

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

On centre pages:
broadsheet on
what Tebbit's
law means,
how to fight it

TUC MUST STAMP OUT TEBBIT'S BILL

The "Employment Bill" will not provide a single job—it is aimed at smashing the trade union movement in Britain.

It seeks to reverse many hard won democratic rights achieved by the working class after a century of struggle.

If the Bill becomes law, closed shops, the highest expression of trade union organisation, will be undermined. Free riders will be encouraged with the prize of over £30,000 compensation for dismissal in some cases, and with the trade unions compelled to pay some of this money should the dismissed individual seek reinstatement.

The right to strike will be greatly curtailed with Tory judges deciding whether or not industrial action is 'lawful', with massive fines of up to £250,000 against trade unions. The same judges can deem a strike 'illegal' and can order imprisonment for trade unionists not accepting these judgements.

Union-only contracts will be outlawed, opening the door to cheap labour by the undercutting of trade union rates of pay, bad workmanship and a blatant disregard of health and safety standards.

Victimisation of strikers

By Wayne
Jones

is to be stepped up by the ending of the current unfair dismissal provisions.

These Vicious measures are being introduced according to Tebbit to 'improve the operation of the labour market' and to 'safeguard the liberty of the individual'. But in reality millions of workers know exactly that in Tory Britain today this means mass unemployment and low wages with the 'freedom' of the bosses to exploit the fear and misery of being on the dole.

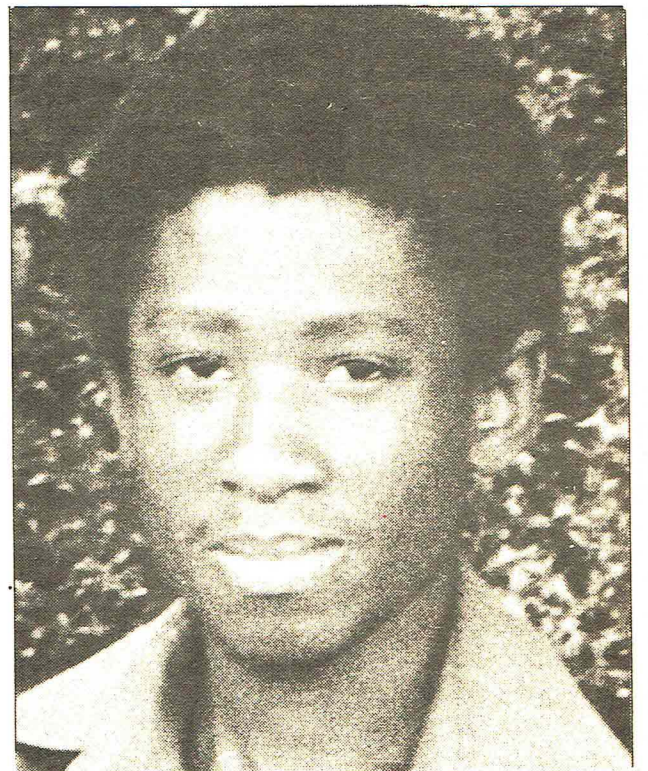
Use the dole queues to terrorise the others! Smash the trade unions! That is the reality of Tory Policy!

All talk of liberty and efficiency by the Tories are hypocritical lies and a pious smokescreen to hide their brutal real intentions.

Yet even before the ink is dry on Tebbit's proposals some Tory backwoodsmen and industry chiefs are urging that even more stringent anti-trade union measures be introduced in another "Employment

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

Why I'm going to LPYS Conference



By July this year I will have been unemployed ever since I left school two years ago. That means two years of living on a pittance, attending interviews for jobs and getting the same answer "we'll let you know".

Most firms don't bother to reply.

Now I'm 19 which means I'm "too old" for most available jobs. For most of the vacancies for 18-25 year olds, you need 2-3 years experience.

Unemployment is a nightmare for young people; some are even driven to suicide. There's no future for working class people in this society. That's why I joined the LPYS to fight for a better society.

The Tories are throwing

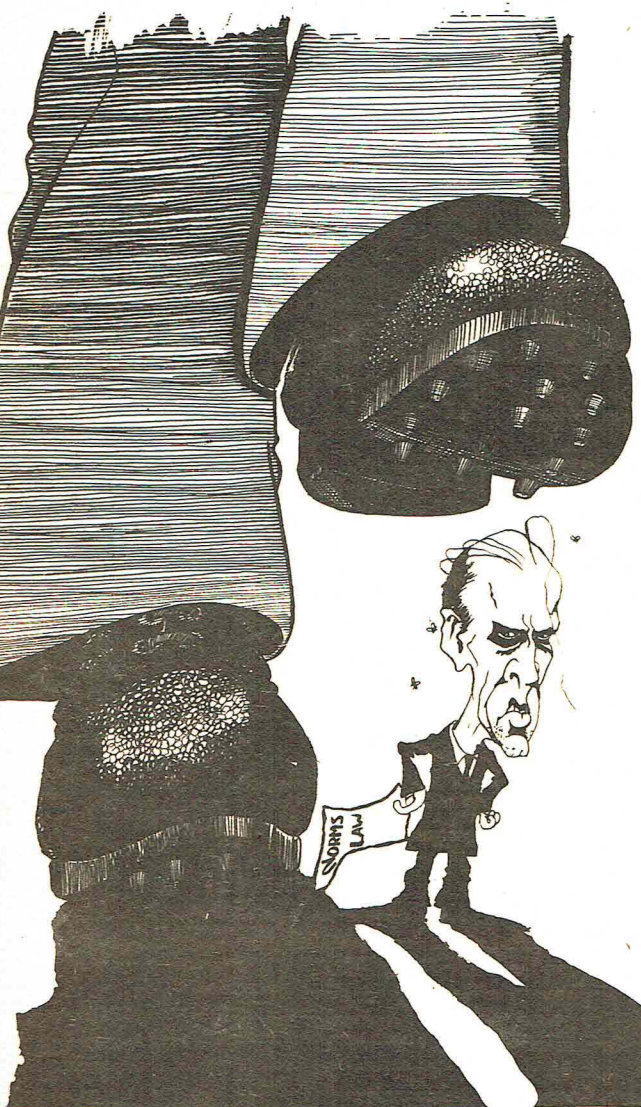
By Mark Spence
(Birmingham LPYS)

thousands of young people onto the dole queue, and the only alternative they offer is slave labour on YOPs "training" schemes. But the LPYS and the YOPs Trade Union Rights Campaign are organising YOPsters into unions to begin the fight for decent pay and training.

Unemployment hits black youth especially hard. We face daily discrimination in employment, housing etc, whilst the Tories and their press brand us as "muggers" and "criminals".

The Tories will always try and use racialism to divide and weaken the

(Continued on back page)



"Within the (trade union) movement there are really nasty creatures who appear out of the woodwork. Our task is to stamp on the nasty creatures."

Tebbit, Conservative Central Council,
28 March

Support paper that supports you

Militant is taking a gamble. Before we reach our first quarter target for our fighting fund, we are committing £13,000 to pay for even more up-to-date sophisticated equipment to replace existing machinery.

This will give us an increased capacity to typeset the *Militant* itself and all the other material so much in demand in the labour movement, and to do it so much more quickly. This is only possible with your help.

We are still a long way short of our £35,000 target and have only one week to go. We have confidence in our readers, who always rally to our aid...in the end.

But next Sunday, 11 April is the end. Before this paper is printed we should have another £4,000, leaving us to find the cost of our new equipment in one week.

It can be done, with an almighty effort, including a bumper collection at this year's LPYS conference. Make the conference your opportunity to help *Mili-*

tant.

Last year the *Militant* Readers Meeting raised £4,900. This year some branches have planned their contributions in advance.

In South Wales LPYS branches in Aberystwyth, Aberavon, Caerphilly, Cardiff SE, Cardiff N, Rhondda, Pontypridd, Llanelli, Swansea, Ebbw vale, Neath and Ystraddeynlats have agreed to give at least £20 at the readers meeting.

In Leicester an appeal sheet is doing the rounds of

YS members and older party members who can't come to conference.

These examples should be followed by every YS branch. Has your branch organised a collection, an appeal sheet, a social?

Militant is your paper. Only *Militant* offers an alternative to the misery and unemployment youth face under the Tories. Demonstrate your support for *Militant* by making this year's collection bigger than ever.

Militant

Labour must destroy SDP myths

The Hillhead by-election was a complete disaster for the Tory Party. The capitalist press and media generally have sought to obscure this simple fact.

Predictably, they have concentrated their attentions in jeering editorials about Labour's failure to win. And as usual, the right wing of the Labour Party lost no time in blaming the left, and particularly *Militant*.

The Tories lost a massive 14.5% of their vote and their only seat in Glasgow, which they have held since 1919. This by-election, together with the Crosby, Croydon and Warrington results, means that Thatcher and her crew would be annihilated in a general election.

What is worse for the capitalists is the fact that the Hillhead result, if repeated in a general election, would mean that Labour would emerge as the biggest single Party. When Tony Benn attempted to point this out on TV on election night, it was greeted with the usual derision.

Yet, *The Times*, not hitherto known for its "Bennite" tendencies, commented: "on new constituency boundaries, the calculation on the Hillhead figures would produce a Parliament in which Labour was the largest Party with the Alliance holding the balance" (27 March 1982).

The Times calculates that this would give Labour 284 seats, which is more than it holds now, the Alliance would hold the balance with 240 seats, while the Conservatives would be reduced to a rump of 78. Thus, the calculations of the ruling class, that the SDP could be used to "wreck Labour", to use the phrase of the right-wing *Economist*, has blown up in their face.

Instead, the SDP, as *Militant* predicted, has taken most of its support from the Tory Party. At Hillhead, the SDP Liberal Alliance took 4 votes from the Tories for every 2 they took from Labour.

Moreover, there is a general "slippage in support" for the Alliance. At Warrington, the Alliance added 33% to the previous Liberal share of the vote, at Crosby 33.9%, and yet at Hillhead the increase was only 19%.

The penny has also begun to drop with the more far-sighted Tory MPs. Chris Patten, writing in *The Times* on 30 March 1982, comments: "what Britain needs is for the SDP to replace the Labour Party as the main Party of the Left. If it replaces the Conservative Party on the centre right we shall still face the grisly prospect of an extremist Labour Party working outside Parliament, to destroy a moderate government, and to win power for itself as the sole remaining alternative..."

Because of the renewed fear that the SDP will "let Labour in" it is now clear that the ruling class have begun to reassess their attitude towards the SDP. The virtual extinction of the Tory Party is too high a price to pay for building up the SDP.

This does not mean that the SDP will disappear. On the contrary, the ruling class will use it to inflict the maximum amount of damage on the Labour Party. They wish at all costs to prevent a Labour government coming to power against the background of massive unemployment and poverty.

However, it is cold comfort for Labour that the SDP did not do as well in the Hillhead by-election as in previous by-elections. Hillhead should have been the graveyard of both Jenkins and the SDP.

That this did not happen is the responsibility of the right wing of the Labour Party. The failure of Labour in Hillhead is payment for the past and present policies of Labour's right wing.

Healey, Hattersley and Shore within 24 hours of the by-election results attempted to unload the responsibility for Labour's failure on the shoulders of the Left, and in particular on *Militant* supporters.

In reality, thousands of votes were lost to Labour because of the "monetarist" programme of cuts in government expenditure carried out by Healey during the last Labour government and which the present Tory government have built on. In the 1979 election Labour got its lowest percentage in any general election for 45 years!

The last Labour government in particular presided over a doubling of unemployment, huge increase in inflation, and an increase in poverty.

The SDP, whose present leaders were the main authors of these policies have sought to capitalise on their own past crimes. They have been allowed to present themselves as a new, "fresh" Party because Labour has not sufficiently unmasked them as a Tory Party in disguise.

The present right-wing Labour leaders like Healey and Hattersley cannot effectively attack their former political bed-fellows in the leadership of the SDP, because in reality, they share the same outlook and many of the same policies.

In the Hillhead by-election, despite the enthusiasm and preparedness of rank-and-file Labour

Party members and trade unionists to combat the SDP, there was no systematic campaign to unmask Jenkins for what he is, a Tory.

The votes of the SDP in Parliament in support of Tebbit should have been punched home much more energetically. Above all, only by offering a clear socialist alternative, a programme of change, could Labour have shattered the SDP and won this seat.

Yet, in the period leading up to the Hillhead by-election, we had Labour spokesmen such as Peter Shore putting forward the same policies as 1974-79 spiced up with a few radical phrases. He has advocated a new incomes policy—that is, the holding down of wages while prices go up—when a new Labour government comes to power.

Moreover, both Healey and Callaghan have in effect offered to form a coalition with the SDP even of the unofficial kind if the latter holds the balance of power after the next election. Both Owen and Steel have gleefully seized on these admissions on TV programmes after the by-election.

Indeed, the right wing would probably prefer Labour not to command an overwhelming majority after the next general election. A Labour government with a big majority would come under colossal pressure to eliminate unemployment, to nationalise sectors of industry and generally carry out policies in the interests of working people.

A minority Labour government, on the other hand, relying on the support of the SDP/Liberal Alliance in Parliament, would, the Right calculate, have a ready-made excuse for "going slow" in carrying out Labour's programme.

The right wing have predictably drawn the conclusion from the Hillhead by-election that the path to a Labour victory lies in blurring the differences between the SDP/Liberal Alliance and Labour. They hope to switch the Labour Party to the right in an attempt to occupy the mythical "middle ground".

The rank and file of the Labour Party and the trade unions will draw diametrically opposite conclusions from the results of Hillhead. Labour can attract former despairing Tory voters and those seduced by the sham "radicalism" of the SDP, but only by putting forward a clear, socialist alternative.

Capitalism cannot give even the bare minimum necessities to millions of working people. Only by a socialist plan of production, under workers control and management, could mass unemployment and poverty be eliminated. This is the lesson of the Hillhead by-election.



Behold!
The Messiah
Cometh

Alan Handman

Right wing out of touch

It was a racing certainty that Labour's right wing would blame the left for the disappointing by-election result at Hillhead.

Thus Denis Healey was quick off the mark, calling for the Labour Party to make it clear "that people who support *Militant* Tendency cannot be supporters of the Labour Party at the same time." In fact, as Denis Healey well knows, *Militant* supporters are the most active and energetic supporters of the Labour Party.

Peter Shore also was quick to pass the buck for Labour's poor Hillhead showing. Speaking at a meeting of members of Solidarity, Labour's witch-hunting pressure group, Shore was reported to declare: "Those who say that we cannot have democratic socialism in Britain without the overthrow of the state machine, those who say that any strong socialist government will have to face violent counter-revolution, know nothing about the history of their country. They have no respect for its citizens, are openly contemptuous of democracy and have no

place whatever in the Labour Party."

Leaving aside this crude vulgarisation of *Militant's* views and Peter Shore's own ignorance of British history, he thus makes it clear that "saying" certain things and "not knowing" other things are grounds for expulsion, proving what *Militant* has said all along: that the enquiry and 'organisational' accusations thrown at *Militant* supporters are only a smoke-screen to hid an attempt to expel ideas.

Peter Shore continued in his speech to deride "the perception of class relationships of too many in the party who saw Britain as having a structure in which the majority are still denied all rights, oppressed by a nearly omnipotent ruling class and awaiting only the call for a liberation struggle."

He referred to a "rapidly diminishing traditional working class", and declared that the Marxists' view of a class society was closer to the 1920s and 1840s, ignoring as it did the achievements of past Labour governments in improving the conditions of life for individuals.

Leaving aside, once again, the deliberate misrepresentation of Marxism, it is nevertheless clear that Shore himself is well out of touch with modern reality. It may well be that there have been changes in occupations, as Shore mentions, but the idea that capitalism has in any way altered the basic class relations in society is fundamentally false.

Right-wing Labour MPs may think that workers are so comfortably off in their new white-collar jobs that they know nothing about class. But 4 million unemployed (to use the Labour Party and TUC figures), millions more on low wages and in slum housing think a lot different.

It is precisely because all the achievements of the post-war period are under threat that workers are turning more and more to understanding the class nature of society. *Militant* is gaining a wider circulation and support among workers precisely because it is telling the truth: that this is a society based on class and that the only way to overcome social ills permanently is to transform society.

Labour Party

Reports



REGIONAL CONFERENCE ROUND UP

WEST MIDLANDS

A clear shift to the left was evident at the West Midlands Regional Labour Party Conference, 27/28 March.

Delegates voted unanimously for unilateral nuclear disarmament and to support the Alternative Economic Strategy. The conference also supported, with just a handful of votes against, a resolution outlining the policies of *Militant*, that Labour fight the next election on a programme of a 35-hour week, a £90 per week minimum wage, the expansion of public spending, with "public ownership of the major monopolies in order to plan the economy."

However, because the Chairman rushed through this resolution with no debate it was not made sufficiently clear to delegates

that this was fundamentally different to the partial and therefore inadequate approach of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

The conference really came to life in the debate on party unity, especially over two resolutions opposing witch-hunts. The right-wing arguments consisted mainly of insults against *Militant* supporters, that they were "parasites", that they had joined the party "for the same reason as maggots go into apples" and, worse still, that "they have never read a word of Marx."

While one resolution specifically mentioning the paper was remitted, another from Coventry South West declaring opposition "to any form of witch-hunts, proscriptions or bans in the Labour Party" was passed on a card vote by 453,000 to 302,000.

NORTH WEST

The North West Regional Labour Party Conference was the best attended and the most political conference in years.

The conference discussions and resolutions showed a marked shift to the left, with resolutions passed on fighting the cuts, against YOPs exploitation, and for a programme to fight the Tories and SDP.

This however, was not reflected in the elections to the Regional Executive Committee with long-standing *Militant* supporter

Sylvia Shaeffer just failing re-election and Derek Hatton, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate Wavertree, narrowly missing election.

One of the highlights of the conference was the cuts debate, where a real fighting mood was shown. One older delegate said he was inspired by the youth and he was prepared to go to prison to fight the cuts and so should councillors.

Two composites both called for a national campaign against Heseltine and his attacks on local democracy but one called quite clearly for no rate increase in order to make up for cuts, for interest charges on housing to be used instead for building new houses and expanding services, and also called for a regional campaign of rallies, and demonstrations to build support for the May elections and the return of a Labour government.

Collaboration with the Tories in any way was slammed by delegate after delegate. Despite this, the stronger composite was lost by 200,000 on a card vote, despite the support of the Transport and General Workers Union.

The mood of conference was overwhelmingly against attacks on *Militant*, and a resolution from Huyton CLP, calling for expulsions, was voted not to be discussed. But unfortunately that

also meant that NUPE's resolution and various amendments defending the right of Constituency Labour Parties to reselect their MP's and for the exposure of CIA and NATO links were not taken. There was desire for unity, but quite clearly around socialist policies.

A successful lunch-time *Militant* Readers Meeting was held, addressed by Toxteth PPC, Tony Mulhearn. Over 50 people in attendance collected over £100 for the Fighting Fund.

opposition to witch-hunts. Let that go into the party enquiry into 'Militant'!

The resolution was moved by Bristol South East LP and seconded by the Transport and General Workers Union and as far as this region is concerned showed the overwhelming desire to stop any witch-hunts.

On economic policy, conference agreed to the call for the next Labour government to "take into public ownership in line with Clause IV part 4 of the Party constitution the commanding heights of the economy, the banks, insurance companies and the major monopolies under democratic workers' control and management."

The only two fringe meetings that were organised, attracting 30 to 40 delegates each, were organised by the CLPD and Militant.

The elections for Regional Executive did not really reflect the left moves within the conference. Bridget Shaw from Devon was defeated, as was Roger Cummings from Avon, both Militant supporters. However, the main success for the left was recorded in the trade union section, which elected a left-wing FBU member and Marcel Pike (NUPE), a Militant supporter, for the first time.

SOUTH WEST

An emergency resolution was passed at South West Regional Conference on 27 March with a handful against, and no-one actually speaking against, calling for party unity based on the CLPs' right to select their own candidates and total

Support for Militant grows

NORTH EAST

The North East of England has always been considered the last outpost of the right wing of the Labour Party. Here the mis-named 'Solidarity' group has some of its staunchest supporters.

Nevertheless, over the last few years, the iron grip of the right has begun to slip: retiring MPs have been replaced by left-wing candidates; rank and file trade unionists have begun to find their voice and the ideas of Marxism have begun to take firm root.

Last week, Peter Taaffe, the editor of *Militant*, came to address a series of meetings throughout the region. In Newcastle, he spoke to nearly 200, made up mainly of young workers but also many older trade union activists who have recently become interested in the *Militant*. The collection of £345 showed the enthusiasm of those present.

In the Sunderland meeting, there were 100 people present, mainly from the shipyards of the Weir and the mines of Durham. £130 was collected for the *Militant* Fighting Fund.

In Teesside another £125 was added by the 80 people who packed in to hear Peter—once again mainly industrial workers, from the steel and chemical industries. One worker at the

meeting, a 'young' 80-year-old who was victimised by the railway bosses after the 1926 General Strike, was filled with enthusiasm: "This meeting is what my life has been all about," he said.

All these meetings represent record attendances for the region and are a great step forward for the *Militant*; they demonstrate that *Militant* is now an integral part of the labour movement in the Northern area.

By Jeff Price

BARNESLEY

A lone Tory was battling against the stream when he claimed at a tremendous *Militant* Readers' Meeting in Barnsley that the Tories had reduced taxation.

Another member of the audience replied that his own tax had indeed been reduced. He had been made unemployed.

It is the reality of life under the Tories which is arousing new interest in the ideas of Marxism. That is why one Tory, some newspaper reporters and about 135 workers braved a cold, wet, windy night to hear Pat Wall and Peter Taaffe outline what *Militant* stood for.

Between them the two speakers have contributed fifty years of hard work to the Labour Party but never have Marxist ideas got such

an echo as today.

The two collections at the meeting showed the determination of the overwhelming majority of the audience. £145 was collected for *Militant*'s fighting fund while more than £40 was raised for the mainly Asian workers at Rawson's in Wakefield who are striking against reduced manning levels, and facing harassment from management

Witch-hunt opposed

At a meeting of the General Management Committee of the North Fylde constituency on 19 February 1982, the following motion was passed by 16 votes to eight: "This Constituency Labour Party is totally opposed to any form of witch-hunt or proscription against the left in the Labour Party, and in particular against supporters of 'Militant', in the labour and trade union movement. Any attack of this sort is a political attack and therefore this GMC calls on the Labour Party to firmly reject any witch-hunt."

Bath Constituency Labour Party last week also added its name to the long and growing list of Labour Parties that have expressed opposition to the witch-hunt being pushed by the right wing.

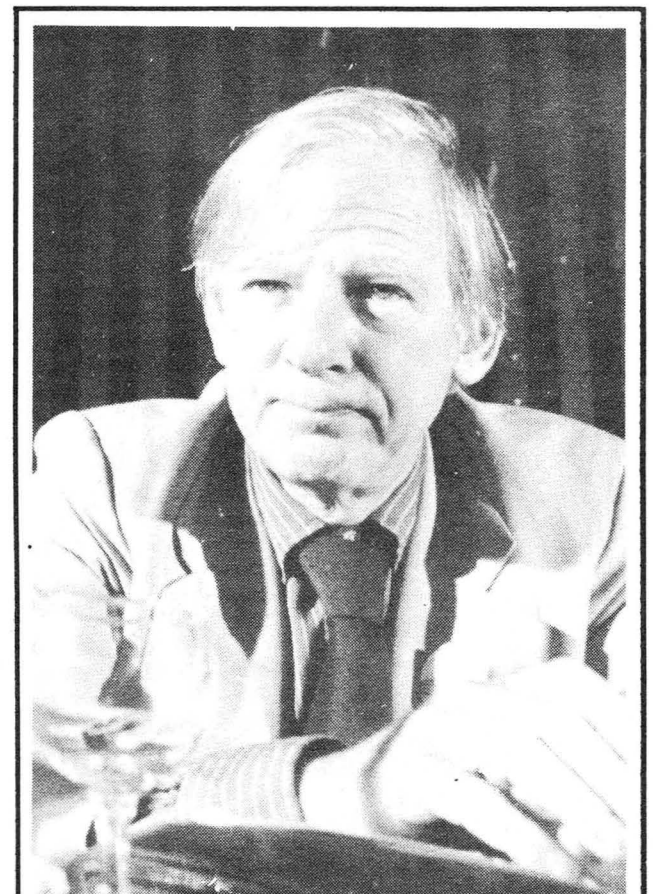
In a meeting that

and police.

Such was the thirst for knowledge that six copies of the 'What we stand for' pamphlet were pinched after the meeting. If any consciences are pricking, donations to the fighting fund please!

By Dave Edgington

(Barnsley Labour Party)



Peter Shore was one of those quick off the mark to blame the left for Labour's defeat in Hillhead. His own Constituency Labour Party, Stepney and Poplar, swung significantly to the left at its recent Annual Meeting. (Report next week).

Photo: Militant

debate and discussion, rather than a witch-hunt as the right wing intend.

Leeds North East CLP, for example, passed a resolution last week calling for "*Militant* to be given equal access of reply within the published findings" and calling for "informed discussion of the issues involved within the labour movement."

The same day, Arundel CLP was debating a resolu-

tion condemning "the hysterical campaign being waged against Pat Wall" and another respecting his right to debate and express socialist views. The resolutions were passed overwhelmingly and many speakers emphasised the fact that the whole of the Labour leadership, not just Benn, should have defended Pat, instead of giving tacit support to the newspaper attacks.

FIGHT THE CUTS



DON'T DO THE TORIES DIRTY WORK

What is the role of a Labour council? Labour Party members would say it was to fight for the interests of the working class, the unemployed and the poorer sections of society.

Bristol has a Labour-controlled council but its record on cuts would unfortunately compare more with many Tory councils. At a Labour group meeting to discuss the city budget, only nine councillors opposed a further cutback in jobs and services.

Bristol District Labour Party have already opposed the budget, as have Bristol South East Labour Party, who have also passed a resolution supporting any councillors refusing to vote for the budget.

Unfortunately, when the council meeting took place on 16 March, only one councillor, Militant supporter Peter Hammond, councillor for St George East ward, spoke against or opposed the budget; some 'left' councillors sat silent throughout and voted with the right wing.



Local authority unions and others march against the Thatcher government in 1980 in Bristol. Labour councils should stand solid with the unions, not implement Tory cuts.

Below is part of Councillor Pete Hammond's press release:

"I must once again record my total opposition to the policies directly contained and inherent in this years proposals.

"Over the last three years Bristol council house rents have rocketed by 103%. The new £1.50 increase is less than the rate of inflation but only because previous rises were so high. The City is simply passing on, without any opposition, the Tory Heseltine's cuts in government subsidies to council house rents.

"Again over the last three years, full-time jobs on the council have been cut from 6850 to 5978 (March 1982): 900 jobs lost—about 600 in the Port of Bristol, nearly 100 in the Housing Department. This year's budget is bound to mean further job

losses.

"Two years ago it was estimated that Bristol would need £19 million for housing spending, today that figure is probably nearer £30 million. The government has allocated £14 million. This means an effective end to council house building in Bristol.

"Only a few purpose-built houses for the elderly will be built. It means cuts in council house maintenance and repairs. It means an end to systematic improvements to older inner city housing.

"In addition to the effects of the above measures, a further £1.5 million in 'economies' have to be found over the course of the year. Again this year the Labour Group has opted to act as the Tory's executioner without thought of opposing Thatcher's

government and fighting to maintain services and workers' living standards.

"People elected Labour councillors to carry out Labour Party policy—to preserve and improve jobs and services in Bristol, not to capitulate and act contrary to Labour Party policy.

"I believe that Labour councillors must take the fight directly to the Tory government, with the support of the people of Bristol in order to maintain living standards.

"Most ordinary people, whilst opposing cuts in services provided by local councils, also cannot support the large rate rises advocated by some to make up for cuts made by the Tory government—as the amounts of money demanded for increased rates often cause real hardship to those

we seek to defend.

"I stand on a platform of No cuts in Jobs or Services and No Rate Rises to Pay for Tory Cuts. Labour councillors, with the support of local people and organisations must campaign to force the Tory government to back down and restore the resources to maintain jobs and services.

"The money exists to do this, except that at the moment it is in the hands of the Tories and their big business friends in industry and the banking and financial institutions.

"There can be no alternative to resolutely confronting the Tories—any other course is a surrender to the Tories and to inflict harsh penalties on working class people who have already suffered enough after three years of Tory government."

A right - not a privilege?

By Steve Sanderson
(Newcastle Central LPYS)

Newcastle and District has been picked as a "testing ground" for further attacks on the education gains of working people.

At present, the unemployed and housewives can study at colleges for up to 21 hours in a week, as part time students and still receive social security. This "21-hour" rule is so that the DHSS officials can check to see if they have "enough" time left to try and find a job.

But with the massive unemployment here, a record number of people have signed on to do part time studies, both to gain access to education they were previously denied and to get qualifications for a better "chance" in the hunt for almost non-existent jobs.

This has been helped by Newcastle Council, who

pay for the courses and exam fees on production of a UB40 card. Furthermore, many sixth form schools have arranged courses to be under 21 hours so that more students can afford to stay on to study.

But this is all too much for the top bureaucrats at the Department of Health and Social Security regional office. Under a national directive (reported in the *Guardian*) they have decided to "investigate" these courses in the northern region.

Their first step is to cut off benefits to isolated individuals, then call them in for an "interview". In the office they suggest to the person concerned that they must spend time travelling to college, have lunch and spend other time in the college when not in lectures.

They will also say that they do a few hours homework a week (which would be in your own time anyway), and then declare that on this basis the course takes more than 21 hours a week.

So you have to choose!



While education cuts are mounting, there are millions to whom education is completely closed.

Education with no money or money and back on the streets!

Already over two dozen students at the local colleges are known to have been "persuaded" to leave their courses, and in reality the figure will be much higher. Sixth formers at local schools are being challenged and test cases are going through at the moment.

The outcome could be crucial. If the DHSS win, it could mean the closure of many courses and even

departments because of the massive number of such students at the colleges.

Jobs will be lost; working class women forced back into the home and youth onto the streets. Coldblooded cuts are being made by the back door.

If this was applied nationwide the combined effects would be catastrophe. It more than ever underlines the LPYS demands for a living grant for all to study and that access to education should be open to

everybody.

The National Union of Students (NUS) in the area want to wait until the outcome of the test cases—but this may be too late. The Labour Clubs have raised the issue, as have the Newcastle Unemployed Workers Union, to make students aware of these attacks, the real reasons behind them and how to fight them. Education should be a right not a privilege.

Fleeing the workers

The Tories try to pretend that they are the party of "all the nation". But a glance at who really influences their policies exposes that myth.

One of the more influential groupings has been named in 'The City', rather pathetically, as "the Argonauts", after a legendary group of Greek heroes who overcame every obstacle to win the Golden Fleece. The modern group may know a lot about fleeing, but they haven't been too successful in bringing prosperity to Britain.

They meet regularly in a plush Soho restaurant and as one financial paper put it, "give badly needed ideological backbone to the cause of free enterprise."

Prominent in their number is Walter Goldsmith, Director General of the Institute of Directors, who last week declared war on the trade unions: "With their (trade union) legal powers and privileges...they are the prime source of unemployment, the biggest obstacle to new employment and the chief cause of the catastrophic decline of Britain's economy."

Not a word about British bosses' refusal to invest, or the fact that British workers are now amongst the lowest paid in Europe. But with Goldsmith's nonsense analysis, no wonder the British economy is in a mess.

Another prominent member of the argonaut group is Michael Ivens, head of the big business Aims of Industry group (see *Militant* 12 March for review of their latest pamphlet attacking left-wing trade unionists).

Also included is Alfred Sherman, head of Sir Keith Joseph's brainchild, the Centre for Policy Studies and a leader writer for the *Daily Telegraph*. Sherman, a former Communist, came to the fore during the 1980 national steel strike. Concerned about the prospect of the British Steel Corporation giving in, particularly under pressure from some bosses, Sherman and a few friends organised themselves into an unelected group to gain Thatcher's ear.

Sherman shares his sandwiches in Soho with John Hoskyns, the head of the Thatcher policy unit at Downing Street, and the highly paid economist Alan Walters. Hoskyns is an ideal example of self-made man made good who struggled from the depths of the Rifle Brigade and a spell with that small computer firm IBM.

Other individuals who attend their lunch-time sessions include members of The Association of British Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Building Trades Employers, the Engineering Employers' Federation and other illustrious groups supporting free enterprise.

By David Churchley
(Glasgow Cathcart CLP)

LPYS Conference

COME AND JOIN US!

Only one week to go to the event of the year!

Want to find out more about the fight to kick out the Tories? Want to find out more about socialism?

Then come along to the Labour Party Young Socialists conference in Bridlington at Easter and join the 2,500 other young people who will be there hammering out socialist policies to defeat the Tories in the course of four days of excellent political debate.

Every LPYS branch should have an urgent last minute drive to get people along.

The four days starts on Good Friday evening with the *Socialist Youth* rally. Dennis Skinner MP and Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Chairman) are speaking on the Saturday.

Not only will the conference be discussing events in Britain but also international struggles of the working class. The main rally on the Saturday night will be a rally of the Revolution in Latin America.

By Kevin Ramage

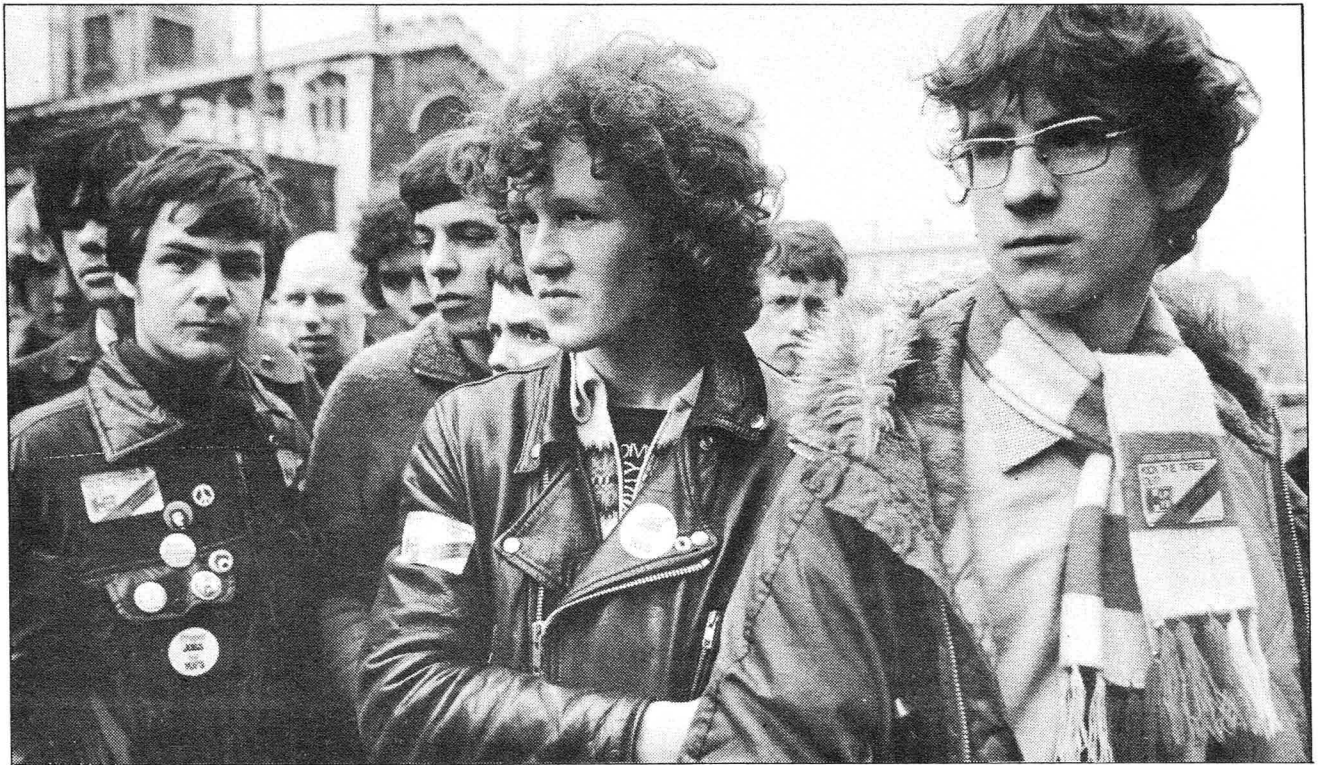
(National Chairman, Labour Party Young Socialists)

The LPYS NC has invited representatives of the Socialist Youth Movement of Ghana, the Irish Labour Youth, and the Young Socialists of Northern Ireland, and Young Socialists from a number of other countries will also be coming along.

In the evenings too, apart from political rallies there will be the leading Reggae band, *Weapons of Peace* playing on two nights along with a disco, and a major feature film, and the Scottish LPYS "Trial of Thatcher"!

Want to come along? Everyone is welcome. The cost? Just £3 for a visitors ticket plus accommodation, which local branches are arranging.

Want to find out more? Contact Andy Bevan (LPYS National Youth Officer) NOW!



The YOPs lobby of Parliament showed the enthusiasm of Labour's youth. Make sure you don't miss the YS conference, the socialist event of the year.

LPYS CONFERENCE 1982

Bridlington April 9-12.
Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Dennis Skinner MP, and Alan Sapper (president of the TUC).

Conference debates. Special evening rallies on Black and Asian youth fight for socialism, and the struggle for socialism in Latin America.

For further information/free posters, leaflets and trade union letters contact Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

"ROOTS REGGAE"

Enjoy Britain's most dynamic sound. The top band "Weapons of Peace". Playing Friday and Sunday, 9 and 11 April, at LPYS conference

Training!

What training?

Like me, you probably thought that to learn the skills of painting and decorating you had to become an apprentice at the trade.

But from my experience I've learnt that all you have to do is go on a YOP scheme as a shop assistant.

Into the bargain I also learnt how to make perfect coffee and the quickest and easiest way of removing marks from floor tiles. Unfortunately I came off this course no wiser about shop work than I was when I started—some experience!

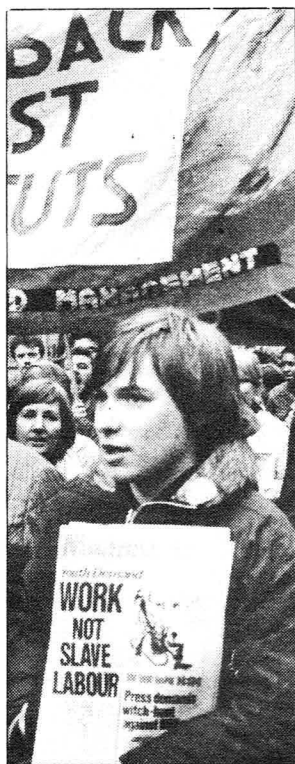
Whilst I was on the dole I joined the LPYS, and through this I learnt that I wasn't alone in my experience of YOP slave labour.

I am now on another YOP scheme but only because I was told my dole money could be stopped as I was refusing to work. Well, I decided that I wasn't going to be pushed around and be taken advantage of again, but I also knew I needed help.

Through the YS I found the only people willing to help, apart from themselves, were the unions. So I got together with other YOPsters and we went to our so-called employers and told them we wanted to join a union.

At first they just laughed at us and thought it was a big joke, but it soon wiped the smiles off their faces when they realised we were serious.

By Joanne Hague
(Sheffield Park LPYS)



They told us 'no way, so forget it!' Fortunately though, a few of the staff are entirely on our side and putting their own jobs on the line, approached a few unions.

A member from each union came along and explained to us how a union could help us and tell us about theirs. We had this meeting in working hours

and were arranging others when the management put its foot down and told us we had to have meetings in our own time.

Of course this made it difficult for us, but we managed to arrange a couple of meetings where we discussed the unions and decided which we wanted to join.

Then on 19 February 1982 I became a member of NUPE along with six other YOPsters. We were the first YOPsters in Sheffield to join a union and since then more and more have been joining.

NUPE told us that we needed 50 members to start our own branch, we already knew of 170 YOPsters who were interested in joining and now thanks to the YS we know of over 300 YOPsters and unemployed people who are interested too!

NUPE sponsored 65 of us from Sheffield to go to the YOPs Lobby of Parliament. I really enjoyed this day, because I believe, like many others, in fighting for what we want.

What we do not want is a measly £25 for working our fingers to the bone, 40 hours a week and 12 days' holiday a year with no training whatsoever.

We want a decent living wage, five weeks' holiday a year and proper training. And with the help of the YS and NUPE we're going to get it.

My advice to you is go out and join the YS and a union and help us fight for a better future.

Merseyside prepares

The LPYS conference gives us a chance to give youth a real political alternative, a message that has been taken up by a number of LPYS branches in the Merseyside area.

In St Helens, LPYS speakers have addressed meetings of glass-workers and Labour Party ward branches. The GMWU 120 branch at United Glass have also agreed upon a £10 donation to LPYS funds, while the GMWU 180 branch at Pilkingtons City Road plant are considering a larger sum.

There have been collections at ward branches and one Labour councillor (a pensioner) has offered £50.

Additionally, St Helens CLP has donated £150.

This money will be used to assist those LPYS members who would otherwise find it difficult to attend the conference. A YOPs scheme at Delta Road, St Helens, has also been visited regularly.

Southport and Crosby LPYS branches have been kept busy with a leafleting campaign around the Easter school leavers, aiming for more new faces at the conference. A social event will take place to raise cash in an attempt to subsidise our unemployed members.

As with Bootle LPYS, regular days of action have been staged and requests distributed to local wards and trade union branches for LPYS members to address meetings. A UCATT

branch in Crosby have agreed to an LPYS speaker. Bootle LPYS have even organised a sponsored 20-mile walk to raise money!

In this area, two ward LPYS branches have sprung up since the last national LPYS conference, in Formby and Ormskirk, so a whole number of 'first timers' are expected to attend the conference. All in all, we have firmly fixed in our sights a bigger than ever turnout.

With this kind of activity around the country and with similar results this conference will undoubtedly be the liveliest and most successful yet!

By Steve Higham
(Crosby LPYS)

Labour delegates back LPYS

The Young Socialists made a big impact on the regional Labour Party conference in the North West region last month (20-21 March).

The YOP schemes were debated in a resolution calling for an increase in the allowance, an end to abuse, trade union monitoring and a call for the next Labour government to give every school leaver an apprenticeship or training with trade union rates of pay.

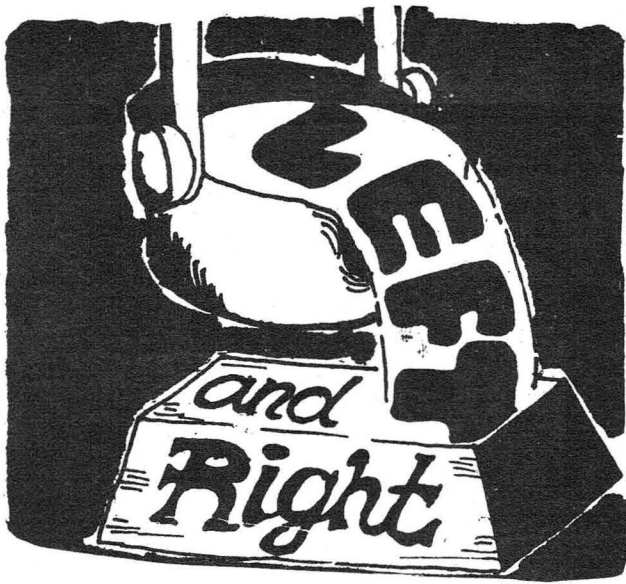
Unfortunately, support

for the YOPs Trade Union Rights Campaign was not included in the composite resolution, even though there was praise for the work of the LPYS by Colin Barnett, the NW Regional TUC Chairman, in his reply.

Martin Lee of Wythenshawe YS also condemned the support of people like Len Murray from the leadership of the TUC for Manpower Services schemes.

The response of delegates was shown by over £95 being raised to help send delegates to national LPYS conference.

One delegate, Lynne Harrison, a school student from Wavertree, raised a YOPs week's wages in dinner time after she spoke, showing how education cuts meant that there was a race to get into lessons so you could have a desk!



Bill Sirs "changes mind" about SDP

Two months ago Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the ISTC steel union was praising Shirley Williams to the very heavens. Writing in the February issue of his union journal 'Banner' he stated that she was "a tough, redoubtable, but very fair politician" who would be bringing back to Parliament "all her acumen, commonsense and flair...It would be churlish if we did not offer congratulations to Shirley Williams on her victory at the polls in the Crosby constituency."

The article was widely criticised by steel worker activists, and Roy Hughes, MP, chairman of the Party Steel industry group, wrote to Sirs condemning his praise for Williams. Sirs was forced to backtrack.

On 22 March he decided to attack the SDP and centred his attack on Williams: "I have noted with disquiet that she has voted with the Tories for the most divisive and destructive trade union bill ever presented to Parliament. And she has voted with them and against Labour on steel."

Starting life in true royal tradition

It's not down to Mothercare or rummaging at jumble sales to get nursery furniture for Princess Diana's baby.

The 'Daily Express' (25 March) revealed that her baby will have a 'four-poster made of golden pine, complete with canopy and full of frills.' Why even "the waste paper bin and tissue box holder are in white broderie anglaise threaded with pink and blue ribbons. There's a hanging nappy stacker in gingham and rose-buds to match the cot."

And it was all offered as a gift to the royal couple by a shop in Golders Green. Unfortunately after the 'Express' article appeared, Buckingham Palace cancelled the arrangement because of publicity. Can we now expect an announcement informing us that such luxury will not be wasted, and that the gift will be going to another expectant mum, in less happy financial circumstances than the royal couple?

Rising rent debt

The combination of rising unemployment and escalating rent has driven many tenants deeply into debt. In London, a survey by Shelter and the London Tenants Organisation shows that rent arrears have risen by more than 60% to £56m over the last year.

They pointed out that "over 60% of London's council tenants are living on or below the poverty line, receiving supplementary benefits or rent rebates...For many of London's 750,000 council tenants, housing costs now account for over half their earnings."

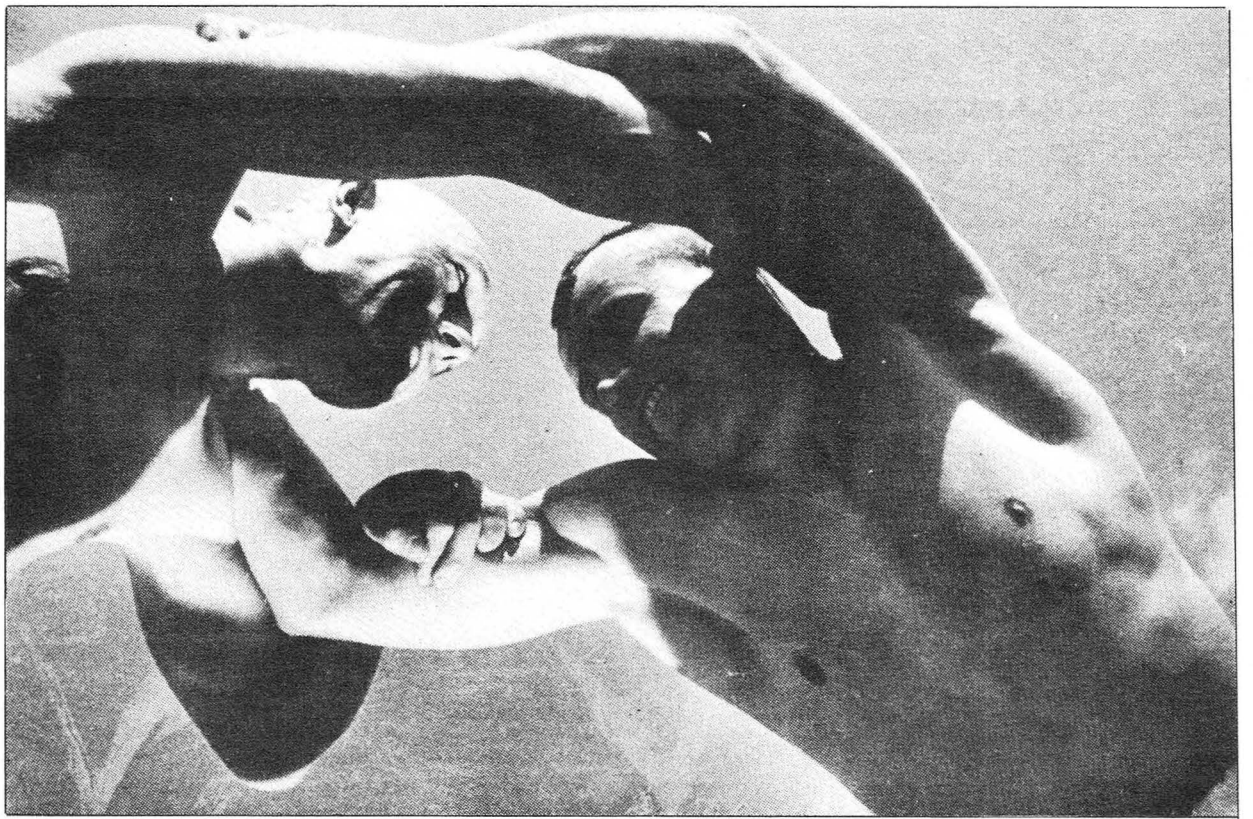
But many do not claim benefit or have it denied. And tenants have had to pay between 32% and 110% extra in London last year.

What is the Tories' and right-wing Labour's solution? In Southwark, which has 61,000 tenants and where arrears rose last year from £3.7m to £7.4m, Labour's right-wingers and Tories have decided to re-introduce such measures as seizure of tenants' goods.

Worse is to come. And this week sees the government's enforcement of a further £2.50 a week rent rise for all council tenants, together with the threat that if any council refuses to implement they will reduce their subsidy.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Although many children did not have decent shoes or boots (or even footwear at all) that did not worry the bosses as long as they could make profits. In March 1932, Freeman, Hardy and Willis still had £562,282 profit after tax and payment of 20% dividend to directors. Other shoe firms reported profits up 50% on the previous year.



Early Soviet photographers

"History is written very well through the lens," said Lenin. "It is clear and understandable. No painter is ever able to depict on canvas what the camera sees."

Beginning with the first official portrait of Lenin which, when shown in Moscow in the spring of 1918, introduced many people for the first time to the leader of the revolution, and ending with a portrait of Stalin taken in 1939, this exhibition documents, through some remarkable images, those years that were not only crucial to the development of modern Russian society but also to the development of photography in Russia.

Two powerful tendencies in photography developed in Russia during the early period: firstly **reportage**, "Down with Tradition! Photograph things as they are!"

Secondly, the **experimental** artistic, explained by Rodchenko as: "There is nothing revolutionary in our having begun to photograph workers' leaders in the same way as the generals were under the old regime... We must seek to find a new aesthetics, enthusiasm and pathos for the photographic expression of our new socialist reality."

Although both trends are represented, the main emphasis of the exhibition is on the one which predominated from the late Twenties—reportage. The dominance of this trend was a reflection of the stifling of the more "free" and "independent" styles by the growing Stalinist bureaucracy and the use of camera technique purely as a propaganda tool in the hands of the state.

Even though the extreme economic conditions of post-revolutionary Russia prevented the production of many papers and magazines, photography was still seized upon as a powerful means of disseminating information. The Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) developed a simple and effective way of communicating information; empty shop windows were used to

display captioned satirical posters explaining the events of the day.

Photography was used in a similar way. In all the main towns captioned photographs were displayed in "Agit-showcases" informing the population of contemporary events. At least sixty of these showcases were used in Moscow, and over twenty in Petrograd.

From the late Twenties the "photo-story" was rapidly developed; photography used as propaganda to attract people to work on specific projects of construction. The photographs in the show of the building of the power station at Magnitogorsk are one example.

But perhaps the finest example and the one that provoked the most attention in the west when it was shown in Berlin is the photo-story "Twenty four hours in the Life of the Filipov Family" (1931) showing a working class family whose life-style was markedly different from their western counter-

parts.

A workers' delegation from the German Social Democratic Party was sent to Moscow to satisfy themselves that this was not just Soviet propaganda. The Filipovs had a decent home, food to eat, and every adult member was in work.

This particular sequence of photographs can show the tangible increases in workers' living standards between 1921 and 1931, but, of course, it does not show the other side—the loss of political freedoms in those years.

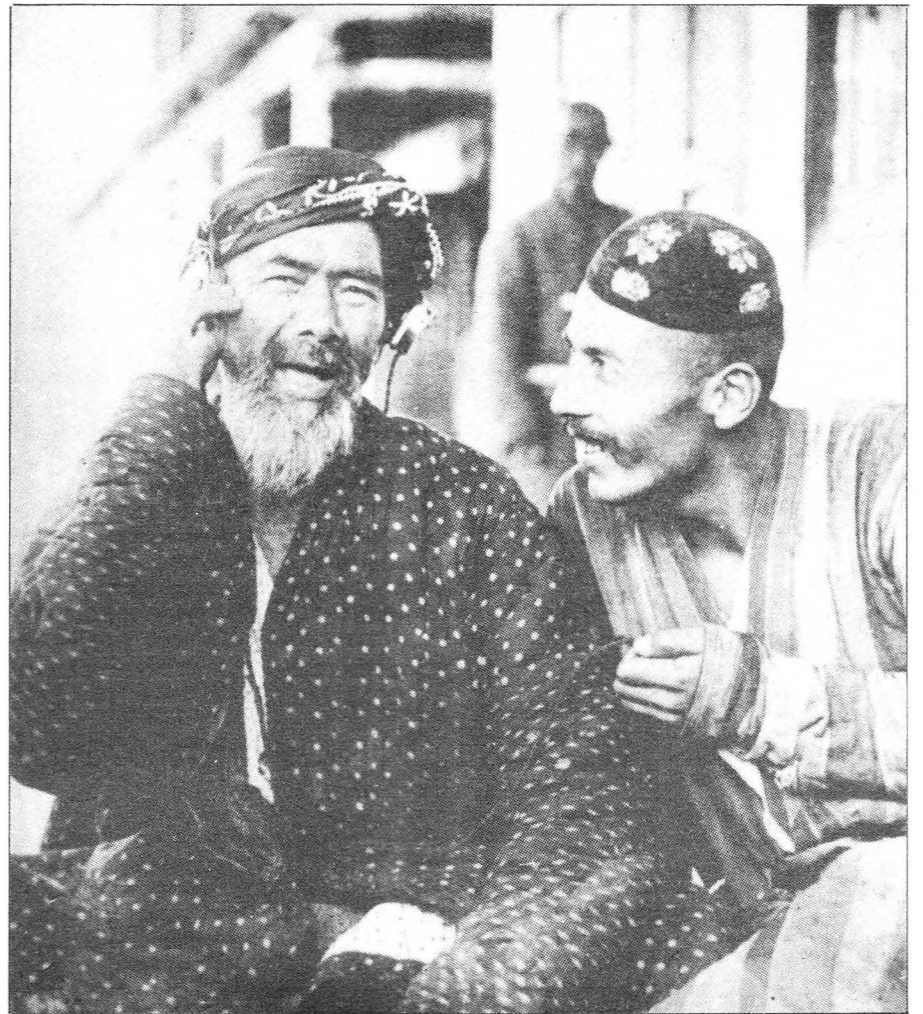
This exhibition presents a fascinating historical document of the inter-war period in Russia. The successes of the economy are shown: "The first Soviet-made vehicle leaving the factory gates at Nizhni Novgorod" (now Gorky) 1929.

But also we see the immense problems faced by the government in bringing modern ideas to backward parts of a vast continent. "A Women's Demonstration in Tashkant 1926".

The text accompanying this photograph reads: "Women who decided to reject the paranja (a thick horsehair veil) had to be protected by the police from angry men, often their husbands or fathers. There were reports of men murdering their wives when they showed their faces in public."

Despite the lack of a political appraisal of Russia between the wars, this exhibition is well worth seeing. It will be on show at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, until May. After that it will be showing at the Photographers Gallery in London and then travelling around Britain.

Denis Doran reviews the exhibition 'Early Soviet Photographers' which is touring Britain



Top: fight, 1935

Above: peasant (left), 1927, hears radio for first time on head-set

Builders' quick profits - residents long-term problems

Photo: J Woulfe

In 1962, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and Nottingham local authorities established the Yorkshire Development Group, to provide better and more effective housing. Nottingham ended up with Balloon Wood Estate. KEVIN SLATTERY (WEST NOTTINGHAM CLP), who has lived there for two and a half years, outlines conditions there.

Built in the mid-60s, Balloon Wood estate in Nottingham was meant to provide quick, cheap housing. The end product, however, turned out different.

In a recent survey, seventy-three per cent of tenants (472 flats) said their flats had either dampness, condensation or mould growth. A health worker quipped that you only have to mention Balloon Wood and you'll be put in hospital! In 1977 a secret medical report said that Balloon Wood has the highest death rate for very young babies in the city.

An Environmental Health Officer, concerned about the structural stability of the flats, has called for a structural engineers report on "safety stability and

future problems".

The search for quick profits is the cause of our problems. The workers involved in the original construction have stated: "Panels were used within 24 hours of being made, they weren't left to cure. We were all on bonuses. The basic wasn't very clever. It was based on the number of panels you put up."

This quick profit-making, while seeing the building contractors go laughing all the way to the bank, has left us with unhealthy, potentially unsafe housing, and a continual stream of repair bills for the council.

It is the cause of the dampness, condensation and fungus, because the buildings are not watertight or properly ventilated.

Wall fungus leads to a rise in the number of spores in the air which can germinate in the moistness of the lungs. A local doctor, with six years of Balloon Wood 'treatment' says "almost all complaints of chest illnesses were caused by dampness", and that high bills—through trying to keep the flats dry—affected people's mental health as well.

But we are not simply standing by while the roof rots over our heads. The Balloon Wood tenants association is at present fighting to get improvements. Whether or not demolition is the basic 'improvement' required has yet to be decided!



Throughout the country many council tenants find conditions intolerable. (Above) Newham tenants in East London demonstrate as the council finally blows up one tower block because of expense in maintaining it.

One whole block was built completely back to front, and the tenants here are all being evacuated. A notable success has been obtaining a twenty-five per cent rate reduction for all tenants, and the BWTA is currently fighting, in conjunction with tenants associations in the other Yorkshire Development

Group complexes, for further concessions.

But what better way to solve these problems, once and for all, than to get rid of the profiteers and financiers who 'make a killing' out of such housing projects?

• Nationalise, under workers' control and management, the giant

building contractors, who oblige their employees to construct buildings at (literally) break-neck speeds with low quality building materials, and then make off with the profits.

• Nationalise the banks and finance companies. Seventy per cent of Nottingham's Housing budget this year will be spent on

loan repayment and interest charges. (Barclays Bank have just announced record profits of £567m.)

• Use the money to usefully employ the 500,000 unemployed building workers on a massive programme of house building and improvements.

PRIVATE HOSPITAL NOT NEEDED

All the fire and fury of the East End was to be seen and heard in the lobby of Bethnal Green Town Hall.

Unfortunately it was being directed against Helen Redwood and myself and a young local General Practitioner, instead of the United Medical Enterprises who wanted to build a private hospital on the site of the old London Jewish Hospital.

Some local residents, including a few who had been influenced by the National Front and feared the erection of a mosque, had been persuaded by UME that a private hospital was just what our run-down community needed.

A community that was having enough trouble finding work and the money to pay ever increasing rents and rates and fuel bills, let alone private charges or medical insurance which covered only the young and fit!

Ignoring as best we could fists shaken in our faces, we stood our ground with some very aggressive people and argued how the NHS was deteriorating because it was being starved of resources, and how a private hospital

would further drain trained staff, expertise and capital equipment costing millions of pounds.

We pointed out that the closure of the London Jewish was directly linked to the decisions taken by the last Labour government which, in order to get an IMF loan, cut hospital services up and down the country. In the City and East London area that had meant the loss of 350 acute medical beds and the change of use or closure of several hospitals.

At that time consultant medical opinion had said the beds were not needed. Now the same medical opinion was asking for 90 private beds in the same area!

When engaged in direct debate the anger of some of these residents who lived near the proposed site cooled and common ground emerged. We agreed with them that the borough was deteriorating and that urgent action was needed. They were completely unconvinced that the Labour councillors on past form were able to lead a fight.

We parted in grudging peace after an hour, when the local authority deferred its discussion for a week.

In the following week a lot of work was put in by

local trade unionists, with further leaflets being circulated on the nearby estates and a petition, which collected more than 700 signatures from other tenants' associations around the site and workers in the nearby London Hospital.

The previously hostile tenants' leader had had second thoughts when he got up to speak at next week's meeting. "Of course they would prefer the site to be put to NHS use," he said! But there was no sign that the council or the DHSS were likely to do this so obviously in their eyes they had been considering a private hospital as the lesser of possible evils.

350 NHS beds lost

Helen Redwood and the GP showed that any medical intervention would affect the planning of NHS resources for local people. The sub-committee entered into a full discussion in which the public persisted in joining! Then to their complete credit the Committee overturned the application from UME yet again.

But according to the rules (which central government are changing all the time) they could still only do this on the basis of architects' drawings, plot density and traffic flow etc. It is clear that UME will come back time and time again with slight alterations to the plan. In the end they will apply to central government to overturn the local authority's right to decide on what happens in their own borough.

A Public Enquiry is in fact scheduled for April—an enquiry which should have taken place five years ago when the 350 NHS beds were lost against the expressed wishes of the public. But health workers and the Trades Council are determined to mount a massive campaign to defend the NHS and try and stop the UME from building here.

Trades Council meeting on hospital plan, Monday 5 April 7.30pm, at Bow Mission, Bow Road. Speakers include Frank Dobson MP, Dr R Smith, Dr T Jewell, Ian Barber (NUPE)

By Myrna Shaw

(Secretary, Tower Hamlets Health District Joint Shop Stewards Committee, personal capacity)

Who killed Barry Prosser?

Barry Prosser was held on remand in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham, for causing £1.50's worth of criminal damage to a door handle. He had been found guilty by Dudley Magistrates on August 15th 1980 but had not been sentenced.

He was in the hospital wing of the Prison while the decision was made whether he should again be sent to a psychiatric hospital. Four days later Barry Prosser was dead.

He died from injuries which included a ruptured stomach and crushed testicles. In fact his body was bruised from head to foot. The Coroner's Court found that Barry Prosser had been 'unlawfully killed.'

But no-one has been found to be responsible for his death.

The immediate question will be that as the recent trial found that three particular prison warders were not responsible, who was? What positions do they hold in the Prison Service? What confidence can any prisoner's family have that another 'unlawful killing'

will not take place behind the locked gates of one of the country's prisons?

The labour movement has to be concerned about what is happening in the prisons. A recent investigation into what caused the Wormwood Scrubs prison riot blamed the 'heavy squad' MUFTI (Minimal Use of Force for Tactical Intervention). Any victimisation or attacks on prisoners must be condemned by the labour movement. Labour should support an inquiry into the killing of Barry Prosser.

But it is the running of the entire penal system that needs to be examined. The Labour Party must commit itself to democratic control and running of prisons. Elected labour movement representatives must have full access to prisons as a check on conditions and methods being used. As long as there are prisons the labour movement must ensure that prisoners are allowed full democratic rights and decent conditions without the fear of assault or violence.

By Jeremy Birch

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER
FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

TEBBIT'S ANTI-UNION LAW

Feature by
Brian Ingham

“Legislation is introduced by Parliament, but we should remember that all our advances, freedoms and liberties are due to men and women who, when their consciences compelled them, have been prepared to defy the law...If legislation is introduced which erodes our basic freedom and democracy or threatens our right to combine, we should oppose it with the same vigour and determination of our forefathers. I believe it will be necessary to use all measures, including industrial action, to defy Tebbit's law and defend our movement.”

This was the message of Arthur Scargill, newly elected President of the National Union of Mine-workers, when speaking recently to the Yorkshire NUM area council. That message should set the tone for the fightback of the entire labour movement against the vicious anti-trade union legislation of Norman Tebbit.

If Tebbit's proposals ever become law the trade union movement will be dragged into a legal morass. Trade unions will face the possibility of bankruptcy and individual trade unionists will face the threat of imprisonment.

Severe restrictions on picketing and on the rights of workers to organise solidarity action have already been implemented by this government under the so-called "Employment Act 1980" of Jim Prior. Trade union rights recognised in statute since 1906 were removed by Prior's legislation.

But the legal minefield prepared for the trade union movement by Norman Tebbit makes Prior's laws look almost liberal by comparison.

Of all the present Tory ministers Tebbit is perhaps the most crude in his hostility to the trade unions. He has talked, for instance, about "neutering" the unions through this new legislation.

This latest attack is, however, far more than a personal crusade of one individual: it is central to the whole political and economic offensive which the Tory government has launched against the working people of this country.

Tebbit was appointed by Thatcher precisely to bring in legislation aimed at undermining trade union power. Moreover, according to *The Observer*, "Tebbit's remarkable rise to power and the downfall of Jim Prior last autumn owed much to the effective lobby-

ing from the business organisations linked together with Mrs Thatcher's political staff in the 'Argonauts' dining club."

In Greek mythology the Argonauts were those who sailed with Jason searching for the 'Golden Fleece'. Today's big business 'Argonauts' are searching for their own special 'Golden Fleece'. They hope that Tebbit will help them to line their pockets at the expense of the working class.

The British capitalist class have seen their once mighty position in the world market completely undermined following years of underinvestment in British industry and wanton neglect of the wealth produced by the labour of the British working class.

The trade unions stand in the way of the bosses

British capitalism has been totally outstripped by its rivals internationally. As a result, in the even harsher climate of today's world trade, British capitalism is being mercilessly savaged.

Therefore big business is making a vain attempt to fight back against its world rivals, but not by matching investment with investment.

The British capitalist class hope to rescue their disintegrating fortunes by trampling over the job prospects, living standards and working conditions of the working people, and over the ruins of the Welfare State.

The trade unions stand in their way. They are the most basic organisations of working class struggle and defence. That is why Tebbit has brought forward this Bill.

The Tories hope to

destroy the effectiveness of the trade unions, thereby clearing the way for their attacks on jobs, living standards and services. The trade union movement has no alternative but to fight back.

Failure to defeat this Bill will embolden the Tories and big business to yet further attacks on our rights. Right-wing Tory MP George Gardiner is already canvassing for a law to make strikes illegal unless all the stages in agreed procedures have been exhausted.

The Engineering Employers' Federation have demanded the right to lay off workers without pay in the event of an outside dispute affecting production. And three Tory MPs, Tim Renton, Marcus Fox and John Ward, have come forward with the outrageous idea that secret ballots before strikes and for key union elections must be called even if demanded by only 1,000 or 5% of a union's membership.

This idea, which would give wide-ranging powers to government ministers to interfere in the writing of union rule books, may even yet be incorporated in the present legislation.

Once this law is on the statute book, the Tories will then begin to turn their attention to the demand of the SDP for laws to sever the financial links between the trade unions and the Labour Party, in order to try and damage the effectiveness of Labour as a viable mass political party.

The Tories and big business can be stopped dead in their tracks. Tebbit and the Tory Cabinet may shake their fists at the unions, but in reality it is like the little people of Lilliput shaking their fists at Gulliver.

Once roused to action the British working class will fight absolutely tenaciously to defend their rights. It will be impossible for any Tory cabinet to strip away these rights simply by passing legislation through parliament.

That was the bitter lesson learned by the Tories between 1970-74 when Edward Heath and Robert Carr attempted to place a legal strait-jacket around the activities of the trade unions. Heath set up the National Industrial Relations Court to police the trade union movement on behalf of big business, but all the major legal attacks of this court recoiled badly upon the Tories and big business.

The railway unions were forced to have a secret ballot to test the backing for their wage claim which was well

but unions have the power to smash it...

in excess of the Heath government's 8% norm.

Railway workers backed their claim and their leadership against the Tories by over five to one. The government were forced to back down, conceding an increase of 13%.

During a dispute over containerisation between lorry drivers and dockers the T&GWU were fined £5,000 and then a further £50,000 for contempt after refusing to appear at a hearing of the National Industrial Relations Court.

Following a narrow vote on its executive, the T&GWU leaders then decided to appear at the court to plead that they had no jurisdiction over the dock stewards. The NIRC decided otherwise, but the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the T&GWU.

At this, Donaldson, Judge at the NIRC, instructed the docks shop-stewards to appear before the NIRC. They refused, and only the spirited intervention of the Official Solicitor (a legal official unknown of the population before then) stopped them being imprisoned for contempt.

Donaldson, however, persisted, and following the stewards' refusal to obey a further court order he placed five of them in jail.

The result was an immediate and spontaneous movement of the entire working class. Literally within hours millions of workers were on strike or were preparing to go on strike. The TUC then legitimised the movement by calling for a one-day general strike.

This time it was left to the Law Lords to save the day for the ruling class by overturning the Appeal court ruling, removing the legal onus from the stewards again, so diffusing the immediate situation.

After that no major employer dared use this legislation. Some of the small fry, however, carried on regardless. As a result, in its dying moments, the NIRC provoked a national strike of Engineers, following the sequestration of the entire funds of the AUEW over £47,000 compensation

awarded out of AUEW funds to a small firm, Con-Mech.

An anonymous donor (believed to be the Newspaper Proprietors' Association) paid the money owed to the court by the AUEW, thus ending this particular episode, and defusing the threat of engineers' strikes.

The trade union movement must learn the lesson of these years: Maximum unity and implacable opposition to Tory attacks will send the Tories and big business retreating in panic.

After the jailing of the 'Pentonville' dockers the trade union movement closed ranks almost 100% against the Industrial Relations Act.

The talk about registering under the Act from one or two major unions was then dropped. Only a handful of smaller unions registered. They were expelled.

Let us have 100% unity against Tebbit's Bill from the start. It must be made clear that expulsion will again be the penalty for any union which accepts money under the 1980 'Prior Act, or which incorporates this present Act into its rules and constitution.

The TUC has drawn up a battle plan for a united struggle against Tebbit's Bill which is to be put to a special conference of union executives on April 5th. That plan lays down that: "No trade union member of an Industrial Tribunal or the Employment Appeal Tribunal should serve on cases arising from the application of a union membership agreement or arrangement."

Again, any union breaking ranks and collaborating with the Tories and their judges on these Tribunals under this legislation should face TUC disciplinary measures.

Unity is essential. That is why the call of the TUC for every union to appoint a co-ordinator must be supported. The propaganda of the Tories must be answered. All trade unionists must be welded together to fight this Bill.

The call of the TUC for a £1 million fighting fund should also be supported.

Finances are the sinews of war. But in their battle plan the TUC suggest that this money would be partly used to pay legal expenses and compensation claims. Such payments would play into the hands of the Tories and dangerously weaken the campaign for a united and intransigent struggle against the Bill.

All money raised should be used for propaganda, organisation and campaigning. The trades union movement should resolutely boycott any legal hearings under this Act and refuse to pay fines which may be imposed.

Neither should the resources of the trade unions be wasted in attempts to win support against the Tories from individual employers or groups of employers.

It is true that the employers are divided on this legislation. **But the divisions among the ruling class are not about whether they should attack working class rights and conditions, only how to attack them.**

Sections of the ruling class, are only too vividly aware of the accumulated power of the working class and fear any provocation which may push workers into struggle, something which may actually develop their political consciousness and especially the consciousness of their power.

These sections of the ruling class favour a more 'softly softly' assault on our traditional rights. They will only demand that the Tories retreat when the working class begins fighting back.

If Tebbit was to succeed they would be only too pleased! The trade union movement must therefore rely on its own independent strength to defeat this Bill, and not on any joint talks or representations with businessmen.

Small skirmishes in individual companies or industries should also be avoided by the trade unions as these could drain the energies and resources of the movement.

The first time that any union member is victimised under this Act the TUC should mobilise the entire

PIN THIS UP ON YOUR UNION NOTICE BOARD



In 1971 the struggle against the Industrial Relations Act, even prior to its becoming law, included the magnificent 250,000 strong TUC demonstration. This campaign helped bind the working class together against that legislation and paved the way for the struggle once it became law.

trade union movement in support.

The fight must start now. The TUC plan seems to be aimed solely at tackling the bill once it becomes law and is aimed against the trades unions.

There is no call for action for the period before the Bill is passed. But in 1971 the struggle against the In-

dustrial Relations Act even prior to it becoming law included the magnificent 250,000 strong TUC demonstration. This campaign helped bind the working class together against that legislation and paved the way for the struggle once it became law.

Following the special union conference on April

5th the TUC should draw up immediate plans for a properly prepared one day strike, including mass rallies and demonstrations, as a warning shot to the government of the opposition it will face should they press on with these laws.

Above all, however, the trade union movement should link the battle

against this legislation to the overall political fight to force a general election and return a Labour government committed to the immediate repeal of all reactionary Tory legislation and to the introduction of a bold socialist programme aimed at solving the fundamental problems which confront the British working people.

What it means in practice

★ **Tory judges will decide whether or not industrial action is "lawful".**

Each and every time you take—or even contemplate taking—action in defence of your interests your union could be dragged to court to argue why your action is legal.

★ **Trade unionists could be jailed.**

If the judge rules that a strike is "illegal" and the ruling is ignored then fines on a union and/or jailings for "contempt of court" could follow.

★ **Union funds could be seized.**

Union funds can be taken as compensation for losses incurred by a company due to "illegal" industrial action. Small unions with up to 25,000 members would have to pay up to £125,000. Unions with over 100,000 members would have to pay up to £250,000. There is no limit to the number of compensation claims per dispute, nor to the number of times per dispute that a union can be fined for contempt.

★ **Strikes and other forms of industrial action will be illegal unless they are "wholly or mainly" concerned with a British trade dispute, and the term "trade dispute" is now narrowly defined to mean only disputes between workers and their employers.**

Industrial action could therefore be illegal if it is (i) in solidarity with your fellow workers; (ii) against a government incomes policy; (iii) against a government cash limit; (iv) against a group of non-trade unionists who are being used to undercut your pay, conditions and job prospects; (v) against cuts in the health and social services; (vi) against the international activities of multinationals, even though this could be to thwart the company using non-union labour to undercut your wages and threaten your job, or to prevent attempts to "de-stabilise" left-wing governments, like Chile before 1973.

★ **Non-union firms will gain legal support.**

Sub-contracting to union-only firms is to be outlawed. This will be a licence for the jerry-builders, the cowboy firms who have contempt for the conditions of their workers and for safety standards.

★ **Non-unionists will get rich rewards.**

Closed shops represent the strongest form of union organisation, they ensure that all those who benefit from trade union organisation also help to maintain the union. Encouragement to undermine closed shops is to be given to free riders. Closed shops are only to be legal if they are backed in ballots every 5 years by 80% of those involved or 85% of those voting. A 21% minority can thus dictate the form of union organisation to a 79% majority! Compensation will be automatically given to those dismissed where such ballots have not been held. This compensation will be over £11,000 in most cases, and even in cases where there is no order for reinstatement a £31,000 pay out is possible. Also, £2 millions of public money is to be put aside as a free hand out to 400 or so free riders who were dismissed between 1974 and 1980 for refusing to join a trade union. Compare this with the average £375 awarded as compensation to workers who have won unfair dismissal cases against their employer!

★ **Victimisation of strikers is to be encouraged.**

The unfair dismissal provisions in current legislation are to be scrapped so that—so long as they have given at least four days' warning—employers can pick and choose which strikers to sack, and which to take back.

★ **There is one contemptible escape clause.**

Unions are to be freed from the financial and other legal threats of this Bill provided

(i) they incorporate these new laws in their rule books, or (ii) they repudiate any members taking "unlawful" action. But "the principal executive committee or an official who is a regular attender of its meetings (must not take) a step which is inconsistent with the purported repudiation." This is meant to encourage the strict policing of the activities of all full-time and lay union officials with prompt disowning of any "unlawful" action. If this bait was swallowed, full-time officials would have to be dismissed for the crime of defending their members, the credentials of lay officials would be removed, workers would be left to fight alone without the backing of their union's resources and without the help of any other union. The trade union movement would be atomised.

'Reaganonomics' in ruins

Well into the second year of the Reagan administration, the American economy continues to lose momentum. There is no sign of the resurgence of economic activity and business confidence that was expected to come in 1981.

While some economic analysts expect the recession to continue to the year's end, others point to the even grimmer scenario of an impending depression.

In the automobile industry, long regarded as the backbone of the US economy, production for the first quarter of this year is 15% less than what was planned for last December.

The steel industry has been in serious trouble from last year. Aluminium is at present so badly depressed that ingots are selling at about 15% below the cost of production.

With the exception of a few growth industries (such as energy, computers and semi-conductors), the pattern of decline holds across industry as a whole. The demand for industrial hard-goods is now 12% below the high point reached last summer.

In January, total industrial output declined by 3%, the sixth consecutive month of decline. The capital goods industry is particularly hard hit, and housing is crippled by the high interest rates which put new mortgages beyond the reach of most working people.

Even if an upturn takes place within the next few months, analysts expect it to be short-lived, just like in 1981. It is expected that major sectors such as housing, autos, capital goods, etc, will remain depressed for a long time to come.

Reagan's economic programme is in ruins. His combination of slow money supply growth and sharp tax cuts for business and the rich have failed to stimulate economic growth.

Inflation has dropped to single digit figures but interest rates remain at high levels, choking off business expansion. But probably inflation will accelerate again once the recession is over.

Throughout the country the worst hit are the small and medium businesses, the ones that backed Reagan the most. Critically dependent on secondary activity spun off from the major corporations, many smaller companies are being driven to the wall.

Interest rates

A major issue at the present time is the extremely high level of interest rates. The bank prime lending rate rose from around 10% before 1980 to around 20% for most of 1981. Recently the rates came down to about 15%, but now they are climbing up again and are currently at 17%.

These high levels have created enormous problems for the domestic economy. Again small and medium business is the worst hit since their margins are much smaller.

From a correspondent in the USA

But even the big corporations are in deep trouble. Already industry as a whole is paying out around 25% of operating profits on debt charges, and the worst hit industries as much as 50%.

For the airlines and the auto industry, operating profits in 1981 were not even sufficient to cover interest payments. *Business Week* (1 March) comments that "The financing of American corporations this year (ie. 1982) is shaping up as an increasingly desperate treasure hunt..."

Deficits

Reagan hasn't realised it yet, but his elephantine budget deficits for 1982 and beyond have made a bad situation practically impossible for the domestic economy.

It is indeed ironic that a President who made the balanced budget a major plank of his platform should now be compelled to preside over deficits of over \$100 billion per year for the next few years—a clear indication of how the economy controls policy rather than the other way round.

The deficits themselves are likely to be much more than the White House projections. The Congressional Budget Office expects a deficit of \$110 billion in 1982, rising to \$140 billion in 1985.

The deficits are of course the consequence of Reagan's tax cuts and increased military expenditure. The recession has also expanded the deficits by cutting expected tax revenues and increasing social security payments for the unemployed.

The surprising thing is that so many people believed for a considerable period of time that Reagan could cut taxes, raise defence expenditures and still balance the budget. It is a measure of the desperation of American capitalism that 'hard-nosed' businessmen and political leaders were prepared to swallow Reagan's 'voodoo economics.'

The manifest failure of his economic programme has turned even Congressional Republicans solidly against Reagan. The decisive factor here is the pressure brought on individual Congressmen of both parties by the business interests in their constituencies.

Big business and Wall Street turned against Reagan around the middle of 1981. Currently they are using every propaganda resource to change his policies.

On 3 March, the Business Roundtable (composed of the chief executives of 200

major corporations) rejected the budget deficits as unacceptably high and called upon Congress to reduce the military budget. They also called for modifications of various tax concessions to business, which indicates that big business is worried about much more than short term benefits.

Congress, frightened by the deficits, high interest rates and warnings of depression, is scrambling to put together a bipartisan alternative to Reagan's budget. One proposal plans to cut defence by \$20 billion, health care by \$22 billion, social security benefits by \$84 billion and then to raise additional revenue by extra taxes.

Political crisis

Reagan is grimly determined to resist. Given the extent of the opposition, a serious political crisis is brewing.

Externally, Reagan's policies are placing a severe strain on the so-called

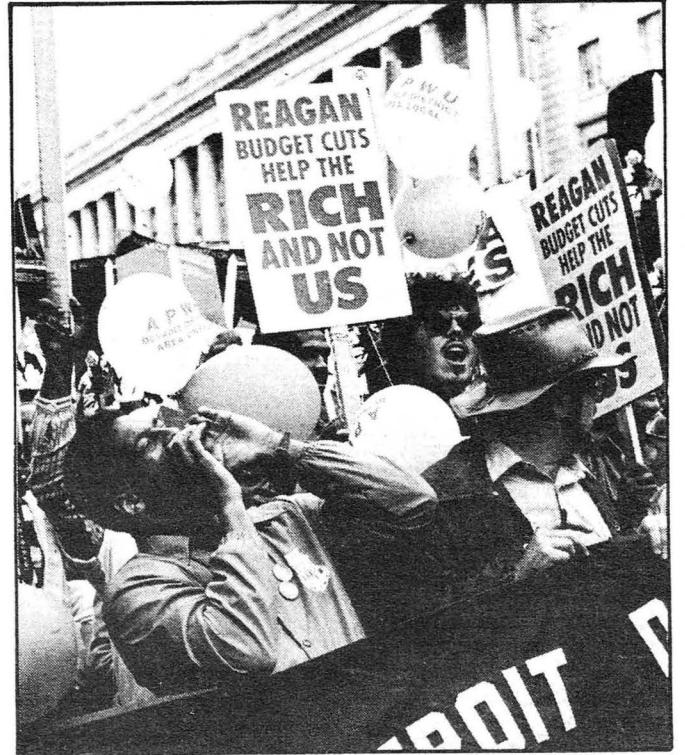
SPD" (*Business Week*, 8.2.82).

Weinberger may well be right, but he forgets to ask whether Reagan could last much longer than Schmidt.

Reagan and Thatcher, Schmidt and Mitterrand, all are struggling against the contradiction between the political system of separate nation states and the unity of the world economy, in particular the close integration of the North American, West European and Japanese economies.

Also the export-oriented European economies, being heavily dependent on the US market, are badly hit by the US recession. Finally, the rapid rise of the dollar in relation to other hard currencies has increased the cost of imports—especially oil—which are mostly priced in dollars.

That is why the European governments are complaining that the big US deficits and the high interest rates are ruining their own depressed economies. Schmidt of West Germany



Trade unionists on last September's mass demonstration against Reagan's policies; (below) Chancellor Schmidt of West Germany warns that the US crisis is "a strategic danger because it spreads social and political unrest in our countries."



Though they may understand the seriousness of the crisis, no section of the capitalist class has the remotest idea of how it can be resolved.

'Atlantic alliance' with the Western European governments.

As they see it, the high US rates attract investment funds that would otherwise be used to build up industry and save jobs in Europe. As funds migrate to New York, European money market rates are also forced upwards, thereby discouraging business expansion at home. Schmidt's coalition can hardly hold together in the face of rising unemployment and high interest rates.

But the Reagan team is ready to let Schmidt sink, except for Secretary of State Haig who argues that Schmidt is the key to the continued unity of NATO.

Defence Secretary Weinberger and the rest argue that in the long run Schmidt cannot be saved "because the left wing is on the ascendancy inside the

has warned that the crisis is "a strategic danger because it spreads social and political unrest in our countries," and that if the high interest rates persist, "one could easily turn this into a general depression of the western world." (*Newsweek* 1 March).

The Economist (27.2.82) reports: "all European governments are banking on a fall in interest rates—and none more so than...West Germany and Britain." They go on to warn that sharpened the conflict and competition inherent in capitalism. Currently the only salvation they see is at each other's expense, by increased competition for capital and rising protectionism in trade.

The Reagan administration, with its antediluvian world view, has still no conception of the enormity of the crisis. But almost everywhere else the pro-

spects are viewed with alarm. *The Economist* (27 February) goes on to say:

"That grim outlook, shared by Wall Street and Western Europe alike, is tinged with despair in Europe."

But though they may understand the seriousness of the crisis, no section of the capitalist class has the remotest idea of how it could be resolved.

Given Reagan's inflexibility, sections of the ruling class are already asking whether he should not be replaced. Given the depth and breadth of the crisis, they are afraid that, like Hoover before the Great Depression, Reagan might quite possibly make a bad situation catastrophic.

This fear is being voiced openly through the leading organs of the capitalist class. Anthony Lewis, writing in the prestigious editorial columns of the *New York Times*, poses the question as follows (22 February):

"Blunder, incoherence and policy disaster increasingly mark the Reagan Presidency. The reporters and editors who watch official Washington know how bad it is, but they are not really saying it on television or in the papers. They are still giving Ronald Reagan a cushion."

Lewis goes on to give a long list of Reagan's blunders, vacillations and often sheer lack of policy on

issues ranging from the economy to El Salvador.

Lewis concludes: "Some of the reporters and editors who watch Mr Reagan are frightened by what they see. They see a man who acts without real information. They see a man with an anecdotal view of the world, who may apply in El Salvador lessons of imagined history in Vietnam. They see a man who gives simplistic answers to complicated questions. They care about their country, and they find it too upsetting to acknowledge—to the public or themselves—that the enormous power of its leadership is in such hands."

This is a serious attack. It comes in the wake of a sustained campaign of 6-9 months against every single member of his Cabinet.

But Reagan's opponents themselves have no better solution to the problems they identify (any more than the 'wets' in the Tory Party). Any attempts to balance the budget will mean even sharper attacks on working people, even greater social tensions, even greater deflation and deeper slump.

Attempts at reflation, on the other hand, will boost inflation and lead by a different road to similar economic and social crisis.

US capitalism is caught up in and deepening problems, whichever way it turns.

WEST GERMANY SRI LANKA

NEW ATTACK ON TAMILS

Once again, the Tamil-speaking people in the North of Sri Lanka are under attack by the military.

This has followed the 'unilateral declaration of independence' by Tamil expatriates in the UK, USA, etc on 14 January 1982. The reaction of the right wing UNP government was to send heavy army detachments to the Tamil Northern and Eastern Provinces to 'maintain law and order.'

Thus, while these gentlemen abroad proclaimed Tamil Eelam (a separate state), in fact the Tamil areas have been brought under tighter military control than ever.

The army's presence in the streets has become almost permanent. The people live in constant fear of life and limb, and of property being wantonly attacked and destroyed. They have still not recovered from the bloody racial riots in July 1977; the brutal killings of Tamil youth in July 1979 by the armed forces; and the police/army rampages, attacks and barbarous destruction in May/June 1981.

Now the army is vested with police powers such as search, arrest, etc. Even though the Emergency has been formally terminated, it makes little difference because the armed forces are armed to the teeth with powers under what is now the normal law of the land, called the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This is a double-edged weapon designed to suppress mass agitations and struggles in

general and to oppress the Tamil-speaking people in particular.

Not surprisingly, the presence of the army in the Tamil areas is a major irritant, and sporadic attacks on the army personnel are taking place.

The latest incident was at the Kurikadduvan Jetty in the North. An army jeep was parked near the jetty. The driver was in the jeep and two soldiers were scrutinising some boats, their arms left behind in the jeep.

Suddenly a couple of unidentified gunmen appeared on the scene and shot the driver (a Sinhalese) at point blank range. The gunmen took all the army weapons, hijacked a minibus and made good their escape.

Immediately after this incident army personnel went on the rampage, attacking innocent passers-by and damaging some vehicles. A massive house-to-house search was mounted and innocent people terrorised. Over 40 Tamil youths have been taken into custody.

Soon afterwards (on 20 February) a Tamil person, Kandiah Navaratnam, was shot dead by the army. The Government-kept *Ceylon Daily News* of 22 February reported that Kandiah Navaratnam died when the Army 'returned' fire when 'some persons fired several shots at an army jeep.'

By A.K. Annamalai

(Secretary, District Committee, Nava Sama Samaja Party, Jaffna)

However, at the judicial inquiry held into the death of Navaratnam, an army lieutenant testified that he ordered his men to open fire when he heard the sound of firing from the direction in which the jeep was passing.

It was also reported that the victim, who was cycling along, was shot in the back.

Large numbers of Tamil youth have been taken into custody by the armed forces on suspicion of involvement in robberies, gunning down of armed forces personnel and so on. Most of them are held at the Panagoda Army Cantonment without being brought to trial. They are subjected to the most degrading, excruciating and inhuman treatment.

At the moment there are cases before the Courts on counts of human rights violations by the armed forces. For example, one detainee was ordered by soldiers to wash Army lavatories. When he refused, the soldiers pushed him face downwards into the unwashed toilet and half strangled him.

He is also reported to have been suspended (from a beam) by ropes tied to both hands and his toes barely touching the floor.

Sri Lanka is one of the countries which subscribed to the UN Charter on Human Rights. The President of the Human Rights Centre in Sri Lanka is President Jayawardena's own brother and legal luminary, H W Jayawardena.

UNESCO recently made a grant of \$20,000 for the promotion of human rights in Sri Lanka. The Minister of Justice, Dr Nissaka Wijeratne, promptly passed over this money to the custodian of human rights, H.W. Jayawardena.

Even the State Department of the US government has branded Sri Lanka as one

of the countries receiving US aid which have committed serious offences against human rights.

Meanwhile, all the workers who participated in the July 1980 general strike demanding higher wages were deemed to have been instantly dismissed when this Government invoked Emergency regulations.

While some of them have been reinstated on degrading terms, the large majority of the strikers are left out in the cold. They are undergoing enormous suffering and hardship. **Nine strikers have already committed suicide**, but the government has steadfastly refused to negotiate with the organisations involved.

And this is the government which is supposedly supporting the Polish workers.

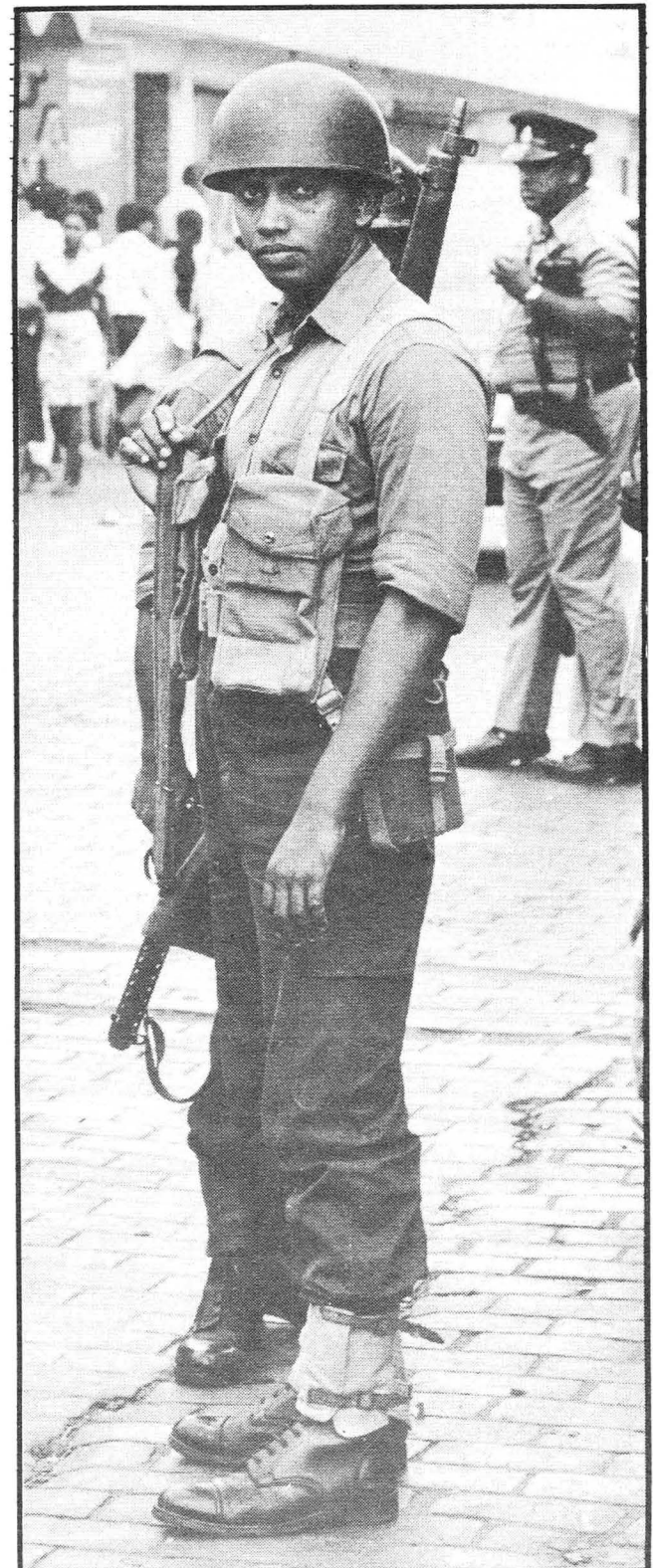
Having alienated the working class, the Tamil-speaking people and the downtrodden masses in general, the government is worried over its insurmountable unpopularity. It has failed to reap any benefit from the much-publicised Free Trade Zone designed to attract foreign investment. Now it has started releasing thousands of acres of land in Southern Sri Lanka to foreign multi-nationals to invest in agriculture at the expense of peasant masses of Sri Lanka.

The Malaysian firm Guthrie alone was given some 25,000 acres for an oil-palm industry.

Once fertile lands are given out in this manner, the poor Sinhalese peasants from the southern regions are uprooted and planted in distant areas including the Tamil-speaking areas. Then the ruling class can try to use them as fodder in stirring up new Communal conflict.

So it will be seen that all sections of the people of Sri Lanka are seething with such mountainous discontent that they will be pushed into struggle to throw out this good-for-nothing UNP Government like a squeezed orange.

Rumblings in the banking sector, a wave of strikes in the Estate sector and the recent lightning strike in the port of Colombo (by a pro-government trade union) are indications that a new working class upsurge is building up.



Jaffna Public Library: gutted by rampaging soldiers, 1981.

West Germany - Trouble for SPD

In the first of four state elections in West Germany this year, the right wing Christian Democrats (CDU) have won an absolute majority in the Lower Saxony Parliament.

They gained 50.7% of the vote which represents an overwhelming victory for them—at the expense of the embattled Social Democrats (SPD).

This is just the latest in a series of setbacks for the governing coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats (Liberals—FDP). Recently Schmidt won a vote of confidence, in the West German Parliament, but this was soon followed by revelations of

bribery and tax evasion amongst government ministers in Bonn.

Both the SPD Finance Minister, Hans Matthofer, and the FDP Minister of Economics, Otto Lambsdorff were implicated.

Already the president-designate of the federation of German industry, Eberhard von Brauchitsch, also involved, has stepped down. All have denied any involvement in the affair—but it nevertheless has serious implications for the long-term survival of the coalition government.

The defeat in Lower Saxony is a double blow for Schmidt, as it is the second largest state in West Germany and has higher unemployment than the rest of the country as a whole.

The SPD only managed

to gain 36.5% of the vote, a fall of 5.7%. Their coalition partners, the FDP, were beaten into fourth place by the 'Greens', a small, predominantly middle class conservationist party who gained eleven seats and 6.5% of the vote.

The 'Greens' have drawn their support, in part, from disaffection amongst the SPD's youth wing, the Jusos (Young Socialists), a fact which has alarmed Schmidt and the SPD leadership.

The SPD have experienced set-backs also in the local elections in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. Their vote fell back 6% from 40.5% in 1978 to 34.5%.

The loss of support for the SPD is a result of their inability to tackle the economic problems which

face this previously strong capitalist country. Unemployment is around two million with no signs of falling, and the government predicts economic growth of under 1.5% for 1982.

Three more state elections are to be held this year, in Hamburg on 6 June, in Hesse on 26 September and in Bavaria on 10 October.

Of these the one in Hesse will be most significant. If Hesse were to fall to the Christian-Democrats, it would give the opposition parties a two-thirds majority in the upper house of the federal parliament in Bonn, enabling them to block any legislation of Schmidt's government.

The CDU leader in Lower Saxony, Albrecht—known to his

friends as 'sunny boy' and to his enemies as 'Führer'—has already accused Schmidt's government of being 'unable to govern', and has said that Lower Saxony represents the beginning of the end of Schmidt's rule.

The SPD's policies are offering the workers and youth of West Germany no solutions to their problems. In government they not only rely, but actually desire the coalition with the Liberals, as a basis for their policies of shoring up the capitalist system.

The problem they now face, however, is that the thin veneer of economic stability has been wiped away, exposing the harsh face of capitalist crisis.

The dilemma for Schmidt is that he must win back the

By Suri Krishnamma
(Erith & Crayford LPYS)

drifting support of the youth, but he cannot do this in the framework of an unconvincing coalition with the liberals.

It is clear that the limited reformist policies of the SPD leadership—now turning back into counter-reforms under the pressure of economic stagnation—can only prepare the way for growing disillusionment with the SPD and the return of a right-wing Christian-Democratic government, including in its ranks many ex-Nazis, prepared to launch a vicious attack on workers' living standards.



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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

What the 'Daily Star' didn't tell its readers

Dear Comrades

After publishing a letter by a *Militant* supporter in their newspaper, the *Daily Star* asked for people to write in with their opinions (see last week's *Militant*).

I wrote in supporting *Militant's* policies. After my opening paragraph I asked what is 'extreme' about the 35-hour week, which a TUC study has shown could create up to 750,000 new jobs. What is 'extreme' about a useful programme of public

works, the building of hospitals, schools, houses, etc.

I highlighted the hypocrisy of Reagan and Thatcher over Poland; Reagan whilst supporting Solidarity in the western press, then leads away his own air-traffic controllers in chains because they had the 'audacity' to go on strike!

I also told of how *Militant* supporters were not against parliamentary democracy, and opposed the bureaucracy in the Eastern European states. Finally, I pointed out how *Militant* candidates at the next election would only take the average wage of a skilled worker, the rest be-

ing put back into the labour movement.

Well, knowing of course that our Press is 'free and democratic', I was shocked to find that only the first and last paragraphs of my letter were printed, with all the main issues left out!

One person writing in against *Militant* in the *Daily Star* wrote "as for the nationalisation of the press, that goes against every democratic principle." While not wishing in any way to belittle his point of view I would say it is against every democratic principle to have five millionaires owning and controlling the media.

As a member of the print union, the National

Graphical Association, I believe *Militant's* policy on the press is correct and that we should nationalise press facilities, letting every political party have access to the national press corresponding to the number of votes they receive in a general election. Also ethnic groups and ordinary people would be able to have a say. Indeed the Tory party under a socialist Labour government would get more say than the Labour Party at present! I ask you, surely this is democracy. Anyway, I know this is one letter that will be printed in full.

Yours fraternally
Phil Greene
Liverpool Walton LPYS

Support for Marxism from some 'old socialists'

Dear Sir

As an 80-year-old old age pensioner myself I am very much in sympathy with Jack Rawling's letter 'Why a pensioner is so angry' in *Militant* 592. Being housebound I agree with him that

it's up to our young people to get this government on the run and rid us forever of the rotten capitalist system, and I hope to live and see that achieved!

I enclose £2 payment for six copies of issue 592 which I think is an outstanding one, to send to various friends.

Yours sincerely
H.C. Brown
Pitdown, Sussex

Dear Comrades

Last Saturday I went into my local in Littlehampton and while having a game of darts I overheard a voice saying, "Did you see them there Militants on TV last night? They were alright mate. Talking about a shorter—35 hour—week, £90 minimum wage and getting back to full employment. One of them was a bloke called Fitch I think, anyway, sounded good

sense to me what they were saying."

On looking up, the speaker was a man in his seventies. Living in Sussex he had probably been a Tory voter in the past. Yet here he was, quite taken with *Militant's* ideas. Further proof of how popular how policies would be if they were given wider publicity.

Yours fraternally
Chris Wells
Littlehampton

Dear Comrades

Following a canvass a few years ago, I have delivered *Militant* to Mrs Connie Dixon every week. She was born in 1900 and joined the Labour Party in 1916. Until illness she was an active member. Unfortunately she has been housebound for several years. The only people apart from myself she sees from the Labour Party are members of the Young Socialists. They have listened to her often as she

described her memories. This week she gave £5 to help send the Young Socialists to national conference, even though she has to live only on her small pension. Her words of encouragement are worth repeating: "It's only a little (!) but I can think of nothing better to give my money to than helping young people learn about socialism."

Yours fraternally
B. Lewis
Thanet West CLP

Police non-political? Far from it!

Dear Sir

According to comments made by James Anderton, chief constable of Manchester, he wishes to abolish police committees as they are of now, and set up a 'non-political' committee. He seeks to take the very small amount of accountability away from the committee that is set up supposedly to protect public interest.

The police is now an overtly political force and if we allow them to take over as they are doing, how long before we have a police state? Let me bring your attention to the Police Federation's parliamentary adviser whose job it is to represent the Federation's case in relevant Westminster debates and to suggest lobbying tactics to the police. The practice has always been that the Parliamentary adviser is a member of the opposition party. The first holder of the job was the former Prime Minister Callaghan. Subsequently he gave way to Conservative Eldon Griffiths who in turn gave way to Labour's Alf Morris. When there is a change of

government the adviser changes to the opposite side of the House.

Until 1979 that is. On the election of the Conservatives in May 1979, the Federation decided to break with their past practice and by a unanimous vote, the joint committee of the Police Federation re-appointed Griffiths.

In a statement they explained why: "The committee felt that his very links with the Federation, his vast experience and his commitment to the policies which the Police Federation has been putting forward on law and order, ought to be retained. The government's mandate includes several major reforms which coincide with our policies and no one in the House would be better qualified to put forward our views."

There's really little doubt that the Police Federation now openly advocates a right-wing viewpoint and that as a consequence it has abandoned the attempt to maintain an all-party or non-party approach to campaigning, which makes nonsense of James Anderton's comments about being non-political.

Yours faithfully
D.A. Aubrey
Penlaw
Swansea

Why we must get Militant

Dear Comrades

You've got to be militant in the fight against the bosses. That's what the workers are beginning to realise at GTP, the Sheffield engineering factory where I work.

We have suffered from a number of setbacks in the recent period. An all-out strike only managed to scrape 5% from the management, and then returning to work after the autumn shut down, we found the works convenor (a member of the Communist Party) had been bought off and taken voluntary redundancy. A good shop steward was sacked because of an alleged offence under the terms of the managements imposed disciplinary procedure, and despite another long strike failed to win his reinstatement.

During this stormy period the men in my department of the factory were trying to win an improved bonus payment to raise our take home pay to around £60 a week. Eventually the only response we got from management was that, in today's economic climate and with the company's financial position, the only way we could have more money was by improving productivity or taking on more responsibilities.

Early in January 1982 my department unanimously voted to go on 'day work' (go-slow) in pursuit of a better response from management. Their immediate response was that, if we agreed to work normally within two weeks, they would come up with a new improved bonus scheme and in the meantime we could have two hours overtime a day.

Having heard promises like this before, we rejected the appeal to be good boys and stayed on 'day work'. After a couple of hours the management came back with a promise of drawing up an improved bonus scheme within two days. At first we again rejected the offer, determined to continue our action until there was sufficient money on the table. But on the advice of the deputy convenor, who had been promised that

management would keep their word and there definitely would be an offer made, we agreed to return to normal working until 2pm on Friday.

The next morning we were informed that we were all to receive an official written warning of dismissal, for taking 19 minutes instead of the agreed 10 minutes for the morning tea break. Even I was shocked that the management would do such a thing after we had agreed to return to normal working. After all its common practise for everyone to take 15 or 20 mins for tea breaks as 10 mins is just not sufficient to mash your tea and eat your snap; our department was the only one to receive written warnings.

This was an obvious attempt to put the wind up us and frighten us from taking any further action. And just 24 hours after we'd been accused of trying to force a confrontation.

The same thing happened again on Friday morning when we were accused of stealing a few minutes of the management's time and then given a final written warning of dismissal. This meant that if we so much as coughed out of place over the next 12 months, it would be out of the gate for good. We were also told that until we gave a good days work there would be no meeting about more pay with management.

We unanimously voted to return to 'day work', determined not to let management scare us from pursuing a decent living wage. The management immediately agreed to put an offer to us and at 2pm a deal was thrashed out including the hiring of another employee into the department. However we still have the threat of the sack hanging over our heads and future confrontations look likely.

The working class in Britain have suffered enormously over the last few years, but sure enough the tide will and our revenge on this repressive class system will be sweet, culminating in the socialist transformation itself. To reach that goal the working class must fight tooth and nail to defend the gains that have been made. So my advise to all trade unionists is **get Militant**.

Yours fraternally
Gary Doman
Heeley LPYS, AUEW.

A question on compensation

Dear Comrades

I have just finished reading 'What we stand for' by Peter Taaffe and while I agree with almost everything in it, there is one point I would like to raise. On the subject of na-

tionalising the top two hundred monopolies it is said that compensation would be paid 'on the basis of proven need'. This is something I do not understand because surely under the socialist society we all hope for, there would not be any grounds for compensation.

Yours fraternally
Malcolm Clark
Hawick
Scotland

Your local community witch-hunt!

Dear Comrades

It seems the latest attempts at a witch-hunt have reached the level of community politics. In a recent by-election for the Van Community Council in Caerphilly, a leaflet put out by the 'Tenants and Ratepayers' went into a fit of wild hysteria somewhat similar to our glorious unbiased national press.

Their main manifesto said, "We don't want national politics in local councils...we ask you therefore to keep the Van Community Council free of party politics..." However, the manifesto then blurts out what these 'non-politicals' are getting at: "We have all seen the influence of Mil-

itant Tendency and other way out ultra left political groups destroy what was once a great political party, the Labour Party. Even the MP for Caerphilly Constituency." Amazing stuff. But there is more excitement. One of the candidates just happened to be a former member of the Labour Party who left because of "increasing Communist influence."

However, in spite of these incredible smears against the left, and because of an enthusiastic campaign, the two Labour Party candidates romped home to win. Incidentally, left winger Dave Hill topped the poll! So much for the 'way out' policies of the left of the Labour Party being unpopular.

Yours fraternally
Dave Evans
Caerphilly LPYS

Another YS branch set up in Northern Ireland

Dear Comrades

To those who think that the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland is insurmountable then I would like to relate our following experiences.

Members of Coleraine Labour Club took to selling *Militant* in the town centre on Saturday afternoons. The National Front claim that their support in this town is greater than their support in Glasgow, yet we have had no trouble whatsoever—rather the reception is friendly with an eagerness to discuss the real matters of the day. We sell an average 30 papers in just over an hour.

On Monday, March 22, we held the inaugural meeting of the Coleraine Young Socialists group. We had six new, eager youth at the meeting, not new to the ideas of socialism but

already self-educated and needing only like-minded people to converse with. Time after time they stressed that what was needed was workers' unity and a socialist Labour Party in the North to represent the working class. One youth said he 'shook with emotion' listening to the speakers, another found the meeting 'really powerful'.

We are not foolish enough to say sectarianism doesn't exist but what we do say is that our class analysis and perspectives for socialism do attract workers from both sides of the barrier, making that barrier disappear for them. And if people say that 12 people at a meeting is not many, well, it's more than the Democratic Unionist Party get at their monthly meeting in their stronghold of Ballymena! And it's a damn sight more important.

Yours fraternally
Kevin McKay
Coleraine
Young Socialists

Target for April 11th £35,000

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April
Eastern	1276		2040
East Midlands	1315		1470
Hants & Dorset	556		1100
Humberside	599		890
London East	1641		2010
London West	878		1150
London South	1010		1550
Manchester & Lancs	1121		1550
Merseyside	1085		1950
Northern	1401		2350
Scotland East	587		1290
Scotland West	1285		1980
Southern	1135		1900
South West	591		965
Wales East	283		970
Wales West	613		1130
West Midlands	897		1980
Yorkshire	1606		2290
Others	410		6435
Total received	18289		35,000

10 DAYS TO DOUBLE OUR MONEY

In a week where the right wing in Parliament are trying to blame 'Militant' for almost everything many of our supporters showed, to the tune of £2,207, they want us to expand our coverage and circulation.

This has been better than a number of previous weeks, but we still need about double the effort over the period to 11 April to add to the collection at LPYS conference and meet our target. In the same ten days last year, we achieved just over £5,200 apart from the YS conference. This week's money came from:

Eastern, thanks to Peterborough and Huntingdon meeting collections and Huntingdon factory collection, also £15 from job done in Luton. Another £764 needed!

E Midlands should go well over, thanks to J Bell (£10), CPSA member £3, Chesterfield meeting £20, Leicester social, and M Tanner (Derby) amongst others. Only £155 to go!

Hants are over half way, with donations from R Phillips (Poole) £20, M Penton (Fordingbridge), D MacManus (Farnham) and Eastleigh social. As much as possible of £544, please!

Humberside have had £100 from a Hull NUPE member, and £55 raised by I Newman (ASTMS). Thanks also to C English (Scarborough), and A Dunne (Hull). Less than £300 left now!

E London includes £10 from Mayfield (Ilford) LP, E Ham supporters, a subscription to *Militant* rounded up to £40 (Cllr H Cohen, Leyton) and others. Only £370 needed now.

W London supporters included those at a meeting

By Steve Cawley

on transport, V Ashley (W11), and a group of local authority workers who promised £40 won in back pay. West London readers should go well over the £372 required.

S London's contributions this week were from union expenses passed on, and a meeting in SW London, also a social. But S London supporters will need to mount a campaign to get £540.

Manchester & Lancs, like Merseyside, benefited from the share of £101.50 collected at the NW Labour Party conference. Other donations included JP Brown (£25), Macclesfield FBU (£16), TGWU members £2, Blackley busmen £1.50, V Hanford and B Curley £1. £429 outstanding.

Merseyside supporters R and M Dickson (Sefton), R Annand (Chester), P Cosgrove and Toxteth and Chester LPYS branches all assisted this week: £865 only remains to the target!

Northern readers have been boosted by the meeting addressed by Peter Taaffe (£294), but what about all our readers who weren't lucky enough to hear Peter? Their chance to help with the remaining £949 starts now!

E Scotland's donations included fivers from J Forbes and R Sharp, £4 sent by G Quinn, and Christmas catalogue money. Falkirk supporters tell us they've a number of events coming up—what about the rest? A

big effort needed to realise another £703.

W Scotland readers to back us with cash were eight CPSA members (regularly), pensioner J Stevenson (Glasgow), D Thomson (TGWU), J Neilson (Shotts), D Fletcher, A Jay (NALGO, £5 and £15) and L Jordan and J Beaton (Cathcart, £5). £2.20 came from Clydebank's meeting on the Middle East. £695 more will see W Scotland to their target.

Southern area isn't doing quite as well as it normally does! Thanks to Littlehampton readers for £21 from collections after meetings, books, and drinks, and to Piltown man (HC Brown) for £2. We need another £765!

South West supporters in Bath, Trowbridge, Torbay, Redruth and Bristol sent in help. Thanks to M Jenkins (Bristol), S Smith (Trowbridge), Bristol meeting, Torbay posters, amongst others. The £374 shortfall can be got, with the necessary grit and determination!

Wales East's line should benefit from a big meeting, and socials in the next couple of weeks, so the comrades tell us, and an urgent appeal is being made supporters. Over £64 came in this week, including £10.61 from Aeroquip strikers, in recognition of our coverage of their dispute. £687 more needs to be found by 11 April!

Wales West's line has moved faster in the last few weeks, thanks to organisers of competitions, parties,

week-end school tapes, providers of meals, and straight donations such as those from T Parsons (Swansea Valley). £517 in addition will see them past the post.

West Midlands money included £48 from a Birmingham meeting, £14 from Rugby, £3 P Hackett (Coventry NUPE member) and R Lewis (NALGO), and £14 from Stoke's curry evening. With a really concentrated effort, we are convinced our readers can make a real impression on the £1,083 shortfall.

Yorkshire supporters can reach the target this time: Thanks to 'anon' (Sheffield) £55, I Andreoni (Sheffield), Highfields & Woodlands LP (Don Valley) £5, J Marsden (Leeds £10 winnings), and mail order agents (Leeds) amongst others. The shortfall is £684.

Others includes £1 from K McKay (Coleraine YS and LTUG).

Let's show our comrades in the movement, those who are contemplating activity, and the ruling class and their shadows we are just as serious about finance as we are about socialism being the only solution for the working class internationally!

HULL EAST Militant Raffle Results: 1st prize (bottle of whisky): winning ticket number 4653, winner M Toulley. 2nd prize (copy of 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'): winning ticket number 4883, winner J Ranby.

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

ads

MILITANT MEETINGS

BLACKBURN Militant Readers Meeting. 'Common Misery, Common Struggle, working class policies only way'. Blackburn Trades Hall, St Peters Street. Speaker: Joe Higgins (Southern Irish Labour Party AC, personal capacity). 7.30 pm, Tuesday 6 April.

WIGAN Militant Readers Meeting. 'Common Misery, Common Struggle, working class policies only way'. Grand Hotel, Hallgate, Wigan. Speaker: Joe Higgins (Southern Irish Labour Party AC, personal capacity). 7.30 pm, Monday 5 April.

Third Kent Militant Weekend School will be held on Saturday/Sunday, 5 and 6 June. Three speakers + hotel bed, breakfast, evening meal. Only £7.50 (same as last year). Further information contact: Selby Hotel, 7 Union Crescent, Margate. (Tel: 0843-24309).

LEEDS raffle winners: Steve and Teresa Appleton.

CHESTER Militant Readers Meeting. Northern Ireland: The socialist solution. Speaker: a member of the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group. Wednesday 7 April, 7.30pm. At Chester Labour Club, 5 Upper Northgate St.

OLDHAM Militant Readers Meeting. "Which way forward for the trade unions?" Monday, 5 April, 8pm. Sergeant-at-Arms, King St., Oldham. Speaker: John Byrne (Manchester North District Committee, AUEW, personal capacity).

Come and enjoy, and preferably take part in, our 'CLUB NIGHT'. Saturday 3 April, 7.30 pm, Tudor Bar, Berni Inn (next to Ealing Broadway Underground and BR Station). Singers, musicians, comedian already booked. If you can perform anything 'entertaining' come and show your talent. For a reserved spot contact Jim Lawley 843 0847. Tickets £1.50 (50p unwaged). Proceeds to 'Militant'.

CLASSIFIED

'After KHOMEINI, Another DESPOTISM?' by Ahmed Ghotbi, price 60p Available from 2 April at Colletts, Bookmarks, World Books, The Other Bookshop

Militant supporter (female) wants to share flat/house in Central/North London from May. Ring 0703 641502.

LPYS CONFERENCE Accommodation available. £8 per day, bed breakfast and evening meal. Contact Vivien Seal (01)-674 3250.

BATTERSEA AND TOOTING LPYS branches Public Meeting: 'London Transport: what now?' Speakers: Geoff Whitaker (TGWU London Bus Committee, Abbey District); Tony Banks (GLC Councillor, Tooting), Theresa Wrack (LPYS National Committee-elect) at Co-op Hall, Garrett Lane, Tooting, on Tuesday 6 April, 8.00 pm.

MILITANT PAMPHLET 'WHAT WE STAND FOR' price only 20p, from local 'Militant' seller or from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. (Add 10p p&p, more than 10 post free)

KARL MARX T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHIRTS. Sizes and colours for small—32-34; medium—34-36; large—38-40; extra large—42-44. Red motif on white, yellow, sky blue, bottle green, navy, black (+ sweatshirt grey and mid-blue). Cost: T-shirts £3.25; sweatshirts £6.75 (both prices include postage and packing). Plain T-shirts and sweatshirts also available, deduct 25p from price. Send cheques and postal orders to R Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1UR.

ADVERTISE IN OUR MAY DAY AND 600th EDITION

Salute May Day and our 600th edition with a greeting in each issue. Our 600th edition is the week after our May Day edition so why not take out two greetings? We are having a special offer for two ads at a cut price.

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6 column centimetres (max 25 words) £6
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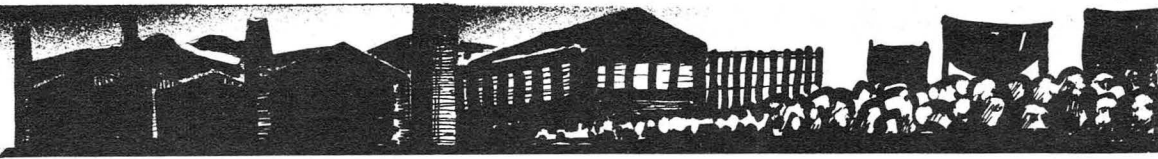
2 adverts x 3 column centimetres £5
2 adverts x 6 column centimetres £10
2 adverts x 1/16 page (display) £16
2 adverts x 1/8 page (display) £32
2 adverts x 1/4 page (display) £64

May Day is an important day for workers internationally show your organisation's solidarity with the world working class and place an advert. The 600th edition is another landmark in the history of *Militant* so give us a boost and show your support for our paper.

Closing date Tuesday 20 April. Cheques payable to *Militant*. Send to *Militant* 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986 3828.

THIS
WEEK:
£2,207

Industrial Reports



DEFEND BRITISH TELECOM

During Howe's recent budget speech another reference was made to plans to sell off assets of British Telecom.

Possibly as much as 50% could go; the most profitable sectors of course. The kiosk and rural services won't be sold off to "private enterprise".

This move is only one of a number of proposals for "liberalisation", ie smashing a public service. Amongst the most important is the setting up of an alternative trunk network, being organised by a private consortium of BP, Barclays Bank and Cable & Wireless.

The operation is called Project Mercury and the most modern cabling system, fibre optics, will be run along British Rail lines. It will cream off the profits of the highly profitable trunk public network. Naturally!

As a result British Telecom (BT) have already reduced trunk tariffs to compete. This before the project is even under way. But the profits from trunk services subsidise the unprofitable local service to the ordinary subscriber.

These will now have to go up, hence only big business will benefit. On top of this a letter from BT's chairman Sir George Jefferson to



POEU members fought for the 35-hour week in 1978. Now the fight is to prevent denationalisation
Photo: Militant

Bryan Stanley, General Secretary of the POEU, calls for a reduction of about 15,000 jobs in BT over the next 3 years.

It is "hoped" redundancies will be "avoidable". To ensure this he wants to phase out those over 60 years of age, in other words a cheap redundancy scheme. And this from a man who is over 60 himself!

There is now rising anger amongst BT workers over

the lack of determined response from the union leaders. Even though it seems that competitors to BT are having their personnel trained in BT schools, there has been no opposition expressed from the union, never mind a decision to stop such practices.

Liverpool Internal Branch have circulated all POEU Branches calling for decisive action on these issues.

We are arguing for an alliance of BT unions linked with the NUR whose telecom members are needed to maintain Mercury. Up to now no one else has argued for this at national level. Yet between the NUR and POEU Mercury could be stopped. After all one of the scandals is that Mercury will also be linked up and will utilise the public network.

Similarly, both the NUR

and BT unions are threatened by sale of assets. Between the unions both industry and the financial institutions could be affected. Such is the power of the POEU that during the 35 hour week fight a delegation from the financial institutions and the Stock Exchange called on the government to settle the dispute.

The BT unions should further approach the TUC and urge united action on both Mercury and denationalisation.

A real strategy based on a fighting trade union alliance with a correct industrial strategy can win. Not only that but the sympathy of the public who will suffer from Mercury and asset selling can be gained.

Already Liverpool Internal's members have reacted strongly by insisting at its last meeting, with 80 in attendance, that a special meeting be called to propose local industrial action if no national action is called. And a meeting of the Merseyside Council of Post Office Unions on 29 March agreed support for a local and national campaign against Mercury and hiving off.

When the facts are explained, members will defend their jobs and their industry.

By Phil Holt
(Secretary, Liverpool Internal POEU)

WOOLWORTHS SHOPWORKERS FIGHT CLOSURES

On 10 March, Woolworth's directors announced that it had decided to sell 25 stores with the probable loss of 2000 jobs. The stores affected in the North-West are in Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Wigan and Burnley.

What Woolworth's didn't bargain for was the determined resistance of USDAW members within the stores affected. At Blackpool and Liverpool it was a unanimous decision that workers would fight the closures, and Store Action Committees were set up starting with mass petitions against the closures outside the stores getting 2000 signatures in 4 days outside the Blackpool store. In Liverpool they got 4000 signatures in less than a week.

Woolworth's statement about the closures said the stores were making profit, but not enough. We must ask ourselves what is "enough" profit? The bosses will never be satisfied and as long as we are in a capitalist system it will

always be the workers who suffer while the bosses get richer.

Woolworth's Chairman said they could no longer tolerate "incompetent" staff in Woolworth's. Well, our answer is that to us, the most "incompetent" person in Woolworth's is the Chairman himself who takes diabolical decisions. The workers end up losing their jobs through the decisions he makes.

The workers at Woolworths in Blackpool will not take this decision to sell these stores lying down. We are angry and we will fight to reverse the decision.

We will also be putting pressure on the USDAW leadership to show the same kind of fight to save USDAW members jobs.

Send messages of support to: M Wainwright, 14 Johnson Road, Blackpool, Lancs.

By Mick Wainwright
(USDAW Blackpool Woolworths Branch Secretary)

BERNARD MATTHEWS

Members of the agricultural workers' union NAAAW at Bernard Matthews' turkey preparing plants were balloted last week on a return to work.

Management had insisted that even the scabs should take part. But no scabs turned up, maybe because strikers were picking up strike pay and they felt their presence might not be exactly welcome.

The result, although opposing a return to work, was felt to be indecisive by the union leadership.

On Friday, a statement was issued by the union leadership to shop stewards' committee giving them one of two options. Either to continue the dispute in the hope that Matthews would increase the offer, or to consider a return to work on one of the three offers.

The union leaders asked the shop stewards to consider a return to work, as they felt there would be very little else put on the table to warrant a recommendation to continue a strike and more hardship to those still in dispute.

Shop stewards voted to accept the recommended return to work and decided to put the three offers to workers outside the factory gates on Monday morning.

One reason was that they believed many workers would return to work on Monday anyway, and they didn't want only a handful

being left outside the gates.

You might have expected morale to have been very low amongst the strikers on the Monday, but the opposite was true. In fact it was the scabs who looked miserable, and the manager of the Holton factory just couldn't understand it.

The result of the offer accepted by the members was 85% in favour of the £6.50 over 12 months, because it would only be eight months before they put in their next demand to Matthews!

Some would say that there has been a sell-out, but I think an incident on the first day back shows that management will never look upon the union with such contempt again.

Shop stewards at the Holton plant were meeting

with their union official, when the manager knocked on the door and asked the senior shop steward to speak to a member who is refusing to work with scabs. If a worker had taken this attitude before, he would have been hauled to the office and promptly suspended.

There will be a post mortem and a lot will be said at shop floor level, but at least workers went back with their heads held high, and in a more powerful position than ever before. Their six weeks struggle has taught them a lot.

Many workers in dispute for six weeks are having serious financial troubles, so donations are still needed to NAAAW Norfolk Office, 76 Norwich Street, Dereham, Norfolk.

MASSEY FERGUSON: Working week victory

A mass occupation of 3,000, followed by the sealing off of entrances and the mass picket of the plant soon brought a swift response from management at Massey Ferguson, Coventry, over the fight for a reduced working week. Concessions!

Management have been demanding compulsory redundancies and no negotiations. They have now accepted that "meaningful talks on union proposals on short time working and worksharing as an alter-

native to compulsory redundancies with volunteers going meanwhile."

Based on this the mass meeting of the workforce voted on 24 March to accept the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee recommendation of a return to work.

The previous week two clerical workers had brought the tracks to a standstill with a loss of over £1 million worth of production to oppose their own compulsory redundancy. These workers, who

LANDIS AND GYR

Two hundred assembly workers, members of the AUEW at Landis and Gyr factory, West London, came out on strike last week over loss of bonus payments.

Management's new revised bonus scheme could mean losses of as much as £30 from weekly pay packets.

In effect management are attempting to cut wages and reduce tea breaks, and at the same time intensify production. Even if you work flat out you can now hardly make any bonus money, workers say.

For example many workers simply cannot afford to take time out to go to the toilet because it would cut down production enough to lose bonus payment. If machines are faulty, workers will now have to suffer on bonus payments rather than management compensating.

One worker told us, "I put wheels on a dial. I am supposed to put 333 on per hour. At the very most I can only do 197. I have been working here for 17 years, no-one can say I am not skilled. Yet management say they want to send us back to school to increase our output! If we went back to school we'd have to teach them to do the job before they taught us!"

Management have been trying to cut bonus payments section by section for quite a while, but now the workers have said enough is enough. Sections of the assembly workers other than those immediately affected have come out in solidarity with department 754, which make dials. If management attack one section today, they will attack another tomorrow.

It is now vital that the AUEW follow this excellent example and makes the dispute official without delay to ensure maximum support. A few workers are still going in to work, but prompt and decisive backing by the union leadership will be a big morale-booster to workers outside the gate and will help bring management to their senses.

By Ed Bober

could be described as loyal, long serving moderate employees took the positive action of sitting over the start button on the assembly line when the gun of "no jobs" was held at their head.

With nearly 40,000 out of work in the Coventry area it is one of the few areas in the country to have an increase in the March employment figures. Further similar struggles are very likely in the near future.

By Brian Debus



Industrial Reports

THE RAIL UNIONS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Without a doubt, ASLEF's stand in their recent action against the British Rail Board on flexi-rostering was recognised by many workers as part of a far wider struggle.

It was not just to safeguard conditions of service, but also basic trade union rights, against attacks by the bosses and their Tory government.

This feeling was reflected at the highest levels of the movement with resolutions of support coming from the TUC General Council and the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party.

Les Huckfield MP, the Parliamentary adviser to ASLEF, moved the resolution of support for ASLEF on the Labour Party NEC. He told *Militant* why: "I believe that the dispute is far more than just a dispute between the union and the employer. It was an issue of fundamental importance to the whole of the trade union movement.

"At the time of the next election, working people involved in struggles will not forgive any part of the labour movement, like the Parliamentary Labour Party or Shadow Cabinet that stands on the sidelines.

"I was amazed that when I raised the issue in the Parliamentary Party, NUR-sponsored MPs were saying that we ought to hear the BRB side of the argument before we got involved!



ASLEF members supported by other rail workers lobby the Railway Staff National Tribunal. Photo: Militant

"Worse than that, there was a feeling in the PLP that the issue should not be raised from the Front Bench. During the whole of the dispute there was no debate, statement or specific question on the issue."

Les Huckfield's resolution endorsed Len Mur-

ray's statement that the BRB should pay locomen the 3% pay rise.

It further considered the Board at fault for refusing to pursue their productivity proposals through the proper machinery of negotiation. That resolution, carried unanimously by the NEC, was a state-

ment of the facts of the dispute as subsequently accepted by the ACAS enquiry and even admitted by the BRB now.

The Labour Party NEC resolution was welcomed by the labour movement. Although NUR General Secretary Sid Weighell in a letter to the Labour Party NEC expressed himself to be "deeply concerned at this lack of consultation on such an important issue", most railworkers warmly welcomed this public support to a section of workers battling against the Tories and the BRB.

In light of the recent dispute and with the case at RSNT these issues are being discussed in messrooms and branch meetings by many NUR members.

Members are demanding that the NUR leadership take up the battle to defend the jobs and hard-won gains of railway workers, and end once and for all the low pay and long hours and to reverse the decline of the industry. The NEC statement will be welcomed, as will Dennis Skinner's when he said, "the first duty of anyone in the movement is to march towards those in struggle and offer them support."

The Parliamentary Labour Party must recognise the key role that powerful groups like rail workers can play in bringing down the Tories and mobilising support for a Labour government prepared to solve the problems caused to transport workers and their industry by declining capitalism.

Manchester University Electricians

Sixty electricians on official strike at Manchester University have gone twenty months with no pay rise.

Approved electricians are taking home £74 a week (the average length of the apprenticeship is 5 years) and mates £52. No wonder the commonest reaction on the picket line has been, "We're at the end of our tether."

The University has declared UDI and withdrawn from the Joint Industry Board agreement which this year is a 9.8% wage rise. The University first offered 4% and then stuck fast at 6%.

The uproar the University has caused has been heightened by the fact that outside contractors are brought in on JIB rates to do work which could be done by direct labour—and the University is after six redundancies as it is.

Withdrawal from the JIB agreement will also mean that apprentices' prospects elsewhere in the industry will be limited by not having to go on the craft courses that the JIB certificate requires.

It's not only pay that leaves electricians low down the

scale. For other campus workers, three days' sick leave is granted on the strength of a phone call; for the "sparks" it has to be a private doctor's note (75p).

Only four weeks' holiday and no service days, there is a feeling that the electricians are being "got at" by management given that this dispute has been smouldering since June last year.

There is an angry and determined mood. NUPE has also promised "full co-operation". AUEW members are also negotiating over pay and the hope is for a united struggle to overturn the Government-imposed, University-implemented 6%.

Fearing this the University no longer recognise the Joint Campus Union Committee which represented 4,000 trade unionists. Undaunted the JCUC is meeting after work hours.

Norman Bradburn and Frank Cassidy (EETPU Shop Stewards) spoke to Leon Kaplan (Manchester University Labour Club/Ardwick Labour Party Young Socialists)

Plessey Bathgate

By Pat Craven



Plessey workers occupying their factory

The sit-in at Plessey's Bathgate factory is over.

Workers occupying the plant since 25 January finally decided to accept a bid by Arcotronic's to take over the factory and employ 80 of the 330 workforce.

Arcotronic is a Dutch company and a subsidiary of the American multinational Wedge Holdings, a firm specifically created to take over four other Plessey factories making capacitors.

At first workers rejected the offer as too little was known about the new company and 80 jobs saved was not sufficient.

But a slightly improved redundancy deal and more evidence of the Dutch firm's credibility was enough to convince a majority of workers to agree to the full time union officials' recommendation to accept.

Afterwards convenor George Wilson expressed the views of those who were not happy with the deal. "A lot of effort has been put in by the members, the trade union movement and the communi-

ty. The outcome today is not a victory for anyone.

"We might have won but equally we might have lost everything in the end, and the members decided on that basis."

A few days after the decision the Court of Appeal in Edinburgh agreed that the sit-in had not been illegal. They upheld an earlier decision in the Court of Session that the occupation was in furtherance of a trade dispute, and therefore not illegal under the Trade Disputes Act.

Thus, while not achieving all they wanted for themselves, Plessey workers may have won an important victory for other workers who occupy their factories in defence of jobs.

More important still, they have provided a splendid example to all other workers of the spirit needed to mobilise a successful fight. They refused to be intimidated by the employers and the courts and took their case to the trade union movement.

The Plessey workers' struggle will not be forgotten.

United action needed

The findings of Railway Staff National Tribunal (RSNT) are not expected for a couple of weeks, but already the British Rail Board and the ruling class generally are gloomy about the likely outcome of Lord McCarthy's investigations.

"BR fears McCarthy will back Buckton," "BR head for the buffers," said the Sunday paper headlines, but workers must not be lulled into a false sense of security. Members of ASLEF know that it was only our concerted action that forced BRB to back down and go to the Tribunal in the first place.

Any attempts to attack service conditions must be resisted with the same determination. Parker and Co. must realise that attempts to emulate Edwardes at Leyland won't be tolerated. No doubt ASLEF branches will be call-

ing on the EC for immediate strike action if the management try to enforce their own proposals.

The dilemma of the ruling class is shown by McCarthy. He is under pressure from BR with Parker threatening to resign if he fails to get his way but he is also under pressure from locomen as he felt at the RSNT hearing.

Despite the devastating evidence from ASLEF the Tribunal is reported to be in "difficulty" coming to a decision.

Rail unions must prepare for battle

The Sun, which hysterically denounced our action, showed its pessimism by saying that the outcome of a further dispute would be "victory for the drivers" and calling for a

"sensible deal" with ASLEF because "to go ahead without them would be like the Germans trying to reopen World War 2 in 1946."

Nonetheless we must prepare now for a united battle of all rail unions in the future. Whether or not the RSNT finds in favour of ASLEF, the Tory press speak of a whole range of weapons against us, including withholding pay rises this year from ASLEF. The Tory government is also using the issue as an excuse to keep vital funds from the railways.

This year's action which has so frightened the bosses must be used now in an effective united campaign of industrial action by all rail unions to get a decent pay rise in 1982 and ensure the Tories cough up the money needed for a thriving expanding rail system.

By Jim Sharkey (Polmadie ASLEF)

• LPYS CONFERENCE

The shop stewards' committee at Staffa Products in East London have generously donated £100 to the Leyton branch of the Labour Party Young Socialists to sponsor unemployed LPYS members to their national conference.

This donation, following on two gifts of £100 to the *Militant* fighting fund shows recognition of the help and enthusiasm of LPYS members and *Militant* supporters during Staffa workers' heroic fight for jobs last year.

Why not ask your union branch or shop stewards committee to send a union member (young or not so young) to LPYS conference as an visitor. Alternatively, to donate to the LPYS to allow more unemployed, YOP workers, young trade unionists and school students along to the best political conference of the year. Details page 5.

ALL OUT AT HEATHROW

In a tremendous display of solidarity with locked out ramp workers, all fellow TGWU workers at Heathrow Airport decided at a mass meeting to strike until all scab labour was withdrawn.

The action will now spread the dispute throughout the airport to Terminal 3 and the Cargo Village. This will affect all airlines not just British Airways (BA).
 TGWU members made their decision to take action on the understanding that if BA management get away with new rosters with the ramp workers, they will feel free to tear up similar agreements with other airport workers.
 The scandalous role of the Tory press was first to ignore the ramp workers' lock-out and then accuse them of sabotage and thiev-

ing. This has been echoed by a parliamentary motion from four Tory MPs.
 Now the Heathrow workers have shown what they think of such behaviour it is vital that action is stepped up. The overwhelming decision to spread the strike must be taken back by TGWU shop stewards to explain the decision to any workers not at the mass meeting. Management must be forced to take back the ramp workers.

Report by
 Nigel Waterfield



TGWU Heathrow workers vote for action, 29 March. Photo: D Doran



Carrying the banner of the El Salvador guerrillas on 28 March demo. Photo: C Augusto (IFL)

El Salvador

The elections in El Salvador were 'a grisly farce', Michael Foot told a mass rally on Sunday. And all that has emerged since then confirms this view. 69 people were killed in the capital alone on polling day.

The 'Irish Times' reported (29 March): "In the poorer areas, people said they were voting because they had to. 'They'll make us prisoners if we don't,' some of the braver ones whispered... One man circled his wrist as though with a handcuff and nodded meaningfully. "He didn't need to say more but he did. You could get away with not voting in 1978, he said, but not this time. It was too strict. The man behind him said that

he sympathised with the guerrillas."

Thatcher's election observers told the 'Financial Times' (30 March), "They may have been thoroughly enjoying themselves" and found the polls to have had an "almost festive character". The Reagan government has already welcomed the elections as a triumph for democracy.

It seems likely that this triumph will result in Major d'Aubisson's Arena party entering the government. His concept of democracy is shown by his description of the current head of the junta, Christian Democrat leader Duarte, as "an agent of international Communism" who should be shot.

But whatever the final composition of the regime it will rest upon the

military for its power and continue to support the vested interests of the profiteers who have plundered El Salvador for centuries. The labour movement must give its support to those who are fighting for an end to capitalist oppression.

LPYS

FROM PAGE ONE
 working class, by implying blacks are to blame for the crisis. Black and white youth should unite to put an end to this system.
 I think all young people should come to the conference. Discuss the problems facing youth, the socialist alternative and join us in the struggle for a better society. (Full details of political and social activities at LPYS conference see p5).

TEBBIT'S BILL

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Bill".
 Such measures would include stopping lay off pay when workers in one workplace are unable to continue normal working because of industrial action elsewhere, secret postal ballots for union elections and national strikes and a ban on civil servants from taking selective strike action.
 It is quite clear that the Tories backed up by their capitalist friends will not be content until the destruc-

tion of organised labour is complete.
 The trade union reply must be swift and decisive. The threat of the Tebbit Bill plus any other such measures must be stamped on by the united power of the whole of the trade union mobilised in a massive movement of defiance.
 The TUC initiatives must be welcomed but a campaign of action must be aimed at stopping the Bill becoming law, and not just

refusing to cooperate after it becomes law.
 The TUC has the power to defeat the Bill. "Their latent power remains the most formidable in the country" remarked the *Financial Times* 29 March, no doubt in an effort to remind some of the more dimmer elements in the Tory Party that workers will not easily give up achievements conquered through previous bitter class battles.
 The print unions have indicated they will not print ballot forms on closed shops. But action must not be limited to a few unions.
 The TUC have a duty to organise a campaign of explanation, through

workplace mass meetings, special local, regional, and national rallies and demonstrations to raise the awareness of all workers to the dire consequences of the Bill.
 This would then prepare the way for a one day general strike as a warning to the government that a return to nineteenth century conditions will not be tolerated. It is only the language of industrial action that the Tories understand.
 If such uncompromising opposition was declared by the whole of the trade union movement and then reflected in a coordinated national strike before the Bill became law the Tories could be forced to retreat.

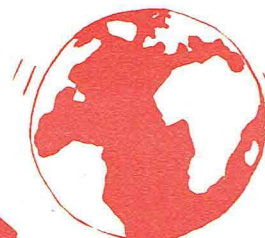
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