Klan while living in America ('Searchlight' June 1981).

Another interesting member of Luton SDP is Denis Williams—he also happens to be chairman of Luton National Front Constitutional Movement!

Pessimists who doubt the future of the British way of life should take heart from Somerset schoolboy Jacob Rees Mogg.

He is currently thwarted in his chosen field (he wants to be chairman of GEC). But the youngest pupil in Westminster remove doesn't sit idling—he puts his shares to work. Checking daily prices in the 'Financial Times', he works with great application to maximise returns: GEC "is making huge profits and paying virtually no dividends at all...On 100 shares you get £3.50, which is absolutely disgraceful." But he acknowledges that he gets very good service from his (six) banks.

He has "decided to go to Eton", but is a realist: "I don't know whether Arnold (Weinstock) will still be leading (GEC) when I'm free. If he is, I'll have a good company to take over..." Such optimism is essential: father William Rees Mogg was recently made redundant (as editor of 'The Times'); godfather Norman St John Stevas has just been sacked by Jacob's other hero, Mrs Thatcher.

So why complain? As long as we have this level of talent, Britain has a bright future. But not everyone is so enamoured with the system that works so well for people like Rees Mogg junior. What do redundant GEC workers think?

Ever been told that workers overseas produce your product quicker, better and cheaper? Lucas shop stewards in Birmingham heard the usual management story: their French counterparts were much more efficient, and they'd better pull their socks up—or else. So the shop stewards decided to visit the Ducellier plant, at Issorie in Southern France, and see for themselves. Management, in a panic, first refused to sanction the trip. Then they tried to attach a couple of managers to the delegation.

The shop stewards refused the offer of 'guidance', and discovered the French plant had much newer, more sophisticated machines. Management claimed that the French plant needed less than half the number of indirect workers; the delegation found much of the 'indirect' work was being done by outside contractors. As senior T&GWU steward Bill Glover reported: "the same company line was being peddled in France—but in reverse. We were supposed to be producing more and faster than them!"

The Oil Profiteers

You can't win! When there is an oil shortage, petrol prices always rise. But now, in the middle of a world oil surplus, prices are still rising!

The major oil companies, starting with BP, announced that they were ending their 'discounts' to garages, pushing up pump prices by 6p to 10p a gallon. The oil companies claim that they made a loss on their retailing outlets and on refining but these would only be 'paper' losses.

The same companies which dominate petrol sales (the big 5 companies control 75% of retailing) are also responsible for refining, transportation and, in most cases, extraction. To make a loss on 'downstream' (sales) operations, they only have to fix

By John Pickard

OPEC level—officially at \$39.25 a barrel.

For a socialist energy policy

prices relatively high at the 'upstream' end of the process—all within the same company.

The oil companies have enough economic power to be able to adjust their prices in this way so as to best suit profit and tax considerations, and they get away with it.

At the same time as conning the motorists, the oil companies have squeezed hundreds of millions out of the government via the British National Oil Corporation. BNOC markets most of the North Sea crude oil and normally sets its price at

Nevertheless, the government, after first promising a cut of \$2 next month caved in to the pressure and introduced a cut of \$4.25 a barrel. Each \$1 cut means an equivalent loss of tax revenue of £200 million so that means the Tories have decided to bolster the already huge oil company profits by over £800m.

Industrial giants like Esso, Shell, BP, Mobil, Texaco, and so on will always wrap workers, taxmen and even governments around their fingers because of the economic and political power they have.

A socialist policy for energy would not leave these companies to be run for private profit, riding rough-shod over governments and workers. They would have to be taken over and run for the interests of society at large.

But now the oil companies have put pressure on the government to drop the price that at which BNOC sells to them. The fall in the value of the pound in relation to the dollar (all oil prices are quoted in dollars) has effectively raised prices in Britain but the same companies, being multinationals are making gains elsewhere from the rise of the dollar.

CASHING IN ON THE UNEMPLOYED

By Dave Webb

(Hackney South and Shoreditch LPYS)

The call for a 'Community Service' scheme, supposedly voluntary, has been resurrected in the Tory press.

With nearly one million people on the dole, a bleak future ahead of them, fears are growing. The bosses are desperately searching for ways to 'get youth off the streets'.

Various government schemes aim to fill the jobs gap, notably the Youth Opportunities Programme. One in four school leavers are now getting £23.50 for usually menial work, under the guise of 'training' and work experience.

The majority are thrown back on the scrapheap after six months, with no permanent job.

'Radical' solutions

Tory plans for conscription of the unemployed in military service provoked outraged protest—the army had reservations too. Community service is the latest 'radical solution'.

The scheme is put forward by 'Youthcall', whose committee includes *Times* journalist, Ian Bradley, and David Kay, a director of National Westminster Bank.

Young people would be paid £15 a week—even less than on YOP—to work in schools, social services, hospitals, museums, nature conservation and recreation. All these services have been threatened by cuts in public spending.

The Conservative suggest that the scheme would be a major lifeline for school leavers by providing them with a 'training' period. They carefully avoid mentioning that the scheme would be a major lifeline for the unemployed.

They also mention that the scheme would be a major lifeline for the unemployed.



Looking for a non-existent job on Merseyside

armour, doing their bit to help the young unemployed.

The bosses also recognise quite clearly that the labour movement, organised in the trade unions, is the biggest threat to their system.

On schemes such as YOPs and 'Youthcall', more and more workers would be denied trade union rights or trade union rates of pay. Despite claims by 'Youthcall', bosses see such schemes as a way of raising their profits by laying off organised workers.

Not a single new job is guaranteed.

Already many youngsters are campaigning against such 'cosmetic' solutions. Their anger must be given direction by the labour leaders.

We want real jobs! We want real wages!

The trade unions should campaign much more actively against all these schemes and for real wages and real jobs. All the existing job programmes must be unionised, and the unemployed must be allowed to join unions.

The demand for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, already the policy of many unions, must be taken up much more strongly to create new jobs. Job security must be guaranteed and a national public works programme must be established.

The enormous potential of new technology and a massive programme of retraining must be used to create new jobs.

The enormous potential of new technology and a massive programme of retraining must be used to create new jobs.

In the Northern Region, 41,000 young people were on YOP schemes between April 1980 and March 1981. Next year, the figure will rise to 57,000—an increase of 42%.

Out of the 1,029 placements made by the Newcastle Careers service in the first three months of this year, only 129 direct to permanent jobs are being offered. The remainder are temporary jobs, for a maximum of 12 weeks. There was a slight improvement in September.

Eighty per cent of all placements were on special government schemes. After six months on YOP, 70% of young people are still unemployed.

Demanded, despite being unemployed for being found them, with employment, the young people are still unemployed.

Demanded, despite being found them, with employment, the young people are still unemployed.

three out of four of the youngsters will be back on the dole. The Manpower Services Commission estimate that a third of all YOP schemes involve no new jobs at all: in numerous cases, workers have been sacked and replaced by YOP trainees.

Some areas of work have become almost dependent on government subsidised training. That of Newcastle City Council's work and community centres is now run by YOP alone. As made an outcast, the council is unable to pay wages to its staff, and the council is unable to pay wages to its staff.

Some areas of work have become almost dependent on government subsidised training. That of Newcastle City Council's work and community centres is now run by YOP alone. As made an outcast, the council is unable to pay wages to its staff, and the council is unable to pay wages to its staff.

ANSELLS - Why the workers lost

Blame for the defeat at the Ansell's brewery in Birmingham cannot be laid at the feet of the workers who struggled to save their jobs.

Their union, the 5/377 branch of the Transport and General was a shining example of trade unionism in this region—its branch meetings were well attended, and through firm action they had achieved some of the highest wage rates and best conditions in the area.

If anyone could have taken on and beaten the reactionary management of Allied Breweries, the owners of Ansell's, it was the 5/377 branch. But what wasn't accounted for was the scandalous role played by some of the union's full time officials.

The strike began after Allied's board of directors clearly felt that with a Thatcher government and 2½ million on the dole, now was the time to smash the best organised and strongest plant in their conglomerate.

This was in stark contrast to management's appraisal of the workers in 1980. In the 'Birmingham Evening Mail' (11 June 1980) the vice chairman of Allied's directors congratulated the workforce for the company's increase in profits and talked of a new profit 'share scheme' for the workers.

But after failing to get through 130 redundancies last year they switched to trying to implement a four day week in January. The directors openly admitted this was a measure to reduce the wages bill. The four days were to be rotated over a seven day week to maintain

By Brian Debus
(T&GWU)

production.

Strike action involving a thousand workers was taken against these 'car industry tactics.' When the company withdrew the lay-off notices they reverted to calling for 96 redundancies, and a condensed 'Edwardes type' plan.

This included a reduction in earnings of £30 per week and acceptance of new 'working practices' (larger loads, more deliveries, mobility of labour, contract labour and more redundancies).

This in turn hardened the resolve of the men to fight, particularly when management said they would replace strikers with recruits direct from the dole queue!

However, with the office staff refusing to interview applicants and picket lines thrown round the brewery, Allied's then plumped for closure.

As the dispute wore on, management's strategy was clear; defeat the strike at all costs. Ansell's themselves referred to losses of £1½ million a week, but the real figure may be as much as £40 million in total.

However, the determination of the workers to fight was not matched by some full-time officials, particularly regional secretary Brian Mathers, and divisional officer, Douglas Fairbairn.

An insight into their role

is given in a letter sent by Mathers to all officers in Region 5 on the 28 February, shortly after the Ansell's dispute started;

"From a strategic point of view, it is important to ensure that we avoid strikes and other industrial disputes that end in well publicised defeats..."

"In an endeavour to avoid these situation it is imperative that all possible alternatives to strike action are considered and it is essential as a pre-requisite of official backing, that the assistance of the divisional officer is obtained before a withdrawal of labour, and in appropriate cases, the ACAS is advised and becomes involved in the issues."

So rather than a fighting strategy to win, a meek policy was given to avoid "well publicised defeats."

This probably explains why official backing was not given until the fourth week of the dispute!

As full time official Terry Austin told the 'Birmingham Post':

"It seems to us that every pressure was put on us to curtail the enthusiasm of the members and to stifle publicity, which may have given us assistance."

He added, an article for the union's paper the 'Record' was never published.

There was the infamous ballot organised by Mathers (see 'Militant' 552). The conclusion drawn by the workers from reading the ballot proposals, was if you want to continue the dispute, you might as well hang yourself, and if you wanted to end the dispute, shoot two thirds of your brothers in the back. One picket commented, "regional officials done in one letter what the company could not do in seventeen weeks."

Worse was to come in the



Workers on the picket line at Ansell's during the dispute

Photo: Militant

final week of the dispute. Management issued a circular which included the following:

"The union advises the company that crossing an official picket line is not an expulsion offence from the union. Former employees offered work are therefore entitled to go into the depots to work."

And "The union advises the company that 50 or more employees have authority to form their own new union branch and elect their own shop stewards and officials. The company will negotiate with that new branch."

Significantly the regional secretary has not denied nor confirmed responsibility for these comments, which amount to a 'scabs charter'.

Not surprisingly a large number of 5/377 branch members are very bitter and disillusioned at the non-leadership of their officials;

"Their job is to fight a closure, not accept a closure."

"You can't fight the gaffer and the union."

The position of national officer Larry Smith, who handled the final negotiations, was no better. He said, "You may say that the officials did not encourage other workers to support the dispute. But the problem there is that if you encourage and lose it is worse than not encouraging at all." ('Birmingham Post' 8 June).

For these reasons, 5/377 branch and the Food and Drink District Committee have called for a full enquiry into the official handling of the dispute. The District Committee has also called for the resignation of Mathers and Fairbairn.

The Ansell's workers will be interested to know what the national leadership's attitude is to the situation. This dispute highlights

the need for all officials to be elected with right of recall and for them to receive no more than the average skilled wage. With the same conditions as a shop steward their willingness to lead a struggle would be enhanced.

If the national officers of the T&G had convened mass meetings at the other breweries with themselves making a call for official strike action all the plants, then Allied's would have been on their knees in two weeks, with 1,000 jobs saved.

As it is, 700 jobs have been lost and conditions "put back 20 years." Already 15 who returned to the depots have walked out.

The branch will continue the fight and is considering what prospects it has for building amongst the unemployed as part of the battle against the bosses' redundant system.

and collects £70 million in interest payments. That's where the potential profit goes. That's why rail workers are offered 7% and not 13%!

The general secretary of the third rail union, TSSA, has said, "any assets which are sold off from our nationalised industries should and must be re-nationalised without compensation when we get rid of this government. Merchant bankers and city financiers should beware."

Fine words. But such intentions must be given value and credibility as part of a clearly identified socialist programme on which Labour fights to win the general election. Not another turn on the Labour/Tory see-saw, but aimed towards a socialist transformation of society with control in the hands of the working class.

That fight, to end the dominance over society by a minority ruling elite, should start now with uncompromising defence of the nationalised industries.

NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES - The vultures move in

As British Rail management advertises jobs in the £10,160-£12,080 a year bracket to oversee the smooth introduction of private capital into BR's shipping company, many rail workers may ask what future they face with big business holding the purse strings.

The prevailing atmosphere of inevitability is due to the near-total lack of

By Len Bates
(Chairman, TSSA
Euston No. 2 branch,
personal capacity)

opposition from the labour movement.

50% of British Aerospace already sold off will soon be joined by BR hotels, ships, hovercraft and property; state-owned docks; 1,000 gas showrooms and any other prize the sons of plunder can lay their hands on.

As though mesmerised by a single issue, the TUC has failed to lead a campaign against the de-nationalisation policies urged by Tory red-necks from the shires.

The representatives of big business are hungry for this fresh source of private profit since the rottenness of their economic system denies them 'acceptable' profits from manufacturing industry.

Individual unions issuing leaflets saying 'No hiving off' is all very well, but we are faced with the deliberate piecemeal destruction of Labour's post-war gains. The nationalised 20% of the economy must be kept out of the City's private pockets.

European Ferries' bid for the Sealink fleet is under Monopolies Commission scrutiny, and the imminent sale of three BR hotels, including the famous 'Glen-eagles', is under official enquiry—for being priced too low!

Even the 'non-political'

British Rail Board (BRB), in its charming way, sees the danger of asset stripping by the get-rich-quick Tories: "What BR is anxious to avoid, is a situation where it is forced to dispose of assets at unrealistically low prices during an economic recession, in such a way that the new owners are able to obtain a financial windfall, perhaps by changing the use to which the assets are put, without there being any underlying economic justification for doing so." ('Rail Manager', March 1981)

Over the past decade the railways have been put on a progressively tighter financial rein by central government. And now, starved of finance for essential capital investment, the subsidiary companies, Sealink, Hotels, Hovercraft, etc., will be put

under a Holding Company authorised to tout for private capital on their behalf.

A billion pounds in supply contracts

In return for this act of mercy, the BRB must relinquish control by not being allowed a majority on the boards of directors, and must own less than half the share capital. The Tory hypocrites who publicly call the railways a "costly anachronism" in the sympathetic columns of 'The Times', will expect their share no doubt once the carve-up begins.

Already, big business creams off £1 billion annually by supplies contracts

WOMEN:

Positive discrimination - or class action?

Even before the appalling escalation of unemployment and the cuts in recent years, it had become clear that the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act has dismally failed to achieve genuine equal pay or to abolish discrimination against women in jobs, training, education and other key areas of society.

For some women, these laws provided a lever for improving their position. But defence of their interest has really depended on women taking action through the labour movement.

Now, as Tory and big business attacks on working people push more and more women into trade union and political activity, there is a growing feeling that more positive, determined steps must be taken to overcome the super-exploitation of working-class women.

The fight for jobs and equal pay

The idea is being floated in the labour movement of "positive action" or "positive discrimination".

In the area of job opportunities, this usually means that in order to break down women's overwhelming confinement to unskilled, low-paid jobs—to compensate for past discrimination against women—there should now be positive discrimination in favour of women, giving women applicants preference for more skilled and higher-paid jobs, or for supervisory, professional and managerial jobs.

Some people are advocating that there should be quotas of jobs reserved for women.

This would be achieved, according to supporters of this approach, either through trade unions negotiating "positive discrimination" agreements, or contracts, or through new laws laying down targets or quotas for women in the various areas of employment with a time-table for their implementation.

But could this approach

By Margaret Creear
(Royton & Wardle
Womens Section)

really benefit working women?

Undoubtedly, in the United States during the boom period "positive discrimination" benefitted a section of women, particularly white-collar and professional women. But there too, past gains under "positive discrimination" contracts and laws are now being wiped out by technological "rationalisation" by big business and the appearance of mass unemployment.

What faith can working class women place in legislation, and particularly in the courts which would have to enforce it? In Britain, the judges have time and again shown that they are not prepared to uphold the spirit—and in some cases, not even the letter—of the equal pay and sex discrimination legislation.

The bosses, for their part, have always proved willing to renege on progressive agreements with trade unions whenever their profits are seriously threatened by their implementation.

A divisive step

However attractive "positive discrimination" looks at first sight it would turn out to be a dangerous snare for working women. It is really an attempt to find a short cut to improving the position of women workers. It is a substitute for the only effective form of "positive discrimination"—class action through the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The advocates of "positive discrimination" argue that their approach is necessary to

overcome the adverse treatment of women in the past, but say that it is in no way intended to discriminate against men. However, in a period when mass unemployment is biting in to the living standards of the whole working class, "positive discrimination" is a recipe for dividing the working class.

To demand that preference should be given to women job applicants, even that quotas should be reserved for women, when every week thousands of workers are threatened by the flood tide of closures and redundancies would inevitably reinforce all the worst prejudices of the more politically backward male workers.

The idea of positive discrimination in favour of women, moreover, would not do anything to overcome the attitude of those sections of women workers who still accept that it is primarily male workers who are the "bread-winners".

While fostering divisions between women and men workers, a campaign of "positive discrimination" could in no way create additional jobs. While the economy is controlled by a diseased capitalism, unemployment can only get worse.

Even a temporary reversal, through working-class pressure, of the escalation of unemployment—whether through the implementation of a 35-hour week or through a reflation with increased public spending—would inevitably be reversed with the continued decline of the British economy, and the whole world capitalist economy.

Step up the fight

This in no way implies that we must passively accept the super-exploitation of women workers, women's concentration into low-paid boring jobs, or their especial vulnerability to unemployment.

On the contrary! The fight to defend the interests of working women must be stepped up. But this must be taken up as the task of the whole labour movement. The fight to improve the conditions of women workers must be an integral part of a programme to achieve a job for all workers, a living wage (currently not less than £80 per week), and a 35-hour week without loss of pay.

There is no question of these radical reforms being achieved by friendly agreement with the bosses or through the courts. They will only be gained through the labour movement mobilising

mass working-class support for their implementation.

And this must be linked to a programme for the socialist transformation of society, with the introduction of a plan of production, under workers' control and management, which will provide the economic basis for enormous advances, and particularly for the real emancipation of women.

Photo: MILITANT



PHOTOS: Above—NHS workers at an East London Hospital South London factory. Women workers often face the lasting improvements

The role of women in the labour movement

However, some of the advocates of "positive discrimination" argue that the trade union and labour movement are incapable of achieving such radical advances because the movement itself is "male dominated" and insufficiently involves women, either in the ranks or in the leading bodies.

They therefore argue for various forms of "positive discrimination" within the labour movement itself.

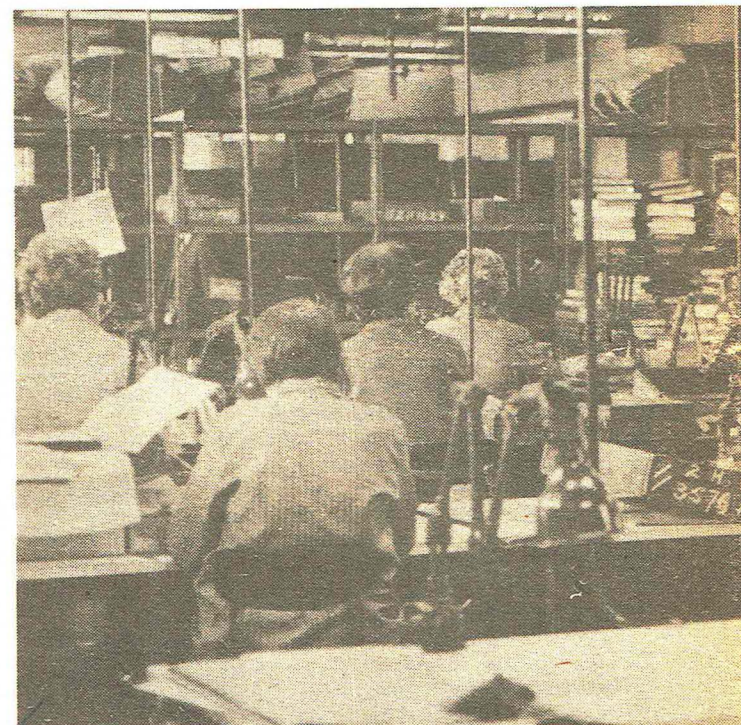
It is certainly true that the labour movement has seriously fallen down in its duty to defend working women. Trade union activists and socialists must campaign for the trade unions to recognise the vital importance of fighting for women's rights, jobs and conditions.

We must fight for the trade unions to step up efforts to organise workers and involve them much more in the life of the unions at every level.

Special steps must be taken: meetings must be held at convenient times; crèches, baby-sitting, and transport must be organised; more trade-union facility time for women must be won; and special courses and schools must be put on in the unions to increase the number of women becoming shop-stewards, taking positions on branch and national bodies, and taking up full-time posts.

The labour movement must fight the attitude, which unfortunately still prevails in many quarters, that it is the men who must naturally play the most active role in the movement, and that women will play, at best, a supporting role. Male activists have got to take their share of responsibilities at home so that women can be fully involved in trade union and Labour Party activities.

In this sense, "positive action" is definitely required!



No substitute for a campaign

But within the labour movement, "positive discrimination" is again, in practice, a substitute for a real campaign to involve women more and to gain general recognition of women's issues.

"Reserved places" for women on trade union executives, for instance, may seem like a good way of enhancing the position of women in the unions. But the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, for instance, has proportionally more women on its national executive than in its ranks—and this has done very little to involve more women in rank-and-file activity.

Other unions, like NUPE, who have recently increased the participation of its women members at all levels, have done so by branch discussion and special schools and courses—in other words, by campaigning amongst the membership on the issue.

Similarly, to automatically transfer a certain number of resolutions from women sections to the agendas of union conferences or the TUC will achieve very little.

Representatives and full-time officers should be

elected on the basis of their political ideas. To fill positions with women, just because they are women, to fill up quotas of reserved places will not advance the position of women, and could actually hold us back.

We need more women in leading positions. But the criterion for elections should always be: Which of the candidates will best defend the position of women?

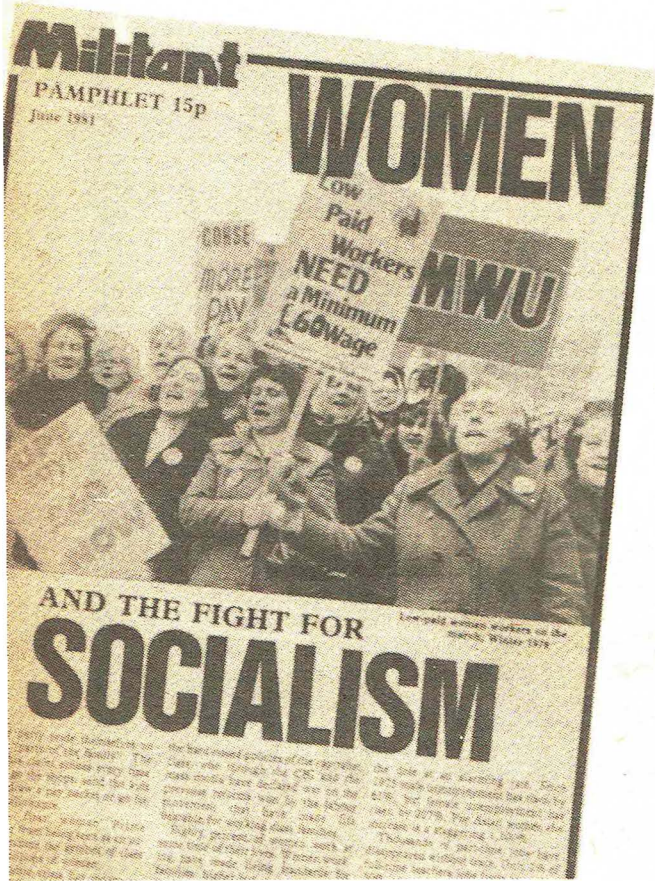
It is the adoption of full trade union democracy and, above all, of a fighting programme for the trade unions, which will be the guarantee that the trade unions will fight to involve and defend working-class women.

The labour and trade union movement is the only force in society capable of radically improving the position of women. Therefore, it is crucial for women that the labour movement responds to their needs.

But it is not just women who have an interest in this. Taking up the struggle for the real economic and social emancipation of women is a vital aspect of transforming the trade unions into fighting organisations capable of carrying through the socialist change of society.



Vote for strike action, 1979. Below—best conditions. Only class action can win



New 'Militant' pamphlet
 Price 15p (+ 15p post and packing) from
 World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

HEALTH - A 'revolution' for the rich?

By Myrna Shaw
 (Secretary, Tower Hamlets Health District Joint Shop Stewards' Committee)



Photo: MILITANT

Queues at London Hospital in East London—one of the worst areas for health problems—and for the number of doctors on the NHS

What would you do if you were a young general practitioner, and found your patients were likely to die while awaiting treatment from a "crumbling" National Health Service?

What would you say to a patient with a fractured leg bone when it would take eight weeks before she could see a consultant radiologist?

The response of one GP has recently been proclaimed "revolutionary" by the medical newspaper "PULSE" (30 May 1981). But don't jump to conclusions!

His "revolutionary" idea is to persuade the British Medical Association-sponsored deputising service AIR-CALL to set up a £1 million private GP scheme. This scheme looks suspiciously like a pilot operation for the Rugby Plan—a contingency plan set up to prepare for a possible mass withdrawal of GPs from the NHS if a pay claim did not go in their favour.

AIR-CALL will start with one Surgery north of the Thames and another South. Each will have six GPs serving an estimated 10,000 patients. There will be an annual subscription of £50-60 a year, with £5 or £10 paid for a home visit. Surgery waiting rooms would be plush, with drinks, "decent carpets" TV room and children's play area with the GPs on £35,000 a year, plus a car.

The "revolutionary" solution proposed by our up-and-coming GP is to bleed even more resources from the NHS, primarily (in this case) trained GPs.

It costs anything from £4,000 to £7,000 a year over

a period up to five years to train a doctor. A Doctor going into any private medical scheme takes at least £30,000 of our money with him or her. The figure is much higher when further periods of hospital experience and postgraduate vocational training for general practice are taken into account.

Not that vocational trainees will be encouraged to apply. AIR-CALL's "ideal" candidate is someone who was "quite happy and settled in general practice but who wanted to work in a private setting." Or perhaps they mean someone who knows how to smile and keep his mouth shut at the same time, on that well known medical maxim that the (paying) customer is always right?

The problems in the NHS are of course largely caused by the holding back of the relatively small amounts of money it needs, plus the never fully estimated on-going effects of hospital cuts and closures. This is illustrated by the level of registered unemployment among doctors. This jumped from 186 in December 1972 to 641 in December 1980. In the same period, unemployed nurses rose from under a thousand to nearly five thousand (BMJ 23 May 81).

Increasingly deprived of trained staff for what facilities are left, will NHS hospitals now be called upon to admit AIR-CALL referred patients, or will their often unwilling subscribers, possibly joining out of severe personal pain, apprehension or desperation, find that they are also faced with private hospital bills?

Of course, the drug companies don't lose out either way (£125m profit from the NHS in 1979). There are already rumblings in the medical press that private patients—seen ahead of NHS waiting lists—

should be allowed NHS-subsidised drugs.

AIR-CALLS scheme for Private General Practice makes a bit of a mockery of the BMA's previous anger with MEDICOVER, another commercial enterprise operating in North London which by-passed the General Practitioner altogether. But as "Militant" (28 March 80) suggested, the BMA's anger was probably not so much on behalf of patients as sour grapes at being pipped to the post!

After all the efforts of the labour movement to establish the NHS, the practice of medicine is now being rapidly reduced to the same level as everything else in capitalist society. The investors in ill-health fight each other tooth and nail for what profit there is—and the devil take those who either fall off the health roundabout, or can't afford to climb aboard.

Highest needs—lowest resources

It is quite interesting to note that before AIR-CALL took its decision, they did a so-called sample opinion poll in four areas in or near London, questioning only 1,000 people but finding the results "incredibly encouraging."

I suppose incredible is the right word, because apparently 30% of those questioned were "totally opposed" to their plan, 20% "didn't know" and another 30% said they would only "actively consider" the plan. Quite correct, 80% did NOT say yes.

Perhaps the really "encouraging" aspect of the poll for private profit was the fact that it was taken in some of the areas which figure prominently in a recent publication of the

Royal College of General Practitioners *A Survey of Primary Care in London*, prepared for the RCGP, May 1981, whose ultimate accolade our GP seeks.

The RCGP survey showed that in those areas it looked at there were twice as many mental disorders, suicides, abortions, illegitimate births and tuberculosis as the rest of the country. East London outstripped the rest of the surveyed areas with more carcinoma of the lung, chronic bronchitis, and infant and perinatal death rates.

Yet those areas probably had the poorest GP service—"a serious mismatch" of the worst social problems with the poorest primary care services—and with nearly 5,000 unemployed nurses in the country! Obviously a very ripe field for exploitation.

Health is a class question! Sir Douglas Black demonstrated this in his Report *Inequalities in Health* (reviewed in *Militant*, 3 October 1980). The inescapable conclusions were sneered at by Patrick Jenkin as "not proven". But our young GP seems to acknowledge them.

Putting aside his far from socialist "revolutionary" ideas and his dreams his stated aim is "to show the country and Gerard Vaughan and the government—if we get time before the government changes—that we can do really good Royal College-style general practice."

I am glad he sees a change of government as a threat. I, too, look forward to a change of government, to a socialist government carrying out real socialist policies, including a working-class entry into the medical schools.

Perhaps then we could take the first steps towards fighting the real killer in our society—capitalism and all it stands for.

France- Landslide Demand for Socialist Change

By Peter Taaffe



Jubilant crowds in the Place de Bastille, Paris, greeting Mitterrand's election victory.

The French elections are a crushing blow to those in the labour movement who argue that radical policies are "electorally unpopular".

The triumph of the left in the French Presidential elections and the first round of the Assembly elections has now been capped by a sweeping victory in the second, decisive round.

The Socialist Party has increased its seats from 107 in the last Assembly to 270 giving the SP an absolute majority.

Together with the Communist Party and other left parties, this will give the combined left 333 seats, compared to the 154 of the centre-right alliance. This is a crushing blow to the right, and undoubtedly the biggest left victory in elections this century.

The right had been desperately hoping to check the tidal wave towards the left by mobilising those who abstained in the first round. Instead, as the *Financial Times* (27 June) remarks, "this merely accentuated the socialist lead rather than reducing it as the RPR (Gaullists) and UDF (Giscard D'Estaing's supporters) had hoped."

All the carefully laid plans of De Gaulle when he framed the constitution of the Fifth Republic have blown up in the face of his heirs. This Bonapartist constitution was designed to ensure that the reins of power would remain in the hands of a right-wing president even in the 'unlikely' event

of the left obtaining a majority in the Assembly.

After all, there have been very few examples in history where the workers' parties have obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast.

In France in the 1945 general election, 51% voted for the Socialist Party and Communist Party as a result of the revolutionary fervour which swept France in the immediate post-war period.

But the left victory in this election far exceeds that of 1945 and also the election of the Popular Front government in 1936. One of the most striking features of these elections is that the vote for the workers' parties has increased with each successive ballot, culminating in the astonishing 56% final vote for the workers' par-

ties.

The capitalists have referred cynically to the 'pink tide' sweeping France from one end to the other, implying that support for the Socialist and Communist Parties does not indicate widespread demands for the socialist transformation of France.

On the contrary, Mitterrand's victory and the Assembly elections show the desire of the majority of the French people, after 23 years of right-wing rule, for sweeping changes.

Expectations

The Socialist Party fought the elections on a radical programme including the demand for the nationalisation of eleven top holding companies.

Many down-trodden and sceptical workers, who at first perhaps doubted the intentions of the Socialist Party to introduce its programme, were enthused during the election when it appeared that Mitterrand intended rapidly to introduce reforms.

His use of the Presidential powers to introduce a minimum wage, to increase pensions and housing subsidies, to lift the threat of eviction of the immigrants from the country, etc, all inspired workers to turn out and vote.

The French elections are undoubtedly a crushing blow to those in the labour movement in Britain who have argued that left and radical policies are "electorally unpopular."

Now France has a socialist president and a socialist majority in the Assembly there is no excuse for Mitterrand and the Socialists not to introduce their programme.

The Times (22 June) remarks dolefully. "In a sense the Socialists' victory is almost too complete and the defeat of their enemies too resounding." The capitalists, when they have no other alternative but to cede power to the workers' parties, prefer them to be in a minority, or dependent on small 'liberal' capitalist parties. They calculate that these parties are a brake on the 'extreme' measures of the workers' parties.

But with the Socialist Party holding undivided Presidential and legislative power, there are enormously aroused expectations on the part of the French workers and middle class that the new President and government will begin to solve their problems.

During the campaign, an opinion poll indicated that 70% of the French population expected big increases in living standards as a result of the triumph of the left.

On the basis of capitalism, however, these hopes are bound to be dashed.

French capitalism, while not in such dire straits as its British counterpart, is incapable of satisfying the aroused expectations of the French working people.

In the first period, Mitterrand will be compelled to carry through some of the reforms promised in this programme. However, his first government and some of his supporters have already begun to try and water down these reforms.

The demand for the 35-hour week, against the background of 1.7 million unemployed, was undoubtedly one of the Socialist Party's most popular slogans. But now the leader of the Socialist trade unions, CFDT, Edmond Maire, has said that it can only be introduced over a period of five years! He has also claimed that the minimum wage can only be increased by 30% over three years.

At the same time, the new government's minister for the civil service, Catherine L'Alumiere, offered the civil service trade unions a mere 3.3% increase. Yet inflation is currently 14-15% in France. This provoked the trade union's spokesmen to denounce "the decisions which continue the wage policies of the previous government" (*The Guardian*, 19 June).

The CGT, the trade union controlled by the Communist Party, has threatened to strike unless the offer is increased.

The character of Mitterrand's first government, which has not been changed substantially, is decidedly right-wing. The economics minister, Delors, for instance, was a minister in the Gaullist Chaban Delmas government.

Despite its character, however, the government will be under terrific pressure to introduce the programme upon which it was elected. But even if the reforms are introduced and the government nationalises the eleven big holding companies, the main levers of economic power will still be in the hands of the French capitalists.

History has demonstrated that the French capitalists are a treacherous and cowardly breed. They will move heaven and earth to sabotage, frustrate and eventually cancel out the reforms introduced by Mitterrand's government.

There has already been an organised run on the franc and a 30% drop in shares on the Bourse (stock exchange).

Sabotage

In the light of previous attempts to sabotage radical governments, the customs trade unions issued instructions that all cars should be searched for the illegal transportation of francs out of the country by the panicky French capitalists.

The capitalists will attempt to push inflation over 20%. Through hyperinflation they hope to arouse the middle class and backward workers against the government and the working class over a period of time.

If all the measures for nationalisation are introduced by Mitterrand, this will place only 20% of the economy in the hands of the state. This will allow the capitalists to hamper and sabotage any radical government measures.

The proposals to introduce a wealth tax against

the capitalist class will undoubtedly be enormously popular. But as in Britain with corporation and capital gains taxes, the French capitalists can find a thousand and one ways to evade punitive taxation laws.

It is therefore vital that the government should use its majority to take over, with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, the assets of the 200 families who dominate the French economy.

On this basis it would be possible to create a socialist plan of production which could eliminate unemployment and the poverty which besmirches France at the present time.

The victory of Mitterrand and the Socialist Party has ushered in a new era, not just for France, but for the whole of Europe. It will have enormous repercussions within the Socialist and the Communist Parties.

The elections were undoubtedly a big blow to the Communist Party leadership. In the presidential elections they recorded their lowest vote since 1936.

Pressure

In the Assembly elections, all members of the Party Secretariat with the exception of Marchais lost their seats. Their total number of seats went down from 86 to 44.

They lost almost a million votes to the Socialist Party. This is undoubtedly a consequence of the disillusionment of a significant section of the workers with the tactics of the French Communist leadership. Marchais was more concerned to maintain "the dominant position" of the French CP over the Socialist Party than with defeating Giscard.

Yet with Mitterrand's victory, all the bitter denunciations of him and the Socialist Party have been completely dropped. The CP leaders are desperate to warm the ministerial chairs which they believe they deserve in the new Socialist government.

Mitterrand has included four CP representatives in his government. This is intended as a means of guaranteeing that no opposition will be forthcoming from the CP-controlled union, the CGT.

However, the pressure of the rank and file on CP ministers will in all probability mean that they will be compelled to come out of the government at an early stage. The Socialist Party will also be convulsed if Mitterrand begins to back-track on his programme.

Precisely because of the expectations the working class and the middle class are so high, the failure to speedily satisfy these expectations can lead to rapid disillusionment.

In the immediate aftermath of the elections there is bound to be an influx of workers, particularly young workers, into both the Socialist and Communist Parties, and they will be exerting tremendous pressure on the new government. Failure to carry out its programme will shake the Socialist Party from top to bottom.

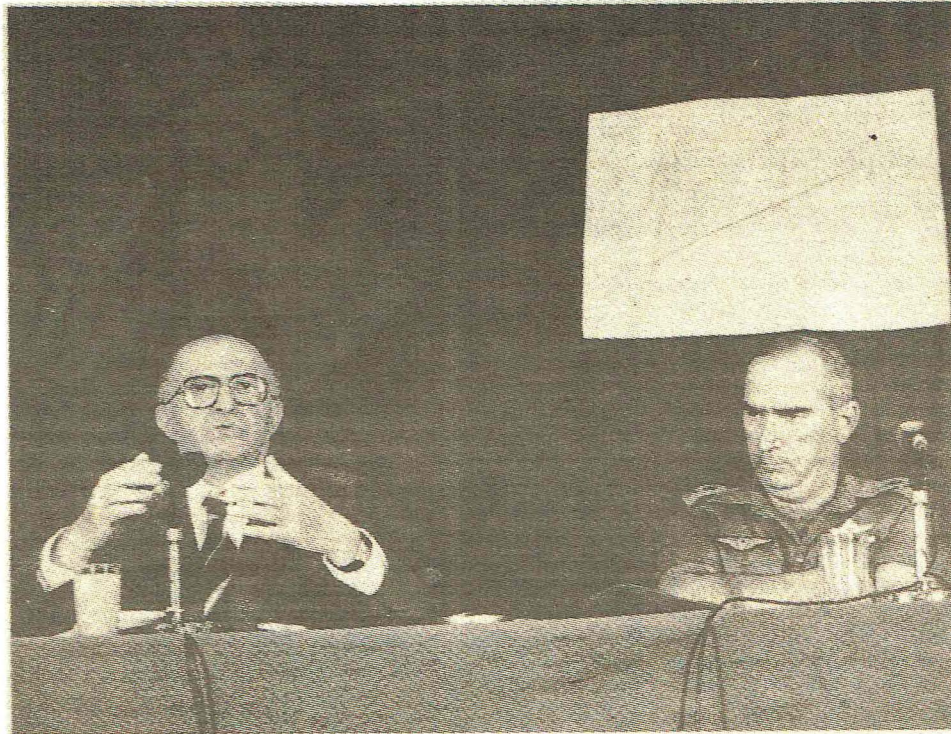
Only a socialist France can satisfy the aroused hopes of the French working class.

ISRAELI ELECTIONS -

NO NATIONALIST SOLUTIONS

Israel, on the eve of the elections on 30 June, is a country deep in crisis, both internally and internationally.

By Peter Lush



Prime Minister Begin and Chief of Staff Eitan announcing Israeli air attack on nuclear reactor in Iraq

STOP PRESS: In a series of attacks on Labour election meetings, Likud supporters have shown Israeli workers the ugly face of Begin's aggressive right wing nationalism. Labour rallies have been broken up, women and children attacked, and a Labour headquarters smashed and burned. The right wing newspaper *Ma'ariv* has been forced to warn Begin that continued anti-Labour violence 'will influence many voters to reject the Likud.'

For nearly 30 years following its creation in 1948, Israel benefited from the upswing of world capitalism.

On this basis, the Jewish national question was 'solved', at the expense of the Arab-speaking population of the country. A majority of Palestinians were driven into exile and those remaining in Israel were reduced to second-class citizens.

Israel was used by American imperialism as its special representative in the Middle East, and built up into an armed fortress with US economic and military support. The Zionist military machine seemed able to protect the 'Jewish homeland' indefinitely against the Palestinian resistance and the surrounding Arab states.

Labour, in office from 1948 to 1977, fully subscribed to the Jewish nationalist position and provided no socialist alternative. This, together with the erosion of past reforms, undoubtedly contributed to their defeat by the even more nationalist and war-like Likud in 1977. With Israel apparently in a permanent state of siege, Likud could present itself as the party best able to hold the fort.

But today all the chickens are coming home to roost. The world-wide crisis of capitalism has cut the amount of American aid, and war reparations from West Germany have now ended. With its increasing involvement in the Arab countries, American imperialism has had to moderate its aggressive pro-Zionist policies and balance more carefully between Israel and the oil-producing Arab states.

All this has tended to reduce the overwhelming economic and technical superiority that Israel originally enjoyed.

Neither Begin's Likud, nor the Labour leadership, offer the Israeli working class any way forward out of this impasse. Begin is fighting the elections on a rabidly nationalist platform. Israel's air strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor has been yet another cynical device in a systematic campaign designed to whip up a mood of chauvinist frenzy.

In January opinion polls were giving the Likud only 12 to 20 seats, and predicting 65 seats for Labour in the Knesset (parliament) of 120. The most recent polls gave Likud 49 seats and Labour no more than 40.

It seems likely that no party will have an overall majority though Likud may again be able to form a government through a coalition with the small ultra-nationalist and ultra-religious parties.

Another reason behind the victory is the

in purchase tax they have introduced over the past six months. For years, Israel has been plagued by three-figure inflation—the world's highest inflation rate—pushing many consumer durables beyond the reach of ordinary people.

The tax cuts are only for a limited time—and end just after the election! But there have been massive increases in sales of cars, colour televisions and other goods.

However, the governor of Israel's central bank has predicted a new wave of inflation after the election, because of the government's economic policies. The 'Financial Times' commented that "whichever party wins the June 30th elections will have to impose tough new measures."

But the over-riding reason for the decline in Labour's support in the polls is their failure to put forward any real alternative to the government's policies. They offer no socialist alternative either on the national question, on inflation, or on the international questions. Faced with two similar programmes, voters could easily decide to stick "with the devil they know."

Cracks in the Zionist monolith

This also reflects Labour's failures in the period from 1948 to 1977 when they were in office. Indeed, in some parts of Israeli society, such as the Oriental Jews, who suffer gross discrimination at the hands of the Western Jews, Labour is regarded as part of 'the establishment.' There is little doubt that many workers supported Begin's 'radical' right-wing 'alternative' at the last election.

The period of Begin's government has seen the start of major changes in Israeli society. For years, there were virtually no strikes in Israel, but cracks have appeared in the Zionist monolith.

For the first time there have been widespread and concerted strikes affecting both the manual and white collar workers. For example, 100,000 of the Israeli workers have had strikes in the past few weeks. The world record inflation rate has also played a major part in undermining social stability. In 1979 over a million workers organised a two-hour strike against inflation.

mented: "You look in a shop window at a pair of running shoes and you have not got your glasses so it is difficult to read the price label. It might be 70 or 700. You don't know. It could be either. This is inflation."

For many workers, basic items such as fridges (essential in a hot climate) and even basic items of food have gone out of reach. This is why Begin's dramatic price cuts, after years of inflation, could have an effect on the mood of the electorate.

The decay and impasse of society is reflected in many ways. In Jerusalem, last year, there was a "tent settlement" of several hundred homeless couples living in tents as a protest against lack of housing. There has been a massive increase in alcoholism—at least 5,000 alcoholics in a nation where five years ago there were almost none—and a growth of drug addiction. Organised crime has increased, made easier by the ready availability of weapons and theft of weapons from the army.

Even Begin's vote-catching nationalist policies can backfire in his face in the longer run. There is a longing for peace and security in Israel, and it remains to be seen for how long Begin's war-like policies can only provide a band-aid.

More importantly, every attack on the surrounding Arab states has increased the economic pressure against Israel. But it should be noted among the masses of the Arab world and will ultimately rebound on Begin's head.

It is clear that the present strategy of the pro-Zionist Labour leadership has

has spoken of the 'moral drain' undermining the army.

The 'Peace Now' movement, originally organised by non-commissioned officers (supposedly Israel's most loyal citizens), has attracted up to 50,000 people on demonstrations. This is a very impressive number in a country of only 3½ million people.

The strain of years of massive defence organisation and expenditure has started to tell on Israeli society.

This is reflected in the latest figures on immigration into Israel. Only 1,829 people emigrated to Israel in the first two months of this year, compared to 4,520 in the same period a year ago, a drop of over 60%.

At the same time, the exodus of Jews from Israel is the highest since Israel's foundation in 1948. Although it is difficult to get accurate figures, it is known that last year over 33,000 more people left the country than entered it, an increase of 50% on the 1979 total.

The Zionists' original hopes for Israel, of being a homeland for the Jews to live in peace and harmony have turned into a nightmare. Reality for Israel is now an armed fortress.

But the problems of Israel cannot be separated from the problems of the Middle East as a whole, of which it forms a vital part. Only a genuine socialist internationalist approach can transform the Middle East, harnessing the technology and natural resources of the whole area.

Marxists opposed the formation of the Zionist state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people. But now, thirty years later,



Arab refugees after the Six Day War, 1967

ignored. To call for the pushing of the Jews into the sea only pushes the Jewish workers behind their reactionary Zionist rulers.

Marxists can neither support the Zionist state, nor the reactionary Arab regimes. Both use the other as a bogey to maintain control over their own workers and peasants.

The only way out lies through a socialist federation of the Middle East. On a socialist basis, with the nationalities and planned economies of the different countries being brought together through a socialist federation of the Middle East, the desert could only be made to bloom.

Within a socialist federation of the Middle East, the demands of the nationalities could be met. They are not nationalities, but peoples. The Jewish workers who have been driven out of their homes in the past few years back to Labour by chance. They will only return to their homes when the workers of the world have won their freedom.

Israeli working class. Autonomous Jewish and Palestinian states could be provided if this is desired by the majority of the people.

Neither Begin's reactionary nationalism, nor the weak policies of Labour, offer a way forward for the Israeli masses. The defeat of Begin would be a step forward, as it would mark a rejection of his policies. But this could only be turned into positive gains if Labour's own present policies are scrapped and a clear internationalist approach put forward in their place.

Most Israeli workers who have been driven out of their homes in the past few years back to Labour by chance. They will only return to their homes when the workers of the world have won their freedom.

Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Work-sharing, bosses' style

Dear Comrades,
An article in this week's London *New Standard* illustrates the bosses' method of implementing 'work-sharing'.

At GEC Telecommunications, Britain's largest private employer, two teenage girls are to share a typing job, working two and a half days a week each.

The big snag is, of course, that each will only be taking home half of the massive £56 a week wage!

For the bosses, GEC's 'revolutionary' scheme has other advantages. As GEC's personnel manager said, "If one goes off sick there is somebody ready to fill in. Absenteeism could be reduced." (Who gets the wages then, I wonder?)

To the young girls taking part in this 'experiment', it is better than being on the dole—almost the only alternative, with 14% unemployment in Coventry.

But it is no real alternative to a proper job on a decent wage.

We should be urging all young people to join the LPYS to fight for proper sharing out of the work available, with a 35-hour week without loss of pay—not the capitalist sop of a two and a half day week for a grand total of £28!

Fraternally,
Lorna Watson
Hackney Central
Labour Party

Voice of protest

Dear Comrade
If Thatcher & Co do not sit up and take notice of what's been going on like the rest of the nation then they are bloody mindless capitalist fools or they need their brains tested.

I make no apologies in this letter: I, as well as the other three and a half million unemployed, am getting very annoyed with the Tories and their monetarist policies, which are sending this once great country to the knackers yard, if it's not already there.

I would have loved to join the gallant five hundred on the march from Liverpool to London to voice my anger but as most people know, you only get peanuts for money and it would have been most difficult to get to Liverpool. But at least I was one of many thousands in London for the last leg of the journey.

Let me congratulate those who did the march, which will be in my thoughts for the rest of my life.

Only when we have total socialism in this country can you see things starting to improve. Until then unemployment, racial attacks, poverty and slave labour will greatly increase.

So comrades, we must continue to fight for socialism.

Yours fraternally,
Graham Padbury
Littlehampton LPYS.

Sectarianism breeds common misery

Comrades,
The letters from Dave Perry and Ian Wallis on Ireland (issue 556) highlight the need for absolute clarity on this question.

Militant places responsibility for the situation in Northern Ireland clearly at the feet of British imperialism. We believe that the only force capable of effectively combatting imperialism is the working class, moving forward on a socialist programme.

Dave Perry correctly states that *Militant* opposes the 'gunmen'. This flows not from a pacifist sentiment, but from a Marxist understanding that bullet and bomb cannot replace mass struggle.

Ian Wallis is also correct in his assertion that the unionist state, set up to maintain the industrial North of Ireland for British imperialism, was an instrument of widespread discrimination against the Catholic population. But he is wrong to pose this as Protestants oppressing Catholics.

To do so ignores the fundamental class question and reflects, in fact, the capitalist class's successful use of 'divide and rule' tactics.

Ian suggests that, in South Africa, we would say to blacks 'don't fight the whites but join with the white workers and fight capitalism instead.'

The struggle against apartheid is not 'black versus



white'; it is a class struggle against a capitalist system.

The black workforce is strong enough to carry through that struggle itself, but still we would explain to white workers that they should stand on our side of the barricade. If they don't, they will go down with the system.

In Northern Ireland, without breaking sectarianism and attempting to unite the working class on the basis of 'labour versus capital', the struggle for socialism is shackled, indeed doomed.

The only way to achieve "equal rights and privileges" is through the struggles of a united working class. Without this, no real future exists: burning

buildings, sectarian violence and ever-heavier state repression is the scenario.

The capitalist crisis is shattering the basis of sectarian privilege where it existed, and laying the basis for workers' common struggle, arising out of their common misery and directed against the common enemy—capitalism.

So *Militant* actively engages in developing the decisive struggle of Ireland's long history.

In 1913 James Connolly came to the same conclusions, writing about sectarian divide in Belfast (*Reconquest of Ireland*):

"But into the minds of the wisest of both sections there is gradually percolating the great truth that

our common sufferings provide a common basis of action—an amalgam to fuse us all together and that, as we suffer together, we should fight together, that we may be free together."

His next sentence raises the burning necessity of today:

"Thus out of our toil and moil there arises a new party—the Party of Labour."

Through such a party the working class could extend its industrial strength and unity into the political arena and develop the socialist struggle, for a successful solution to the present problems.

Yours fraternally
Larry Flanagan
Rutherglen LPYS

Workers at war

Dear *Militant*

As one of the three million plus people on the dole, I won't be voting for another dose of Maggie's monetary medicine in the next general election. Left wingers will understand the plight of the poorer working class, who are needed in the entrenched class warfare with the Tories.

The public image in the press and the media of a tea-swilling 'skiving' shop steward sat on his backside playing cards behind-the-scenes, 'suggests' socialism is a haven of workshop layabouts like the Andy Capp character in the comics, and on TV.

Highly paid professional actors and actresses make their very lucrative living in 'sending-up' unemployed working-class characters; certainly 'mis-fits' like the George Ropers, the Fanny Wendles, Tony Hancocks, Alf Garnetts and Eddie Booths exist, but to suggest the socialists of this country are bone-idle workshop layabouts is surely slanderous.

In the run-up to the next general election, every committed socialist should serve to strengthen the Labour Party from those Conservative-type careerists in its midst. A 'moderate' right-winger would leave Labour for the House of

Lords, or the SDP, or the Liberals, or even the Tories should their salaries or their careers come into question.

Labour left wingers will never be able to abolish the House of Lords and the Monarchy whilst 'moderates' waste the votes of the electorate in their watered-down lip service to the poorer working classes, who cannot afford an array of luxuries in their lives.

Nineteen per cent is good enough for royalty, 18% is good enough for the very pampered politicians in the Houses of Parliament, but the rest of us, unemployed and lower paid people, can whistle for a pay rise. When workers in industry insist on a decent living wage, what are they offered? That's right—6%.

Roll on the next general election.

Yours most sincerely
Stephen Draper
Grimsby

Media myths

Dear Friends

In Tony Benn's *Arguments for socialism* he outlines the need for a Labour daily newspaper. Many other people in the labour movement have expressed this idea. It is essential in my view that the Tory media is countered, not just to help Labour's cause but to destroy many myths the present media uphold.

For example most people

I work with vote Labour, but many hold semi-racist views. They firmly believe that if we sent all coloured and "foreign" people home it would solve the unemployment crisis.

It has also taken a long time for people to realise that on the dole, you do not live the life of Riley.

I often used to hear people grumbling about paying tax to keep the "scroungers". It's tragic that only high unemployment has stopped this talk.

Even today there have to be "scapegoats" for unemployment—immigrants, working women, inefficient workers: the list is endless. The capitalists' press cunningly further these views.

In the political columns of most daily newspapers they claim to be sympathetic to the unemployed. Yet there is nothing they like better than a good "dole scrounger" story or one about blacks carrying out violence.

A good paper is essential so that when a crisis does occur at least innocent people won't be blamed as at present.

Yours fraternally
D Perry
Wigan LPYS

DHSS tactics

Dear Comrades
The 'police state methods

used by DHSS' article (*Militant* 552) is of interest to me as I am unemployed. Through the paper I suggest two ways of turning the tables.

If invited to the DHSS office take a notebook—check the name of the interviewer and write down all details of the interview.

If, in the other hand, they come to see you, use a tape recorder. It is best not to conceal the tape recorder.

It is strange how the interviews I have had since adopting this method have become much gentler.

Yours fraternally
A Southern reader

Who pays the rates?

Dear Comrades,
Your article, 'Not elected for perks' [12/6/81] prompted me to write.

A Margate Tory councillor has just received over £2,000 'expenses', £80 a week, for the last six months' work.

With twenty per cent unemployment, in an area of low wages, the majority of Margate people have to live on £50-£60 a week. Many of them have difficulty paying their rents and rates.

Like all Tories, this councillor says it is disgusting and wrong of workers not to pay up. But, the week after

Workers demonstration in Belfast against the Tories

Protestant workers not a 'special case'

Dear Comrades

Ian Wallis (*Militant* 556) raises the age old error of a "stages theory" of socialism: first, equal rights for Catholics in Northern Ireland, then workers' unity and socialism at some unspecified date in the future.

Everything he says about discrimination is true, but he leaves open the question of how civil rights can be gained in NI.

The prospect of a capitalist united Ireland holds little attraction to Protestant workers because it could not solve the underlying problems of bad housing, low wages and unemployment. A fight for decent social conditions, such as that being waged by Derry Trades Council, can attract workers from both sides of the sectarian divide.

The economic realities unite the interests of Catholic and Protestant workers far more strongly than anything divides them. The effectiveness of the civil service strike in the province is an example of what is possible on a class basis.

Civil rights can only be obtained by a class movement which would inevitably clash with the Green Tories of the South and would have to appeal to the Protestant workers of the North and the British workers for support. A socialist federation of these islands would in turn appeal to the workers of the world.

When Marx wrote, "Workers of all lands unite: you have nothing to lose but your chains," he did not make a special exception of the Protestant workers of NI. Present-day Marxists also reject any such "special cases".

Yours fraternally
Derek McMillan

his record £3,000 expenses were announced, he admits that he was a director of a company that went bankrupt, owing the council £4,000 in rates and rents!

The council, of which he is a financial officer, has written off the debt. Our Tory councillor says many firms are going bankrupt because of the recession, and companies cannot afford to pay rates!

So next time you get your rate/rent bill, try following the Tory way out: form a Company and have the debt written off!

Yours fraternally,
Barry Lewis
Thanet West
Labour Party

Build **Militant**

ads

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

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 July	Target for year
Eastern	2212		3550	7100
East Midlands	1759		2750	5500
Hants & Dorset	1236		2600	5200
Humberside	772		1750	3500
London East	2493		3800	7600
London West	1693		2400	4800
London South	1836		2750	5500
Manchester & Lancs	1794		2900	5800
Merseyside	1840		3300	6600
Northern	2105		4300	8600
Scotland East	1246		2200	4400
Scotland West	1986		3750	7500
Southern	2466		3550	7100
South West	1221		1750	3500
Wales East	820		1300	2600
Wales West	1039		2300	4600
West Midlands	2115		4300	8600
Yorkshire	2522		4500	9000
Others	8414		6250	12500
Total received	39569		60,000	120,000

Target for July 11th £60,000

Target for year £120,000

NEEDED - A HOLIDAY BONUS

THIS
WEEK:
£1574

The holiday season is here, and once again, we ask all readers to set aside something from their holiday bonus for us.

A recent radio programme pointed out that six million people in Britain cannot afford any holiday at all, and have not had one for several years!

The interviewer was quite incredulous: but holidays in Spain are now as cheap as a couple of hundred—that figure can't be right. "You've obviously never lived on social security" was the sharp reply.

We don't want to put the clock back sixty years ago when the London Labour Party had election poster showing slum children on a school outing in the country. "What's that funny smell?" one asks and the teacher replies "That's fresh air, Tommy."

Your money now can ensure we get a socialist society where such things are as dead as the dinosaurs.

The trade union conference season is still in full swing, with nearly £120 collected from NALGO delegates and visitors, but there's also money coming from such events as Castlemilk LPYS Militant supporters' jumble sale (£60), Brixton rally (£93), and West London social (£46). We've had the third instalment from a sponsored bike-ride for *Militant* by Stephen Grant (aged 7) and his 6-year-old brother

By Steve
Cawley

Alex, of Brighton. They have raised £43.15 by this method, and there's more to come!

£66 was raised at a *Militant* meeting in West London, and £18 in Coventry, and this week we've had two £50 individual donations from J Marsden (Leeds) and D Barr (E London). This shows the determination our supporters have to see our circulation grow!

And grow it does! K Gent from County Durham sends £7.50 (after expenses) from the first *Militant* meeting in Crook, "an historic event!" From Glasgow Pollok LPYS we've had a £4 donation, and from Merseyside £23 from Wavertree supporters, including a tenner from L McCluskey.

£10.50 also came from readers in Kirkdale Labour Party, to help us redress the balance evidently lacking in a Granada programme they had just all been watching on the *Militant*.

We've had a £15 donation from B&C George (Cardiff), £19.50 from Staffordshire readers, over £14 from S Herts supporters, including £6.70 from Colin (Hatfield) and £4.80 I Still (Boreham Wood), £22.95 including raffle money from Newcastle readers and

WIN A SUMMER HOLIDAY FOR 10p

£500 holiday in resort of your choice is the first prize in our Grand Draw other prizes of music centre, radios etc.

Tickets available from your Militant seller—books of 10 tickets for £1. all proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund.

Militant Supporters Association. Registered promoters:

D Smith 73 Armond Road, Witham, Essex.

or Tickets by post from "Summer Draw",

1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

MILITANT BENEFIT Live music from WASIMBA featuring SWEET HARMONY

Sunday 19 July 7.30pm—midnight downstairs at the Rock Garden, Covent Garden (junction of King St and James St, WC2). Entrance £2 on the door, £1 unemployed with UB40. Advance tickets £1.50 from Mike Cleverley, 108 Vansittart Rd, E7 (01-519 1978) or your local *Militant* seller.

TWO WEEKS TO HALF-YEAR DEADLINE

from Scottish readers M Averall (Blantyre) £9, A Dewar (E Kilbride) B Thompson (Glasgow) and S Biro (Rutherglen) amongst others.

Thanks also to leading NUR members G Hensby and D Dobson for their donations, and to the Saunders family, West London for £21 over a three-week period. Many more readers than can be mentioned gave us £2s and £1s this week; F Coghill (Basildon), B Scorfield (Leyton), G Blackmore (E

Ham) and L Johnson (gas worker, E London) are just a few examples.

Our total so far is £39,569 or just over £20,000 short of our £60,000 target by July 12th. Hundreds of pounds' worth of raffle tickets for the Summer Holiday draw have already been sold, but there's still the vast bulk of ticket money to come in! Send yours in now, so we can get the best out of this! Send us a holiday gift, so we can build *Militant* and give capitalism a much-needed, and permanent, 'rest'.

NOTTINGHAM LPYS Public Meeting 'Drive out the Tories!' Hear Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Chairman). Monday 29 June at the Pakistani Friends League, Woodbrough Road, Nottingham. 7.30pm.

BARROW Labour Party Young Socialists Weekend School July 17-19: Saturday am: Which way forward for Labour? pm: Nuclear Disarmament. Sunday am How to build a YS. pm: sports and social activities. For further details contact Ed Waugh, Newcastle 857017.

ANWAR DITTA Defence Committee invites you to: Victory Celebration. Sunday 5 July. 5-10pm. Venue: Umist Student Union, Barnes Wallis Building Sackville St. Manchester. Asian group, reggae group, international disco. Exhibition: People in struggle. Admission £1 Children 25p.

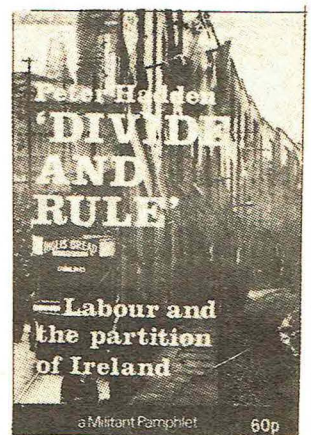
Readers visiting Margate on holiday can obtain *Militant* at the paper kiosk opposite 'Clock Tower' or phone 21293.

OUT NOW!

'A fighting programme for the NUR'
Price 25p [+ 10p postage] from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

TYNESIDE Marxist Sunday School Sunday 21 June: 7.00pm Two part introduction to Marxist Philosophy—1) Historical Materialism. Sunday 28 June 7.00pm 2) Dialectical materialism. Sunday 5 July The Russian Revolution. Sunday 12 July: 7.00pm History of the Communist International. Sunday 19 July 7.00pm The rise of fascism in Germany 1919-1933. Sunday 26 July 7.00pm The Chinese Revolution 1925-27. Sunday 2 August 7.00pm The Spanish Revolution 1931-1939. Sunday 9 August 7.00pm Popular Fronts and France. Venue from your local Militant seller.

MILITANT PAMPHLET



60p (+ 20p postage) From World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

MILITANT MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL Friday 26 June-Sunday 28 June

Courses on: Introduction to Marxism: Ireland; France; History of the British Labour Movement; South Africa. Debates: The Future for the Labour Party; How to achieve peace and disarmament. Also: Meeting on Poland—The struggle for workers' democracy. At Goldsmith's College Students' Union, Lewisham Way, London S.E.14. Cost: £4.00 whole weekend, £2.00 Friday evening and Saturday or Sunday only. Half price school students and unemployed. Food for weekend (lunch Saturday and Sunday, sandwiches for Sunday breakfast) £2.00 (no half price). (Cheques payable to Militant). This weekend school is open to all workers and activists in the labour movement. There is full debate and discussion in each session. Come along and put your point of view. BOOK NOW! Send bookings to, or for further information write to: Militant Marxist Weekend School, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

LESSONS OF CHILE

Read this Marxist analysis price 50p [+ 15p p&p]

From World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

MILITANT PAMPHLET

'The Marxist Theory of the State' By Ted Grant

Price 70p (including postage) from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

"I'D RATHER BE A MOLE THAN A RAT" T-SHIRTS

Summer T-shirts. Colours—white, yellow, sky blue, dark green, navy and black. All with red motif. Round neck and short sleeves.

Sizes—children's: 24, 26, 28, 28 and 30 inch chest. £2.80 each. Adults: small—32-34; medium—34-36; large—38-40; extra large (no dark green)—42-44. £3.25 each. Both costs include postage and packing. Please indicate colour, and size preferred. ALL PROCEEDS TO THE FIGHTING FUND:

Cheques and postal orders made out to R Harris. Send orders with payment to: R Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1UR.

Industrial

NUR MUST FIGHTBACK

Broad Left

A very lively and enthusiastic meeting marked the founding of the NUR Broad Left recently.

Over 50 NUR members from places as far apart as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Wales and London came to this important event.

A Bristol NUR member set the tone of the meeting by explaining past failures of BR management's policies for the industry.

He went on to attack the joint approach attitude of union leaders. There is no common ground between management and railway workers.

In reality the trade unions were being told by the BR bosses and the Tories if they took any industrial action to defend services there would be no money for investment into the industry. This was described as "blackmail at two levels with the victims being expected to write out the ransom notes for the blackmailers".

Demands included:

- ★ Defend the existing rail network
- ★ No to job losses
- ★ Industrial action if necessary to save jobs and services
- ★ Scrap the Minimum Earnings Level agreement
- ★ Living basic wage for all railway workers of no less than £90 a week.
- ★ Action now to achieve a 35-hour week.

However, the machinery of negotiation within our unions is as bad as one speaker said, as anything the other side of the Iron Curtain. That was why the statement of aims also called for:

- ★ A democratic negotiation machinery, scrap the 'consultation' procedures. All items to be negotiable.
- ★ All elections of LDCs to be run entirely by union branches.
- ★ Full time officials to be elected every five years and to be subject to the right of recall during their term of office and to receive the average wage of the workers they represent plus necessary expenses.
- ★ All grades conferences to be binding on NEC.
- ★ For a fully democratic NUR executive with EC members having the right to decide the agenda and issues to be discussed at their meetings.

On general policies agreed by the Broad Left, the statement of aims also calls for:

- ★ One democratic union for all railway workers.
- ★ Build Triple Alliance at grass roots level.

It also called for defence of the moves to democratise the Labour Party, support for Tony Benn in the leadership elections and implementation of Clause IV.

Our union is one of the oldest in the labour movement. It has a long and rich tradition of struggle. It also played an important role in the formation of the Labour Party. We believe the NUR Broad Left will help our union with fighting socialist policies and thereby take our union once again to the very forefront of the British trade union movement.

There is undoubtedly an increasing mood of anger and determination to fight back within the ranks of the National Union of Railwaymen.

Members are coming under attack in every section of British Rail, with closures, short-time working and de-nationalisation (see page 7).

On the railway operating side there have been a whole number of strikes and disputes against the cuts in services and threatened line closures.

This year's NUR Annual Conference will have a great responsibility to ensure that a clear fighting programme is adopted to defend the jobs and living standards of railway workers and to ensure the future of the rail industry.

There are resolutions on all the major issues of job losses, service cuts, wages and de-nationalisation, with many of them backed up with calls for industrial action to fight BR management and the Tory government.

On the Labour Party a total of 21 resolutions from 24 branches and one district council deal with the election of party leader and deputy leader. Only two resolutions support the ear-

By Jeff Bright

(Tinsley NUR, personal capacity)

lier position of the NUR, which favoured the 50-25-25 formula.

The majority of the rest support the decision of the Wembley special conference and clearly understand that the trade union movement—that founded the Labour Party, and gives it financial and political support—must have a major say along with the constituencies in the choice of leaders.

It is important that this conference reflect that feeling and ensure that the NUR continues in its traditions of progress and democracy.

Resolution no 49 from Birmingham No. 4 calling for the union's executive to support Labour Party democracy should be supported. Likewise resolution 50 from Truro which calls for a labour movement daily paper, to be financed and published by both the TUC and the Labour Party, as "the only way that Labour

Party policy can be unbiasedly reported", should be supported.

However, a resolution from Darlington Shops branch—claiming to be "deeply concerned about the activities within the Labour Party at local level of people who owe allegiance to other organisations (who) as a result are constantly undermining the objects of the Party"—has now been withdrawn by the branch.

This was clearly an attempt by supporters of the right wing of the union to launch a further witch-hunt against the left of the party, particularly against 'Militant'. The fact that it has been withdrawn shows it would attract little support, as most members are more concerned about the political record of those higher up in the Labour Party, some of whom have left to join the Social Democrats, rather than fairy stories about 'conspiracies' and 'plots' etc.

Resolution 20 from Dundee and 21 from Port Talbot indicate the enthusiasm of the members of the Triple Alliance, indicating an understanding of the need for unity between railwaymen, miners and steelworkers.

Both these resolutions are amended by Paddington No 1, which points out precisely the way that the Triple Alliance must be strengthened and developed, through forging links of the three unions at branch and

district level.

Clearly the use of unemployment by the Tories as a weapon against workers demanding a decent wage hasn't worked. Five resolutions dealing with pay point to the high inflation rate and call for substantial pay rises in line with the cost of living.

The amendment from Paddington No 1 to resolution 86 from Glasgow No 5 clearly points the way forward. It calls for a basic minimum wage for the lowest grade of £90 per week, and that the executive should without doubt invoke industrial action of all sections of the membership, the Triple Alliance machinery being fully applied, in supporting strike action at the same time if the claim is declined.

Two resolutions, however, from Teesside Loco and Derby No 7, called for improved redundancy and resettlement payments in line with other nationalised industries. This is not the answer to fighting unemployment.

Willesden No 1 [resolution 23] condemns the hiving off by the Tory government of lucrative sections of our industries. Correctly, this resolution calls for renationalisation without compensation of any parts hived off by the next Labour government.

It is an absolute disgrace that while 'opposing' de-nationalisation, the NUR leadership are participating by using union funds to buy

shares in such hotels. Sid Weighell's threats about NUR members barricading themselves into hotels to prevent them being hived off was so much cynical demagoguery.

Above all, major debate at conference will be what policies the next Labour government is to adopt to fight unemployment and attacks on the working class. Feltham No 1 [resolution 19] rejects any incomes policy, restrictions on free collective bargaining or wage regulation; conference should adopt this resolution.

Those resolutions which call for the discredited policies of the last Labour government must be opposed.

Resolution 17, from Dundee, calls for many reforms including calls for reflation, a reduction of arms spending, and further use of North Sea oil revenues. This resolution, however, lacks the socialist programme needed to ensure its implementation.

Only Paddington No 1, resolution 18a, spells out what is necessary. It calls for an early general election and the return of a Labour government based on a socialist programme, which should include a programme of public works, a national minimum wage, a 35-hour week and implementation of Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution with nationalisation under workers' control and management.

T&G CONFERENCE

In a series of unprecedented moves, the platform at the Transport and General Workers' Union conference in Brighton has been overturned on a whole series of issues.

On Monday afternoon, conference supported a reference back against a platform recommendation on the report, and the leadership's handling of the 'taco-graph' issue.

Not long after, conference rejected a motion supported by the platform on industrial democracy, on the basis that the motion called for

'joint' control rather than workers control.

But it is over the question of the election of deputy leader of the Labour Party that the leadership's manoeuvring over this vital question is causing most disquiet. It seems at the time of writing all reference to the election has been removed from the agenda, including many emergency resolutions which call for conference to support Tony Benn.

It was significant that Michael Foot's address to conference on Tuesday morning never mentioned, except in a most obtuse way, any reference to the election.

The Broad Left at the instigation of T&G 'Militant' supporters has agreed to lobby the Standing Orders Committee to try and get the election issue raised. If this is unsuccessful, then the Broad Left has mandated Alan Quinn, a 'Militant' supporter and delegate from Merseyside, to move reference back of the Standing Orders' Report on Thursday morning, to allow the union's 'highest court' to voice its opinion of the Labour Party deputy leadership.

It was Alan Quinn who, in the debate on the one resolution on the agenda that supported an incomes policy, said, "With the

By Bill Mullins

enormous crisis in capitalism, the only way employers can put up profits is by holding down the wages of the workers.

"As regards helping the low paid, the whole union has to throw its weight behind these workers. This way is better than an incomes policy."

Support Benn in Labour Party election

Alan went onto say that in the Labour party elections the union ought to cast its vote to the person who most

represents union policy—Tony Benn.

However, during this debate a delegate who supported incomes policy said "Socialism has to be paid for and the working class has to pay." This was greeted with uproar!

To back up the arguments against a prices and incomes policy, a Region One (London) delegate said when a delegation saw Hattersley when he was prices minister, his answer to their question over high prices was that there 'is nothing we can do to control prices'!

A fuller report of the T&G conference will appear in a future issue.

AMBULANCEMEN

Avon ambulance-men showed their disgust at the employers' pay offer by voting overwhelmingly in support of a one-day strike.

The mood of anger got further fuel from Health Minister Jenkin's claim that ambulance-men earned £160-£180 per week. The reality of £62.50 to £78 a week before stoppages is far short of this.

Such contempt from the bosses is evident also at local level. Avon Health Authority snubbed an offer

of emergency cover by only offering 50% pay. Their intransigence was summed up by one driver: "They were determined to put the boot in from the start."

The low pay, stressful conditions and incidents have put workers in a mood for a fight. In Bristol, emergency cover was pro-

vided by Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade. Health union COHSE approached these organisations, so that if ambulance-men volunteered to man Red Cross or St John's vehicles, the unions could be informed so as to take action against these men.

Some workers favour stronger action. The pay deal has been on the table since January without improvement. Action should have been taken then. Feelings are also growing for lightening action rather than giving plenty of notice for management to arrange cover and shift hospital visiting times.

Alperton Carton

In May, 214 workers at Alperton Carton company in London were given a 90 day closure notice by the J Lyons board of directors.

Lyons, who are owned by Allied breweries, claim the factory is running at a loss. This is due directly to the pricing policy of the board whereby outside producers are forced to take on the work at a loss to maintain their own production. The board uses this to hold costs down in Alpertons.

The workforce are not prepared to take this closure lying down and have formed a joint action committee comprised of all union representatives, plus man-

agement staff who have seen where their true interests lie.

Allied Breweries anti-labour movement attitude can be seen after the strike at Ansell's (see page 7).

In their desire to maintain profits the board totally disregards the livelihood of the workers.

The workers of this factory need support both moral and financial to carry on the fight. Send to: Peter Boyd, 79 Jubilee Road, Perivale, Greenford, UB6 7HX.

By Brian Blake and Ruth Jellings

Reports

Civil Service— in brief (see also back page)

From the outset of the civil service dispute 'Militant' has advocated the need for emergency cover should workers in the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Employment be brought in to the dispute.

In this way the weakest sections of society—the unemployed, the pensioners and poor etc.—would not be hit by the action, which is aimed at the employers and the government. Nor could the Tory press launch hysterical attacks against the civil servants, designed to split the labour movement, with horror stories of claimants 'starving' etc.

The social work departments in Scotland and the social services in England and Wales have powers to relieve destitution. These powers can be and advantage during the civil service dispute, and should be studied.

Because of the struggles in the past by DHSS workers in the West of Scotland, discussions between civil service unions and the local authority union, NALGO, began at an early stage. We in NALGO made it clear we did not want to 'scab', and we fully supported the civil servants' fight for better wages.

We formed a joint agreement on NALGO volunteers manning council emergency centres, making crisis payments to an administrative formula to relieve immediate distress.

The situation is under constant review by both sides and so far it has been agreed to let this crisis procedure continue. With the civil service dispute continuing these discussions between trade unionists should take place in all areas, rather than allow the imposition of management negotiated procedures.

The debate regarding this issue continues among our own membership, alongside the important need for solidarity with the civil servants during this dispute.

During the voting to decide whether to go for all out action, nearly 3,000 IRSF members met in Manchester. The motion for all out action was passed with a comfortable majority. The votes against reflected a reluctance on the part of some members to abandon selective action, and there were certainly no indications that acceptance of the 7% offer having any support.

On 17 June, IRSF official Ted Eley appeared in court in Edinburgh under the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act. He had broken this obscure law by merely following scabs carrying mail from the strike-bound Cumbernauld Tax office to discover where it was being handled. The maximum sentence for this 'crime' is seven years in prison. However, this blatant attack on trade union rights received a suitable answer from the civil servants—at 10.30 am, as Ted

was to appear in court, thousands of civil servants walked out in Merseyside on strike and attended meetings in Liverpool and Bootle.

In Newcastle, the Unemployed Workers Union has linked up with the civil service unions to help in the action. They have been leafletting dole queues answering some of the lies and distortions put out by the Tory press, which has been trying to turn the unemployed against the civil servants. Dave Archibald of the UWU said, "Nearly all the unemployed we have met here have been in support of the civil servants." A public meeting called jointly by the UWU and the local Council of Civil Service Unions will be held in the near future.

In Southampton recently, 1,500 civil servants demonstrated through the town. After the march Ernie Manning of the Institute of Professional Civil Servants told a local paper that they 'laughed' at such government measures as leaving civil servants off the 'Honours List'. "How many of these protestors are likely to get their names on the list!"

Over 43% of those voting at IRSF meetings called for an early all out strike.

At the unions' executive meeting following the vote, several EC members expressed the view that this call is the only real weapon left if the campaign is to budge the Tories, and that many more would have supported the call if no alternative choice of selective action had been given.

Executive member Ann Sylvester called for the IRSF to give a lead to its members by instructing them to honour CPSA picket lines, and to be ready to fall in behind the CPSA should the increased levy prove insufficient to bring about negotiations and their members went on strike.

This idea was actually called 'undemocratic' and ridiculed by the general secretary.

The CPSA has stated that it will be pressing the other unions for an early date for an all out strike at the next meeting on 2 July.

Criticisms were levelled at the lack of preparation for the meetings, which were spread over five days and resulted in poor voting patterns after the weekend.

Preparations are in hand should the need arise for mass meetings to be held at short notice. And EC member Terry Lyons expressed that the next time that every possible preparation would be made to ensure support, a view that is shared by many.

POTTERS MOVE INTO ACTION

There has been an enormous upsurge of anger within the potters' union, CATU.

In recent pay negotiations, membership rejected a 5% offer by secret ballot, despite the union's executive not making any recommendation.

After further negotiations, a meagre 7% rise, with catches, was conceded by the bosses.

However, a past agreement to shorten the working week was delayed six months, until January 1982, and the pay deal would not be back-dated.

Despite the right-wing executive of CATU strongly recommending acceptance, the deal was only accepted by 167 votes in a ballot of nearly 25,000 potters!

This failure by the union leadership to gain a wage rise at least keeping pace with inflation has led direct-

ly to spontaneous action by workers.

Over 5,000 signatures of no confidence in the union leadership have been sent to head office, and some factories are implementing an overtime ban against the pay deal.

At one factory, H & R Johnson in Tunstall, over four hundred workers walked out in protest and formed an action committee to continue the fight.

Despite the union's insistence that it would be impossible to get back-dating of the pay deal, H & R Johnson management have

conceded after the workers' action. The action committee last week called a public meeting in Burslem town hall, attended by over 180 pottery workers from various factories. The chairman, Trevor McVicker, a CATU works rep., pointed out that the chairman of Wedgwoods, Arthur Bryant, earns £3,000 a week, more than the annual pay of some pottery workers! He called for greater democracy in the union and a fighting leadership.

Guest speaker at the meeting was Bill Mullins of Birmingham Trades Council, who outlined the socialist policies needed to beat the bosses, to enthusiastic applause.

However, one CATU member, an ex-executive member, was not impressed. This right winger attacked all and sundry for daring to hold such a meeting, saying, "I am an ex-NEC member because I accepted redundancy, so that your jobs would be safer." This

was thought rather amusing by the meeting!

After much discussion, Trevor McVicker said that the union bureaucracy had threatened him with disciplinary action for booking the meeting hall. One worker suggested, "tell the union we've had a dance in the hall!"

Trevor was promised support, including strike action if necessary, to protect him from victimisation.

A resolution opposing redundancies and calling for a 35-hour week, an £80 minimum wage, greater union democracy and workers to become active in their local union lodges, was passed unanimously.

Asking for those against, Trevor got the reply: "No one—he's gone."

A collection to pay for the room left enough over to start the fight for decent conditions in the pottery industry.

thing new. Management have started to increase their offer a little which will be discussed at a mass meeting.

This division of British Aerospace makes guided weapons and fat profits. Yet white-collar workers there have put up with a lousy grading structure and equally lousy pay for too long.

STOP PRESS: Mass meeting on Tuesday decided to return to work on condition that negotiations continue satisfactorily.

beginning to realise that the press reports of disputes involving other workers are just as full of distortions and lies.

The dispute is now in its fourth week. Messages of support and donations to: Peter Cresswell, NALGO branch office, 22 Duchy Chambers, Sir Thomas St, Liverpool 1.

By Andy Pink
(Liverpool NALGO)

street because we have given away our jobs.'

Conference carried a resolution opposing denationalisation and ISTC's resolution to Labour Party conference will be in support of renationalisation without compensation. This has to be translated into action over Phoenix. The Triple Alliance was also discussed with strong feeling for solidarity, but the executive failed to put forward plans to fight any future closures.

By Bill Hopwood

BRITISH AEROSPACE

By Jane James

There could be no better place for a strike headquarters!

Situated seventeen floors up and overlooking British Aerospace in Stevenage, where 800 members of the white-collar union are on strike, the picket lines can be clearly observed.

The dispute at British Aerospace Site A involved security guards, typists, wages staff, computer operators, section heads and

stores. In fact the company must be in chaos without these vital staff.

All walked out on 11 June, but as with most disputes the grievances had existed for many years.

Two and a half years ago the company finally agreed to implement 'Job Evaluation.' In return the union agreed to use new technology. The joint management/union committee sat for two years and presented a new grading structure. However management wanted the right to downgrade

groups of staff, while only allowing individuals and not groups of workers to appeal to be upgraded.

Members began action by refusing to use the new technology and only going on all out strike when members were threatened with suspension.

Ged Moran (leading spokesman) said he was amazed by the support for the strike and that there were plenty of pickets. Although various unions on site have walked out before, this all out strike is some-

when Labour regains power.

The resolve of the typists in support of the Labour Group, steeled by the presence of seven 'Militant' supporters, has caused Trevor Jones and the local press to hysterically attack the action; "Terrorist tactics, Marxist dictators, political strike" are just some of the quotes in the "balanced" media reports.

The typists are now

forced 80 typists, out on indefinite strike.

The current Labour group on the council have been right behind the typists. They have refused to cross the picket lines, walk out of committees when scab agendas have been produced, and have sent letters to senior officers warning that those who scab on the typists' action will not be considered for promotion

recommenda-tion of the executive and Bill Sirs, carried resolutions in favour of withdrawal from the EEC and unilateral disarmament. There was an overwhelming support for the Labour Party and setting up of work place branches, while a resolution of support for the SDP was crushed with only two votes in favour! The right wing only just defeated by 110-118 support for the 40/30/30 method of electing the leader. The meeting in support of Tony Benn had over 50 attending, in spite of

several attacks by Bill Sirs on the left. Denis Healey could only attract 24—half of whom were journalists!

There was a strongly felt debate on the steel industry and unemployment. Delegates attacked the closures and slim down of the industry as well as privatisation through the 'Phoenix' schemes.

There was anger about selling jobs and taking 'the fools gold.'

One delegate pleaded 'Stop selling jobs which aren't yours to sell. I am ashamed to see kids in the

ISTC CONFERENCE

The last two years, with the steel strike and massive job loss, have been a testing time for ISTC.

This conference showed the union is changing under the pressure. Among the guest speakers at the last conference were Prince Charles and Charles Villiers. This year Michael Foot, Joe Gormley and Sid Weighell were the speakers.

The main debates were on political policy, unemployment and union organisation. Conference, against the

CIVIL SERVANTS: WORKERS MUST WIN!

The Major Policy Committee of the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) has decided to continue the programme of selective strike action, now entering its 16th week.

To finance the action, immediate payments are being requested from members and weekly levies are substantially increased.

By Frank Bonner
(CPSA NEC member,
in a personal capacity)

The decision follows membership consultative exercises in nine trade unions. In every case civil servants voted heavily for continuing the pay struggle. In a massive show of strength, they refused to accept the 7% pay offer and voted to continue the fight.

Unfortunately, the response from membership was not helped by the leaders' failure to launch a united campaign for all-out action.

For example CPSA recommended all-out strike action, while the IPCS recommended continued selective action.

In CPSA's Consultative Exercise 33,228 voted to settle with 24,148 voting to continue selective action and no less than 45,313 voting for an all-out strike.

This substantial vote for all-out action without strike pay marks a watershed in the union's history, on the

first occasion ever that the issue had been raised with the membership.

When the Executive met on Thursday 18 June, the General Secretary reported that with the exception of the CPSA, the other eight unions had supported selective strike action. The Executive Committee had two motions before it concerning future action.

One from full-time official John Macreadie read: "This Executive recognises now that continuation of selective strike action is unlikely to move this government. The Executive notes the decision of the membership to continue the fight and take all-out action."

"The Executive agrees to implement the decision in favour of all-out action from 6 July 1981. We agree to delay all-out strike action by CPSA members in view

of the decisions of other Civil Service union members to further attempt to win this struggle by the extension of selective strike action.

"However, if further selective strike action has not secured our demands by 6 July, then we call upon all other Civil Service unions to fight shoulder to shoulder with CPSA in all-out strike action."

However, the acting chairman, Mrs Pat Womersley, ruled the motion out of order saying that the CPSA's Executive had no power to call unilateral strike action as our powers of action had been handed over to the CCSU!

Despite being challenged, the ruling was upheld by the majority of right-wing NEC members. The right wing, always uneasy about unity in action with other unions, had now found a use for the Council—a cover for their own inaction.

The strategy of selective strike action is to be given yet another "one last chance" and the opportunity to give a firm lead to members was once again lost.

No clearer indication could be given of the confusion in the minds of the leadership. They say that Thatcher will not be moved by selective action, but they will opt for all-out action only if there is insufficient money to support selective action.

It is not now a question of money. Selective strikes have had a certain effect. But even this tactic should



Photo: Militant

The will to win shown by rank and file union members must be given a firm lead

have been applied more firmly earlier on in the dispute.

The Tories remain set to cut the living standards of civil servants and public sector workers. They will not be defeated merely by the public rhetoric of general secretaries or by movable target dates for decisive action.

The unions can still win the pay dispute. When the full CCSU meets on 2 July the unions must call all-out strike action. Only this stands any chance of winning the dispute.

Further delay by the leadership can only weaken members' morale. Members know that this is no longer just a pay struggle, that the

Tories are out to smash, if they can, civil service trade unionism.

There is a will to win but it needs a strength and boldness of leadership to translate this into effective action behind a winning strategy.

subscribe now!

BRITAIN & IRELAND
26 issues... £8.00
13 issues... £4.00
52 issues... £16.00

EUROPE
[by air]
26 issues... £9.00
52 issues... £18.00

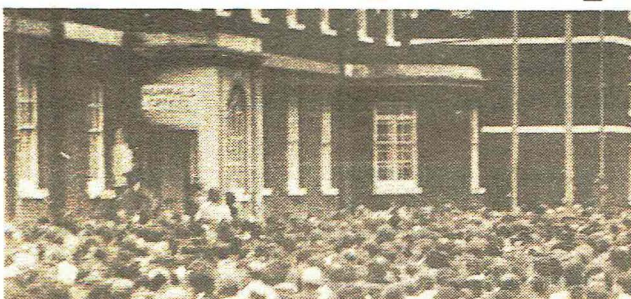
REST OF WORLD
[by air]
26 issues... £14.00
52 issues... £28.00

Name.....

Address.....

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

no scrapheap



Demonstration in Chatham Naval Base 19 June

16 weeks, with many of them on all-out strike over the government's 7% offer, and its failure to honour previous pay-structure agreements.

The frustration of the workforce came to the boil last week, when Bill Stevens, the non-

industrial workers' union leader, reported that news of the closure had been leaked to him by an anonymous Whitehall well-wisher.

Representatives of the industrial and non-industrial unions got together to formulate ac-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

tion to force the government to make an announcement on their future before the planned July date.

The first action taken in the campaign to save the jobs of the 7,000 employees was the demonstration last Friday, on the heli-port in front of the Admiral's House within the Naval Base. A letter was handed to the Admiral Superintendent by the representatives of the combined workforce.

Following this action a plan was made for several bus-loads of workers to lobby Labour's Shadow Minister of Defence. Local support is being sought from trades councils, the Chamber of Commerce, small businesses, etc., to

back any action the workers need to take to avoid the devastating effects that closure would have on the Medway Towns.

We must all unite to demand that alternative work be found for this highly skilled workforce. Workers must not be thrown on to the scrapheap!

Work such as the repair and refit of British Rail ferries (we would like to know where this work goes now) and the repair and refitting of our merchant fleet could be done at Chatham.

There are hundreds of uses which the skills and facilities of this establishment could be used for which would be of benefit to the majority of the people.