

FIGHT FOR JOBS

Everyone in Britain, from the youngest baby to the oldest pensioner, could easily be at least £25 a week better off—simply by allowing the unemployed to get back to work.

By cutting the grotesque waste of unemployment and unused industrial capacity £70,000 million of extra wealth could be created in 1982.

Divided among Britain's 55 million people, that works out at £25 each, or £100 extra for a family of two adults and two children each week.

What stands in the way? The criminally insane economic policies of the Thatcher government. They base themselves on the interests of big business, which produces for profit, not need.

Yet just by allowing the 4 million unemployed people to get to work, living standards could be dramatically improved.

The Gross Domestic Product—the total wealth produced in the home economy—is likely to be about £275,000 million in 1982. The 4 million unemployed (TUC estimate) represent 20% of the 20 million strong labour force.

Let them back to work and we could get a 20% increase in output. Assume on top of this a 5% increase in productivity—a very modest improvement—and we would get a 25% increase.

This amounts to £70,000 million—or £25 each!

But because profits are low, millionaire financiers and businessmen are callously prepared to leave 20%-25% of the country's industry lying idle. As a result, millions—3 million

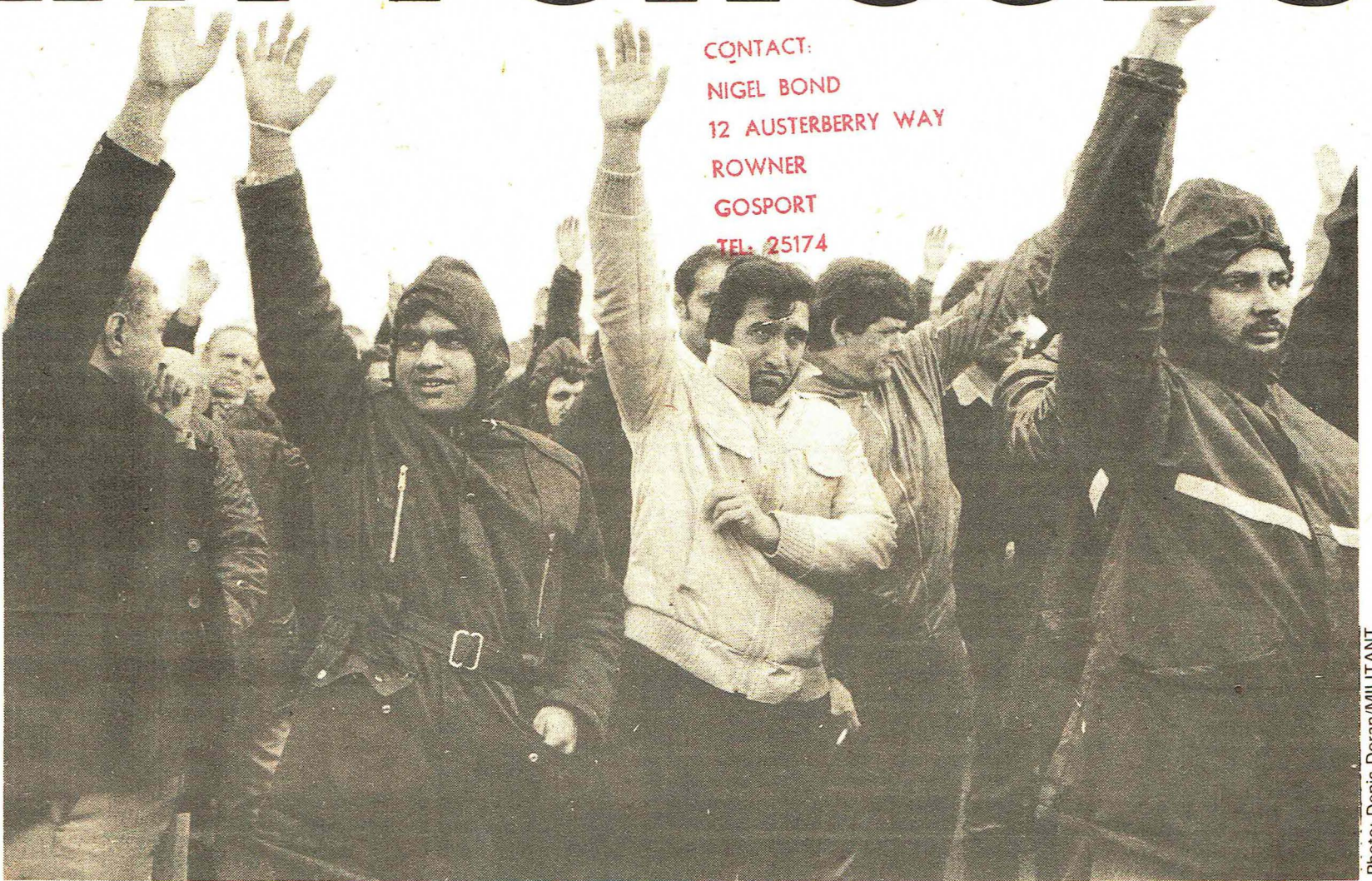


Photo: Denis Doran/MILITANT

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Heathrow workers vote for a battle to maintain wages and conditions. Meanwhile the bosses system wastes billions

officially, 4 million according to the TUC's calculations—are forced into the misery and poverty of unemployment.

Now the Tories are worried about the 'cost' of unemployment, by which they mean the burden on public expenditure. This year will it will probably cost over £14,000 million in terms of unemployment benefit and lost tax revenues.

The madness of it is that a large slice of the unemployment is the direct result of the Tories' attempt to cut public expenditure—which has inevitably drastically reduced demand for goods and services.

Now the Tories are trying to cut the cost to the government of unemployment through savagely reducing the level of unemployment benefits and social security—which they have pushed down to the level of 1951!

The Tories have only one 'solution': attack workers' living standards and rights!

This is far from providing a cure for diseased British capitalism, however. The government's December figures for manufacturing output, which mark a further drop of 2.3% (after a 1.9% drop in November),

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Back YOPS Lobby

"MSC should be 'MSC should be renamed the MSL—More Slave Labour!' This was the angry comment this week of a young worker in Lancashire.

He had previously been on two YOPS schemes, but has now "graduated" to "hard labour" on a Manpower Services contract.

The pay? About £70 a week. This is better than the miserable YOPS allowance (£25). But the MSC workers, who include older men, feel it is a cheap-labour wage forced on them

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**Tory Unemployment will cost us
£70,000,000,000 This Year**

KICK TORIES OUT!!!

Militant

Inquiry marks BR's failure to smash ASLEF

The very fact that ACAS had to be brought in to the train drivers' dispute is a defeat for British Rail bosses and Thatcher and co. They set out to isolate and smash ASLEF, a well-organised rail union, as a prelude to pushing through even more redundancies and further driving down

railmen's wages.

Yet they have been forced by the resolute, united action of the train drivers into a sticky and confused arbitration.

The BR bosses, fully backed by the government and the ruling class have carried out a desperate campaign to bully the train drivers into submission. The Fleet Street press have unleashed a barrage of smears, lies and distortion at the train drivers. They have also given great prominence to isolated stunts organised at great cost by the British Rail Board.

The BRB itself has reneged on agreed procedures, and issued a tirade of threats. The latest came on the eve of the inquiry with the claim that 16,000 jobs will be lost because of the dispute.

Yet they have not made a single dent on the firm stand by ASLEF. As we go to press it is unclear what stance the BRB will take with the publication of the inquiry report, but it is clear that ACAS were called in to try and get BR and the government off the hook.

The inquiry itself is full of the double standards that

railmen have come to expect from 'inquiries' and 'tribunals'. It says ASLEF should 'confirm its continued commitment' to the August 1981 'understandings.' But it was the BRB reneging on this understanding that led to the dispute in the first place.

The report says the train drivers should be paid the 3% as was originally agreed, but only if the strike action is called off. Yet it then goes on to say "the application of the shorter working week agreement, would wait on the outcome of the dispute over flexible rostering."

This is just backing up the tactics of the BRB. The original 1981 agreement promised the shorter working week as part of the 'understanding on pay', not productivity. These two understandings were separate.

The BRB, and now ACAS, have conveniently tied the promised 39-hour week in with produc-

tivity—including flexible rostering—proposals. Flexi-rostering will in fact destroy any gains to be made from a cut in working hours. This twisting of agreements is typical of the BRB and gives an insight of what ASLEF are up against.

The ACAS report also recommends that the two parties be given a seven-day time limit on negotiations on flexible rostering.

The train drivers will be suspicious of ACAS's proposals. They include the usual time-wasting, 'around the houses' inquiry after inquiry.

If the ASLEF and the BR bosses—meeting as the Railway Staffs Joint Council (Loco)—fail to agree in the proposed seven-day time limit, they must go on to the next higher body, the Railway Staffs National Council. If this fails, they must go on to the Railways Staffs National Tribunal—the original negotiation body which proposed the 1981 two part agreement

which BR refused to abide by thus causing the present dispute!

And guess who chairs the RSNT?...Lord McCarthy—a full circle!

The train drivers were promised an agreed wage rise and a shorter working week, which BR have failed to produce. And if negotiations are to continue on flexi-rostering the resolute action by ASLEF has given a clear mandate to the leadership that the members do not want flexi-rostering and they won't accept it.

The past six weeks has proved the strength of ASLEF and given its members enormous confidence in their ability to fight. No doubt attempts will be made to use the ACAS report to ensnare ASLEF in new negotiations over 'productivity'. But the union's leadership must firmly reject any suggestion that they may be prepared to bargain away the jobs and conditions of railway workers.

ANGER BUILDS IN NUR

Thousands of NUR members have been inspired by ASLEF's action.

Many of them have also been angered by the attitude and statements of some of their own union leadership, who have publicly criticised another railway union in the middle of a struggle with BR and the Tory government.

Many NUR members are angry at their general secretary's claim to be speaking on their behalf on the issue of flexi-rostering.

The strike action by guards at a number of depots is only the tip of the iceberg. Unity House has been flooded with resolutions, letters, telegrams, and messages of outright opposition to flexi-rostering and the NEC's decision to accept it.

According to an NUR Head Office memorandum, on 18 January a total of six depots from Manchester area to Ramsgate were threatening strike action. In addition, nine branches and one Sectional Council had written to Head Office about variable rostering, whilst a further nine expressed opposition to the agreement, or any extension of the eight-hour day.

On 20 January correspondence was received from a further nine branches. Stoke No 1 Branch opposed flexi-rostering and were considering industrial action. Norwich No 1 and Wellingborough both expressed support for ASLEF and asked the NUR Executive to reconsider their position. No Branch expressed support.

Eight letters came the following day. Again none expressed actual support. There was support expressed by Ayr Branch for ASLEF, while Glasgow No 9 called for the resignation of the General Secretary and the NEC of the union.



Photo: MILITANT

Guards at London Bridge station meet on January 18 to discuss action against flexi-rostering

On 22 January only five Branches wrote in, but all of them expressed their rejection and opposition to the agreement. One, Faversham, was considering industrial action, and several expressed support for ASLEF.

By the 25 January a further twelve Branches had contacted Unity House, almost all rejecting the deal, and none in favour.

Six more branches wrote in on 26 January, all opposing agreement bar one, which was seeking clarification. The following day a further five letters arrived, including, the information that at Crewe and Bognor Regis strike action was taking place. Also noted without comment was BR's decision to deprive Southern Depots of Sunday payment as a reprisal, before this was applied nationally.

Reports from the Divisional Officers revealed their desperate attempts to sell the deal, including unsuccessful attempts to provide action by members at Hitchen and Shoeburyness.

In those few days alone a total of 64 branches con-

tacted Unity House, with over 50 of them expressing opposition. These objections were on the basis of loss of earnings, loss of jobs, attacks on conditions of service and opposition to an extension of the 8-hour day.

The document gives only half a glimpse of members' seething anger and dissatisfaction at the NUR General Secretary and the National Executive Committee, who have failed to

listen to the membership's views. They have shown themselves incapable of leading a fight to defend and improve the conditions of service and living standards of the workers they are supposed to represent.

It is now crucial that the present discontent is channelled in a constructive manner to take the NUR, with its past traditions of struggle, back to the front of the labour and trade union movement.

side of the table) last Monday, they gave Sidney yet another chance to attack the left in their programme on the Labour Party.

"It is reported that Arthur Scargill, the president-elect of the Mineworkers Union, was disconcerted when Panorama researchers arrived to meet him with NUR badges in their lapels. "These had been handed out by Weighell as symbols of the rapport with his new-found admirers."

"Of course," *The Observer* comments sarcastically, "interviewer Robert Kee retains a proper objectivity."

Of course! As always!

CIVIL SERVICE — PREPARE FIGHTBACK!

Thousands of young low paid civil servants will get no pay rise this year if the government gets its way.

This is a further attack on civil service pay on top of the 8% cut we have already suffered since Thatcher came into office.

The Tory policy is for no increase for workers at the minimum of the various pay grade scales and those under 21, and a contemptuous 1% rise for those slightly higher paid.

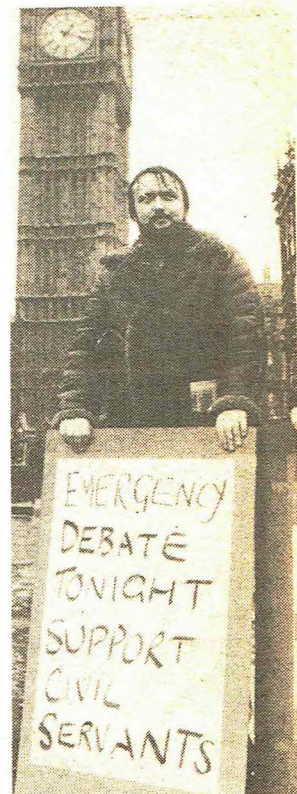
The maximum offer is 5½% for civil servants who have been at the top of their pay scales for at least a year. The civil service unions' demand was for 13%.

The offer was announced to the CPSA NEC meeting the very same day that National Officer John Macreadie (Broad Left candidate for Deputy General Secretary) demanded that the union's Civil Service Executive Committee should immediately meet to draw up a policy to fight the offer.

He asked the executive to reconsider their policy to proceed to immediate arbitration and asked the President Mrs Losinkska, if the right wing majority on the National Executive would now consult the membership on the way forward.

Whilst a special meeting may be held "at some stage" the CPSA leadership say they already agreed to terms of reference arbitration being submitted to the government and have given overall responsibility to the Council of Civil Service Unions.

The union leaders may hope that somehow this arbitration will bring about a settlement nearer the 13%



A picket outside Parliament during last year's Civil Service dispute

claim. John Macreadie warned that this would not be the case.

The lessons of last year's strike should be clear. Civil Servants and all other workers can only defend their living standards through their own collective strength.

The strike committees set up last year should now be immediately re-activated and joint mass meetings held in all areas to review the situation.

In last year's pay battle Civil Servants demonstrated the enormous power at their disposal. They will have to be ready to use this power to the full.

By KEVIN RODDY
(Broad Left candidate for CPSA President)

YOPS WORKERS...



**GET
ORGANISED**

"What's the point in working here, I'd be better off on the dole," asked a young worker in my office on seeing her weekly pay of £35.

Eighteen months ago just after I started working here there were two secretaries earning about £70 a week. With the introduction of YOPS schemes my boss, who sacks and hires people at the drop of a hat, did a few sums and decided to replace his secretaries by YOP workers. After all this would save him £70 a week for each secretary and the cost of YOP workers would be met by the government.

At the end of 6 months, not wishing to pay for the two workers he replaced them by two more. This happened again after the next six months. Towards the end of the final six months, feeling his conscience pricked, and one of the YOP workers being such a hard worker, he decided to keep one on. And at what rate of pay we might ask. £35 a week. A cut in wages of £35!

YOP workers have to get organised. It's the only way to stop unscrupulous bosses like mine walking all over us.

By a member of
Blyth LPYS

We're all going to the Lobby

"We're all coming on the lobby", has been the promise from over 70 YOPS and WEEPS workers visited at Basingstoke Technical College in the run up to the lobby.

Each group of YOPs demanded more money, better conditions and a guaranteed job. As one YOP typist put it: "the allowance for travel should start at £2 not £4."

Another YOP worker related how he has to spend his Saturdays rummaging around at jumble sales to find 'clothes' for work.

When I explained the aims, objectives and programme of the YTURC there was a tremendous response. Everyone decided we should immediately set up a campaign to get free bus passes.

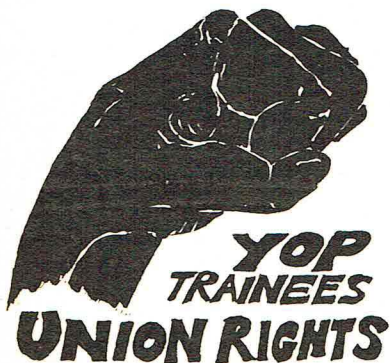
One group which comes to the Tech has the use of a video—so with the consent of the supervisors we are now going to make a film of the campaign interviewing people on the street, shop stewards on the buses and the local councillors while we take around our petition.

As some YOPs and WEEPs were still on full-time training at the Tech while others were scattered over a wide range of workplaces, we decided first to set up a YTURC committee electing a representative from each group and then to start joining people up to the most appropriate unions.

On the Monday before the Lobby we are holding a mass meeting of YOPs to really launch our campaign and to ensure that the youth of Basingstoke get to Parliament to tell Thatcher and Tebbit to jump in the Thames.

By Steve
Morgan

(Southern region
LPYS NC (elect))



Fight Tory misers

"Youth rates of pay in Britain are far too high. The young should be a source of cheap labour."

These are the predictable views of David Young the property speculator Tebbit has made the new boss of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC).

Young workers on the Youth Opportunities Programme (run by the MSC) would not agree. They are already being used as cheap labour. How else can you describe £25 a week?

Mr Young and his Tory puppetmasters think this is too much! They are demanding youth work for a miserly £15 a week. If we refuse we'll lose our dole money.

Another Tory plan has been the "Young Workers" scheme, where the Tories pay employers £15 a week to take on a young worker, as long as the young worker is paid no more than £40 a week.

The Tories claim the "Young Workers" scheme will create 40,000 new jobs. In reality it won't create any new jobs.

Young workers on low pay will simply take up jobs that would have been filled by older workers on union

schemes, to prevent abuses."

Since the founding conference of the YOP Trainees Union Rights Campaign last November, union recruitment and organisation has gone ahead. An example has been given by the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union in Northern Ireland where over 1000 YOP trainees have joined the union following a vigorous recruitment campaign.

If this lead were followed by unions in every region of Britain, within months tens of thousands more YOP trainees could be organised!

As well as joining a union YOP trainees must also organise politically by joining the Labour Party Young Socialists to end the rule of the party and the bosses class, who inflict these schemes on us.

The mass YOPS lobby of Parliament on 25 February must become the start of a national campaign to recruit and organise youth in the unions and in the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Join us in our fight.

Join us in our fight.

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Trade union power is better than pedal power!" was the message from protesting YOPsters when Norman ('on your bike') Tebbit visited Liverpool on 5 February.

BUILD for YOPS RALLY

Lobby of Parliament, Thursday 25 February. Rally at Royal Festival Hall, 2-5pm. Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Rodney Bickerstaffe (General Secretary-elect National Union of Public Employees) and Peter Taaffe.

Every LPYS member and 'Militant' supporter should make arrangements to get to this lobby. It will be an event nobody will want to miss.

The lobby of Parliament is not the end of our campaign. It is only the beginning. Our demands are

- ★ No to Tebbit's proposals
- ★ Trade union rates of pay for YOP trainees
- ★ 35-hour week and five weeks holiday
- ★ A guaranteed job for all trainees

KICK TEBBIT OUT

Norman Tebbit, Tory minister of Unemployment, recently paid a visit to Middlesbrough's Job Shop as part of his "get to know the area" trip.

What the demonstrators who welcomed him want to "get to know" is when he and his friends are going from government. His trip certainly won't do anything about a male unemployment rate of 30% in Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough job shop

has a reputation of being the best in Teeside; there are at least a few jobs. On Tebbit's day there were 297 on display. However over half—153—were outside the area. It will need strong legs to bicycle to find this work, as 44 of these were abroad!

Even the 144 jobs within the area don't offer much future. Fifty-five were for reps, or self employed with earnings based mainly on commission. Not much chance of getting a living with no sales. A further thirty-four were low wage jobs in catering, shops, and

reception.

Almost all the jobs on offer, even with bad conditions and pay, were beyond the hope of young people even to get a job as part time bar staff, Trainee shop workers or receptionist the bosses want experience.

The main activity in the job shop was signing people up for sports programme to relieve the boredom of the dole.

Kicking a football won't solve the problems. Kick the Tories and their system instead. Kick them OUT!

By Bill Hopwood

EDUCATION MUST NOT SUFFER

Keep school meals

This Thursday 18 February, school meals workers from all over Kent will strike for one day to protest at a savage threat from the Tory County Council to their jobs and conditions.

Trade unionists were told by the council on 5 February that by the end of March, they intend to write to 3,800 school meals staff and 3,000 mid-day supervisors sacking them and giving twelve weeks to decide whether to accept a new job in school meals, without a number of conditions nationally agreed by the unions.

First, that they will be paid no retaining fee. At present they get, half pay during school holidays. Holiday entitlement, which at present is calculated as if working 52 weeks a year, will be cut. As workers will be employed term time only, holiday entitlement will be four-fifths of the present entitlement.

We estimate it means about a 15% cut in school meals workers' incomes. The average weekly wage for a part time (20 hour) worker is about £32 gross (before deductions).

The council decided months ago to cut expenditure by 5½% in every department, but in particular to cut £2m from education, by cutting school meals.

Having faced previous cutbacks our members have already found it very difficult to work with reduced staff and we have been fighting for more workers.

By Nick Bradley
(Area Officer, NUPE)

The council approached the unions saying school meals staff were too highly paid compared with private enterprise. A reduction in wages was the 'alternative' to shutting down the meals service.

The reply of all union (NUPE, TGWU, GMWU) was that we would not even discuss their plans. Our members are already on a pathetic wage.

The £2m cut is to be decided at the County Council budget meeting in Maidstone on 18 February, and we have called on our members to lobby the meeting and asked branches in all departments (excluding home helps and workers in social services residential homes) to strike on the 18th.

The mood is extremely bitter. In every school kitchen in Kent, women are worried about losing their jobs, and some of them have acted without a lead coming from their local union.

If the council can tear up national agreements for meals workers, they can do it for caretakers, cleaners, waste disposal, highway workers. Where would it end?

Other councils will look to see if Kent get away with it. This is a fight to safeguard nationally agreed conditions of service.

Response to the strike call has been good, particularly when you consider that part-time women workers have not always been well



Kent Council are trying to follow their political counterparts in Dorset, where the attack on the school meals service aroused mass opposition (above)

No sackings

Teachers are now on strike in Barking and Dagenham to save 160 jobs.

The council wants to slash the numbers of teachers, mostly by the end of summer term. This would mean, after cuts in staffing last year, that nearly one fifth of teaching jobs would have been lost in two years.

Subjects such as Music, German, Commerce and others would vanish from the curriculum in some comprehensive schools. Remedial teaching could disappear altogether in many junior and secondary schools. Covering for absent teachers will become impossible—and classes would have to be sent home.

The effect upon education in this working class area would be disastrous.

organised.

In Gravesend schools even before the union contacted them, decided they wanted to strike.

A lot of schools are going to be closed on that day. Unfortunately there has been a very mixed reaction from teachers, some refus-

ing to cross picket lines and some prepared to, but we urgently need their support.

A mass meeting in Rochester of over 200 women voted unanimously to stop work and picket all Medway schools. Even in places with a poorer response individuals are

argue that they have no alternative, because of Heseltine's spending limits. Teachers do not accept this. At a recent union meeting of 250 teachers the following demands were agreed:

1) No compulsory redundancies.

2) No compulsory redeployment.

3) Job security for all on fixed term contracts.

4) No worsening of current staffing provision.

Messages of support can be sent to: Ken Jones (Sec. Barking & Dagenham NUT), c/o NUT Strike Office, AUEW Hall, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex.

By Colin Ramage and Anne Tanner (Vice president and past president, Barking and Dagenham NUT, personal capacity)

It is unfortunate that these cuts are being carried out by a council which has a massive Labour majority (42 out of 48 seats). Councillors, whilst claiming that they regret making cuts,

prepared to act.

The strike and lobby is just an initial protest. We meet councillors on 24 February to ask them to drop their proposals (though with little hope). What we are doing now is preparing the union in Kent for a tough struggle.

HISTORIC BENN MEETING IN DUBLIN

Over 2,000 people turned up to Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) in Dublin on 10 February to hear Tony Benn speak on the struggle for socialism.

The meeting organised by Labour Youth, the party chairman Michael Higgins and John Carroll ITGWU president, took place in the middle of a general election campaign.

It reflected above all the desire of labour movement

activists for a genuine alternative to the capitalist parties, and their enthusiasm for socialist ideas.

As Tony Benn explained, the socialist victories in France and Greece offer new hope for us all in Europe. They prove that socialist policies could win votes. The Irish and British labour movements must now unite to resist the onslaught on wages, jobs, living standards and the public services which are taking place in the name of monetarism.

Turning to the situation in the North, he reaffirmed the British Labour Party policy of calling for a conference of labour to create a mass Labour Party and said, to applause, that the only way forward lay in working class unity around socialist ideas.

Other speakers including Joe Higgins, of the Administrative Council of the Labour Party (a Militant supporter) and John Carroll of the ITGWU called for the breaking of coalition and for Labour to fight independ-

ently of all capitalist parties on a socialist programme, sentiments that won immediate and prolonged applause from the audience.

The word "historic" is much abused but there is no other description for this meeting. Three halls were packed, two linked up by speakers where the applause was no less enthusiastic.

Over 250 were turned away.

One longstanding activist said he had not seen a meeting of the labour movement of that size since

Larkin had spoken to a meeting in 1941.

For the organisers, Labour Youth it was a vindication of the Marxist policies and bold campaigning approach of the fastest growing and most dynamic political youth organisation in Ireland. We proved how Labour will be built.

By Pat Smyth
(Liberties Branch
Labour Party)

Double standards of Labour's Right Wing

Roy Hattersley last week denounced purges and pogroms in the Labour Party. Yet in the same breath he called for a purge of the 'Militant' supporters!

Speaking to a Solidarity conference in Sheffield he denounced the use of the democratic selection procedure to replace long-standing Labour councillors. Many of them, he said, had "honest records of putting municipal socialism into practice."

They were being sacked, Hattersley alleged, because they had "offended the prejudices of little, tightly organised sects." At the top of Solidarity's hit list, of course, is 'Militant', "whose existence within the Party is intolerable."

But what about Solidarity? It is usually described in the media as 'moderate'. This is Fleet Street code for 'extreme right-wing.'

What is Solidarity if it's not a "tightly organised little sect" dedicated to upholding the divine right of MPs and councillors to sit for ever, defending them against the terrible democratic threat of re-selection?

Last year the Labour Solidarity Campaign "announced the establishment of a regional organisation" (*Guardian*, 1 April 1981) to a meeting of 50 right-wing Labour MPs.

Peter Shore told that meeting that support for the Campaign had "been building up rapidly...The movement, which hopes to recruit up to 20,000 supporters from within the party...currently estimates it supporters at around 11,500...Co-ordinating groups are being set up in the constituencies." (*Financial Times*, 1 April 1981).

Outside the PLP and Labour councillors, however, Solidarity is very thin on the ground. A year later, the Labour Solidarity Campaign is still trying to organise its supporters. A letter recently went out inviting right-wingers to a meeting in the House of Commons on 16 February.

On headed Solidarity Campaign paper and signed by Ted Graham (MP for Enfield, Edmonton), Roland Moyle (MP for Lewisham East), Chris Savage (member of Stepney & Poplar CLP), Richard Tomlinson (of Ealing North CLP), and others, the letter says:

"Labour Solidarity is attempting to form groups in the localities to promote the objects of the organisation. If there is not one already in your area we would like to help form one. You will be given as much help as possible to do this."

We await Lord Underhill's comments on the Labour Solidarity "organisation" with interest!

The truth about Socialism

"The mood of the ASLEF members in the present strike, the action taken against the Sun and other Murdoch papers shows the growing concern to fight back against the Tories.

"Militant supporters will fight for any Labour candidate tooth and nail to get rid of the Tories. Even if Ben Ford had been reselected in Bradford North we would have been the hardest workers for his return."

Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant* was speaking in Bradford to a meeting of 120 on "What *Militant* stands for".

But there was a growing realisation amongst the

**Reports by
Pete Watson
Theo Simon and
Mick Slater**

working class that the economy was in a deep crisis and that not just the Tories but even a Labour government would be in crisis too, unless it

As a result of a well attended meeting in Wigan to hear Phil Frampton speak on 'What we stand for', 'Militant' is now being sold regularly at the local Heinz factory, the Co-op glassworks and the local post office depot.

Wigan CLP have passed a resolution against the witch-hunt and other local Labour Party branches and trade unions have invited 'Militant' speakers to their

meetings.

Rossendale CLP passed, with no votes against, an anti-witch-hunt resolution moved by the trades council and Ramsbottom town party. At a town party meeting in Rawtenstall a proposal that a 'Militant' speaker should be invited was only turned down when two local councillors threatened to resign, showing these councillors' fear of open democratic debate.

transformed society along socialist lines.

The old right wing leaders of the party, having lost their arguments in favour of discredited pro-capitalist

policies, are now trying desperately to retain their position through a witch-hunt against *Militant*.

Pat Wall, selected by Bradford North Labour

Party to fight the next election, also spoke at the meeting. He pointed out that there was no way Labour's right could get rid of him or other *Militant* supporters.

If he was banned from the party, he would sell the paper outside meetings, and see party members in the pubs and clubs of Bradford. He had been a party member for 31 years and would remain one!

In Plymouth too there was a record turnout for a Readers Meeting, spurred on by a press attack which backfired, when a local right winger was given space on the front page of the local paper.

"I am pledged to fight them to the bitter end. It's time the rest of us took decisive action", said Devonport CLP Chairman, Bob Bishop, in his press attack on local *Militant* supporters.

This free advert for our ideas, along with a fortnight of solid leafletting, fly-posting, and street sales, brought over fifty people out to the meeting. Some came as far as twenty miles to hear Bryan Beckingham explain what we really stand for.

As one young worker said to an LPYS member afterwards, "you people are what I always thought the Labour Party should be".

PHOTO: Denis Doran



Workers in Stanley Co Durham demonstrate their anger as the then Tory Industry minister Joseph visits the area, early last year.

'Something has to be done'

'Militant' supporters in Gateshead decided that workers had heard plenty about our paper recently, most of it lies and distortions.

It was time we started methodically spreading the truth.

We sent letters to every factory on our Trading Estate, explaining what we stand for together with back copies of 'Militant'.

A few days after we rang round for appointments to see Convenors and Senior Shop Stewards and their Committees.

The first Conventor we spoke to, obviously influenced by the press, just didn't want to know, and couldn't get off the phone quickly enough. The second said, "Ring back. We'll discuss your letter at our Shop Stewards Committee this afternoon."

We rang back. "After careful consideration we are of the opinion that politics shouldn't mix with union business." Well—at least they've discussed 'Militant'!

On call number three—the telephonist replied—"We haven't a union here. Our management's great."

We reply—"They're all great, mind you 'til they're not!" A five minute discussion follows—nothing positive, but perhaps the girl will think about what we said.

Number four—"Can we speak to your Conventor?" Reply—"Hold on please, I'll get her for you." Suddenly a man's voice on the line—"I'm the Personnel Manager and before I take her off her machine, I want to know what it's about."

That night the phone rang at home—"Hello. I'm the Conventor you tried to speak to today when the boss stepped-in. What did you want?" It was arranged we'd meet next Tuesday dinner time. Success!

Call five. We spoke to the Conventor. "Did you get our letter?" "No" she replied, "I get my post about a fortnight late—after the boss has had a good look!"

"Can you come to the factory for a proper discussion? Do you just want to talk to the Shop Stewards or would you like to speak to the whole factory?" We decided we'd start with the Shop Stewards.

After days on the phone, we decided it was about time we showed ourselves on the Team Valley. (Remember Team Valley Council in the play, 'United Kingdom.?) Firstly, an

engineering company making mining equipment for the NCB.

The Conventor and Senior Shop Steward met us. (Obviously experienced trade unionists—they never meet anyone they don't know alone!) If we had spoken to them on the phone we would probably have met with the reaction, "Politics and trade unionism shouldn't mix."

Instead, after chatting and arguing, both bought a copy of 'What We Stand For,' which they promised to read, and gave a donation of 10p each to the Fighting Fund.

"Something has to be done. We'd both say we're good Shop Stewards, but we'll also admit that our firm employs 140 while two years ago we had over 300. Last year we settled for 4%. We're at rock bottom. God knows what'll happen to us if Thatcher manages to close all the pits she wants to."

Next to a factory producing rubber hoses, where we were able to see the Conventor and Senior Shop Steward. The noise was so intense we had to go outside to talk. Our arrival slotted in between a meeting with the shop floor workers and management.

"We want to know what the hell's going on. They've closed our factories in

Glasgow and Speke and we reckon we're next. We've got 600 lads here and the mood of despair is terrible, agonising.

"Thatcher's against working people—we expect that—but our biggest problem is our own leadership. We're going to lose our jobs like thousands of others in our union have, but what do Regional Office and National Office do? We can't save our jobs on our own, but our leaders have no fight in them.

"How the hell can we persuade our own lads to fight when they're getting no encouragement from above? The bosses are being allowed to just walk all over us."

"We agree with you. Something has to be done and it's good of you to come down and see us. The only time you normally see people from the Labour Party is at election time."

That's encouragement enough for us. With confidence in our ideas, our programme and the working class we'll soldier on. Only 59 more factories to go!

By Margaret Reavey

(Gateshead East CLP)

Save our services

On 9 February over eight hundred workers from bus crews, maintenance staff and canteen staff along with LPYS members left Waste bus depot, Salford, on a four-mile march.

They went to protest in Manchester city centre to members of the transportation committee about the proposed closure of three depots in the Greater Manchester area.

Encouraged along the route with shouts of support, on arriving at County Hall we were met by another two hundred workers who had been picketing the council chambers since lunch time.

Councillors were greeted with shouts of "Fight Tory cuts", "Save our services" from many of the transport workers, clearly disillusioned at the way the county councillors have given in yet again and carried out the Tories' dirty work. The mood was clear when as management representatives arrived, the bus crews shouted for workers' control and management of the transport industry.

Barry Madden, a long standing shop steward from

Birchfields bus depot, told demonstrators that this was only the start of a fight that we must win.

A leaflet published by the TGWU Broad Left carrying a resolution by Blackley LPYS calling on the Labour county council to stand and fight the Tories, and calling on all transport workers to join the Labour Party, received massive support from the demonstrators.

Other demands on the broad left sheet that were met with enthusiasm were those calling for a national TGWU delegates' conference to agree a common programme of action against the general attacks on transport, and a political campaign linking up with the Labour Party.

Warren Bates, chairman of the militant Hyde Road bus depot called on all workers to attend their branch meetings and Labour Party meetings to fight cuts, make the voice of the transport workers heard and return a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

Over fifty 'Militants' were sold and at least thirty names were taken to join the Labour Party and the rally ended with a massive cheer from the transport workers in answer to Warren Bates' request to take the fight forward.

On 10 February, all laundry staff at Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital were locked out. Management claim laundry workers earn £60 a week plus £20 bonus, but workers' pay slips show around £45 per week. To earn the weekly bonus, workers were expected to clean 76,000 individual items which management want to raise to 84,000 with no extra money!

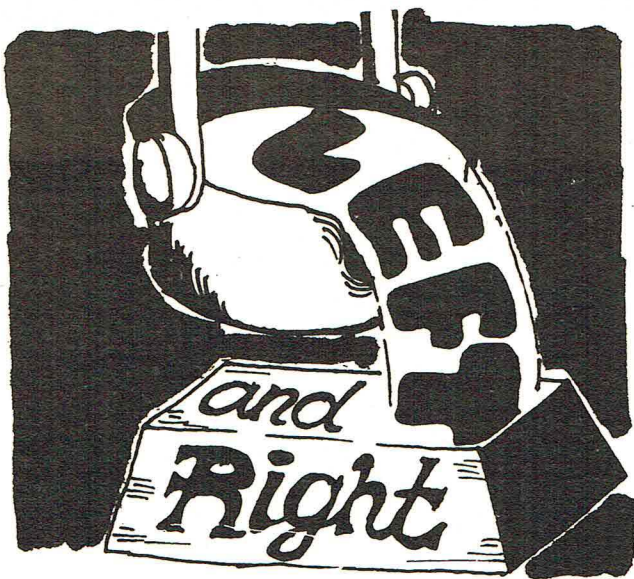
Already, just to take home £45 or £47 per week requires non stop, hard slog in filthy conditions. Each day at least 10 van loads of dirty bedclothes and clothing arrives, much of it infected, blood stained and stinking. Workers washing the worst laundry receive a pair of rubber gloves, an

overall and 38p per day! [before tax!]

The laundry's old machines are constantly breaking down, and some have not worked for 8 years! Management promised to install new equipment but it is always promising.

This dispute was planned by management as part of an attempt to bring private contractors into the hospital. The night before the lock out a convoy of commercial vehicles completely emptied the laundry.

This is not just an attack on 40 jobs but on all public sector employees. Messages of support and donations to Ella Sanderson, 75 Nile Street, Gateshead.



'Temporary insanity' drove me to SDP.

Amid a blaze of publicity Strathclyde Labour councillor Arthur Houston defected to SDP last October. Now, like the proverbial prodigal son, he has applied to join the Labour Party claiming he "must have been in the depth of despair and suffering from temporary insanity...I found myself in an alien society dominated by the middle class" (*'The Scotsman'*, 8 February).

So much for the SDP in Scotland. However, while Mr Houston may have been genuinely stunned by the blatant careerist and anti-labour movement antics of the SDP and regretted his decision, it must be added that no other Labour councillors in Strathclyde defected and the Labour Party generally in the area remains strong.

Cross-eyed Observer?

Do you still believe that the political commentators of the quality Sunday papers are intelligent, widely read opinion leaders? An example from the *Observer* of 30 January suggests that some of them do not even speak to their colleagues:

On page 11, Alan Watkins wrote "...the abolition of exchange control, the one genuinely liberal measure which the government has taken...(Labour's) chief objection is not that anything specially deleterious economically is happening as a result of the abolition of control, but rather that the government is depriving itself of one instrument for bossing people about."

But four pages further on, Iain Carson is writing: "The huge outflow of investment from Britain is causing growing alarm...Since Mrs Thatcher's government removed exchange controls over £13 billion has been invested abroad by British Companies and investment institutions. Incoming investment totalled just over £7 billion. This huge investment gap tops the agenda for the meeting of the NEDC chaired by the Prime Minister on Wednesday."

Pity the poor stockbroker

It is getting so tough, that stockbrokers have been forced to put in for a rise. No threat of industrial action, unfortunately (would we notice if they did?), more through a discreet Commissions Review compiled by the Stock Exchange Council. This reports that the average salary in the City is £50,000 for leading executives.

As hardly anyone could make ends meet on such a paltry sum, executives get a few extras: 2% mortgages, company car(s), private medical and pension schemes. These perks are estimated to be worth an extra £25,000. But what about the poor starving stockbroker?

Well, he is really on skid row. He gets no perks and has to limp along on an average of £32,000. But perhaps it is not all that bad. Despite the poverty wages, somehow more people join stockbroking firms than leave it every year.

50 YEARS AGO

February 1932 looked like being a good month for reactionaries. Kerensky, the last pro-capitalist ruler of Russia, was in London feeling optimistic. The *'Evening Standard'* "for the first time in thirteen years found him full of optimism about the overthrow of Bolshevism."

The *'Standard'* has never been reluctant to rush to the bosses' aid. But they did have good scientific evidence to back their hope. Old Moore's *Almanack* predicted that capitalism would be restored in Russia in 1932.

Bottling up Profits

From the moment of birth, big business is trying to use you for a profit.

A report published this month by the charity 'War on Want' shows how baby food manufacturers abuse National Health Service facilities and ignore a voluntary, international advertising code.

Amongst the 1,700 contraventions of the code which 'War on Want' found during only a two-month survey last autumn were the following. Manufacturers are not supposed to "use pictures or text which may idealise bottle feeding." Yet one advert, implying breast feeding was not good enough, stated: "Maws may cost a little more. But isn't your little one worth it?"

Another was the Bayer pharmaceutical company using a picture of a bottle-fed baby to tell people that Bayer products "improve the quality of life."

It is obviously true that not every mother will be able to breast feed, and those who cannot are certainly not second class mothers. However, the National Health Service is forced through lack of funds and staff to use baby care leaflets produced by the big baby food companies to give to expectant mothers.

These carry advertising for the manufacturers' products. Wyeth Company had leaflets on pregnancy, bottle feeding and breast feeding with full-colour advertisements for bottle-milk, Gold Cap SMA. Magazines for pregnant women were found to contain several adverts from

Jen Pickard (Newham NE CLP) and Lorna Watson (Hackney C CLP) review 'Breast or Bottle' by 'War on Want', £1.00 (plus p&p) from 467 Caledonian Rd, London N.7.

baby food companies.

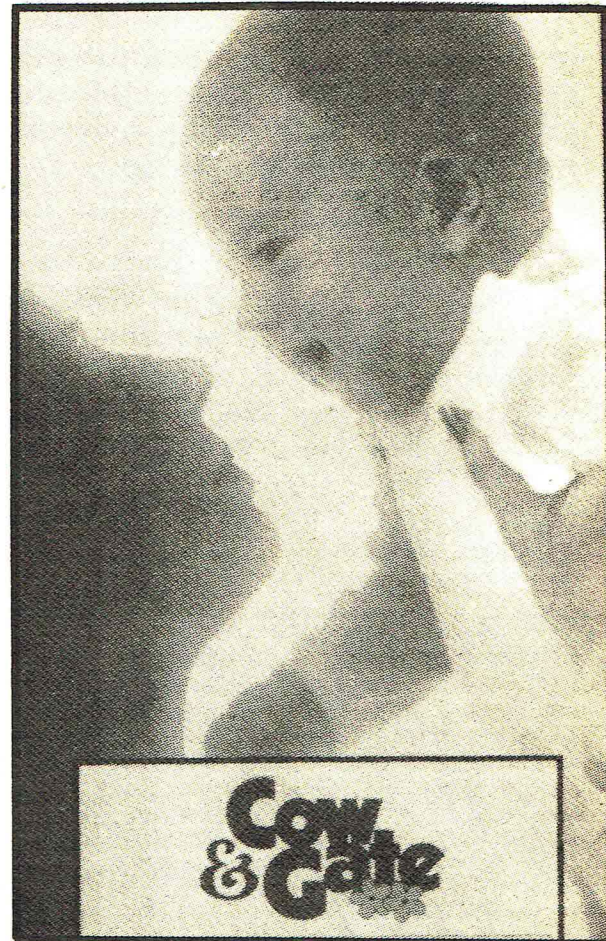
Cot cards and clinic cards are also provided free by some companies—all, of course, advertising their products.

Another example of contravention of the code of advertising is the free samples given to clinics. The code states that free samples should not be given except when necessary for the purposes of professional evaluation or research at institutional level. But samples are regularly given to health workers and clinics, as companies obviously want to get mothers using their products at an early stage.

It is also against the code for health workers to give samples of baby food to pregnant women and their families. But samples are often given to women at clinics or when they leave hospital.

Because the NHS lacks funds to help, in many cases health workers save up these free samples for low income families. One health visitor said, "If all 'samples' were stopped, there would be no way that the health staff (outside hospital) could help those mothers and babies in need..."

But this is not in the manufacturers' interests.



Cow and Gate Premium 'starter pack'. But once used, breast feeding may become difficult or even impossible.

They want a bigger market. One representative, on being told that the samples are given to mothers in need, cried: "But you're not supposed to do that. These samples are expensive... They're meant to be given to mothers, not hoarded up!"

Many mothers are also discouraged from breast feeding by the lack of facilities in shops, restaurants, and even doctors waiting rooms! Some mothers have found that they are expected to feed their baby in the toilet.

Shopping centres and other public places should be encouraged to provide places where mothers could breast-feed their babies. In this way the idea the idea which has been reinforced

in the last few years that breast-feeding is "unnatural," could begin to be overcome.

However, while the NHS is starved of funds and staff to teach baby-care, big business will continue to profit from parents wanting the 'best' for their children.

The 'best' start we can give them is to begin by taking into public ownership all the major baby-food manufacturers and integrate them into the NHS. Not only would this ensure a free sample of baby-food to babies being bottle-fed, but it would also put an end to expensive advertising by companies who do not seem to care about a voluntary 'code' when their profits are at stake

The cash crisis at the De Lorean car plant means 1,100 jobs will have to go immediately. And what future do the other jobs have?

Recently that chaotic capitalist John De Lorean was refused a further £40m loan for his car plant. So far £75 million has been thrown at De Lorean for the production of his stainless steel 125 mph gull-winged sports car. Why did they build luxury cars in the first place?

Only half of the 7,000 cars built last year were sold. One executive said the cars were designed for "well paid, randy, West Coast bachelors rapidly approaching thirty" (*Sunday Times*, 24 January).

What about building cars for underpaid West Belfast workers, rapidly approaching the dole queues? The £75m should have been invested in a plant to build cheap cars for workers.

De Lorean directors were about to award themselves £40,000 a year before the car plant crashed. They decided not to, only when they were struck by the glare of the media. On one Concorde flight De Lorean and directors reportedly

Produce for need, not luxury toys

By Glenn Simpson (N W Belfast LTUG)

spent £15,000 on expenses.

According to the Tory MP Alan Clark, De Lorean said in New York that "he had a handlock on the British government and they will always pay up." Thus a Tory MP unwittingly condemns the system of which De Lorean is a perfect expression.

Recently De Lorean has attempted to blame his failure on conditions in Northern Ireland. He has been quoted by a New York correspondent of the *London Times* as saying he made a serious mistake in launching his sports car firm in Belfast.

Yet in May 1981, at a press conference, De Lorean said, "I cannot think of a better place for us in the world to build." In other words when the government is throwing money at him things are good and when the grants are hard to come by things are bad—that's capitalism.

When hunger striker Bobby Sands died, one of De Lorean's temporary offices was petrol bombed. De Lorean put in a claim for £10m—that's also capitalism.

Yet this "best dressed" entrepreneur has been defended by trade union executives. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has actually expressed anger at Labour MPs for overt criticism of De Lorean.

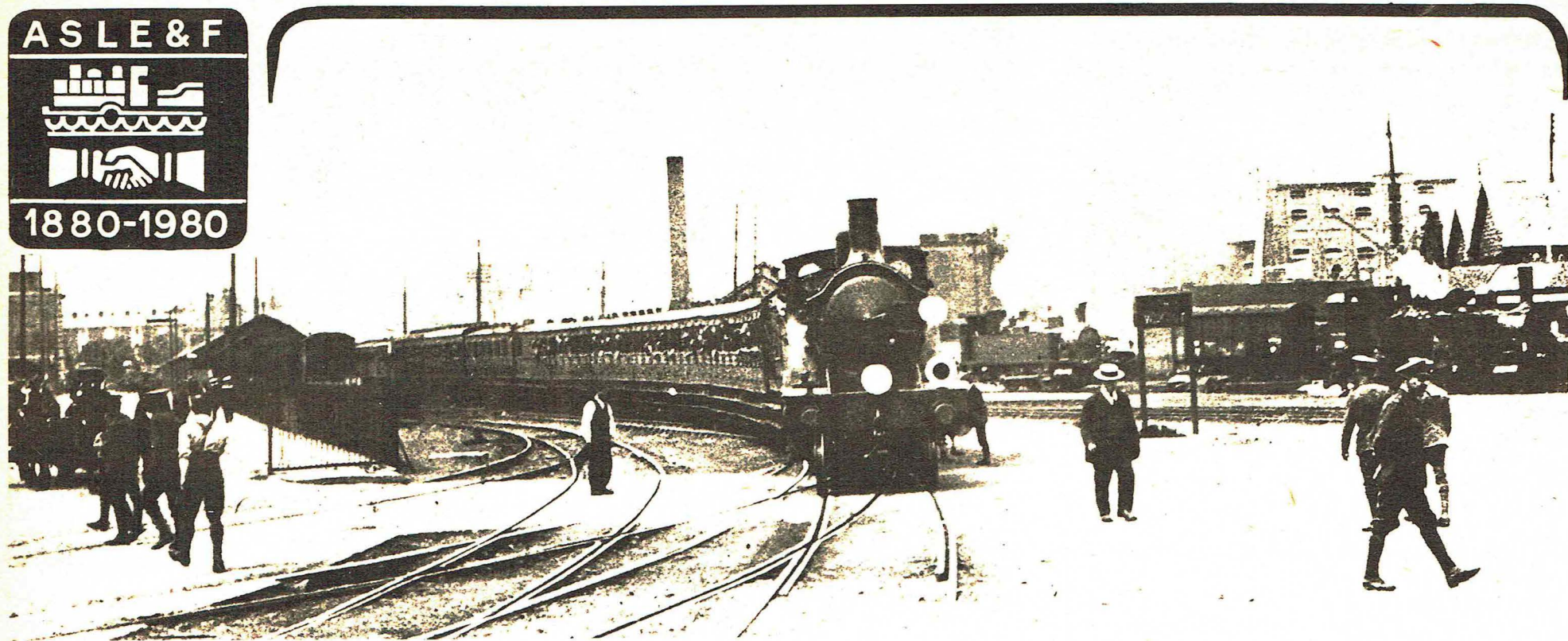
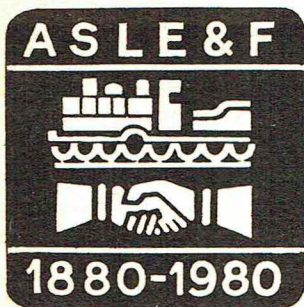
Mr George Clark of the T&GWU has said, "We are disappointed that the company has not been given any

new cash." De Lorean shop stewards even consulted that ogre of sectarianism, Ian Paisley MP, for a possible solution.

But there is really only one logical solution—nationalisation without compensation. You don't compensate people like De Lorean who have been compensated by the capitalist system all their lives.

The De Lorean episode is only one more symptom of a decayed and bankrupt system. The economy should be owned by workers and not by rich American "tourists" like De Lorean. Why was the £75m in grants (our tax money) not spent on a programme of useful public works?

What about production geared towards the needs of workers? I wonder why we all can't drive stainless steel gull-winged sports cars.



It took ASLEF nearly 40 years before they won the guaranteed working week, and that was in the teeth of draconian war-time conditions (Above). (Top left) ASLEF centenary badge

HOW ASLEF WON THE EIGHT HOUR DAY

Formed in 1880, the early history of ASLEF was dominated by the struggle for shorter working hours.

Evidence given at a Royal Commission on Railway Accidents held in 1877 gives a picture of the shocking conditions then faced by railwaymen.

On the Highland Railway, one driver "was on duty from 12.40 pm on the Friday till 1 pm on the following Monday." On the Manchester-Liverpool line "Guards and drivers sometimes make 10 hours overtime at a stretch, and 4 to 5 hours overtime is quite a regular thing." And this after a 10-12 hour day with often not a penny payment for the overtime.

ASLEF was formed partly as a result of widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of leadership given by the only other union for footplate staff at that time, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

Socialists and activists in the labour and trade union movement today can best serve their interests by working to transform their existing organisations, not forming separate ones. However, at the time that ASLEF was formed the ma-

By Martin Elvin
(ex-Stratford ASLEF)

majority of railway workers were not in any trade union. Many of the union's first full-time officers were blacklisted on the railways throughout Britain.

In 1893 with a shortage of coal, railway companies implemented a short working week, with men working only two or three days. The hardship caused was terrible and the importance of guaranteed hours, daily and weekly became clear.

A Royal Commission reported that the working day should be confined to 'reasonable limits', but the bosses ignored it.

ASLEF, like other unions, saw the need for class solidarity. In support of engineering workers in 1897, ASLEF donated £1,000 to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. They levied all drivers 6d (2½p) per week and firemen 3d, and then loaned the union £10,000 interest free for three years. John Boyd, current general secretary of the AUEW, should take note.

Railworkers did succeed in forcing some concessions from the rail bosses during the early part of the 20th century, but pay, hours and conditions varied greatly from one railway company to another.

In reality, locomotive men were still being employed as and when the railway companies required them, and were still only paid for hours worked.

To bring about a standardisation of the pay and conditions of its members, ASLEF drew up a National Programme in 1907, which demanded an 8-hour day, the guaranteed week (exclusive of Sunday) and standard payments for all grades.

All the bosses offered was the Conciliation Board Scheme, where management and staff representatives sat down and discussed their differences. Within a year, such was their bias in favour of the bosses, ASLEF executive 'renamed' them, 'Confiscation Boards'.

In 1911 mass industrial action broke out all over Britain. Engineers, building workers, dockers, miners and many others moved into action.

A rail strike was triggered off when the dockers in Liverpool and Hull took strike action and railworkers were called upon to block all traffic from the docks.

When the leaders of the

then four rail unions met the President of the Board of Trade, all they were offered were the Conciliation Boards. They refused and on 16 August all four rail union executives issued a joint call stating "within 24 hours, all labour shall be withdrawn from the railway industry."

On 17 August Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, thundered: "We cannot allow the commerce of the country to be interfered with in the way it would be by a national dispute, and we want you men to realise that in the event of its reaching that stage, HM Government have decided that they will use all the civil and military forces at their disposal to see that the commerce of this country is not interfered with."

The union leaders' reply was to telegram on the eve of the strike their members stating, "Your liberties are at stake." The strike was solid. Although two rail workers were shot dead by the army at Llanelli, the strike never wavered.

After two days the government surrendered. As the *Daily Mail* stated, "...Recognition was won on the brink of civil war."

ASLEF and the other unions won negotiating rights. That strike had enormous effects upon the confidence and consciousness of all workers not least those in the rail industry. They saw the role of the

government, the army and the state and also the power they could wield.

As *The Lighted Flame*, the history of ASLEF, states, "In two days, by force, railwaymen had achieved what they had been unable to obtain during over three decades of peaceful persuasion."

By the outbreak of the first world war ASLEF was in a strong powerful position. But the rail union leaders, including ASLEF, wrongly entered into a truce with the employers and the government who, because of the war, had taken control of the railways.

Victory despite prison threat

Stockholders did well out of the government takeover, with their annual profits guaranteed at the well-above average 1913 level. But the mood of railworkers grew increasingly bitter and frustrated.

At the 1917 Annual conference of ASLEF the executive were mandated to take up the struggle for the National Programme.

A Special Conference of ASLEF was held to decide on strike action. Threats to arrest trade union leaders and confiscate funds were made as strikes were illegal under the war conditions.

Police spies had to be evicted from the conference.

But the mood for a strike remained solid and was only averted when the government offered more talks and conceded that the principle of the eight hour day would be given as soon as the war ended.

The day after the war ended, the ASLEF general secretary wrote to the government demanding that the pledge on the 8 hour day be implemented. The government at first twisted and tried to avoid the commitment.

But on 6 December 1918 the president of ASLEF and a government representative signed the agreement guaranteeing the eight-hour day, and no less than a full week's pay.

The victory meant an enormous cut in working hours, up to 24 hours in some cases. Even then the employers attempted to negate this gain by the back door.

The electric railway companies in London attempted to force their workers to do their eight hours without any break or rest. They were quickly dissuaded when a three day strike paralysed the capital and ASLEF threatened to involve other railway companies.

Such a long and hard struggle to win an eight-hour day will not be lost now.

Workers must manage railways

My experience over the last two years, the length of time I have worked for the Tyneside Metro, strengthens my belief in democratic workers' control and management of industry.

The attitude management have towards the health and safety of the workers is appalling. When we first started one lad was disciplined, correctly so, for not wearing a safety 'flag' jacket. But today our

bosses allow blokes to work on overhead electric cables without permits because they say the cables are "safe." So far there has only been one injury when one lad got his feet burned, but this injury could have been avoided.

I've asked for clarification of health and safety rules but so far I've been met with reluctance. Twelve months ago I suggested a site visit to discuss this; management said yes but this is as far as it goes. Lip service.

Another source of grievance is overtime working. We get a good basic

wage and therefore don't need to work overtime, but undermanning means we are pressurised into covering for sickness and holidays—or else we are threatened with being re-rostered, and no-one wants to be re-rostered.

As a shop steward I face the brunt of management's cheap underhand tricks. When I was on holiday my boss told the lads that I was a bad influence and that they should get together to vote me out, but the lads are solid. Realising that I must be doing a good job if management dislikes me, I was recently re-elected shop

steward, unopposed.

Another example was the time I faced a disciplinary hearing because I had £1,000 worth of radio equipment stolen from my van, which had a faulty lock. If they had proved negligence, then I was liable to pay the costs. As it turned out I wasn't fined and received only two day suspension, reduced to one day after an appeal. I'm sure this was a 'show trial' because of my union activities. If I'd been fined then the lads would have handed in their expensive equipment, refusing to work with it in case it got

stolen.

What would management have done then?

Management implement policies without consulting the union on the basis that they 'reserve the right to manage'. If they did consult us I'm sure things could be run more efficiently. There shouldn't be a 'them and us' attitude in a nationalised industry. Management should be subject to recall. Some are straight out of college and have no work experience.

I've recently joined the Labour Party because it is moving left. The time has come for workers to control

their own destinies and I will fight any talk of a witch-hunt against socialist policies inside the party.

The same goes for my union. They say a union is only as strong as its members but a strong leadership is needed. I applauded the recent landslide victory of Scargill in the miners' union—my only regret is that he's not a shunter on British Rail!

By Stan Herschel
(NUR Metro Branch, Newcastle, personal capacity)

Unemployment Is it undermining the unions

While the miners voted narrowly against strike action over their pay claim, ASLEF drivers have now been involved in partial strike action in defence of the 8-hour day for six weeks.

There have also been any number of bitter, local struggles, especially against redundancies. Gardners, Laurence Scott, Robb Caledon, Staffa, Chamberlain Phipps, and Lee Jeans are notable examples. In the last couple of weeks there has also been the occupation at Plessey in Scotland and the strike in the BL bus and trucks division in Lancashire.

But looking deeper than these immediate trade union struggles, what is the underlying trend?

Is the strength of the trade unions being undermined by mass unemployment? This serious question is raised for active trade unionists by two recent trends: the decline in trade union membership and the marked falling off of strike action (down to 4.9 million days lost in 1981, a third of the 1980 total).

The Tory government's economic policies have given a vicious boost to unemployment, which the Thatcherites see as a weapon against the organised working class—a weapon to be backed up with the anti-union measures in Tebbit's 'Employment' Bill.

There was a fall in 1981 of about 600,000 in the membership of TUC-affiliated unions. The current total membership is just over 11 million, down from 11.6 million last year (and down from the 1979 post-war peak of 12.2 million).

In the 1920s millions of disillusioned workers turned away from the trade unions when their hopes for permanent improvements and a real change in society were disappointed

Most of this fall is accounted for by job losses, which have been particularly heavy in manufacturing industry. Over 700,000 jobs were lost in manufacturing alone in 1980, with another 400,000 lost in the first nine months of 1981. Some unions (particularly craft unions which pay unemployment benefit) have kept unemployed members on the books. But in most cases, when workers lose their jobs they stop paying their union dues and give up their membership.

There are no signs, however, of large numbers of workers turning away from the trade unions out of general disillusionment with the labour movement, as happened in the terrible depression years of the 1920s and '30s. The slump

By Lynn Walsh

of that period more than halved trade union membership, drastically undermining the power of the unions.

Today, on the contrary, the fall has been proportionally much less drastic. All the signs are that, despite massive unemployment, new sections of workers are actually turning towards the trade unions.

Comparison between the present situation and the 1920s indicate that the movement is experiencing a **temporary set-back**—not a crippling, long-term decline in the strength and power of the trade union movement.

Slumps do not automatically produce a radicalisation of the working class. Such a view is a crude caricature of Marxism. In 1921, in fact, the sharp slump—which marked the opening of the prolonged period of crisis—abruptly cut short the upsurge of the workers' movement which followed the First World War.

The 1914-18 war enormously accelerated the growth in trade union membership, from 4,189,000 in 1914 to 8,081,000 in 1919. The shortage of skilled labour and the concentration of workers into massive armaments factories also brought the development of the powerful shop stewards' movement.

It was the conditions which immediately followed the war which brought a sweeping radicalisation of the working class. The demand for a "Land [genuinely] fit for heroes [workers] to live in", as demagogically promised by Lloyd George and others heightened militancy. The earth-shaking example of the Russian revolution stimulated the socialist aspirations of millions of workers.

The workers' advances after 1918 took place on the basis of a boom—a boom deliberately stimulated and prolonged by the capitalist class in order to stave off the threat of revolution, and buy time in which to prepare a counter-attack.

The crunch came in 1921. The sudden slump sent unemployment soaring. From less than half a million unemployed, the jobless total jumped to over 1½ million in March 1921. By May it had risen to 2½ million. When the locked-out miners were forced back to work, unemployment slowly declined to 1½m at the end of 1922, never real-

ly falling below this level until after 1939.

The official leadership of the trade unions had done nothing to prepare the movement for such a sudden turn in the situation. Busy negotiating improvements—or simply ratifying shop-floor gains—the reformist leadership could not see beyond the rotten framework of capitalism. When the bosses launched their counter-offensive, the trade union leaders retreated in panic.

The organised workers fought back tenaciously. In 1921 there were 763 strikes or lock-outs, involving 2m workers in 85m days of strike action. In 1922 there were another 565 strikes or lock-outs (involving, half a million workers, with 20m days lost).

The trade union leaders, however, completely failed to respond to their members' determination to fight. The notorious 15 April 1921 entered Labour history as 'Black Friday'—the day the leaders of the 'Triple Alliance' refused to back up the locked-out miners.

The miners were forced back in July, there were also bitter strikes, or rather lock-outs, of cotton workers, engineering and ship-building workers, and printers—defensive struggles which all ended in wage cuts, with the victimisation of shop-floor leaders.

"The defeats," wrote J.T. Murphy, one of the leaders of the shop stewards' movement at that time, "threw the trade union leaders especially into the deepest depression. Trade union membership rapidly declined...the growth of unemployment soon liquidated the shop stewards' movement..." (*Preparing for Power*, 1934).

Unions have lost members through unemployment, but workers are still turning to the unions to defend jobs and conditions, especially in the public sector

Not only the massive rise in unemployment, but the failure to maintain the gains in wages and conditions made in the war and post-war years, led to an undermining of workers' con-



Thousands of trade unionists joined the TUC Day of Action, 14 May 1980, in Bristol's biggest ever demonstration.

fidence in the unions. Nationally, many trade unions — which had far fewer resources than today — were on the verge of bankruptcy. The shop stewards' organisations were largely crushed.

The hopes of millions of workers that the trade unions could secure permanent improvements in conditions and bring about a fundamental change in society were bitterly disappointed. The active, more politically advanced workers—if they were not thrown out on the dole—remained active in the unions, but millions dropped out, disillusioned.

This is not what has been happening in the last year or so. It is unmistakably job

losses which account for the drop in membership. It is particularly in the big unions with a substantial unskilled and semi-skilled membership in manufacturing, engineering and construction, which have been the hardest hit.

The biggest TUC-affiliated union, the Transport and General Workers Union lost 160,000 members in the nine months to September last year, compared to a loss of 140,000 in 1980. Its membership is now under 1.7 million compared to over 2 million two years ago.

Membership of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

(Engineering Section) fell by 80,000 in the first six months of 1981, as many as in the whole of 1980. Its total membership, just over 90,000, is 9% down on the 1979 level.

In the public sector, however, it is a different story. All the main unions have either retained their existing membership or even slightly increased their totals.

Unions like NUPE (National Union of Public Employees), the CPSA (Civil and Public Servants Association), COHSE (Confederation of Health Service Employees) and NALGO (National and Local Government Officers Association) have all lost

ent: ining ons?

members through redundancies imposed by Tory cuts. However, new recruitment to these unions has either compensated for the losses or brought about a net increase in membership.

Faced with massive cuts, more and more workers have obviously been turning to the unions to fight the threatened job losses. Significantly, these workers are turning to the union in sectors where there has not been enormous union strength in the past, and where, generally, there have not been closed-shop agreements. This is an answer to the claim of Tebbit and the Tories that millions of workers really regard trade unions, particularly closed shops, as an odious form of 'tyranny.'

The biggest new recruitment has almost certainly been in NUPE, the largest manual workers' union in the public sector. Over the last year, its members have suffered heavy redundancies, particularly in the school meals service.

In spite of this, NUPE last year lifted its membership above 700,000 for the first time. This followed a big recruitment campaign and the establishment of closed shops in several Labour-controlled council early last year.

There were also small rises—net gains of new recruits over members lost through unemployment—by the CPSA and COHSE.

NALGO, whose white-collar members are threatened by horrendous local government cuts, increased its membership by 16,000 last year, pushing the total to over 800,000. The strike of the Liverpool Council typists is a sign of the growing combativity of sections of white-collar workers when faced with massive job losses and cuts in real pay levels.

There was nothing to compare with this present day development in the inter-war period.

In 1920, the total membership of TUC affiliated unions was about 6.5 million. This was dominated by the 'heavy battalions', the unions based in mining, engineering, shipbuilding, transport, construction, and other heavy industries.

The total trade union membership among public employees was only about 100,000. Among civil servants it was about 300,000. Other 'non-manual' trade unionists totalled about 160,000, and in the distributive trades, USDAW, for instance, had a membership of only about 90,000.

In the period of retreat after 1921, when the trade unions and the labour movement generally suffered a series of massive defeats (the disastrous fall of the first, short-lived Labour government in 1924, the defeat of the General Strike in 1926, the splitting of the 1929-31 Labour government, with the formation of MacDonald's 'National' government) which did little to attract these sections of workers towards the movement, the white-collar and non-manual workers still formed a social and political reserve for big business and the Tories.

White-collar workers were also relatively cushioned against unemployment in the 1930s. Their level of unemployment was between 5% and 8%, compared to 30% for unskilled labourers and 14% for skilled and semi-skilled workers.

But the position of public-sector and white-collar has been transformed during the post-war economic upswing.

The enormous growth of the state's administrative apparatus, together with the expansion of central and local government services, has vastly increased employment in the public sector. Changes in conditions of work and pay have brought them nearer to the industrial working class. Civil service workers, typists, and other office workers, moreover, have increasingly come to work under 'factory-type' conditions in vast office complexes.

Far from being absorbed into the middle class, as the right-wing Labour leaders and the academics predicted, the white-collar and public-sector workers have been increasingly 'proletarianised' and drawn towards the labour movement.

Membership of public sector unions slowly but steadily grew throughout the post-war period. But with the stark threat posed by expenditure cuts to workers in this sector, there has been a sudden mushrooming of their membership.

The other indicator of



Striking cotton workers stream out of a Lancashire mill, August 1932. The amalgamated weavers lost half their members between 1926 and 1939.

developments in the unions—leaving aside membership—is the trend in strikes.

In 1981 just under 4.2 million days were lost through strikes or lock-outs. This was about a third of the 1980 total (11.9 million) and less than a third of the annual average over the last 10 years (30 million days).

Strikes have fallen off, but any upturn in the economy will bring a new wave of trade union militancy

"[Tory] ministers are likely to see it," commented the *Financial Times* (28 January), "as indicating workers' unwillingness to strike at a time of record unemployment."

This is the view of many bosses, who feel that they are riding high at the moment. The director of one Birmingham engineering firm told the *Sunday Times Business News* (31 January): "The initiative has switched. Before, union power had to be seen to be believed...now we get total co-operation in spite of what we have done to them through the tremendous cut-backs we have had to make."

Undoubtedly, the tidal wave of redundancies which has hit workers, particularly in the West Midlands, has produced a mood of desperation. Many workers at present feel that they must hang on to their jobs at almost any price.

The fall in strikes, however, is only one side of the picture. While last year saw an undermining of trade union resistance to the bosses' attacks, the spring and summer saw the biggest explosion of rioting ever experienced in Britain's cities. The frustration of youth, particularly black youth, with unemployment, rotten conditions, and no prospects for the future produced the explosive mood.

But one of the main reasons why the revolt of the youth—when provoked by police tactics—took a spontaneous, unorganised, blindly violent form, was the lack of any clear alternative, backed up with action, from the labour move-

ment.

The lack of a clear lead from the TUC and the tops of the unions has also been decisive as far as the trade union ranks are concerned. A clear programme to defend jobs, with campaigns of active mobilisation, occupations, and national strike action to stop factory closures and mass sackings could have transformed the mood of millions of workers. This would especially be so if the TUC together with the Labour Party launched a determined campaign to bring down the Tories and return a Labour government on socialist policies.

Despite the lack of a clear lead from the top, there have been any number of local strikes and occupation. But most workers are not prepared to fight in isolation, without the prospect of support from other sections—and not even with the certainty of backing from their own union leadership.

The West Midlands manager quoted previously also said: "The T&GWU and the AUEW had enormous power here on the shop floor. We were in the same lodge as Robinson ('Red Robbo') and when he went a helluva lot militancy went out of the gates. Edwardes did a damn good job there."

Failure of the union leadership, particularly of the AUEW, to mobilise the strength of the unions to defend key shop stewards and past union gains, led to a rout of the unions in BL—with disastrous repercussions throughout the region, and even nationally.

The recent strike in BL over the management's attempt to cut down tea breaks, showed that the situation, and the mood of the shop floor, is now changing.

BL workers were pushed to the sticking point. In spite of unemployment, they are prepared to concede no more. The last few weeks have also seen the occupation of the BL Bathgate, Edinbrugh, factory and the strike in the bus and trucks division in Lancashire.

Where local trade union leadership, through shop stewards' committees, District Committees and Trades Councils have been prepared to lead a fight-

back against redundancies there has been a response from the shop floor.

This was shown in our article on Leeds last week. The fight over wages in Sulzers and Kirkstall Forge also gave an impetus to the resistance to sackings throughout the Leeds area, undoubtedly preventing a number of impending job losses.

The more perceptive representatives of big business understand that the 'new mood' among workers of relative passivity and acceptance of cut backs will not last indefinitely.

If the economy begins to recover—as the government expects, with a 1% increase in production over the coming year—industrial workers will move to recoup the living standards taken from them in the past period. Relatively small increases in the demand for skilled labour, increased pressure on managements to meet orders and deadlines, and so on, will begin to change the balance of forces in the factories.

It is no doubt significant that the renewed combativity of BL workers has been in plants like Longbridge (producing the Metro) and the bus and trucks division, relatively successful sections of BL with orders on the books.

British capitalism's long-term decline will create a massive radicalisation of the working class

The long-term economic decline of British capitalism will undoubtedly create the conditions for a massive radicalisation of the working class, on an even bigger scale than the 1920s and 1930s. It is inevitable, moreover, within the long-term curve of capitalist production—which has clearly turned on a descending arc, internationally and especially in Britain, since the world slump of 1974/75—there will be short-term fluctuations of the economy. It is hardly surprising, either, that in the absence of a lead from the top of the labour and trade union movement, the slump and mass

unemployment of the last two or three years should have brought a retreat on the part of the working class.

At the moment, the Thatcherites are congratulating themselves on their success in taming the unions. But the 'Wets' are undoubtedly a little more far-sighted. They understand that the miners' decision not to back strike action is only a temporary reprieve. They realise that the horrendous rise in unemployment and driving down of living standards since 1979 could be preparing the conditions for a massive explosion of trade union militancy at a later stage.

The balance of class force remains overwhelmingly in favour of the working class.

British capitalism is now one of the weakest of the major capitalist economies, and the monetarist policies of Thatcher and Co. have accentuated the decline, not reversed it. On the other side, the trade union organisation of the workers is still among the strongest in the capitalist world.

The enormous power of the labour movement, strengthened during the boom period, remains intact. The softness of sections of workers which developed in a period of economic upswing and relative class peace is rapidly disappearing as a new generation of activists and shop-floor leaders are being brought to the fore, a new layer tempered by much harsher conditions of capitalist crisis. A renewed attempt to undermine union strength through Tebbit's 'Employment' laws will provoke massive resistance from the union ranks.

Industrial struggles are inseparable from the political fight: fighting policies for the trade unions must be linked to a socialist programme

As the crisis of British society unfolds, not only will there be even bigger struggles on the part of the public-sector and white collar workers now moving towards the unions, but the 'heavy battalions,' the industrial workers who have been on the retreat in the last period, will once again move into battle against the bosses and their Tory spokesmen.

The recent election of Arthur Scargill to the leadership of the NUM is a big step forward. It has enormously raised the expectations of the active workers, and marks the opening of a new period in the development of the trade unions, just as the election of Hugh Scanlon (in AUEW) and Jack Jones (in TGWU) did in the late 1960s.

But as the experience of that period proved, a programme of industrial demands and limited reform is not enough. Trade union issues are inseparable from political issues, and a fighting programme for the unions must be part and parcel of a socialist programme for the labour movement as a whole.

The vital task is: to give the movement clear socialist aims, to avoid the defeats of the 1920s and '30s—and ensure the socialist transformation of society, which offers the only way forward for the working class.

"In El Salvador 30,000 have been killed and we have been under martial law for two years. Why does he (Reagan) light the candles for Poland and not for us?"

These comments from a Catholic human rights worker in El Salvador were contemptuously dismissed by US President Reagan last week. After hypocritically attacking the suppression of workers' rights in Poland, he gave an extra \$55 million worth of aid to El Salvador's military dictatorship under President Duarte.

Even Reagan's own advisers have admitted that this junta has no popular support. Writing in the *Washington Quarterly* (autumn 1980) three of his foreign policy advisers stated: "The centre in El Salvador has disappeared, and the current junta is supported more by the US embassy than by anyone else."

For the people of El Salvador the position is now desperate.

The 30,000 killed in El Salvador over the last few years would be equivalent to 350,000 in Britain. Out of a population of only 4.5 million, 100,000 have been made homeless and a further 150,000 forced to flee the country.

Desperation

The civil war broke out because of the desperation of the mass of the population, and inability of capitalism to provide any chance of a decent life.

The growth of sugar and cotton plantations in the last two decades drove hundreds of thousands off the land. An estimated 65% of the people in the rural areas, where most of the population live, are now landless. Twenty years ago it was only 12%.

84% of the rural population have an annual income below £100 a year. But, for the very rich, life is good. 2% of the population, own 60% of the land and get a staggering third of all the wealth the country produces.

To safeguard their position the ruling elite have ruthlessly tried to crush all opposition. At the end of January, the *Washington Post* reported a massacre of hundreds of people, including women and children, at Mozote village.

The army divided people into groups. One who escaped told what happened, *Guardian*, 28 January:

"A soldier said, 'Lieutenant, somebody here says he won't kill children.' 'Who's the sonofabitch who said that,' the lieutenant answered. 'I am going to kill him.' I could hear them shouting from where I was crouching in the tree. I could hear the children crying. I heard my own children. When it was all over late at night the lieutenant ordered the soldiers to put a torch to the corpses. There was a great fire in the night."

Civil war

El Salvador had been dominated by just fourteen

By Jim
Christie

families, neighbouring Nicaragua by one (Somoza), who ran the country as their private domain.

Tied to imperialism, they were just like gangsters taking their cut from the profits.

Such leeches were incapable of carrying through the historic tasks which capitalism had performed in the industrialised world: ending landlordism, and foreign domination, and uniting the nation.

But with such a narrow base of popular support they were also unable to bottle up for ever the demand for change. Fearful of explosion from below, sections of the middle class called for reform from above.

In 1972 a coalition headed by Christian Democrat Duarte won the election, but was prevented from taking office through fraud. Power remained with a right-wing dictatorship.

Denied an electoral path, many parties—including left-wing groups which had supported Duarte—resorted to guerrillism.

Despite vicious repression, resistance grew. But the guerrilla leaders, while calling for support from the workers, did not base themselves on the working class in a decisive struggle to end capitalism and landlordism and establish workers' democracy.

The Catholic Church, under pressure from below, became more and more outspoken against the regime. Right-wing vigilante groups, mainly consisting of government troops, now surfaced and tried to wipe out all opposition.

But as the civil war spread, US imperialists reconsidered their strategy.

The military regime was unstable. Repression alone seemed unable to create 'order'. If they did not provide some reforms, curbing some of the excesses of the elite, US imperialism might be faced with another Cuba, where capitalism and landlordism had been overthrown.

Following the fall of the Shah in Iran, US President Carter's Assistant Secretary of State, Vasky, described US policy:

"Change is inevitable. Defence of the status quo cannot prevent change nor contain instability for a long time. The real issue is not how to preserve stability in the face of revolution, but how to create stability out of revolution."

Junta

In October 1979 a military junta seized control of El Salvador. They promised reform, and some social democrats as well as Communist Party members joined the government.

But the land reforms were limited, and had little impact upon the landless

The Battle for El Salvador



El Salvador's 30,000 deaths in its civil war would be equivalent to 350,000 in Britain. (Above) butchery by government 'security forces'. (Below) cosy chat between junta President Duarte, and his regime's main ally, US President Reagan.

peasants. Some curbs were put on the fourteen top families, but without involving the mass of the population.

The first reaction of the Carter administration was to send riot equipment for the junta, and a six-man training team. In January 1980, when 200,000 people demonstrated for reform in the capital, San Salvador, the junta's response was to open fire.

When the agrarian reform law was announced in March 1980, a 'state of siege' was declared at the same time. Reforms, it was said, could only be carried out "in a climate of order".

Duarte was brought in to head the regime, but limited reforms imposed at bayonet-point could no longer end the growing discontent. In this climate the CP and other reformist elements including some Christian Democrats, left the government.

The guerrilla war has escalated, with neither side being able to strike a decisive blow. The economy has plummeted downhill.

Since the junta took con-

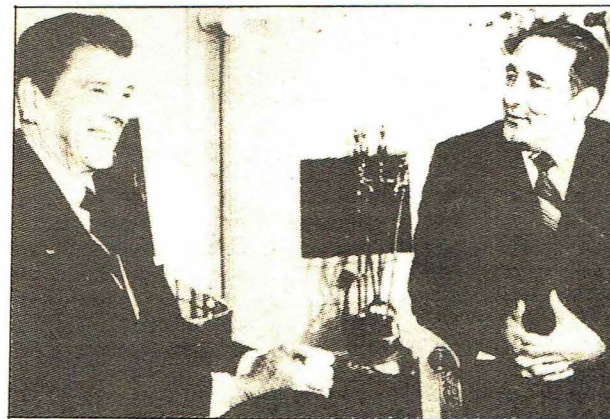
trol, over \$1,500 million has left the country, investment has fallen by over a third, and overall production by 10%. Only 50% of industry is being operated and agricultural production has been seriously disrupted.

Tinder-box

The dilemma for imperialism is growing. For US capitalism, El Salvador has strategic importance. The whole of Central America, including Mexico, is a potential tinder-box of corrupt dictatorships presiding over mass poverty.

Now large quantities of oil have been found in Mexico, which the US capitalists hope will be a safe and reliable supply. But from their point of view the old saying, "Poor Mexico, so far from God, so near the USA," should today be changed to "so much oil—and so near Nicaragua and El Salvador."

Earlier this month Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State, Enders, made clear why military aid to the junta in El Salvador is being stepped up: "If after Nicaragua, El Salvador is captured by a



violent minority, who in central America would not live in fear? How long would it be before major strategic interests—the Panama Canal, sea lanes, oil supplies—were at risk?"

One Californian Congressman has pointed out that California is nearer El Salvador than it is to the White House.

But it is virtually impossible at present for US imperialism to intervene with its own troops in El Salvador, because of the opposition this would generate in the States itself.

A Gallup poll in March last year found only 2% of Americans who wanted an invasion of El Salvador. About 90% of mail sent to the White House is against Reagan's emphasis on military aid.

Last May there was a 100,000 strong demonstration in Washington against the El Salvador junta.

With no secure road for imperialism, divisions have opened up within the ruling class. US Defence Secretary Weinberger has, privately, gone out of his way to disassociate himself from Reagan's policy on El Salvador and the extreme right-wing demands to blockade Cuba or Nicaragua. Some Western European governments are in favour of negotiations with the guerrillas.

The guerrilla leaders have said they will negotiate and are prepared to come to an arrangement with US imperialism.

But the Reagan administration at present refuses to negotiate. In reality, neither military repression nor a negotiated truce could bring stability as long as capitalism and landlordism continue.

To try to 'legitimise' the Duarte junta, elections are being held next month. To ensure a 'correct' result, there is no electoral register. Significantly, the election campaign has brought even more extreme right wingers such as Major D'Aubuisson to the fore. In his view Duarte is too soft:

"Christian Democracy is the same as Communism. They're like water melons; green on the outside (CD colour), but red in the middle."

Only the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism, with workers' control and management and a democratically decided socialist plan of production, can create a basis for solving the problems of the working people.

Such a transformation would have to be linked to the workers' movement throughout Central and South America, and in the United States itself, to defend the gains of the workers and peasants against imperialist counter-measures and the dangers of US invasion.

STRIKE WAVE IN FRANCE

A new strike wave has swept across France. Factories, hospitals, public services, shops, customs offices, airports and seaports have been affected.

On 1 February, the 39-hour week was introduced. But the working class now see that the 'great reform' is only one more disappointment on the road away from the 35-hour week originally promised by the Socialist and Communist Parties.

Just after the elections of June 1981, the government met with the absolute refusal of the 'patronat' (employers) to make any concessions on hours. Mauroy, the Prime Minister, responded by dropping the issue "until some later date."

The Socialist and Communist Ministers began to emphasise that the "Change" to socialism could only be successful if it had the support of the capitalists—a theme which has become more and more prominent in government policy since that time.

However, the government was forced back to the negotiating table by a series of strikes in September and October, which opened up a serious rift between the four Communist ministers and the Communist leadership of the CGT (France's major trade union federation). The CFDT (Socialist-led TUC) even more closely reflected the mood of the rank and file, launching a campaign of industrial action for 35 hours.

The result of these negotiations was a deal proposing a one-hour reduction annually, bringing us to 35 hours by 1985. But,



March 1979: steel workers demonstrate against threatened closures

From Marcel Coupeau in Paris

Since this article was written the French government has backed down under union pressure from its position that "work-sharing means income sharing". The public sector will get the 39-hour week without loss of pay and the government "expects" the private sector to follow its example.

Mitterrand and the government stressed, further reductions in the working week would only be viable if the bosses of Europe as a whole suffered the same fate.

Obviously the argument of the CNPF (French CBI) that the profit losses entailed in a shorter working week would put France at a serious economic disadvantage, had made a big impression upon the Government. After all, the PSF-PCF leadership had already sanctioned a whole series of massive handouts to the capitalists because of the

supposed importance of their profits.

Not only would the week only lose one hour, but the government would pay the bosses compensation for loss of profits as a result of this measure! Only then, against a background of mounting trade union pressure, did the 'patronat' agree to 39 hours.

This deal did not satisfy trade union activists. Incredibly, the slogan of an 'All-European 35-hour week' was being used to rob the French workers of winning this reform in France!

The Communist Party

paper *L'Humanité* said that one hour less may not seem much, but if we remember that the 40-hour week was achieved in 1936, this really was an historic reform!

"Why settle for only this?"

Others, more logically, asked: "Why wait 45 years of struggle, and settle for only this?"

Whilst an agitation for the 35 hours ticked over in

the factories, it seemed that the compromise deal had taken the steam out of the struggle, and the workers patiently awaited 1 February as 'stage one' of better things to come.

The reason for the strike explosion is that for hundreds of thousands of workers, 'stage one' has actually made things worse! Having received their promises of compensation, the bosses in many industries and services have tried to twist the 39 hours to their own advantage.

For example, the reason why Customs workers

halted two thousand trucks on the Spanish border was that normal "routine delays, breaks, and rest periods," formerly counted as work time, are now called a one hour reduction in work time!

Hospital workers have lost the hour—and the hour's pay! In other places, a struggle has broken out over whether one hour should be taken off on Friday afternoon, or else by 12 minutes a day. The latter method enables the bosses to get the time back by 'tightening up.'

The net result of all these swindles has been to bring the slogan of "35 hours immediately, with no loss of pay" to the fore again.

The government, hoisted to power by the working class, must support this struggle. In failing to tangibly improve living conditions and solve unemployment, the government is undermining its own basis.

Already, four recent by-elections showed loss of support for the PS candidates (supported by PCF) ranging between 20% and 37%!

In the year from November 1980 to November 1981, the number of strikes has risen by 109%! Under a government committed, in words, to a socialist transformation, there have been twice as many strikes as under the vicious and reactionary government of Giscard-Barre!

The explanation lies in the raised expectations of the workers, and the sharp turn to the right of the Mauroy government.

Now the 'honeymoon period' of the government is over. The next two or three years will see more struggles in which the organised workers will try to enforce the 1981 election pledges of Mitterrand and Marchais

SPAIN - memories of the Civil War

I have been fighting for real democracy, workers' democracy, for 50 years, since I was 15 years old.

When the Republic was proclaimed in April 1931 I joined the UJT (Union Socialist Party), paying 1½p per week subs—a heavy sacrifice in those days. People were politically conscious, especially the youth. We sold our paper, the *Daily Worker*, every day on the streets.

My revolutionary ideas were sharpened in a place called *La Casa Pueblo* ("House of the People"), where anti-fascist youth discussed socialist policies.

By 1931 leading socialists were subject to constant police harassment and the right-wing Civil Guard often raided *La Casa Pueblo*, beating us up if we were caught. The union leaders were slow to counter the fascist attacks and only realised the seriousness of the situation when they were taken away, handcuff-

ed, to prison.

Political attacks on socialists increased and I became a political prisoner, spending four months in a Seville prison until I escaped. The workers had no illusions about the nature of the capitalist state, the bare face of which is fascism. The fascists, helped by the police, were moving to get rid of any militant opposition as a prelude to their eventual take-over of society.

The Civil War broke out on 18 July 1936 and the workers formed well-disciplined militias. Confident and predominantly young, the rank and file had tremendous revolutionary élan. But we were always suspicious of the Popular Army officers, they were conscious fifth columnists.

The reference is to those regular army officers who opposed the struggle for workers' democracy, holding it back or sabotaging it—Editor.

On many occasions they refused additional materials

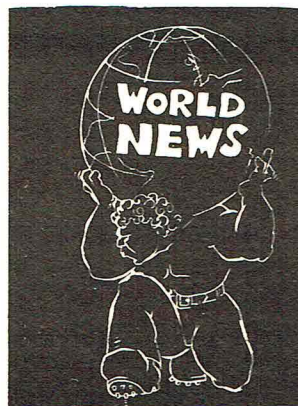
and support for our artillery which resulted in the slaughter of many workers. I had to use a 1898 double-barreled Winchester rifle, while the fascists had the latest guns supplied by Hitler.

The only people we could trust were the commissars, the elected representatives of the workers who were subject to recall at any time.

The war ended in our defeat on 29 March 1939 and I spent the next year in a fascist concentration camp before escaping to Britain, helped by the Welsh Miners.

Socialists learn from experience—fascism must never be allowed to rear its ugly head again. All socialists must take the policies of the *Militant* onto the streets, the factories and housing estates to ensure that capitalism, the system that breeds fascism, is swept away and replaced by a democratic workers state.

By a Spanish Socialist



Iran

The killing of a number of leaders of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI) in Tehran last week has struck a severe blow against this organisation. The regime admits to having shot over 3,500 people in that period, but the PMOI alone claims to have had 8,000 members killed.

As well as striking blows against the opposition the Khomeini regime has warned that "strikes will be suppressed immediately" ('Ettala'at, 7 December 1981). When 500 workers went on strike at the Iran National car plant at least seven were killed, dozens wounded and 200 arrested. While not supporting the PMOI's

alliance with Bani Sadr or its policy of conducting guerrilla attacks on the Khomeini regime, the British labour movement must protest at the continuing repression of the workers' movement, national minorities and revolutionary groups in Iran.

Belgium

A 24-hour general strike had a massive response in the French-speaking south of Belgium last week, as well as in major Flemish cities. The strike, called by the Socialist trade unions against the government's new "emergency powers," was opposed by the Catholic unions in Flanders.

With a huge budget deficit and unemployment at 12.5%, the Belgian capitalists can form no stable government and are resorting to authoritarian measures in the effort to cut public spending. The Christian-Democratic/Liberal government has now got power to rule by decree for 12 months, to cut real wages, to suspend social security indexing and to make all the cuts it thinks necessary without the approval of parliament.

The general strike shows the potential for a militant fight-back by labour. United and with a clear lead from their leaders, the Belgian workers can halt the present government in its tracks, sweep it out of office and put in power a government of the workers' parties committed to socialist policies.

Jamaica

In Jamaica, three of the island's four bauxite refineries have been shut by strike action. One refinery has been closed for over three weeks.

The strikes follow more than a year of fruitless negotiations over a new wage contract between unions and five bauxite companies (all US or Canadian controlled). The workers' previous contract expired in January 1981.

The strikes are costing the right-wing government \$1.5 million per week, and are also endangering the supply of bauxite to the US strategic minerals stockpile.

Despite government attempts at intervention, the strike is expected to spread to the island's fourth refinery.

Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

The good, the decent and the right wing

Dear Comrades

The right wing of the Labour Party have stated in the build-up to their witch-hunt against 'Militant' that we are driving 'good and decent' people out of the party. This value of being 'good and decent' surely changes depending on which side of the poverty fence you're on.

Through the recent publicity in the press and on television is supposed to support the Party's right wing, and scare the workers away from 'Militant's' socialist standpoint, I have found the opposite to be true.

Where I work I had been talking to a fellow-worker about joining the Labour Party. His attitude was that 'the parties are all the same.' I'd tried to get him to read a copy of the 'Militant' for a week or so to no avail.

Then on the Friday he came straight up to me and asked for a copy. Why the change? He had seen the television programme 'TV Eye', which looked into the 'Militant' paper and its supporters.

The right wing know that what they're saying about the socialists driving out the 'good and decent' people is a load of bull. The right wing know, but refuse to admit, that the only reason for the Tory victory in the 1979 election was that the workers felt betrayed by the Labour government's anti-working class policies, and they showed this with their ballot sheet.

Only by putting forward socialist policies will a Labour government come to power. These policies must then be carried out, in full, no matter how hard the task.

Yours fraternally
Norman Smith
Nottingham North LP

Laker's a hero yet Livingstone's illegal!

Dear Comrades

Ken Livingstone and the Labour-controlled Greater London Council were democratically and constitutionally elected on a manifesto to reduce fares. Yet it is deemed illegal, wasteful, irresponsible and unfair to the ordinary working man.

Freddie Laker, using the ordinary working man's money, appoints himself to reduce fares. He loses £270m, consigns 2,000 workers (un-unionised and underpaid) to the scrap heap...and he's a hero!

Moral: as Solidarity in Poland have always requested with the full support of Thatcher, Reagan, Laker et al, democratic workers' control and management of industry cannot come soon enough.

Yours sincerely
Wally Kennedy
Ruislip

A close encounter with 'common sense'

Dear Comrades

After the rise of the SDP, it seems that there is a new force in British politics. 'Militant' sellers came across a representative of this organisation while selling the paper in Kirkcaldy High Street recently.

After we had sold some 18 copies, a rather well-proportioned gent passed us shouting, "Poor, misguided fools!" His condescending tone provoked loudly from me the following message to the people in the street, "Get your copy of 'Militant': Labour's socialist paper!"—and that, I thought, was the end of the matter.

A few minutes later I saw him protesting to a police patrol. The police car moved up to me, they beckoned

me over and the window came down. "Have you got a permit to sell that paper?" asked the constable. "This paper is sold in towns and cities all over the country"—this was my way of saying no.

"They've got to have a permit," chimed in the citizen who complained, "I'm a councillor!" My ears pricked up. "What party are you in?" I asked. "I'm in no political party," he snapped; "the commonsense party."

I was joined by other comrades. I told them, "Good job this isn't Poland eh! They don't let you sell papers in the street like they do in a 'democracy' like Britain." Meanwhile the policeman radioed to headquarters to find out if we needed a permit.

"Ask the Poles if they want your lot in power!" was the retort from the roundish councillor from

the Commonsense party.

"We challenge you to a public debate on the question of Poland," I said. "Oh if there's one thing you're good at it's talking." I took this as a decline.

"I'm afraid I will have to ask you to move on," said the policeman and we were obliged to do just that. Our disgust is not at all aimed at the policeman who would normally have not interfered but explained that he is forced to act upon a "public complaint".

Paper sales are increasing in Fife. We intend to continue selling in Kirkcaldy High Street every Saturday, in Dunfermline High Street on the same day, round the doors in small towns of Lochgelly and Lumphnans and amongst the ever growing numbers of regular buyers and supporters.

Yours fraternally
Paul Cunningham
Dunfermline LPYS

"Smartly dressed philanthropists"

Comrade Editor

As an office worker I have noticed how working conditions have changed over the recent period.

Even a year ago the atmosphere in our offices was very relaxed. Managers didn't mind people arriving late or taking long lunch breaks, as they knew the time would be made up. Today the 'whips' have come out, as workers are forced to work harder and harder.

As a Computer Programmer, I have spent some time working at clients' sites away from London, staying in hotels. One of the advantages of this was having a nice meal, on expenses, in the evening. Now those working away are being encouraged to stay in cheaper hotels and eat in pubs rather than restaurants.

This situation I feel has some parallels with that described in the Ragged Trousers Philanthropists, written about 1906. Today's

'Smartly Dressed Philanthropists' are prepared to assist the bosses with their struggle to make more profit. Unfortunately many socialists working in offices find it difficult to discuss their ideas, and to do so means dismissal, and we would not get any support from those we work with.

Workers, in theory are allowed the right to participate in a union but for many office workers to do so means victimisation or at least the worst jobs or projects available. I am in this very situation, and have been so since requesting permanent work in London a year ago. As a known union activist I have been marked as a 'trouble maker'.

I believe that it's only by changing society that we can end the continuous attack on workers living standards, and it is only the programme put forward by the Militant that is capable of doing that, and ending once and for all the horrors of capitalism.

Peter B Giblett
(AUEW-TASS)

Why Sir Freddie won't suffer

Comrades

While our media moan about the fate of Laker Airways and hope that Sir Freddie doesn't "fall too far" ('Sunday Times', 7.2.82), the other side of his character has recently appeared.

Ask his staff about his "Robin Hood" reputation for championing working people and they can point to his non-union principles. They have not had a pay rise in four years and they last saw him when he asked them to sacrifice two 5% threshold payments. The staff have compulsory overtime, no pension scheme and some cabin crew are so low paid that they qualify for family income supplement.

This model of free enterprise has through the years built up a personal fortune through deals such as selling

government surplus trucks for a profit and cashing in on the misery of thousands in the Berlin airlift, after which he made even more profit in selling the planes as scrap.

Despite the £270m debts I am sure that his stocks and shares, 1,000 acre farm, stud farm, 85 ton yacht and his "spacious" house in Sussex will not be lost as he belongs to the ruling class and has friends in high

places. Workers' families with high rents and fuel bills and low income, however, must suffer the indignity of debt-collection and (in Scotland) warrant sales.

And anyway, with four million unemployed and real wages declining, who is it who benefits most from 'cheap' flights to America—the workers?

Fraternally
Stuart Bates
Cathcart CLP



Secret chemical warfare test

Dear Comrade,

One day the morning paper dropped through our letter box saying how 25 years ago, chemical warfare tests were carried out, which may have affected the health of millions of people.

In 1957 an RAF plane zig-zagged up the country saturating the east coast of England with a chemical spray which was then monitored by MAD (sorry) MOD scientists. A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said, "Obviously it was a sensitive area and I don't think there was any need to tell them". But I wonder how many diseases and birth defects of that period were caused by this experiment and attributed

to the 'hand of God' instead of the 'hand of MOD' because it must be hard to make the connection 25 years later.

But according to present regulations the government don't have to tell you state secrets until 30 years later, and who can be angry 30 years on.

How can a group of officials take it upon themselves to act in our interests. It seems that the ruling class don't have enough confidence in the people to grant them a democracy whereby they could run their own lives.

Yours fraternally
P Vasey.

Crisis hits soccer

Dear Militant

I have for many years enjoyed watching football, but the last two months have shown capitalism rearing its head and threatening to swallow anything up to a dozen clubs.

The clubs hit so badly by the adverse weather conditions were refused further credit by the major banks. My own club, Oxford United, were only saved by the intervention of Robert

Maxwell, of publishing fame. Whilst Maxwell's financial help is appreciated, I feel that all boards of directors whether at football clubs or major companies should include workers and players. The major finance houses and the banks, charging the crippling interest rates are the largest creditors. The only way to quieten them and reduce their powers is to nationalise them.

Yours fraternally
Anthony Link
Deptford Labour Party

Fed up to the back teeth!

Dear Comrades

I'm a bit too old to be teething but I am! Consequence—very inflamed gums and considerable pain. Visited the dentist. Examined. Told, "In the old days this would have been the beginnings of lock-

jaw!" Prescribed two items. Vist Chemist. Cost £2. Nine days later, return visit. Teeth examined and cleaned. Bill £5. Total cost of toothache = sleepless nights and £7. Tooth in question still not through. Should I struggle to keep it? After all, it is a wisdom tooth! Or should I subject it to a Tory cut?

Yours fraternally
Kath Cotterill
Gateshead East CLP

capitalist press, and "state capitalist" by other ultra-left groups. As Marxists you should be reporting the CP's analysis of what these



Solidarity on the march in Poland.

countries are, rather than what it calls them.

Had you correctly presented the position of the Star and the CP, you would have had to mention

the facts: that they have supported Solidarity since its inception; that the imposition of martial law was unequivocally condemned; and that an Executive Committee statement urging the withdrawal of the military and official recognition of Solidarity was given front page prominence in the Star within days of the military takeover.

Your deliberate misrepresentation of the facts can only be attributed to the kind of sectarianism which one learns to associate with Militant. How much better your article would have been if you had simply quoted the truth.

As a Marxist member of the Labour Party, I look to the Morning Star as the only daily paper to put the views of the labour movement. Militant seems more intent on dividing the left than working towards the broad left unity that is so essential to the progress of socialism.

Fraternally
Jim Dymond
Ipswich

FORGET LAKER, GIVE TO MILITANT

When a moneybags like Laker gets in hot water, the press call him a hero and fellow bosses eager for profits come to his (but not their employees') 'rescue'.

The working class daily face catastrophes such as mass redundancies, but only our own class can come to their rescue. With the socialist ideas of 'Militant', more and more workers realise we can and must save our jobs and living standards.

And workers must come to the aid of the 'Militant' fighting fund to ensure all workers hear of our ideas and fight alongside the Marxists in the labour movement.

Some contributors do it with commendable style. Martin Edwards (Dudley LPYS) has successfully completed a sponsored parachute jump for 'Militant' (not, we hasten to add, into a different constituency!)

Meanwhile, more down-to-earth appeals were made at meetings in Sheffield (where £40 was also raised for the Jewel Razor Blade Strike Fund), Kidderminster, West Bromwich, Canterbury, Southampton, Hackney, Chesterfield, Swansea, Brighton (Southern LPYS Conference), Alloa, Basildon, and Kirkby. After expenses, our funds have benefitted by £383 with IOUs still to come!

Thanks also to Hull AUEW No 12 Branch for their £5, Edinburgh EETPU members who oppose the witch-hunt for £12, and for collections at Wavertree Womens Section and Child-wall Ward, Birkenhead, Chester and Leyton LPYS Branches. Nearly £10 has been raised at Kidderminster GMC and Hunslet Branch (Leeds South CLP) after meetings addressed by Militant supporters.

A wider audience saw and heard West of Scotland supporter Bob Wylie on TV and Radio over the past two months: Bob has forwarded his £100 fees to the Fighting Fund.

A Blackburn reader, R Wilkinson, has donated half his raffle prize (£17) and H Redwood (London) £10 union expenses. Other tenners came from A Halstead (London), T Tattersall (Mo-

By Steve Cawley

recambe), S Barrett (Hitchin) and M Averall (Blantyre) and £12.50 from S Nelly (S London). Thanks to S Leckey (Scunthorpe EET-PU) for £8, and NALGO members at Priesthill Social Work Office Glasgow, for £7.

B Davies (Stechford LP) sent us a fiver with another £8 collected on a 'Stop the Witch-hunt' appeal sheet from the same part of Birmingham, £5 also from J Wilson, an AUEW branch secretary, £3 donations came from R Downes (Scunthorpe, Blastfurnace-men's) and Waltham Forest supporters J Castle and K Reilly.

Between £1 and £2 from P Hynes (Lanark), R Davey (W Ham), H Williams (Warrington), S Chandler (Southampton), Liverpool BAT workers, A Grant (Salford) & Mr Lewis (Manchester), J Cowie (Chester-le-street) and J Wilson (Washington), Sid Simms, secretary Hull Docks SSC and John and Kim, Tyne Social Services.

Many contributors have been on strike, on short time, or are unemployed. Other readers have retired, with little prospect of an increase in living standards under capitalism, such as Mr Allom, a pensioner from Ryde, Isle of Wight, who sent us 60p.

Diverse activities such as the sale of wall-lights (Litt-lehampton) and Jo Hart's curry (W London) together with socials and parties in Blyth and Dalkeith netted over £60! C Rogers, Chairman Hayes CLP, made £2.40 at the Labour Group social with the raffle of a diary signed by Peter Tatchell.

Although our supporters have sent in nearly £7,000 so far this year, to be on target for £35,000 by April 11th, we need well over £2000 each week from now on. We appeal to all readers, new and old, to consider a regular weekly donation to our fighting fund—whether it's 50p or £100 (if any readers can afford the latter).

The capitalist system is collapsing and we offer the only alternative that makes sense—socialism. But we depend on YOU to enable us to do it.

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April
Eastern	341		2040
East Midlands	686		1470
Hants & Dorset	271		1100
Humberside	80		890
London East	689		2010
London West	326		1150
London South	393		1550
Manchester & Lancs	505		1550
Merseyside	516		1950
Northern	616		2350
Scotland East	196		1290
Scotland West	477		1980
Southern	376		1900
South West	159		965
Wales East	43		970
Wales West	150		1130
West Midlands	303		1980
Yorkshire	707		2290
Others	80		6435
Total received	6,920		35,000

Target for April 11th £35,000

East Midlands

The East Midlands area has shot into the lead on the fighting fund chart in 1982, largely due to the enthusiasm generated by recent readers' meetings being translated into the language of finance.

Laurence Coates, the Labour Party Young Socialists rep on Labour's NEC spoke at the Leicester-shire mining town of Coalville. Laurence showed how all the present attacks on workers, the growth of the SDP and the massive shift to the left in Labour's ranks were all due to a growing crisis of capitalism.

Anyone who agreed with the ideas of *Militant* should help win Britain's powerful labour movement to Marxist ideas by selling the paper regularly, Laurence said. A number of people in the meeting agreed to do just that.

A readers' meeting in another mining area, Sutton in Ashfield, Notts, attracted 25 people who donated an excellent £70 after hearing Brian Ingham, *Militant's* industrial editor, speak. He compared *Militant's* truthful coverage with the so-called free press of the bosses. In reality, this is only the freedom of five Fleet Street barons who have no interest in getting the truth to their working class readership.

Brian gave as an example the way the campaigning activities of the LPYS were met with a conspiracy of silence from the press for years, compared to the huge coverage for the Young Liberals who represented nobody but themselves.

It is only the growing echo our ideas are getting that has given *Militant* and the LPYS mass coverage, and this is, of course, of a totally hostile nature. After the meeting the prospects for a new LPYS branch in the area were very good.

Brian Ingham also spoke at a large enthusiastic meeting in Nottingham which raised £160 for the fighting fund. The ideas of Marxism are beginning to get a wide hearing in the East Midlands.

This week £1,864

ads

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All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

"What We Stand For" Meetings

ROTHERHAM. 'Stop the Witch-hunt'. Speaker: Pat Wall (Bradford North Labour Party nominated parliamentary candidate). Sunday 28 February, 7.30pm, WEA Rooms (Above Ratcliffe Printers), Corporation Street.

HULL Militant Public Meeting. 'Poland—bureaucratism or workers democracy'. Speaker: Jeremy Birch. 7.30pm Wed. 3rd March. Co-op Hall.

BRISTOL WEST: Speaker to be announced. Monday 22 February, 7.30 pm, The Swan, Gloucester Road.

PRESTON: Hear Peter Harris (Blackburn Labour Party) Monday 22 February 7.30pm. Preston Labour Rooms, 98 Deepdale Road, Preston Lancs.

WEST LONDON 'Defend the Militant! For a mass socialist Labour Party'. Speaker: Ted Grant. Thursday 18 February, 7.30 pm, Anson Hall, Anson Road, Cricklewood NW2

NORTH SHIELDS: Hear Norman Hall (Wallsend CLP). Monday 22 February, 7.30pm, YMCA, Church Way, North Shields.

POOLE LPYS TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL

SUNDAY 21st FEBRUARY 11am-1pm/2pm-4pm. WOODLANDS HALL, ASHLEY ROAD, PARKSTONE. 'YOPs workers get organised!' and 'What road to nuclear disarmament?'. Speakers: Laurence Coates (LPYS rep on Labour NEC), Rob Martin (District Officer, GMWU), a local peace movement speaker. Admission free! All Welcome!

OUT SOON

- ★ In Defence of October by Leon Trotsky
- ★ Stalinism and Bolshevism by Leon Trotsky
- ★ Cuba—an Analysis of the Revolution by Peter Taaffe

Order from: World Books
1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

HEYWOOD Militant Readers' Meeting: 'What Future for Labour?' Speaker: Terry Fields (PPC, Liverpool Kirkdale and NC of the FBU, personal capacity). Tuesday 23 February, 7.30 pm, Kings Hotel, Market Place, Heywood, Lancs.

BARROW Militant Discussion Group. Wednesday 24 February, 7.30pm, Barrow Labour Club, upstairs lounge. 'Is Russia Socialist—a programme for workers' democracy'. Speaker: Dave Cotterill. All welcome. Plenty of time for discussion.

MANCHESTER-Ardwick Labour Party Young Socialists Meeting: 'Fight for a future with Labour's youth' Speakers: Bob Litherland MP (SOGAT), Simon Swinnerton (LPYS), John Byrne (AUEW District Committee; Prospective Longsight Councillor) Followed by 'Rock Against Thatcher' Disco. Friday 26 February, 7.00 pm, Slade Lane Neighbourhood Centre, Longsight.

NORTHERN REGION LPYS Conference, Cruddas Park Community Centre, Cruddas Park, Newcastle. Speakers include Eric Clarke (Scottish NUM), Harry Cowans (MP Newcastle Central), Pat Wall (President, Bradford Trades Council). Starts 10.30 am, 20-21 February.

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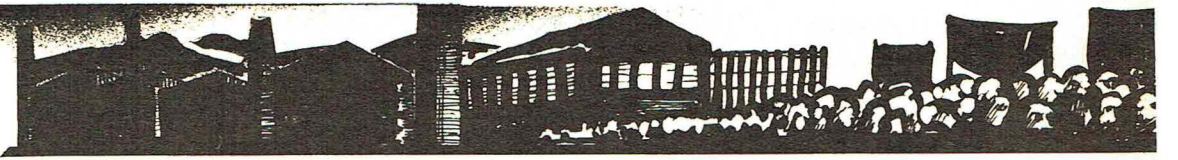
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LONDON Irish Social

Saturday, February 20th, 7.30pm. CRUSHEEN as at LPYS Summer Camp, and other guests and stars at Fairholt House, Whitechapel Road (opposite Aldgate East Tube).

Tickets available from Anne Beales: (01) 474 6584, £1.50 and 50p unwaged (£2 at the door).

Industrial Reports



30-second sacking

Sacked—with 30 seconds' notice! This was the fate of USDAW shop steward Siobhan Lanigan on 11 February, when management at Foyles bookshop in London attempted to stop increasing union membership. Conditions in "The Greatest bookshop in the world" are appalling—low wages, systematic sackings, no job security, no staff canteen, no training facilities; the list is endless. At the meeting called to set up the union, the shop's general manager and his deputy stood outside, writing down who was going into the meeting. Since Siobhan was sacked, two other USDAW members have also been sacked, and further dismissals are anticipated. In 1968, following a 6-week strike, union recognition was achieved, but within one month, all the union members had been dismissed. Full support is needed for this struggle against a notorious anti-union employer. Donations to the strike fund can be sent to: Foyles Strike Fund, c/o John Bailey and Emma Sandon, c/o Collets International Bookshop, 129-131 Charing Cross Road, London WC2. (Cheques payable to 'Booksellers & Stationers Branch, USDAW).

Culrose

Workers at Culrose Food Ltd in Aylesham, Kent, are striking for recognition of the General and Municipal Workers Union. Shop Steward Chat Price said, "We have been fighting management for years for recognition. We had meetings with them and agreed on a ballot; if it came out against a union we were prepared to return to work." However, management then began accusing the stewards of press-ganging people into the union. "This was the last straw so we came out on strike. This is supported by over 80% of the workforce. Some are crossing pickets for fear of losing their jobs after a letter sent out by management. But we're not going back until our demands are met in full."

Evans Lifts

Morale is still high at the Evans Lifts dispute in Leicester after an incredible five months strike. Support is still coming from the local labour movement—a mass demonstration was called on 5 February by the local trades council, and the Labour council is to meet management to impress on them the damage the dispute is doing to the area. This is to be welcomed but the council must now declare its full support for the striking workers to isolate Evans even further. Already, some Labour local authorities have cancelled orders with the company. The strikers, members of AUEW TASS were locked out and sacked after a pay dispute. However, the AUEW District Committee has yet to enforce its decision to instruct AUEW manual workers not to co-operate with the scabs employed by Evans after the lockout. Support still needed; send to Steve Goddard, 19 Blackesley Walk, Leicester.

De Lorean domino

The De Lorean crash in Northern Ireland is already having its repercussions on industries in this area. Belfast CP Trim, part of the Chamberlain Phipps groups is to finally close, although most of the 220 workers had already been made redundant. The firm made seats and internal trimmings for the De Lorean firm.

Scotland's new 'clearances'

The sit-in by the workforce at the Plessey factory in Bathgate, West Lothian, goes on despite a court order.

The orders were delivered to the workers' homes by Sheriff's Officers in a way that Alan McGillveray, a TASS member, described to me as "blatant intimidation".

"They were thumping on doors and even nailing the orders on to doors. Law-abiding citizens are intimidated by such action."

But they have not been intimidated; the occupation continues and the workers, mainly women, are waiting for the next move from the company, who want to close the factory on 31 March.

The workforce are not in favour of breaking the law, but as George Wilson, joint co-ordinator of the Action Committee, told the press, "In bygone days laws had enforced the Highland clearances, and in the same sort of way we are seeing the industrial clearances in Scotland."

"There are," he said, "exceptional cases where the law and justice were out of sympathy with each other."



Sit-in at Plessey, Bathgate

The workers are stirring up support in the local communities. "Fauldhouse are leading the way," Alan McGillveray told me. They have also been helped by the strikers at the BL Truck and Tractor plant across the town.

Last week, at only 24 hours' notice, a conference of shop stewards from all over central Scotland met to build support and prepare for a massive mobilisation should the occupying workers be evicted.

On Monday 15 February,

BRITISH LEYLAND

British Leyland management who have devastated jobs throughout the industry through their 'recovery' plan have now threatened the future of the entire truck and bus subsidiary, Leyland Vehicles, putting at risk 22,000 BL jobs and nearly 40,000 in supply industries.

The bosses blame this on the strike over 14,000 threatened redundancies at Leyland and Chorley in Lancashire and Bathgate in Scotland.

Although a few of the workers have accepted voluntary redundancy workers are determined to defend their jobs and unions have put forward an expansion plan for the section. Mass meetings to discuss this latest piece of Edwardes-inspired blackmail will be held later this week.

TEES DOCKS

The attempt by Cleveland Offshore to break the strike by Tees dockers has failed miserably.

Cleveland Offshore, a subsidiary of the Trafalgar House group, attempted to move part of the Thames flood barrier using non-registered dock workers, but was foiled by the solidarity shown by shore riggers and tugmen who refused to work on the 1500 ton module. The threat of a national strike hung over the head of the bosses had the desired effect.

The hysterical allegations made by the media that if London floods it will be the fault of Tees dockers should be recognised as pure farce. The dockers have made it clear that if people in London were in any danger we would allow the barrier to be moved.

The attempt to move the barrier was made for financial reasons and not because big business had suddenly discovered a concern for the workers in London. The fact is that the Thames flood barrier is nowhere near completion this year or next!

So far the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority have offered 6% plus demanning clauses. We are standing firm for an offer to keep up with the rate of inflation (13 weeks so far).

By Dave Jennings and Billy Love (8/10 T&GWU, personal capacity)

IMI SHIPLEY

The bosses at IMI Radiators in Shipley want it both ways. They told workers their 'final' wage offer of 4%, which caused the workers to occupy the factory, was withdrawn. Then they said "an immediate return to normal working would enable discussions to continue!"

They also took steps to repossess the premises. A summons was issued naming 165 plus other unknown persons to appear in court. Not in Bradford, however, but in Birmingham! A long way to travel when you take home £57 per week as some workers do at IMI. On advice from the AUEW legal department the workers vacated the premises last week.

While the occupation is now therefore ended, pickets are out in force. All transport drivers have been turned back and building workers on the site have refused to cross the picket line.

Messages of support and donations (cheques and postal orders made payable to IMI Shop Stewards Fund, Shipley) to Roy Stebbens, 10 Southlands, Knoll Estate, Baildon, Bradford, West Yorkshire.

By Pete Watson (Bradford West LP)

T Lucas strike official

Striking workers at the T Lucas factory in Bristol are now entering their second week on the picket line.

They realise if management close the Rusk plant section and move it to Yorkshire as threatened, there can be no guarantees for the rest of the Kingswood factory. The workers, members of the TGWU, have welcomed the decision of their national executive to give the dispute official backing.

Nothing is moving in or out; the workers are keeping a solid picket line. On Monday 15 February, the manager, Nailor, was reported to have approached the T&GWU full-time official for talks. This indicates a shift in their position and that they might be making an offer. The only offer that can be accepted must be no jobs to go.

A delegation from the strikers has travelled 300 odd miles to the sister plant in Birstwith, Yorkshire, to obtain solidarity and support. The latest phone calls back indicate that support

will be coming from that plant as soon as the dispute is made official.

Hundreds of pounds have already been collected into the fund. Pickets have toured factories, union branches and Labour Parties making collections. Bristol busmen—only in dispute themselves last summer—made a donation of £100, plus a collection at all depots. A collection was held at the South East Labour Party which raised £42 after the convenor, Colwyn Jones, spoke to the meeting. The South West LPYS conference raised £66, to be shared between ASLEF and T Lucas.

On Friday 19 February, a public rally has been organised with speakers Colwyn Jones and Tony Benn, the area's MP, at the Lindens Hotel, Kingswood, at 7.30 pm.

Send support to: Tony Golding, Treasurer, T&G 3/17, 21 Tudor Road, Hanhan, Bristol 15.

By Bryan Beckingham and Andy Corfield (Bristol SE LP)

BOSSES SNUB WORKERS PLANS

At the mass meeting of the threatened workforce of Lucas Aerospace in Burnley, there was unity and determination to fight the proposed 1,050 redundancies.

The statement issued by the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, endorsed by the meeting, "deplored the company's rejection and refusal to discuss the combine committee's corporate plan, rejected the company's strategy declared by its chairman, Sir Bernard Scott...that 'Lucas will move overseas with capital, investment, and jobs, and retain its UK operations on a care and maintenance basis'; and to fight for the corporate plan and against any enforced redundancies."

It was agreed to take strike action if necessary. Phil Asquith, the chairman of the JSSC, said international solidarity would ensure the backing of Lucas products.

One of the reasons for

the bitterness of the workers is that Lucas cannot in all honesty claim to have been caught unawares by the recession. In 1976 the combine committee produced its corporate plan, as a means of avoiding job losses.

In their desire for maximum short-term profit, and their reluctance to give any say to the workforce, Lucas rejected these proposals. Many of the socially useful products contained in the corporate plan proposals are now being produced by competitor firms!

However, Lucas now insist that they must make redundancies, even though latest figures show £60 million profit for the group, and £6 million for the Burnley plant alone. Eileen Gedegan, a worker at Lucas, told *Militant*, "They were shown the way to remain successful, make socially useful products and increase employment in Burnley and elsewhere. They chose to ignore us. Now they are morally obliged to retain the workforce."

By Pat Craven



Industrial Reports

CPSA

ELECT

John Macreadie

Within the next few weeks the Civil and Public Services Association will be holding elections for the very important post of Deputy General Secretary.

Until last year this post was filled by appointment, by a small selection committee. This extension of democracy was fought for by the left within the union and was opposed by almost all of the senior full-time officers with the exception of John Macreadie and Terry Adams.

The selection of the Broad Left candidate was made at a special conference, convened to discuss this election and the 1982 pay campaign. At this Broad Left conference, John Macreadie was overwhelmingly selected as the Broad Left candidate, in a contest against Peter Thomason.

Scandalously, however, and in contradiction to the traditions of the labour movement, Peter Thomason refused to abide by the decision of this meeting and has decided to stand regardless. By standing, Peter Thomason is inviting the Post Office and Telecommunications group to vote for him, thus splitting the left vote. If this happens, the right-wing candidate, John Ellis, will almost certainly win.

It is now vital, therefore, that the whole of the left within the union rally round John Macreadie and fight enthusiastically for his election. The democratic procedures of the left have been carried out, the selection has been made, and the defeated candidate should stand down.

John Macreadie has been selected as the left candidate because he is the best man for the job. His previous experience in the union and his proven record as a trade union fighter, especially in the recent General Secretary election campaign, enable him to stand head and shoulders above all other candidates.

The right wing of the union know that their short reign is almost over. John Macreadie polled 28,000

votes in the General Secretary election, the highest ever votes achieved for a left-wing candidate under the new individual voting system. After this election John Raywood, the new General Treasurer, said that the right within the union were extremely pessimistic. They have full cause to be.

The right wing are fighting a losing battle to keep control of the union, as the forthcoming National Executive Committee election will show. They realise that a leadership which has nothing to offer its members can expect nothing in return.

There is now an urgent need for local and regional Broad Left groups to organise for the distribution of the election material being made available by the Broad Left. Local activists must be approached and asked to work for the campaign and make recommendations through their branch executive committees in support of John Macreadie.

This fight will be a hard one but not impossible to win. Once again the union's national executive will be recommending their favourite candidate and once again it is someone who opposed the introduction of the election of full-time officers.

Diana Warwick, the DHSS Section Secretary, is also standing for election. Already, however, the huge majority of the DHSS Section Executive Committee have declared their support for John Macreadie, as has the Chairman of the Inland Revenue Section.

This election is vital for the future of this union. Conference repeatedly passes motions of a progressive nature. What is needed now is a Deputy General Secretary to make sure that those policies are carried out. A success in this election would pave the way for a left national executive and would be the start of building a fighting leadership for CPSA which could defend the conditions of the members in the face of this reactionary Tory government.

**By Bill Boyle
(Hackney & Tower Hamlets DHSS Branch, personal capacity)**



Airport workers' mass meeting, 11 February

HEATHROW LOCKOUT

British Airways management at Heathrow airport have locked out 2,000 ground staff—baggage and freight handlers—in a major assault on workers' wages and conditions.

On 9 February workers reporting for work were told by management that unless

they agreed to the new rosters they would be sent home. This new flexible rostering would mean, as one worker said, "No time to eat or see friends, and in the end even the break up of marriages." Forty-five rest days in a year would be lost. In a six-day working period workers

would be starting at six different times, from 5.30 am to 3.15 pm or even later, in return for working longer hours with less money.

These workers are being offered nothing in return. The so-called 'survival plan' of British Airways, if successful, would take conditions

back fifteen years. Laker Airways imposed pay cuts for four years, yet 1,700 workers lost their jobs!

A mass meeting on 11 February agreed to seek official recognition from the Transport and General Workers Union, and agreed to step up the picketing.

NUR MEMBERS REJECT FLEXI-ROSTERING

This Friday, 19 February, NUR members, guards and other grades throughout London and the Home Counties, and across all four regions of British Rail, will be joining together in a Day of Action with a 24-hour strike and a lobby of the NEC at Unity House.

This action is designed to show British Rail management our total opposition to their attempts to turn back the clock and attack our conditions of service through the introduction of flexible rostering.

Through this Day of Action we will also be indicating to our own union leadership that their acceptance of the Board's proposals doesn't reflect the feelings of the vast majority of NUR members.

Over the past six weeks ASLEF have led the struggle against flexible rostering. Contrary to the attacks made upon our sister federated union by the General Secretary and other leading NUR officials, we support ASLEF. Already many branches and Local Departmental Committees (LDCs) throughout the country have called upon our union executive to call

sympathetic action to back them up.

Flexible rostering will not only affect drivers. Train crew grades as a whole will bear the brunt of it. Ultimately all grades will be hit. British Rail have spared no effort in attempting to convince us of its advantages. So, to their shame, have our own NUR leaders.

We'll have a shorter working week of 39 hours they say. But that was agreed as part of the 1980 pay deal and its implementation has already been delayed because BR have pleaded poverty. In fact flexi-rostering would destroy any possible gains from a cut in working hours.

Fewer unsociable booking on and off times would be welcome. But these can be achieved without flexi-

rostering. Already we work some of the most unsociable hours in British industry. In addition to night and early morning work, many of our members have to work their rest days and Sundays to supplement their wages.

Flexi-rostering would make our hours even more unsociable. We would be expected to work different lengths of time on a weekly or daily basis. At present we can mutually exchange turns on a daily or weekly basis. Management have admitted that their proposals will make this impossible.

Anyway, who is going to exchange a 35-hour week with somebody rostered work for 45 hours? Flexi-rostering could only be operated on an eight or sixteen week cycle. Many depots have links that don't fit that pattern. Further upheaval and alteration to established link structures would therefore be necessary.

Block rest days would no doubt be welcomed by some. But these would only be possible by working long periods without any time off.

A change in the authority of LDCs is also contained within the Board's proposals. LDCs will now have the right to veto management proposals to alter rosters and diagrams. But this is only experimental for six months. If at the end of this period there have been a large number of objections by LDCs, as already there are, the Board reserves the right to withdraw this concession.

When the NUR pressed

the Board for concession on travel to and from work and for meal breaks for guards, as loco grades currently get, the Board refused to give anything nationally and recommended that LDCs deal with it locally.

Above all flexi-rostering is aimed at the destruction of yet more jobs. An estimated reduction of 25% of guards can be expected with the complete closure of some smaller depots.

In effect the existence of the eight-hour guaranteed day guarantees jobs and wages like work-sharing without loss of pay.

Management, backed up by their Tory paymasters, have made it clear that money for investment in the industry will only be made available in return for loss of jobs and productivity. To their shame, leading officials within the NUR seem prepared to accept such arguments.

However, NUR members are in no mood to accept the blackmail of management or the government.

Already guards have taken strike action on this issue at many depots throughout the country. Management and NUR officials have made desperate efforts to halt this action.

Friday's strike and lobby will bring together many depots and stations in an organised and co-ordinated way, for maximum effect. Undoubtedly NUR members in other parts of the country will be encouraged to continue their opposition to flexi-rosters.

Leeds Meeting

'Make or break—the future for British Rail' NUR, in a personal capacity. Venue: Speakers: ASLEF Swarthmore Centre, member, Leeds Woodhouse Square, Holbeck depot, and Leeds. 7.30 pm, Thursday 18 February. Jeff Bright, Tinsley

ASLEF:

They won't smash our union!

"This has become a political strike," ASLEF members at the Ripple Lane Depot, Barking, told 'Militant' this week.

"It's not a question of 3%. Thatcher wants to smash the unions. She'd like to go back 100 years and see slave labour in this country.

"Ray Buckton can't give in on the issue of the 8-hour

Maggie McGinley talked to ASLEF members at Ripple Lane, Barking

More on railways page 2, 7 and 15

day. He knows it's more than his job's worth."

The mood of the Ripple Lane ASLEF members is solidly in favour of continu-

ing industrial action.

"Life wouldn't be worth living if they introduced flexi-rostering. Greater efficiency? They should look at the management! That's the only growth part of the industry, and where has it led?

"We come in here of a morning ready to work and we can't, because there's not an engine fit to be taken out, they're in such a bad state.

"It's not our fault the railways are in a state. It's bad management and lack of investment. Compared to other railways in Europe, Britain has the lowest investment. We work the longest hours, and have the

lowest wages. What more do they want?

"The railways should be run as a service to people, not to make a profit. What's more, they're hiving off the profitable sector, like the hotels, to private enterprise. It's always the same; giving the nice bits to the rich, and leaving the dross for the rest of us.

"It's good that the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party are supporting our action. But it's a pity Labour's Shadow Cabinet haven't come out on our side yet. We just hope that the next Labour government will look after their kind as well as Thatcher has looked after hers."

1000 POLICE RAID SCOTTS



Photo: John Smith (JFL)

Early on Tuesday morning, 16 February, a massive display of police force cordoned off the area surrounding the site of Lawrence Scott Electromotors plant in Openshaw Manchester. Unfortunately the hundred or so pickets were no match for the 500 strong police force with a further 500 strong police back-up

PHOTO: Laurence Scott pickets held back by police in October as management visit the factory

who allowed scab lorry drivers to remove vital equipment and machinery.

Many pickets felt such an attack was imminent, but they were shocked by the aggression and provocation of the police officers, many from outside the Man-

chester area.

Unfortunately, many see this as a decisive hammer blow to the struggle. They are particularly bitter that if the AUEW leaders had not withdrawn support from the workers' long and determined occupation, such a

police action would have been impossible.

Shop stewards and other AUEW activists will be intensifying their fight for real trade union opposition to job losses and for democracy within the engineers' union.

By Mike Lee

FIGHT FOR JOBS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

show that industrial production has slumped to the lowest level for 14 years!

The big business system has plunged us into crisis. What hope of recovery can there be when growth depends on the capitalists satisfying their greed for profit? When production is subject to the blind anarchy of the market?

There is no way out for working people under this system. Only unemployment, and untold misery!

But the working class has the skills. The factories are there. Even on the basis of existing capacity, if it were used, an extra £70 billion could be produced this

year. With rational planning and new technology enormous new wealth could be created. The living standards of every man, woman, and child in the country could be dramatically improved.

But this can be done only if the working class can plan production. And you can't plan what you don't own.

The only way out is to nationalise the big monopolies, banks and finance houses, with minimum compensation on the basis of need.

Then they could be run under democratic workers' control and management. Then there could be a socialist plan of production.

Then—and only then—would there be a way out of the crisis!

YOPS LOBBY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

as the only alternative to the dole.

Just as scandalous is the work they are being made to do.

They are being employed by MSC to rip the timber flooring out of the South Works of the BL plant at Leyland. This section of the BL's bus and trucks division has already been closed down.

The timber is to be used to restore a stately home, Worden Hall, on the outskirts of Leyland, and a number of YOPS workers are to be employed on this project.

Isn't this typical? A factory is being reduced to ruins, while an aristocratic

home is refurbished with cheap labour recruited from the dole queues.

It's the futility of many YOPS schemes, as well as the low pay, bad conditions, and petty restrictions which are angering more and more of the 500,000 now on YOPS.

Local meetings and LPYS visits to YOPS schemes around the country show that massive support is building up for the Lobby of Parliament called by the Labour Party Young Socialists for Thursday 25 February.

Speaking at a meeting during the afternoon at the Royal Festival Hall will be Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, representatives of YOP Trainees Union Rights Campaign and the LPYS.

Reports and details of Lobby and Rally: page 3

Explaining why Civil Servants under 21 should get no pay rise this year, Tory Minister Barney Heyhoe, said on BBC TV News: "We can get as many recruits as we want. There's ten applicants for every job."

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