

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p



Hunt the
real witches —
the Tories,
not the
socialists!
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MASS ACTION TO SMASH THATCHER

“We’ve got to fight them to the end. A one-hour strike is a waste of time. We came down to lobby for a general strike. That’s what we need now.”

So GMWU shop steward Harry Garner echoed the sentiments of health workers on the need for a massive show of

trade union solidarity on 22 September and the need to fight yet more anti-trade union legislation from the Tories.

Harry was up from St James’s Hospital in Devizes, Wiltshire, to lobby the TUC conference. Taking home £49 a week as a hospital porter, and trying to main-

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Photo: MILITANT



Message to Labour Leaders

Fight the Tories not Socialists

Labour leader Michael Foot speaking on television last Sunday thought it strange that the Militant had not replied to the Labour Party General Secretary’s letter announcing the register. Well, his answer will be on every television screen and newspaper this weekend!

Around 3,000 delegates representing all sections of the labour and trade union movement will assemble at the Wembley Conference Centre to say no to this attempt at a witch-hunt—the resounding declaration will no doubt be ‘fight the Tories not the socialists’.

The Labour Movement Conference, to be held this Saturday, 11 September, will be the first opportunity for the rank and file of the movement to voice their opinions.

Delegates from Labour Parties, trade union National Executives and branches, District Committees,

shop stewards’ committees, trades councils and LPYS branches will join the conference. It has also been backed by ASLEF and the Yorkshire miners.

It is amongst the rank and file that the labour leadership should seek their applause not in the editorials and lead articles of the

capitalist press.

This conference cannot be dismissed as merely an assembly of people who support ‘Militant’. It will be a broad representation of the labour movement rank and file. And its message will be clear—no register, no witch-hunts. Hands off ‘Militant’, hunt the Tory witches!

Become a

Militant

Supporter

Don’t stand on the side-lines...Defend Militant!

I am prepared to help in your campaign to defend the paper and stop the witch-hunt.

Please send me details of how I can assist.

Name.....

Address.....

Rush to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN
Tel. 01 986 3828

ALL OUT ON THE 22nd

Strike action in support of the health workers on 22 September has so far been pledged by miners, seamen, printworkers and bakers, with many other sections of the labour movement promising support

Militant

Even before the TUC congress opened, it was clear that the day of protest organised on September 22 would have massive support among trade unionists.

Arthur Scargill pledged the support of the miners in a 24-hour strike. Moss Evans of the TGWU made an appeal for his members to support the NHS workers on that day.

Now the National Union of Seamen have called on their members to strike for 24 hours.

Sean Geraghty of the Fleet Street electricians has pledged that his members will "come out fighting" and the support of other print unions will guarantee that the presses are idle on the day. Even the right-wing leadership of the Union of Communications Workers has called on its membership to strike for "up to a maximum of four hours."

Such has been the groundswell of support for the strike protest on that day that, astonishingly, James Callaghan has even come out in support, even if it meant breaking the law. "If the law is a bad law there is always a contingent right to take action that you would not otherwise take", he said.

This is all the more incredible considering that it was James Callaghan's insistence on a 5% pay limit which led to the "winter of discontent" in 1978-79, losing Labour the subsequent election.

The day of protest will be yet another indication of the impotence of James Prior's law against secondary picketing and sympathy action. The rights that have been painstakingly fought for and acquired by the trade union movement over many decades cannot be swept away by a piece of paper waved in the House of Commons.

The threatened imprisonment of Sean Geraghty last month did not materialise, and, indeed, even the small fine was paid anonymously—but if it had taken place, there would have been an unstoppable wave of protest strikes.

Having assimilated the lessons of that episode *The Times*, mouthpiece of the

ruling class, has declared that "it would not be sensible" for the National Coal Board to sue the NUM for loss of production. "So September 22 may come and go," the editorial stated hopefully, "Without the Passchendaele in the law courts..."

But behind the Tories' impotence against the sympathy action of millions of workers, there also lies a simple strategy...sitting the protest out. The government may be hoping that after the one day general strike, no matter how well supported, there will follow a period of anti-climax and disillusionment amongst NHS workers.

The TUC must not oblige the Tories, it must not let September 22 go by as a holiday that leads no-where. The day of protest must be massively supported, but it must be used to mount a serious campaign against the Tories.

It is a strike in direct pursuance of the legitimate claims of the workers of the National Health Service, and in a wider political sense, it is a protest against a Tory government that has been set on ruining the livelihoods of millions of working people, by mass unemployment, public expenditure cuts, increased taxes and wages restraint.

Previous TUC "days of action" have left a lot to be desired: the calls for strike action have been equivocal, publicity and planning minimal, and the results therefore limited. There is still a strong element of equivocation among TUC tops over this month's action. Some are still hedging around the issue of whether or not the protest is 'political' and whether or not a strike has been called at all.

When there is a Labour government in office the Confederation of British Industry and the City of London have no hesitation in bringing enormous economic pressure to bear in order to

ONE-DAY GENERAL STRIKE

September 22nd

- must begin mass campaign

get their own policies accepted, threatening, if necessary, to bring the government down.

The TUC should therefore have no hesitation in using the enormous power of the labour movement to mobilise opposition to the Tory government. Many workers realise instinctively that this is the only language

the Tory government understands.

The TUC tops must make a clear and unequivocal declaration that the day of protest is a 24-hour general strike involving all industries and sectors, with the exception of essential services, and involving picketing where necessary.

But they must also make

sure that the protest gains the maximum effect by turning it into a real day of action, involving:

1 Calling a series of mass rallies and demonstrations in every town and city throughout the country, through district and regional trade union bodies, trades councils, shop-stewards committees, Confed. Committees, and so on.

2 Calling for work-place meetings of shop stewards' committees and mass meetings in the lead up to September 22, to hammer home to workers the reasons for the protest—support for NHS workers and opposition to this vicious Tory government—and to ensure support on the day.

3 Calling for posters, leaflets and literature to be given out in the days around

the 22nd, in order to get the message over to un-organised workers, students, housewives and so on.

4 Drawing up plans for concrete activity in support of the NHS workers after September 22, including further solidarity action.

The day of protest next week must not be seen as an end in itself, it is not the last gasp of the NHS dispute. It must be seen as the beginning of a massive campaign to win a victory for health service workers and to drive the Tories from office.

A clear call must go out from mass rallies and protest meetings up and down the country: "Concede the full NHS claim! Out with the Tories! Demand a General Election! Return a Labour government pledged to socialist policies!"

Poland, socialism and the Morning Star

By Rob Sewell

On the same day last week that mass demonstrations swept through Poland in support of Solidarity, the news broke of the death of Stanislaw Gomulka, past head of the Polish state.

The *Morning Star* (2 September), in its review of Gomulka's life made some astonishing admissions. Despite the *Morning Star's* and its predecessor's constant refrain about the existence of glorious socialism in the USSR and Poland, it pointed out that "during the 1937 purges of the Soviet Communist Party, the leadership of the Polish Communist Party was executed."

It was revealed that Gomulka only narrowly avoided this fate by being under arrest by the Polish

police at the time "when they (the leaders of the Polish CP) had been summoned to Moscow and so escaped the purges and the disorientation of the party that followed its dissolution by order of the Comintern in 1938!" (How is it possible to be disorientated when you have been liquidated?)

Yet this bloody chapter of Stalinism was passed by without so much as a whimper by the *Morning Star*. Given these callous murders by the Stalinist regime, readers of the *Morning Star* will be astonished by its stony silence. It is simply glossed over as an embarrassment—an aberration to be hushed up.

In 1944, after a meteoric rise, Gomulka became the General Secretary of the Polish CP. After the war he became deputy Premier of

the Polish Provincial government and responsible for the monstrous expulsion of the German population from east of the Oder-Neisse line.

By 1948 he was removed in true Stalinist fashion from his post of general secretary and expelled from the CP for "right-wing-nationalist deviation," to be later imprisoned in 1951. After four years he was released and readmitted to the party following the disclosure of Stalin's crimes by Khrushchev in 1956.

With the Poznan riots in the same year, the terrified Polish bureaucracy moved in to head the movement off by once again promoting Gomulka to the rank of General Secretary. Whereas the Hungarian workers were violently suppressed by Russian tanks, the Polish movement was side-tracked onto harmless nationalist lines.

Gomulka saved the necks of the Polish bureaucracy by promising reforms from above—later withdrawn—to prevent revolution from below. All the old trappings of Stalinist repression were restored when the mass movement died down.

In 1968 Gomulka directly supported the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, sending Polish troops to suppress that struggle for liberal reforms. The seizing-up of the economy in the 1960s, due to bureaucratic mismanagement, forced the government in December 1970 to announce large-scale price increases.

This, reported the *Morning Star*, "brought an explosion of anger among the country's working people with massive demonstrations in the Baltic port cities of Gdynia, Gdansk and Szczecin...troops and militia opened fire on the demonstrations with hundreds of killed and wounded..." The *Morning Star* writers made no comment about these murders except to say Mr Gomulka was

charged with serious 'mistakes' when he was replaced in December 1970!

In the very same issue, their Editorial commented on the 1982 murders of demonstrators in Poland, saying that such action could not be condoned! "This is all the more the case when, as in Poland, those bullets are fired by the forces of law and order of a working class state and when the action leads to the killing and maiming of demonstrators!"

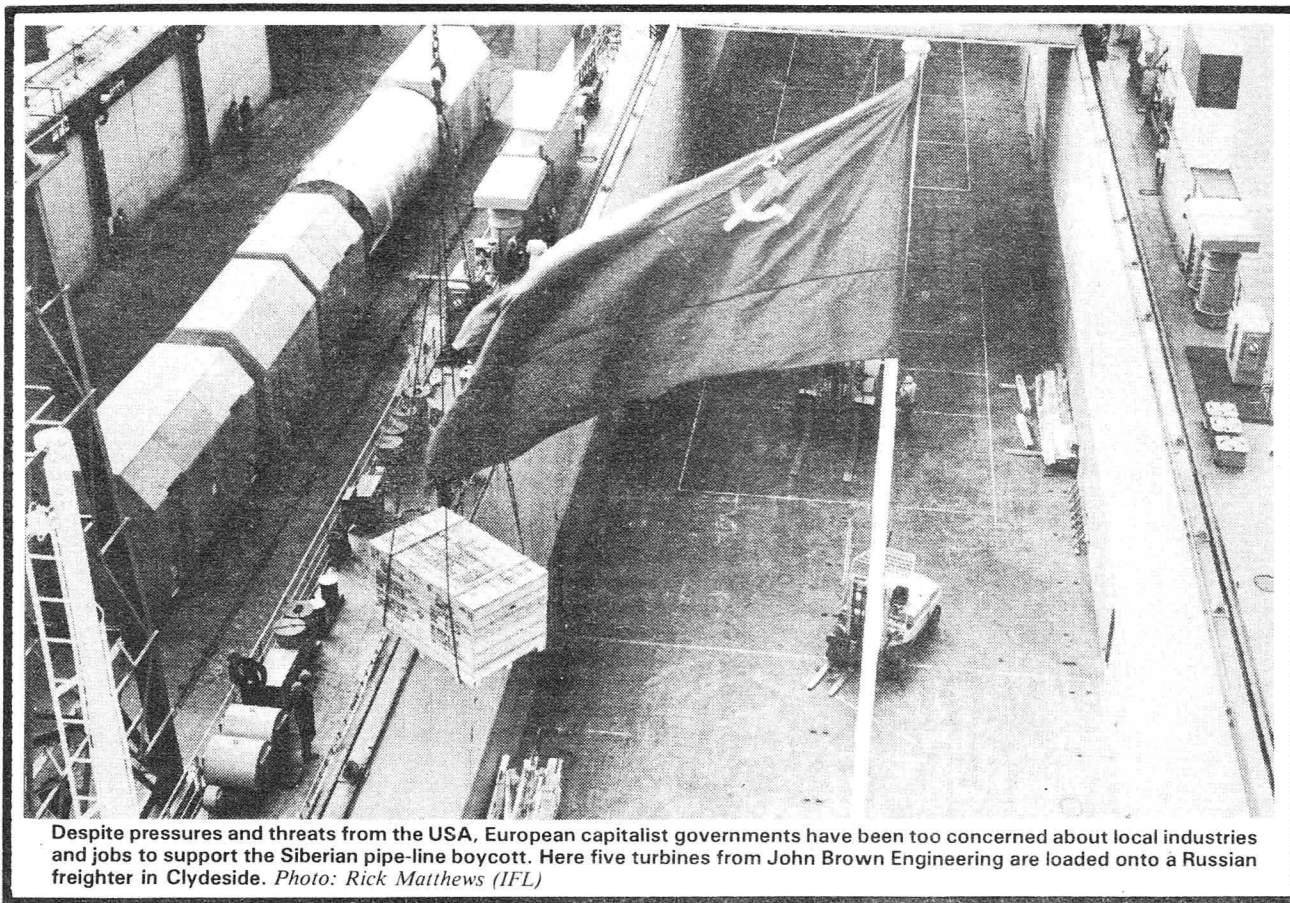
This is no way, the *Morning Star* laments, "to construct a socialist society." Every labour activist would certainly agree. But how can the *Morning Star* still maintain that Poland or the rest of these Stalinist states be termed "socialist" when the workers are held in subjection?

How can they be "socialist" when there are less democratic rights in these states than in the capitalist West? They are in reality a monstrous caricature of "socialism". Although capitalism has been overthrown and the economy nationalised, without workers' democracy, these regimes are grossly distorted and deformed.

A privileged bureaucratic elite has arisen on the backs of the working class. It has constructed a dictatorship over the workers in order to maintain its privileges and income.

The editorial in the *Morning Star* incredibly scolds the Polish Stalinist leaders for their lack of comradeship: "It is all too easy to toss around labels like hooligans, anti-social elements, and counter-revolutionaries." As if it is all simply a misunderstanding.

It then calls for a "dialogue," but recognising the weakness of this line in face of reality, points out "It is difficult to see how that can be achieved under martial law"! How very true. After 35 years of so-called 'socialism', the Polish workers have no other alternative than to overthrow the bureaucracy. Only then can workers democracy be introduced and the movement towards socialism be guaranteed.



Despite pressures and threats from the USA, European capitalist governments have been too concerned about local industries and jobs to support the Siberian pipe-line boycott. Here five turbines from John Brown Engineering are loaded onto a Russian freighter in Clydeside. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

GOWER BY-ELECTION

'We need more militants, not pink Tories'

The by-election in Gower on the 16th of this month, brought about by the death of the sitting Labour MP Ifor Davies, will be the first by-election fought in Wales for over a decade.

The constituency covers not only the Gower peninsula itself but the industrial and predominantly working-class areas of Loughor, Gorseinon, and parts of the Swansea and Amman Valleys. At the last general election, Labour sailed home with a majority of over 10,000.

This time the seat will be contested not only by Labour, Conservatives and Plaid Cymru, but also by the SDP-Liberal Alliance, in the form of ex-Labour MP, former would-be Labour Euro-candidate and twice failed-to-be-selected Labour parliamentary candidate, Gwynoro Jones.

Only weeks after failing to gain the Labour nomination for Gower, Gwynoro, in a sudden burst of political clarity, discovered that he

By Pam Woods
(Gower CLP)

had, in fact, become disillusioned and out of step with the Labour Party for over twenty years! His crusading mission throughout the constituency has met with a frosty response in the hard-core Labour areas.

At Abernant colliery, near Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, one miner told me: "If he'd stayed any longer, I'd have punched him on the nose. It's more people like you Militants we need, not pink Tories."

The industrial areas of Gower have been devastated by large-scale redundancies, particularly in the steel industry, and factory closures

during the last few years. The future of neither of the only two remaining collieries, Brynlliw and Abernant, is secure.

The closure of Abernant would be a catastrophe for the Amman valley, where unemployment is already colossal, at over 50%.

The area has strong left-wing traditions but the attitude of the right wing of the party shows a disgraceful contempt for working-class people. So confident are they of a Labour victory that the official campaign has been right wing and low key.

'Militant' supporters are also confident of the loyalty to Labour of the working people of Gower. But that loyalty must be rewarded. The people of Gower deserve and need a radical socialist programme which will solve the terrible economic problems of the area and the misery which goes with them.

That is why 'Militant' supporters will fight not only for a Labour victory at the coming by-election, but will continue to campaign for a socialist programme for Labour at the next general

election.

the regular and vitriolic attacks on 'Militant' in the local press by the Labour candidate, Gareth Wardell, have given the other parties ammunition with which to attack Labour and may have confused and disillusioned some voters. And this is precisely at a time when all our energies should be channelled towards putting forward and explaining a socialist alternative to Thatcherite policies and exposing the political bankruptcy of the SDP-Liberal Alliance.

'Militant' supporters, along with other left wingers in the constituency, will be out around the houses, factories and mines right up until the election, campaigning on socialist policies and recruiting new members into the party.

The working people of Gower must show Thatcher and her government exactly what they think of their rotten policies and help boot the SDP one step further into the dustbin.

Support Pat Wall for NEC



★ For a mass, democratic, socialist Labour Party to defeat the Tories!

★ For rank and file representation on the NEC!

★ For the right of CLPs to select the candidate of their choice!

★ Defeat the witch-hunt!



TGWU must oppose register

"TGWU backs move to oust Militant" ran a 'Times' headline on Monday.

If you took the trouble to read the rest of the article, it's admitted that no decision has actually been taken but it looks like...etc.

This sort of deceptive journalism, something a little more sinister than wishful thinking, is nothing more than an attempt to put pressure on the General Executive Committee to reject the previously decided (March 1982) policy of opposition to witch-hunts.

Yet nobody, least of all the TGWU membership, wants to return to the 1950s days of Deakin and Co. with their bans and proscriptions. There have been at least 50 resolutions carried against witch-hunts by organisations of the T&GWU.

Bobby Owens, chairman of No 6 Regional Committee told 'Militant', "Our regional policy is specific: we are opposed to all witch-hunts within the Labour

Party, and my personal belief is that the party needs to unite to defeat the Tories—all witch-hunts should stop."

Walter Cunningham, speaking as vice chairman of Hull Port Shop Stewards' Committee said: "It's diabolical if the TGWU support the register. The regional committee in region 10 might come out for the register. The committee might decide that, but it isn't the wishes and feelings of the membership. They haven't been consulted."

"My branch, and the shop stewards' committee, have been against the register all along. We've sent telegrams to London, expressing our view, and we've supported Pat Wall. No way are we going to support a register."

"We stand by TGWU policy: No bans, no proscriptions, and no to the register."

This call should be taken up by all supporters in the TGWU—back union policy—fight Tories not socialists!

Despite denials to the contrary, Michael Foot in his TV interview 'Face the Press,' made it clear that the attack upon Militant was a witch-hunt of socialist ideas, not a constitutional debate..

He tried to make an issue out of the fact that "the Militant Tendency have not themselves applied for the register," describing it as a "revelation of how in fact this method (ie. registers) will work." In fact, what Michael Foot did not make clear was that none of the left groups in the Labour Party have registered, with the exception of the Parliamentary Tribune Group.

Contrary to Michael Foot's assertion, this is an indication that the so-called register will not work.

In the same interview, the Party leader said it would be an "absurdity" for "someone who continued or persisted in supporting the Militant Tendency" to be a

Labour Parliamentary candidate. Pressurised by right wing journalists on the interviewing panel, the Party leader is, in effect, saying that candidates should be barred for their ideas: what other meaning can be attached to "supporting the Militant Tendency"?

And if Militant supporters are barred as candidates, then they would, by the same logic, presumably be barred from Party membership. And what of those who 'support' the Militant by buying it and reading it? Will they be barred as candidates? And what about those who 'support' the Militant by objecting to the witch-hunt? Will they also be expelled?

Michael Foot deludes himself into thinking that his support for the register is not a witch-hunt, but if the register is agreed at conference and implemented by a right-wing National Executive Committee, there is no other course it would follow—it would lead to an attempted purge of all the lefts in the Party.

Campaigning against the witch-hunt

'Militant' supporters on Clydeside took an excellent initiative to get the ideas of 'Militant' over to workers in local industry. They organised a factory gate meeting outside Howden's compressors factory.

Thirty workers, all AUEW members, came out to listen and, nodded with approval as the speaker explained who were the real wreckers of the Labour Party.

"One worker pointed out that he was not happy that only 15 copies of 'Militant' were sold in the factory," John McClelland reported. "The convenor said later that he would ask his shop stewards' committee to buy a supply of the papers to leave around the factory."

On 2 September, there was a public meeting in Littlehampton, organised by the Labour Party, the Trades Council and the local branch of the TGWU. Nearly 50 people attended, representing all sections of the labour movement, as well as the general public.

The meeting was called in opposition to the Tebbit Bill on the trade unions and after a long discussion a resolution was passed calling for opposition to it. The same resolution, however, called for the Labour Party and TUC to fight the Tories' class legislation "instead of

fighting socialists in the labour and trade union movement."

The Liverpool Food Manufacturing branch of USDAW at its last meeting passed a similar motion deploring the stand of Labour's NEC on the 'Militant' enquiry and calling for the decision to be reversed. The branch has also taken a decision to send delegates to the 11 September conference.

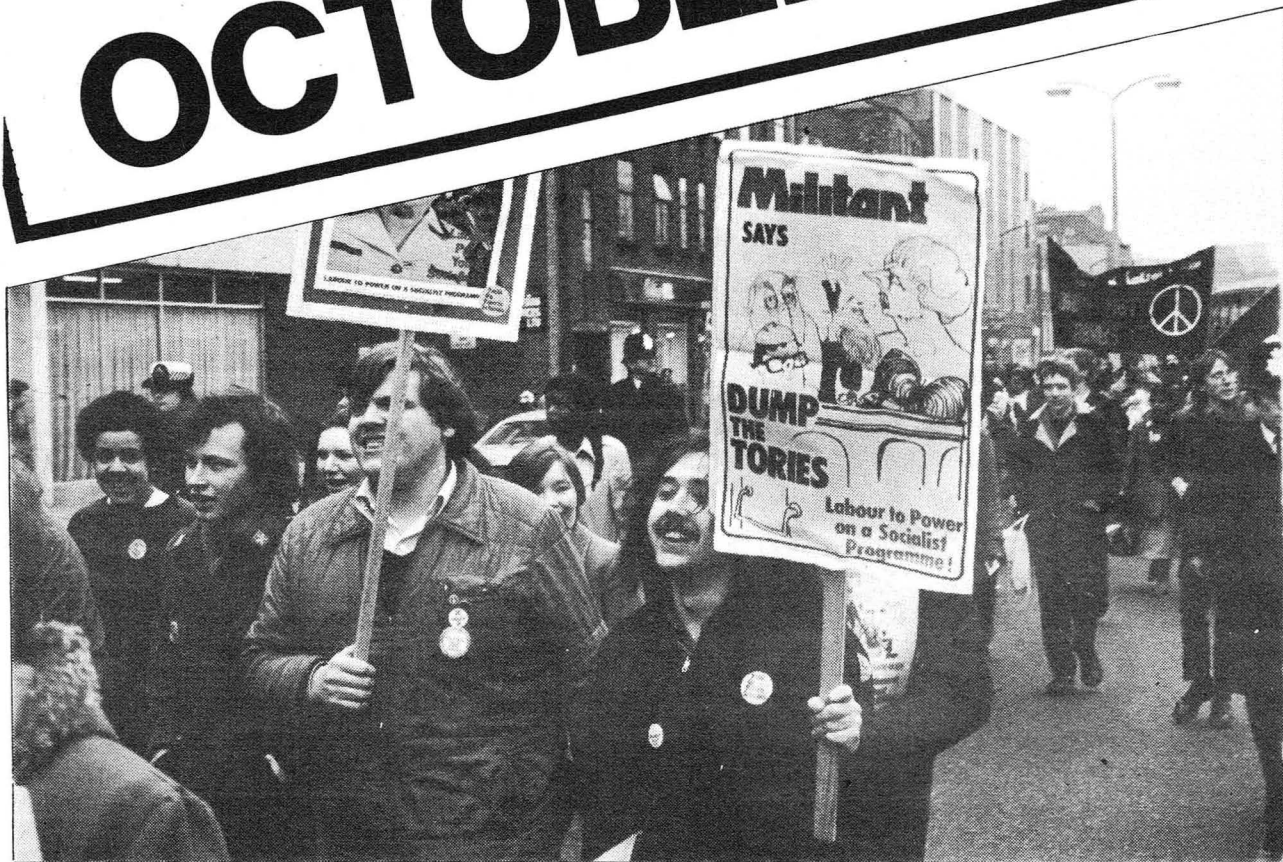
Despite not being affiliated to the Labour Party, the executive committee of CPSA also agreed to send two observers to the conference. The executive, which is committed to campaign for the re-affiliation of the union to the party, felt that such a campaign would not be helped "by the threats of bans and purges being levelled against the left wing of the party." "Bans, proscriptions and so-called 'registers' must be resisted," the EC resolution said.

The GMC of Southampton Labour Party, at its meeting on 1 September, declared that it was not prepared to "co-operate with the register or to expel any member nor prohibit any members from promoting socialist ideas or literature because they do not conform to the NEC's register." The meeting, it was reported, was overwhelmingly against any witch-hunts.

By 'Militant' reporters

Labour Movement Conference
Wembley Conference Centre
11 September, 10.30 am
Notice: Credentials for late delegates will be distributed at the enquiries desk from 9.30 am

PREPARE FOR OCTOBER 16th



YOPsters and LPYS members join the march to the YOPs lobby of Parliament on 2 February this year. Organised jointly by the LPYS and the YOPs Trainees Union Rights Campaign, it attracted 3,000. Photo: Militant

This month, hundreds of thousands of school leavers who have been unable to find a job since June will become eligible to sign on the dole queue.

Clearly, when the unemployment figures are announced by the Department of 'Employment' at 11am on September 21st they are likely to be the worst ever officially recorded.

The following day, September 22nd, sees the TUC's day of action in support of the health workers. The TUC has instructed its affiliated unions to take industrial action for at least an hour and it is already evident that millions of workers will strike for the whole day.

50,000 leaflets are being produced especially for this event and when workers realise that October 16th will be the only national demo against the Tories this year support will mushroom across the country.

Already on Friday, 3 September the CPSA national executive agreed to back the demonstration and make a substantial donation towards the cost of the campaign. Financial support nationally has also been received from the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union and the Bakers Union.

In London the TGWU, SOGAT, and ASLEF are backing the campaign and London LPYS are set to fill one train of 1,000 and are looking to book another! Trains have also been booked in Birmingham and South Wales.

In Yorkshire support has been promised from NUPE and NUM branches and in Leeds alone four coaches have already been booked by LPYS branches together with one from a local tenants association.

Coaches have also been organised by Milton Keynes Trades Council, Brighton LPYS (who have already received £70 from local unions) and LPYS branches who are also organising a

By Nick Toms

Labour Youth week from October 9th to 16th with Tony Benn speaking at a major rally. In Manchester 16 LPYS branches are planning to send coaches to Liverpool.

To date 400,000 leaflets advertising the demo have been distributed to LPYS branches and more will be available together with posters and stickers at the Labour Movement conference against the Witch-hunt on September 11th in London.

Every LPYS branch should ensure that it has transport booked if this has not already been done. No stone should be left unturned in visiting factories, trade union branches, shop stewards committees, YOPs schemes, dole queues and

Local LPYS members are now meeting regularly during the day to make the plans for the LPYS National March and Festival in Liverpool on October 16th. So far we have booked two coaches to come from Hampshire. If things go well we hope to increase this nearer the time.

It's important particularly for LPYS members who will have long distances to travel to work early. We have sent out hundreds of the national TU letter together with a local covering letter. The TGWU have given a list of all their branches locally (over a hundred) which we are now beginning to circulate.

Down in the south we need to raise a lot of money to get to Liverpool, but are

youth clubs.

Make sure you always carry an appeal sheet to get financial support as well—you'll be surprised what you get if you ask!

Clearly if every LPYS branch follows these examples then not only will the

convinced that if we approach it in an organised fashion that we can raise it. A 12 hour sponsored monopoly session has been planned to raise money and improve the comrades' understanding of the capitalist finance system! We are also planning social events.

Most important of all we have produced an appeal sheet which we will use in the movement but mainly aimed at the factory visits planned. A local letter is being sent to shop stewards to tell them that we will be calling to talk to them and their young members. It is certainly the most comprehensive and well organised approach to a national event we've organised so far.

target of 15,000 be easily achieved making October 16th the biggest event yet organised nationally by the LPYS, but also a sharp warning will be given to those who would like to witch-hunt the LPYS in the future.

LANCASHIRE READERS' MEETING

Last week Wigan had its most successful Militant Readers Meeting so far with an attendance of over 50 people, who heard Ted Grant.

Over the past few years Wigan has been hard hit by redundancies and closures especially in the Textile and Mining industries and it is this that has prompted an interest in a Marxist programme. This was shown by the attendance of a large number of trade unionists, many of whom had never been to a Labour meeting before. This included three

By Paula Leigh and Dave Beale

postmen, who had to leave for their shift after the meeting, school welfare workers, miners and unskilled workers. £82 was raised for the fighting fund.

Ted Grant was again the main speaker at a meeting in Preston, Lancashire.

He explained why recent experiences of the socialist governments in France and Greece should be a lesson to

workers in Britain. The socialists in Greece, pledged to getting out of the Common Market and NATO, were elected with a massive majority—but because of their failure to take over big business, the socialist government there has broken its election promises and abandoned its programme.

Over 40 people attended the meeting held at Preston's Textile Union Centre on Tuesday of last week, and held as one in a series of meetings in this part of Lancashire. A collection raised an excellent £55.

Recruitment drive — YC style!

And, Don't Forget...

YOUNG? ENERGETIC? ENTHUSIASTIC?
INTERESTED IN JOINING A REPUTABLE
MARRIAGE BUREAU?
USED TO HARD WORK?

If you can answer 'yes' to any one of these questions, then you are a suitable recruit for the Young Conservatives.

LCA's YCs meet most Thursdays at Homewell.

Details of contacts and timetable from Havant 475066 during morning office hours

P.S. A sense of humour can be useful too!

Local Young Conservatives in the Langstone Conservative Association (Havant & Waterloo Constituency) are appealing to local youth in the only way they can. Yes, all the stories told about the bold recruiting methods of the Young Conservatives are true! The advert printed appeared in the journal of the local Conservative Association.

The local branch of the LPYS has tried on three occasions to arrange a debate with the YCs on the situation facing youth in Britain. On the first and third try we received no reply. On our second approach we were told there was no branch in the area. We can only conclude that they've all died of hard work or got married!

All this can be contrasted

to the local visit of Thatcher to South Downs College. A demonstration against the Tories met her as she sped into the College to meet local dignitaries and a few hand selected school students to demonstrate their computer work.

Concerned about the prospect of an anti-Tory demonstration the local Conservative Association (the same one with the elusive YCs) organised a counter demo. They all turned up in this true blue area with rosettes and placards, explaining how they loved Maggie. We then realised they they had advertised for new YC members. The average age of the Tory demo must have been about 65!

The lights go out for Tebbit

Norman Tebbit must be wondering whether his trip to the Gower constituency on September 2nd was really worthwhile.

He and a handful of local Tory supporters were met at the gates of Gowerton Comprehensive school near Swansea by about 60 demonstrators, a quarter of whom were from the LPYS.

After the demonstration we tried to get into the meeting to put some pertinent questions to the 'unemployment secretary.' It was at this point however that the true nature of Tory democracy was revealed. The entrance was blocked by the police and we were prevented from entering this so-called public election meeting.

Tebbit, presumably, was all set up for a pleasant chat with the party faithful without having to put up with any criticism or argument.

However, the school caretaker, Len Thomas, a member of NUPE, thought differently. He insisted that we, as members of the public should be allowed into the meeting. His arguments fell



on deaf ears. Eventually, Len made it clear that unless we were allowed in, he would not let the meeting go ahead. Met only with intransigence from the police, he switched the lights off leaving Tebbit and Co. where they like to keep the workers—in the dark!

For Tebbit, the occasion was less than successful. The YS on the other hand with the largest and liveliest contingent, succeeded in creating interest in the October 16th demo and in the LPYS itself.

By Dave Warren
(Swansea LPYS)

'Living' on social security

I'm leaping up and down on the front doorstep like a mad thing, searching frantically for any sign or glimpse of the postman. It's half past eight, and Saturday morning has finally arrived.

A feeling of sheer relief is the only way to describe the sight of our fortnightly girocheque coming through the letter box. Tearing open the envelope the initial reaction to getting a cheque for £100 feels good, but then I remember—the money's already spent.

Damn! They've forgotten to send the milk tokens through again. Even though my husband and I are both on the dole and we've got a young child you still have to fight the DHSS for every penny you can get.

For the first six weeks my husband was unemployed we didn't get a single penny in benefits, due to the fact that his previous employer gave wrong information to the DHSS about his dismissal.

We're still in the process of appealing against this decision. Had my husband not had any holiday money due to him from his firm, God knows how we'd have managed during those first 6 weeks.

Getting a fortnightly cheque instead of a weekly one is not only a big con, but it's hell trying to make it last 2 weeks. When you've got the money in your hand it's so easy to spend it all in one go. Not because we or anyone else in our situation fritters it away but there's always something that you

need or there's always some bill that you've just received a final demand for.

Like a lot of people today we're on a rent rebate, but we're still £50 in arrears which we somehow attempt to pay off by paying a pound or two over the top of our weekly rent.

Once we've done our weekly shopping at Tesco's, bought some stamps for the bills, and invested in our only luxury (a couple of packets of fags) before you know where you are, half the money's gone.

Then there's the decorating, which isn't a necessity but has to be done from time to time. We've just spent the last two months saving up for a can of paint. It'll just have to stay half-done until we can afford another.

I went to measure my daughter's feet the other day for a pair of new shoes. She has to have the inner-raised type because her feet turn in on her when she's walking.

I've always known what a rip-off kids' shoes are, but I was absolutely staggered when the assistant in the shoe shop told me the damage! £13.50! What a price for a pair of shoes and on the feet of a 3-year old; you can guarantee they'll grow out of them after 3 or 4 months.

Luckily she's just had her birthday and a relation bought them as a present. There's no way we'd have been able to buy them.

The Tories talk about the sanctity of the family. Yet they can't provide us with a decent standard of living.

I can't be the only person around whose mother-in-law has literally clothed my daughter and we can't be the only people who



The press always gives enormous publicity to a few people who abuse social security, but never about what it really means to live off the pittance given. Women suffer enormous under the present structure. Above: 1982 Labour Party Demonstration for Women's Rights. Photo: John Arthur

spend half the week round my mum and dad's just to get fed.

If it wasn't for mine and my husband's families I dread to think how we'd have managed. Yet there must be thousands of others who haven't got relatives and are up to their eyes in debt.

Even with nearly 4 million people out of work you're still looked on as a scrounger when you go and sign on. More than anything else that makes me sick.

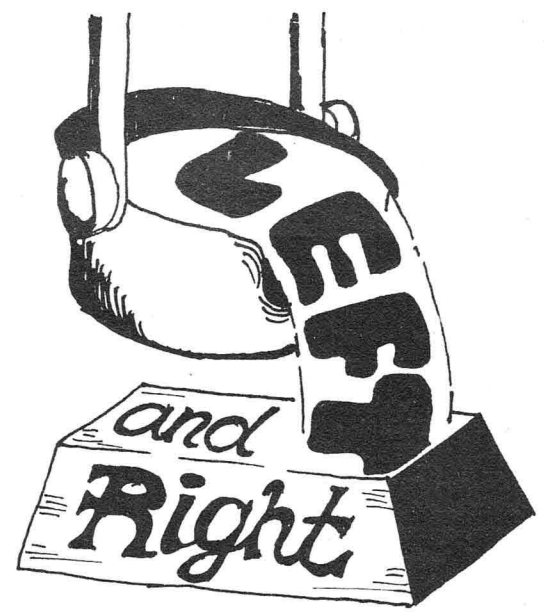
The Lord Vestey's of this world, and the Royals, who are the biggest scroungers on this earth, can get away with paying no tax and yet working class people are interrogated for days and weeks on end before it's

decided that we're entitled to anything.

There's times when I feel really down and wonder if they'll ever be any jobs at the end of the day. Things can only get worse under the Tories and the rotten sick system they prop up.

That's why it's imperative that ordinary people fight to secure a decent job with a decent standard of living. And the only guarantee of being able to live instead of merely existing, is to fight alongside the Marxists in the Labour movement for socialist policies.

By Jackie Walsh
(Stevenage LPYS.)



Wisdom of Ben Ford

On a recent LBC (London commercial radio) phone-in, Ben Ford (MP for Bradford North) was asked whether he supported Clause IV part 4 of the Labour Party constitution. His reply was, "Of course, but surely it's almost been achieved."

Strange. Clause IV part 4 calls for private British industry to be taken into public ownership. As this has not happened, perhaps only two conclusions are possible about Ben Ford's remarks. Either he does not know what is going on in industry, or he cannot remember what Clause IV part 4 says. But then that is only printed on every Labour Party membership card.

Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make monetarists

Two years ago this month, businessman Ted Jones paid £2,000 for an advert in the 'Financial Times' backing Thatcher. This week the last of his six companies went bust.

He now complains: "I think businessmen like myself have been misled by the government. We were led to believe that after twelve months things were going to pick up. They haven't and all I was left with were high interest rates and no profits. Two years ago I was worth £2 million and my companies had a £5 million a year turnover. Now I have lost everything—even my £23,000 Mercedes has been repossessed by the hire purchase company."

Two years ago Jones praised Thatcher's tough financial policies, and said the only way out of the recession was by hard work. Now his 250 workers are on the dole, victims of their boss' enthusiasm for an out-of-date economic system.

West Midlands march for jobs

Next Wednesday, 15th September, sees the start of five marches on Birmingham, culminating in a rally at Chamberlain Square in the city centre at midday Saturday 18 September and a march to a 'multi cultural festival against unemployment' in Summerfield Park, Birmingham. Organised by the West Midlands TUC and a number of local groups, 260 marchers from 26 towns in the West Midlands, are starting from Stoke, Derby, Northampton, Hereford, and Shrewsbury. (further details from Sid Platt, Co-ordinator, Tel 021 643 6084)

Almost as if to perversely prove the need for a union-led campaign for jobs British Leyland management laid off 7,000 Longbridge workers for two weeks over the September holiday week.

It came as no surprise to the workforce as rumours suggesting lay-offs had been in the air not just before the main summer holiday, but prior to the May holiday week.

Workers had been well aware that despite management's continued emphasis on production, cars coming off the tracks had been stockpiled in great numbers.

Over the past few years management have pulled out all the stops, in the way of new working practices and faster track speeds to increase production. Now that targets have been met, workers once again have been penalised, but now for being too efficient!

It is not only car workers who will suffer as a result of lay offs. BL's decision has sent shock-waves throughout the car components industries. Dunlop's have already announced 3,000 lay-offs at its Fort Dunlop plant in Birmingham. Lucas Industries as well as GKN have followed Dunlop's ex-

ample. The consequence for many smaller suppliers may well be closure.

An indication of the crisis facing the component industries is shown by the fact that since the Tories have come to power, 30% of all component jobs have been lost, reducing total employment in the industry to 300,000. When considering the dependency of Midland manufacturing firms upon the well being of the car industry, no wonder the Tories have pulled back from their election threats of closing down all so-called 'lame ducks'. In the words of one car worker, "if Thatcher tried to close Longbridge then she would have to send tanks down Longbridge Lane to maintain order." Such would be the anger throughout the West Midlands at the loss of half a million jobs overnight.

BL's decision to lay off workers in September is clearly not an isolated decision. The move is an opening shot at the unions in readiness for November's wage negotiations. BL management, while clearly shaken by last year's pay battle, will not hesitate to once again use the state giant as a 'political guinea-pig' in order to set the trend for other employers.

By Les Kuriata
(LPYS NC)

In charge of the Western world

Thirty per cent of Reagan's top staff are fully-fledged millionaires. This fact emerges from a new book by two aides of Ralph Nader, a leading US consumer activist, profiling President Reagan's top 100 officials. It found that 95 of these are men, 98 are white, and Nader describes it as "a government of extra-ordinarily broad wealth, narrow vision and little compassion." It is, he says, a government "of General Motors, by Dupont and for Exxon."

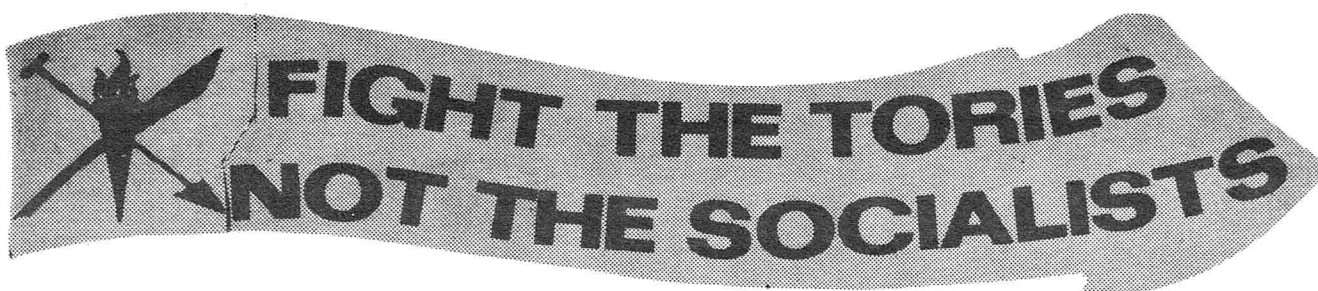
Reagan is just the front man for the corporate giants who run the country. Sometimes he finds it a bit difficult to grasp what is going on. In the last twenty months, he has taken 12 vacations, totalling four months, more than any other President in memory. One recent embarrassing incident was when he introduced Liberian military dictator Samuel Doe as "Chairman Mao". And his staff consider it a special achievement if he manages to stay awake for 12 hours at a time.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

On 13 September 1882 at the battle of Tel el Kebir, Britain defeated the Egyptian army and became the effective government of the country. Just as today imperialist powers intervene to safeguard their interests, in 1882 the Liberal government of Gladstone was worried that growing unrest in Egypt, reflected by a new nationalistic government, was threatening the Suez Canal.

Western powers had begun to take a stranglehold upon the Egyptian economy. They had had Egyptian workers build the canal and 82% of its traffic was between Britain and its colonies. By 1882 25% of Egypt's revenue was in interest payments to foreign debts and this had helped trigger the revolt.

A century of economic dominance has change little. Nowadays Egypt's indebtedness accounts for over 60% of its Gross National Product.



Labour Party Young Socialists protest against YOPs exploitation in February. The LPYS have been fighting as usual over the past year to defend our class against Tory attacks. Labour's National Executive, unfortunately, have voted to water down party policy on nationalisation of the banks; they have stopped organising demonstrations against the Tories and concentrated on attacking Labour's left.

LABOUR'S NEC; The Right's record

The move to the right on Labour's NEC last year was no mere fluke or accident. "It was exactly what was planned," boasted Roy Grantham, the right-wing general secretary of APEX. (London 'Standard' 29 September 1981)

After a decade or more of left victories, a number of right-wing general secretaries secretly and successfully plotted to oust Norman Atkinson as Treasurer together with four other left NEC members.

This organised conspiracy to boot out the 'lefts' was held at "St Ermin's Hotel dinners, where Duffy, Roy Grantham (APEX), Bill Sirs (Steel workers), Sid Weighell (Railway-men), Frank Chapple (Electricians) and others met regularly to plan their strategy". (Observer, 4 October 1981)

At the very first NEC on 28 October, the right-wingers made it abundantly clear that they hoped to launch a witch-hunt against the left, and in particular against 'Militant'.

In the November Executive, the move for a purge was only narrowly defeated. An unsuccessful attempt was made to deal with an NUR conference resolution which called for a return to bans and proscriptions, with again 'Militant' singled out for special treatment.

At the December NEC the right organised to successfully block the Bermondsey CLP's democratic right to select Peter Tatchell as its parliamentary candidate. In the same broad sweep, to the delight of the capitalist press, an 'enquiry' was finally established into Militant, carried by 19 votes to 10.

Given this green light, at-

tempts were then made to stop Pat Wall (Bradford North) and Terry Fields (Kirkdale) being endorsed as Labour candidates. The February NEC, although backing Terry Field's candidature, voted to put Pat Wall through a further selection meeting because of 'doubts' about the original selection.

John Golding, the 'impartial' chairman of the enquiry team into Bradford North, told the press he would stop Pat Wall and 'Militant' candidates "at all costs". He later defended this at an NEC meeting saying that where Militant was concerned he was "prejudiced and even bigoted."

Nevertheless, the right-wing were clearly waiting for the Hayward Hughes report on Militant in June to stage their attack on the left. And by 16 votes to 10, they were able to open up a witch-hunt in the party.

The right-wing, though, were able to take this road only because of the actions of so-called left-wingers. Unfortunately it was the support of Neil Kinnock and Joan Lestor, that has opened up the possibilities of registers, bans, proscriptions and expulsions.

It is no wonder that the EETPU is now calling for a vote for Neil Kinnock in this year's NEC elections!

Yet, to the dismay of the right-wing, only three days after the Hayward-Hughes report, Pat Wall was selected once again for Bradford with his majority enormously increased from the original 7 votes to 37 in June. Ignoring this, the right again tried to

stop him at the organisation sub-committee and at the full July NEC meeting.

They talked openly of expulsions and even certain "lefts" were reported to have said that Pat Wall "would have to choose between 'Militant' and the Labour Party."

In the organisation committee though Pat was endorsed by 9 votes to 6 and at the full NEC it went through by 14 votes to 9.

Over the past 12 months continued attempts have been made to stifle the LPYS—the most active section of the party. Already the NEC has blocked the re-printing of the LPYS document, 'The Ideals of October' with arguments that it didn't reflect party policy (by the way, what is party policy on the Russian revolution?) or that it was 'Trotskyist' to voice Jim Mortimer's objection.

Right wingers like Eric Varley have made repeated warnings that if they had their way the LPYS budget would be drastically cut.

The NEC majority have turned the party in on itself in a witch-hunt against the left. Their actions, in supporting the right wing, are leading the party to disaster. David Warburton, the organiser of the right-wing Forward Labour group, has organised this year the removals of more lefts from the NEC. This right-wing "party within a party" demands a stepping up of an East European-type purge.

As bold as brass, its journal points out: "Although delegates last year voted in a more balanced NEC(!) it has been only too evident that the changes were not enough"(!)

For Warburton and the 'hard' right, this right-wing NEC is still too soft to carry through the surgery needed i.e. the expulsion of 'Mili-

tant' and the left wing in general. The 'executioners' hands need staying for the job required.

They want a clear course back to the "good old days" of the 1950s where the right ruled the roost. Then the left were hounded, proscribed, banned, closed down and expelled...

The right-wing NEC majority over the last year has clearly failed to campaign against the Tories or build the party. What happened to Labour's successful demonstrations against unemployment and the Tories? The NEC has done nothing to mobilise working people against the real enemy, the Thatcher government.

They are too engrossed in an attack on 'Militant'. The only section that has campaigned has been the LPYS who have done marvellous work over recruiting YOPsters to the unions. On 16 October they have organised a national demonstration against the Tory attacks.

It seems the right wing, on the other hand, are only capable of playing verbal pat-handies with the Tory government.

The lack of any lead from the NEC has resulted in a fall in membership to less than 277,000—one of the biggest falls ever—on par with that of 1964-70 of a 140,000 fall. Again at that time, it was right-wing policies of the Wilson government that drove members away from the party.

The right's stewardship of the party has been an unmitigated disaster. They have failed to take up the Tory challenge but have succeeded in turning the party in on itself.

The only way forward for the party is to adopt a leadership that can effectively take on the Tories, and lay the basis for the election of a Labour government on socialist policies.

Don't stand on the sidelines

Liz is a single parent in Essex. Despite having a 9-year-old son to look after she sells the 'Militant' regularly and donates her time and £1 a week to the 'Militant'. She has been unemployed for years.

A friend challenged Liz's priorities once; why was she giving so much time and money for others when she should really be helping herself and her son?

Liz replied that the sacrifices she made were for herself and her son. Without socialism, the future wasn't really worth talking about.

This one example could be repeated scores of times over. People are more and more finding that the ideas weekly presented in 'Militant' represent the only way out of the daily grind of capitalism.

One of the few growth industries left in Britain is the mountain of sociological and economic reports that pour out. They are boring in their unanimity. Unemployment is here to stay.

The 'Daily Telegraph' in a recent article, unbelievably entitled, 'It all adds up to recovery', thought gloom and doom was misplaced. True, unemployment would continue to rise, but that was the 'natural' rate of unemployment for Britain!

Three to four million people are "surplus" to the requirements of capitalism. That article merely blurred out the truth reported in 'Militant' over the years. Capitalism has outlived its usefulness and can now only maintain itself at the cost of lives and livelihoods of millions of people.

Only a socialist programme of taking the top 200 monopolies into public ownership under workers' control and management, with compensation only paid to the old owners if they need it, will enable the working class to plan the resources of the economy.

These resources will not just go where the biggest profit can be made but where they are needed to provide concrete help for the millions of people like Liz.

Some workers feel confused, some even feel despair,

about the current political situation. Shouldn't things be going faster? Shouldn't Thatcher have gone by now? Marxism provides a clear answer for those workers.

Marxism is nothing but the concentration of the experiences of the working class. It provides a perspective and an understanding of the pace of events so as not to mistake the "first for the ninth month of pregnancy".

'Militant' in its regular articles and features explains why Marxists are nonetheless optimistic for the future, with titanic class battles arising on the horizon (a foretaste of which is provided by the current health service dispute).

'Militant', though, always stresses that without a Marxist leadership to match the determination of the workers the hopes of the movement will be at best dashed on the rocks of capitalism or even derailed as in the recent ASLEF dispute.

'Militant' has therefore dedicated itself to the task of rebuilding the leadership of the labour movement.

'Militant' and its supporters in the labour movement are not therefore just about discussion circles on good ideas but are about a fight; the fight to return the labour movement to the policies of its founders; to Clause IV part 4; to socialism.

The working class has enormous political strength in its own organisations. The TUC could use the strength of the labour movement to bring the Tories and the capitalist system to their knees.

Socialism could be taken out of the speeches and put into practice. We appeal to all to join this battle, to become a 'Militant' supporter, to join the fight for socialist policies where it counts in the labour and trade union movement.

Sell the 'Militant', send in money for the 'Militant', write for the 'Militant', but above all fight for the 'Militant'.

Don't stand on the sidelines! Become a 'Militant' supporter!

By Mike Waddington

Find out what the bosses and their media, and the right wing of the labour movement are so scared of. Only 30p, post-free, from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



Tony Mulhearn (at microphone) speaking in his Toxteth constituency after the disturbances in 1981. Labour MPs must stay in touch with their constituents and their local labour movement. Toxteth Labour Party have recently distributed thousands of leaflets with a message from Tony Mulhearn supporting NHS workers and exposing the truth about Tory Britain. Photo: Militant

A WORKER'S MP ON A WORKER'S WAGE

The first workers' representatives in Parliament received no wages from the state and lived as well as they could on donations from the labour movement.

Keir Hardie, the first leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, went hungry on many occasions and lived most frugally, sometimes not having sufficient cash for fuel to heat his lodging house.

Both the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party inspired by the ideas of Marx and Engels had appealed to the trade union movement throughout the last decade of the 19th century to work with them to establish a Labour Party offering a distinctive alternative to the Liberal Party which previously had given the illusion of political representation for the working class.

The pioneers by self-sacrifice created the Labour Party as they recognised the working class would need to be led by a party with a clear class understanding and policy.

Since its creation the party has relied on similar self-sacrifice and hard work by thousands of workers in wards, constituencies and trade union branches who raise funds and canvass to ensure the election of Labour councillors and MPs. They are the backbone of the party—unsung heroes who stand to gain no personal wealth.

MPs must keep in touch with this voluntary army of the labour movement and continue to adhere to labour movement policies. A lifestyle similar to those he or she is representing is absolutely essential.

An MP should be regarded in "career" terms as no different from a shop steward or voluntary officer in the Labour Party. Yet for

many who have entered Parliament classified as workers' representatives the gulf between them and most working people is immense.

Throughout the '50s and '60s many with middle-class backgrounds joined the Labour Party not to fight for socialism but to seek a lucrative Parliamentary career for themselves, and spent the bulk of their political lives "ignoring conference decisions" as Harold Wilson once put it.

After Labour's defeat in 1979, after the right wing had presided over a doubling of unemployment, wage curbs and massive cuts in public expenditure, the party rank and file said enough is enough and demanded accountability of Labour MPs. Not the phoney accountability which had previously existed but a genuine change in the party constitution to allow the ranks who put MPs in Parliament the opportunity to remove them if they do not fight for party policy.

This demand clearly threatened the lucrative incomes of the right wing and many had already split away to head for greener pastures: Prentice, Dell, Mayhew, Marsh, Stonehouse, etc., followed by the founders of the SDP: Williams, Rodgers, Owen, Jenkins, etc. The first batch of deserters at one time or another were members of Wilson's cabinet and overwhelmingly middle class.

The PLP continues to be dominated by people of this sort. Right winger Austin Mitchell MP, formerly Harold Wilson's favourite TV interviewer, gave voice to the hidden thoughts of the right on re-selection: "We could finish up with a clutch of Kamikaze candidates."

Writing in 'Labour Weekly' in November 1981, he added, "In the past individuals have been able to pursue their career interests only through the party. What furthered the one fur-

thered the other. Now they have to choose between the two. Do they want a council seat, to become a minister and drive around in a black car? Then for the first time ever the ambitious have to calculate where Labour can take them and whence the SDP."

Middle class lifestyle

It is not only the fact that they are middle class that is the problem, but that they continue to base themselves on the "mixed economy" and imagine that there is nothing wrong with capitalism that can't be put right with some mechanical changes.

But even MPs with impeccable working class credentials have succumbed to the "most exclusive club in Western Europe", Parliament. Witness Bob Mellish's

ultimate betrayal of the party which gave him his career.

Before him were people like Bessie Braddock, Ray Gunter, and further back Bevin of the TGWU, Thomas of the NUR and many more besides. Their backgrounds did not prevent them being rabid opponents of socialist policies and advocates of the witch-hunt against the left.

The incomes of MPs must be a major factor in the process. The basic MP's salary is £14,410. Add to this a subsistence allowance of £5,099, while office and secretarial allowance comes to an additional £8,819. That's over £28,000 a year.

Apart from subsidised meals MPs also get a travel allowance of 20p a mile by car and 15 free journeys a year for their wives or husbands to visit Westminster. In all it reaches about £500 a week.

Labour ministers can also get perks from newspaper columns, TV and radio appearances and the sale of memoirs. Barbara Castle's

went to the *Sunday Times* for £30,000, while Richard Crossman's fetched over £17,000. But Harold Wilson is the gold medalist—he got £250,000 from *Times* newspapers for his revelations.

The lifestyle and the circles in which Labour MPs move can become a thousand times removed from those of the average working family. Poor housing, unemployment, low pay, inadequate pensions, foul environment and such problems as NHS waiting lists, can be so remote that the reason for being sent to Parliament in the first place can soon be forgotten.

With the best will in the world, an MP, even with the strongest character, can soon cease to regard the struggle to change society as a burning question. It is no accident that the capitalist propaganda machine in Fleet Street constantly advocates higher pay for MPs in their 'responsible' positions!

As well as accountability to the labour movement all MPs must live on the

average pay of a skilled worker, plus genuine expenses vetted by the party. The remainder of their income from TV, memoirs, consultancies (where they are approved) should be donated to the Labour Party.

This would ensure that the grip of the careerists on the PLP, who spend their lives fighting against socialist ideas, can be broken. If the lure of high earnings was removed it would help to ensure that honest self-sacrificing people would come forward—not for high monetary reward, but to be in a position to elevate the whole struggle for socialism.

It is time we returned to the spirit and sacrifice of Keir Hardie. The Labour Party was created not to promote Parliamentary careers but to fight to transform society in the interests of working people.

By Tony Mulhearn
(PPC Liverpool Toxteth, President Liverpool Labour Party)

Euro-MPs, Euro-wages, Euro-perks

Top of the parliamentary earnings league must be Euro-MPs. They pick up a flat salary of £15,510, and on top of this receive an attendance allowance of £53 a day (more than a lot of NHS workers' weekly take-home pay).

Then there is the secretarial allowance of £18,887 a year. Working an average of 14 days a month, Euro-MPs can pick up around £42,301 a year or over £800 a week. Nice work if you can get it!

Then just in case malnutrition might undermine their ability to represent workers they are also entitled to a

lucrative extra in travelling expenses. A Euro-MP is entitled to a further flat rate of £217 a month to assist in journeying between home and Strasbourg.

On top of this an additional 31½p a mile for the first 248 miles is received and 16p for each subsequent miles. A trip from London to Strasbourg (831 miles) comes to £171.44 in expenses, plus £217 allowance. Not bad when the second class fare is only £112 return! Some crafty groups of MPs have seemingly been chartering a private plane to make an even greater profit.

Even if income from con-

sultancies, directorships, lobby-sponsors and TV/press royalties are excluded, then a Euro-MP's income comes to around a tasty £1,000 a week. One Labour peer, Lord Bramelow, obviously feeling a little embarrassed, thought the allowances "rather on the high side"!

Euro-MPs are wined and dined and taken on "business trips"—at taxpayers' expense for themselves and friends. In March last year 33 MPs and their hangers-on spent £3,360 on a trip to Africa. They travelled economy class but claimed first class air

fares.

They drank 50 bottles of champagne at £43 a bottle, 50 bottles of red wine at £14 a bottle, 20 of whisky at £38 each, £57 for mixers, and £33 worth of water. Well, Africa is a hot place. That leaves £200 for your flowers and cigars and, of course, a £760 service charge on top.

More recently it has been reported that the chief cashier of the European Parliament in charge of expenses was aware that some MPs creamed off vast expenses (quite legitimately). The 410 Euro-MPs have been receiving £1 million a month!



FIGHT THE TORIES NOT THE SOCIALISTS

The September 11th Labour Movement Conference at the Wembley Conference Centre promises to be the largest and most representative conference called in Britain in the recent period with the exception of the Labour Party conference itself.

In spite of the holiday period and in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions together with some erstwhile "left-wingers" there has been a colossal response from the rank and file of the movement itself.

Labour parties, shop stewards committees, young socialists branches, Labour party womens sections; from all corners of the Labour movement requests for delegates' credentials have poured in. Even before the conference was called about 300 CLPs had opposed the decision of the NEC to initiate a witch-hunt against Militant and the left within the movement.

A staggering total of 1,000 labour movement organisations have passed resolutions opposed to the witch-hunt. This conference will confirm that the great majority—80-90% of the workers in the Labour Parties and trade union branches—are implacably opposed to any attempt to expel Militant supporters from the labour movement.

The complete failure of the right-wing to fight the Tories has fuelled the opposition to the attempted witch-hunt. In fact their denigration of the left, of Tony Benn as well as Militant has supplied the bullets for the SDP traitors and the Tories to fire at the labour movement.

If one tenth of the energy directed against Militant was aimed at the Tories by the right-wing leaders of the Labour movement this government would have undoubtedly been brought down by now.

The measures of the Tory government since 1979 have opened a chasm between the classes in British society. There is a tremendous piling up of anger amongst the working class and even sections of the middle-class devastated by the crisis.

Strongholds battered by Thatcher

3.3 million workers in Britain have been thrown on the scrap-heap of unemployment. A million of these are now classified as the long-term unemployed, having been without a job for more than 12 months.

Nor is it just manual workers in the North of England or the West Midlands who have been put out on the stones. 15,000 graduates are incapable of finding work in Britain at the present time. Formerly safe preserves of the Tories in the South and South-West have been ravaged by unemployment.

Thus, in June of this year, Cornwall had an unemploy-

By Peter Taaffe

ment rate of 17.9%, which rose to 25.8% in the Tory Defence Minister's constituency of St. Ives! Nott's decision to quit at the next election will be due in no small measure to the fact that he could well have been kicked out anyway.

Similarly, Devon has an unemployment rate of 15.8% with 24.9% at Torbay. And, as the Times puts it, "Bournemouth with 14.1% unemployed is little better. Weston Super-mare, a Tory bastion, has 15.9%." Behind these statistics lies the grinding poverty which has grown spectacularly in Britain since 1979.

More than 11 million people now live below the of-

The right wing have moved heaven and earth to dilute Labour's programme...they have no fundamental difference with the SDP...Jenkins, Williams, Rodgers and Owen were the SDP class of '81. The Healeys, Hattersleys and Shores could be the SDP class of '84 or '85.

ficial poverty line. Since the Tories came to power one million more people have been added to those who receive supplementary benefit. Almost 5 million people in Britain earn less than £85.00 a week, while one and a quarter million earn less than £60.00 a week.

Earlier this year the Times gave an example of a home worker "who earned about £6.00 a week for working anything up to 40 hours. Her husband earned £85.00 a week as a maintenance fitter, so it was essential for her to work. She gave it up when the firm said it was paying her too much!"

A single unemployed person in Britain now receives £7.60p per week less than an old age pensioner!

These conditions reflect the devastating collapse of British capitalism which has been enormously aggravated by the measures of the Tory government. Thatcher promised a re-birth of the British economy.

Instead, production has slumped by more than 6%, manufacturing industry by almost a fifth, and British capitalism has been completely outstripped by its nearest rivals by even formerly backward Italy.

Thus, the productivity record of British capitalism does not measure up to Italy which exceeded Britain's Productivity growth by more than 68% in 1981.

The policies of the That-

cher government are largely determined by the long-term crisis of British capitalism. However, there undoubtedly is a conscious element in the strategy of Thatcher, Howe and Joseph: which sought to deliberately force "inefficient" industry, particularly manufacturing industry, to go to the wall.

In their delusions they expected that the gap left by manufacturing industry would be filled by services—banking, insurance, distribution etc. In this sense the Thatcher government has reflected the interests of finance capital, banks, insurance companies—the City of London—rather than the industrialists.

This is one of the factors in the antagonism between the Confederation of British Industry, in which the voice of industrial capital predominates, and the Thatcher government. The Tory government has forgotten the basic workings of their own system. The ultimate source of real production and real wealth lies in manufacturing industry.

The international market for service industry moreover is only one fifth the size of that for manufacturing industry

and the government were prepared to lock out the train drivers, a generalised mood developed. It was evident that the working class were prepared to come to the assistance of ASLEF, even if this involved action of a general strike character.

Add this to the record number of "small men and women", the small businesses celebrated in Tory folk lore, who have gone to the wall through bankruptcies in the past three years and we can see that the social reserves upon which the Tory party has rested in the past have been rapidly eaten away.

The working class for its part is at boiling point. This seems at first glance to be contradicted by the strike

Trade Union strength remains intact

statistics which in 1981 were at a 40 year low. Moreover, trade union membership dropped by a million.

The strategists of capital have used these statistics to indicate the alleged "unpopularity of the unions". The barrage of hate propaganda which is daily spewed out from the Fleet Street

Therefore along the road mapped out by Thatcher lies absolute catastrophe for British capitalism and also the working people of Britain.

Already manufacturing industry has been reduced to less than two fifths of the total "of the nations total output of goods and services." (Times 18th March '82). From being the "workshop of the world", Britain is now reduced to being a net importer of manufactured goods.

Working class is at boiling point

The open divisions within the ruling class are the most striking reflections of the crisis which exists in Britain, which is social and political as well as economic.

"Revolution starts from the top," Karl Marx pointed out. The middle-class is also in ferment.

Thus it is unprecedented for ordinary general practitioners, family doctors, and even surgeons to come out on the picket line in defence of nurses, hospitals, orderlies, etc. as has happened recently. At the same time, the medical profession's own "trade union"—the British Medical Association, through the medium of its journal Lancet, has accus-

press and the media has even had some effect on some sections of the trade union leadership itself, who have argued that the unions must adopt a low profile.

But the drop in trade union membership is accounted for almost entirely by the rise in unemployment. There has not been a massive exodus from the trade unions as was witnessed in the early 1920s.

On the contrary, sections of workers who have stood aside from the unions in the past have seen the need to become organised. White-collar workers and some of the most oppressed sections of the working class such as dinner ladies have joined unions like NUPE and NALGO, which as a consequence have actually experienced a growth in membership.

Against the background of mass and rising unemployment workers have been reluctant to take strike action or struggle against the impositions of the management. But at the same time their willingness to engage in a general struggle against the Tory government which is clearly seen as the chief bulwark of the local despots in the factories, the mini Edwardse's who have sprung up in British industry in the past three years, is quite evident.

Thus, at the time of the ASLEF dispute when it looked as though the BRB

and the government were prepared to lock out the train drivers, a generalised mood developed. It was evident that the working class were prepared to come to the assistance of ASLEF, even if this involved action of a general strike character.

If the General Council of the TUC would have remained firm in defence of ASLEF workers, a head-on confrontation between an aroused Labour movement on the one side and the government and the employers on the other could have developed. The right-wing trade union leaders and some on the left drew back from the prospect of such a struggle with the government.

However, the weaknesses of the trade union leadership will not forever be an insurmountable obstacle to the working class. Their agonies, the savage reductions in living standards, will compel them to move into action once they see a favourable opportunity to score a victory.

There has been a 40% increase in profits in the first quarter of this year. The number of millionaires in Britain has grown to 4,000; the only growth it seems which is taking place under this government!

The long promised upswing in the economy has been delayed by the continued world crisis of capitalism which has been re-inforced by the measures of the Reagan administration. This means that the British economy will probably grow this year by less than 1% compared to 1981, and by just under 2% in 1983.

But even if the economy "grows" it is anticipated that unemployment will continue to rise, reaching an official figure of 4 million—in reality almost 5 million—by the end of 1983. Thus a General Election is likely to be called against the background of mass and rising unemployment.

However, the working class will seize on the growth in profits and even a limited upswing in the economy as the opportunity to recapture the ground that has been lost in the last three years. The more sober representatives of capitalism in the Financial Times have warned their class that this could result in a strike wave that could put in the shade the upheavals of 1970-74.

The return of a new Labour government

At the same time the working class will be eagerly looking for the opportunity to bring down this Tory government and bring to power a new Labour government. Notwithstanding the opinion polls, which are continuously slanted to underestimate the basic support for Labour, the most likely outcome of a General Election is the return of a Labour government, possibly a minority Labour government.

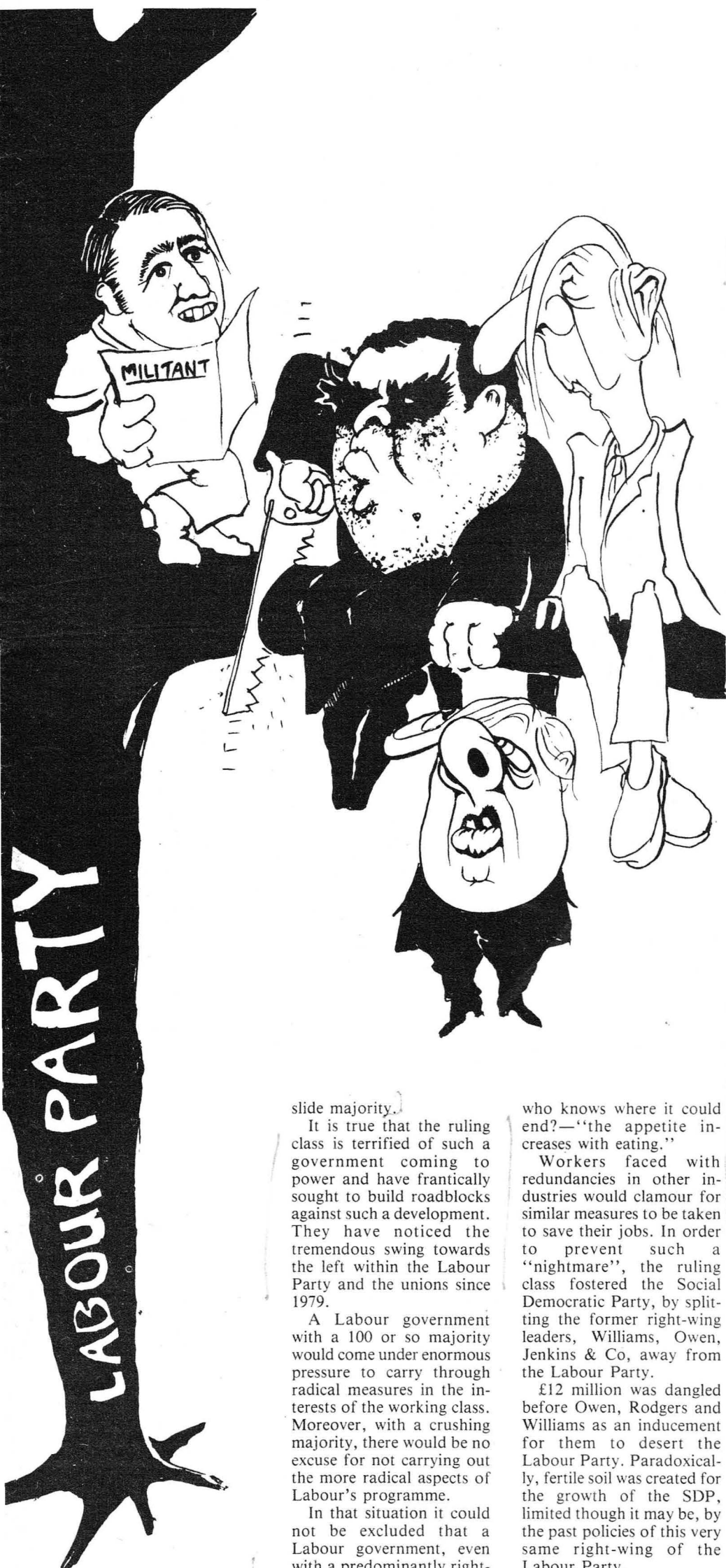
Yet it is a crushing

Th in



criticism of the record and policies of the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party, that after three years of the

The witch hunt perspective



Tory vandals in power we cannot automatically assume that a Labour government will be returned with a land-

slide majority.

It is true that the ruling class is terrified of such a government coming to power and have frantically sought to build roadblocks against such a development. They have noticed the tremendous swing towards the left within the Labour Party and the unions since 1979.

A Labour government with a 100 or so majority would come under enormous pressure to carry through radical measures in the interests of the working class. Moreover, with a crushing majority, there would be no excuse for not carrying out the more radical aspects of Labour's programme.

In that situation it could not be excluded that a Labour government, even with a predominantly right-wing cabinet, could be compelled to nationalise maybe one or two profitable industries. Once this happens

who knows where it could end?—"the appetite increases with eating."

Workers faced with redundancies in other industries would clamour for similar measures to be taken to save their jobs. In order to prevent such a "nightmare", the ruling class fostered the Social Democratic Party, by splitting the former right-wing leaders, Williams, Owen, Jenkins & Co, away from the Labour Party.

£12 million was dangled before Owen, Rodgers and Williams as an inducement for them to desert the Labour Party. Paradoxically, fertile soil was created for the growth of the SDP, limited though it may be, by the past policies of this very same right-wing of the Labour Party.

There is mass disillusionment with the Tory government. But there is also profound disenchantment with

the past policies of right-wing Labour governments.

In the last 35 years we've had 17 years of right-wing Labour governments, and the conditions of the working people have immeasurably worsened. Even the National Health Service one of the major conquests of the Labour government of 1945-48, has been undermined; there are now less beds in the NHS than in 1948!

SDP promoted as a safety net

Without the intervention of the SDP, millions of Tory voters threatened to swing over to support a left and radicalised Labour Party. The SDP was therefore created as a safety net.

The right-wing now have the gall to accuse the Left, and particularly the marxists, of not wanting to see the return of a Labour government. Their portrayal of the alleged standpoint of the Left can be more accurately applied to themselves.

In reality, for the right-wing, a Labour government with a crushing majority would be the worst possible outcome of the next general election. Far better to be a minority government similar to the SPD in Germany whose leaders use the fig-leaf of its coalition with the FDP (the German Liberals) as an excuse for not carrying out the party's programme.

The right-wing reason that a coalition, albeit an unofficial one similar to the Lib-Lab pact of 1977-78, would be less trouble than a Labour government with a crushing majority. This perspective of a minority, or coalition government, is organically linked to the witch-hunt. By expelling Militant supporters and thereby hopefully silencing others on the Left, the right-wing calculate that they will inoculate such a government against the criticism of the rank and file of the movement.

When it was suggested by Tony Benn that the aim of the right-wing was a coalition with the SDP/Liberal Alliance, Michael Foot rejected the charge with indignation. Yet Denis Healey in the Labour Party's theoretical magazine "New Socialist" argued that such a coalition with the Liberal/SDP alliance was possible.

Moreover, former Party leader, James Callaghan, the witch-hunter general himself, linked the expulsion of Militant, the closure of the Labour Party Young Socialists etc., to the idea of a coalition. However, even if a minority Labour government comes to power, this will not at all repeat the ex-

perience of 1974-79.

From the outset it will come under pressure to go much further in carrying through policies in the interests of the working class.

The counter pressure of the capitalists will be reflected through the present right-wing leaders who are calling for action to be taken against Militant.

At a certain stage the right-wing would not hesitate to stab the Labour movement in the back and form an open coalition—that is, a National government like in 1931—with the SDP/Liberal traitors together with the Tories or a section of the Tory party. The right-wing leaders who have remained within the Labour party have no fundamental differences with the SDP.

In the language of military terminology Jenkins, Williams, Rodgers, Owen, etc. were the SDP class of '81. The Healeys, the Hattersleys, and Shores could be the SDP class of '84 or '85.

They could desert a Labour government and go over to the SDP. One thing is absolutely clear. They are incapable of answering the needs and solving the problems of the British working class.

They have moved heaven and earth to delete even the demand to nationalise the banks and insurance companies from Labour's programme.

Their proposals on the economy for reforms on living standards, which will be supported by the whole of the labour movement, cannot possibly be solved within the framework of diseased and rotting British capitalism.

We support all struggles for reforms such as the 35-hour week, a massive increase of public expenditure; a minimum wage of £90 etc. However, experience has demonstrated that no lasting reforms are possible within the confines of British capitalism.

On the contrary, the spokesmen of capitalism have called for further cuts

in living standards, with the CBI director Beckett recently calling for "nil" wage increases to become "permanent".


The unused capacity in British Industry—idle factories, offices, plant, machinery could alone generate £70 billion worth of extra wealth. This would give an extra £25 a week to every man, woman and child in Britain.

Socialist Plan would use idle capacity

But capitalism is incapable of using the resources created by the labour of the working class. Only a socialist plan of production, involving the nationalisation of the 200 monopolies with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, drawn up democratically and implemented by committees involving shop stewards, trade unions, small businessmen and housewives, can begin to solve the problems of the British working class.

It is the fear of this programme gaining an echo within the Labour movement that motivates the desperate campaign to force Militant out of the Labour Party. This campaign is doomed to failure. No organisational means will be capable of separating Marxism from the Labour Party in Britain.

The September 11th Conference can demonstrate the preparedness, indeed the determination, of the rank and file to ensure this. At the same time it can re-affirm the socialist aspirations of the movement and prepare the ground for transforming the Labour Party in Britain into a fighting socialist Labour Party. This alone can ensure, not only the defeat of the Tories, but the eradication of the system which has resulted in such untold misery for millions of working people in Britain today.



CIA INfiltration of the Labour Movement

How has the American CIA infiltrated Western labour movements? Where do Labour's right-wing organisations get their secret funds? These questions are taken up by Militant's latest pamphlet (£1 post free).

Send cash with orders to
World Books,
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INDIA; NEW CENSOR -SHIP THREAT

By our Calcutta correspondent

Unemployment, inflation, fall in production, corruption and nepotism, rapid impoverishment of the Indian population, and regional and linguistic chauvinistic movements have converted India into a veritable inferno.

The centrifugal forces let loose by the crisis has resulted in a bloody confrontation between the working class and the ruling capitalist class, and acute inner conflict within the capitalist class.

This phenomenon has made the dominant sections of the capitalist class monopoly industrialists and kulaks scared and impatient. They have realised that even the minimum democratic rights enjoyed by the people, are no longer compatible with their survival.

So, the ruling Congress (I) Party has started a systematic operation to shackle the vast majority. The first steps in this direction were the enactment of NSA (National Security Act) and ESMA (Essential Service Maintenance Act).

Trying to crush trade unions

Both are aimed to crush trade-union movements and gag the voices of those who dare to protest. These acts have been followed by "Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill" (passed) and "Hospitals and other Institutions Bill, 1982" which is on the anvil.

All these laws have armed the government with legal sanctions to carry on its attacks on the toiling mass.

The opposition capitalist parties fearing for their own political rights, and for the longer term survival of capitalism, are seeking to defuse the explosive situation they have taken up the cudgel against Congress (I).

The left parties dominated by the Communist Parties with the policy of 'Popular Frontism' are failing to come out with any radical alternative, but simply giving credibility to the opposition cliques by flaunting the slogan 'Left and Democratic Unity'.

There is an uproar against Congress (I). The press has become the principal medium to vent this clamour especially since its harsh experiences during the period of the Emergency when there was a rigid censorship. So the leading national and regional newspapers, journals, etc., have started to bring to light the failings of Congress (I) dominated governments, both at the Centre and in the states.

Many sordid facts relating to corruption and other nefarious activities have come to light. These revelations are helping people to perceive the vile nature of the ruling class.

This naturally is becoming a source of grave concern to the ruling class. This fall-out effect of the intra-capitalist conflict has attracted the wrath of the ruling party towards the press. So the ruling party has started imposing sanctions on the press.

The government at the centre has floated the idea of disciplining the press, on the specious ground of putting a check on "yellow-journalism"! The Information and Broadcasting Minister has already informed Parliament that the Press Council will be asked to see whether it can codify what constitutes journalistic ethics, the breach of which would be punishable.

This is a clear attempt to put the press under the straight-jacket control of the ruling party. This signal beamed from the centre has been taken up by the Congress (I)—run State Governments.

The Bihar State government, has been facing scathing attack, for its monstrous corruption. The Chief Minister of Bihar, being threatened from within the party could no longer countenance the exposures of the press. So, in a bid to gag the press the Bihar Government has passed "Indian Penal Code (Bihar Amendment)" and the "Criminal Procedure" Bills.

These bills are in fact intended to put draconian restraints on the functioning of the press. Although their avowed purpose is to punish newspapers for publishing "indecent and scurrilous matter," the real purpose is that the press should publish only what is palatable to the ruling party.

Rely more on brute force

But the Bihar Press Bill has opened Pandora's box. The opposition has condemned the Press Bill as a "black Bill".

Even a section within the ruling party is not favourably disposed towards it. Mr Mool Chand Daga, a Congress (I) MP pointed out that the state was bound to guarantee fundamental freedoms under Article 19 of the Constitution.

Congress(I) dissidents within the Bihar Legislative Party had unanimously requested the Prime Minister to send an observer to assess the "damage which the Press Bill introduced by Dr Jabgannath Mishra has caused to the party in Bihar". Even the State Ministerial Association of Bihar has condemned the

Bill by characterising it as an instrument of repression against those who exposed misdeeds and corruption.

All the opposition parties have opposed the Bill vehemently. Students, teachers, workers, lawyers, politicians, state government employees and journalists have launched a movement to scrap it.

The whole of Bihar is against the Bill. 'The Statesman' in its editorial (August 11, 1982) has commented, "But New Delhi's ready acquiescence suggests that while the Union Government may not be prepared to invite obloquy by reimposing curbs, it is not averse to the introduction of

Volatile situation

such restrictions through the backdoor and on a regional basis... It would appear that New Delhi's tactic is to continue to make soothing noises while the actual dirty work is delegated to some Chief Ministers who have their own local axes to grind".

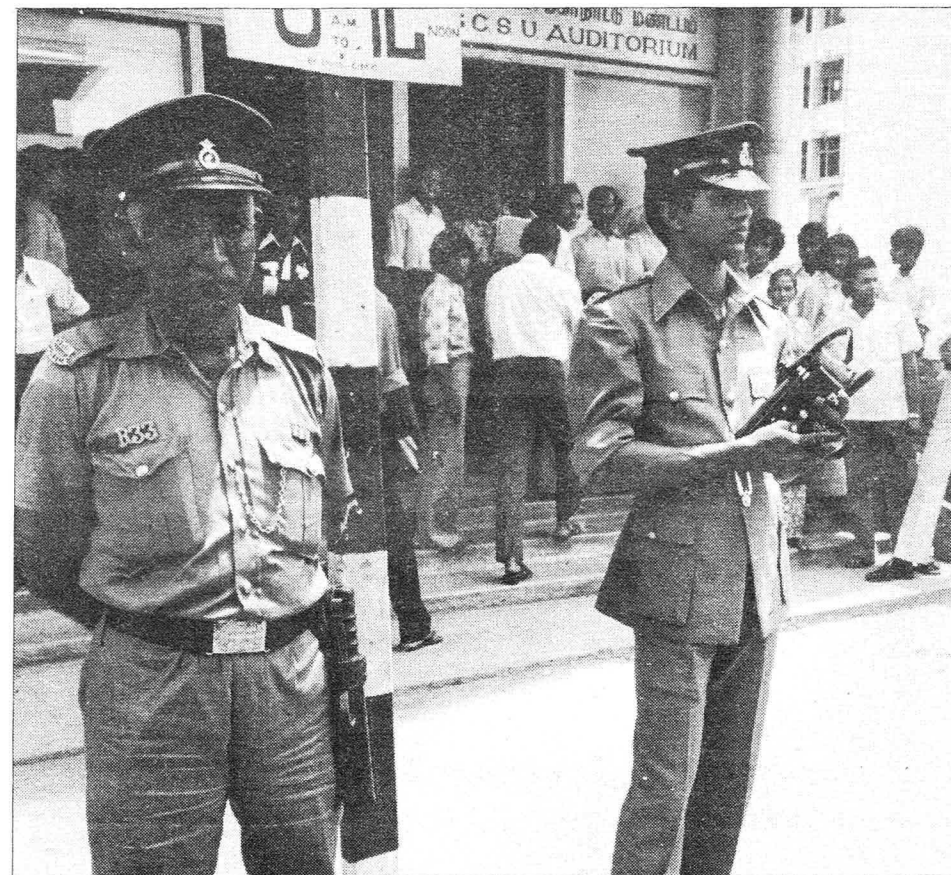
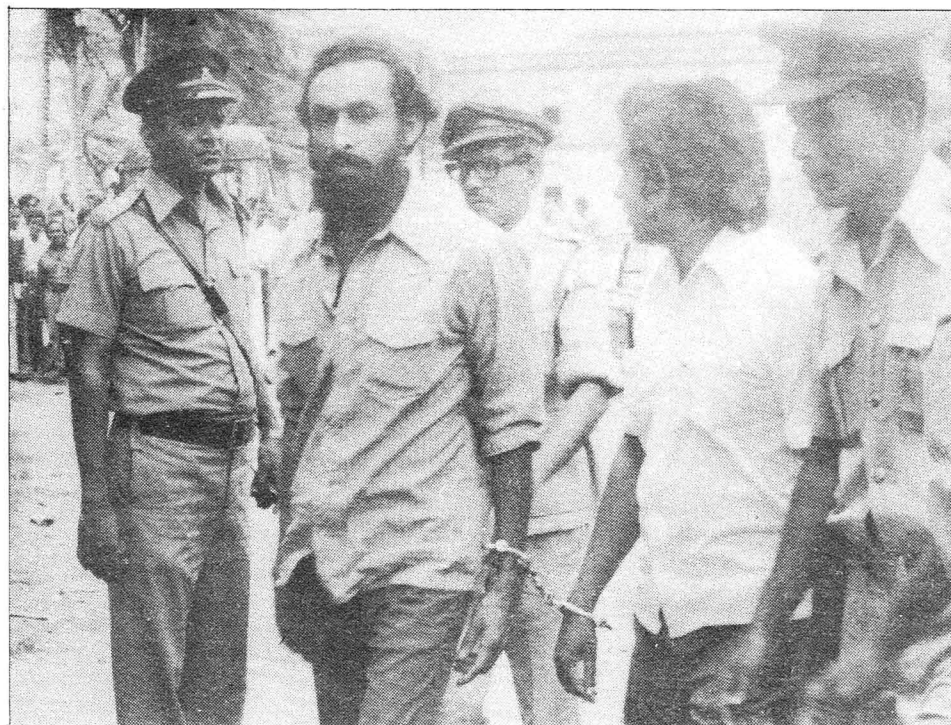
As a matter of fact, the Bihar Press Bill has aggravated the inter-and intra-class conflict. The ruling party is gradually realizing that the present situation will not permit the re-imposition of Emergency, even if disguised with legal trappings.

The Bihar Press Bill once more confirms the fact that the ruling party is fast losing its social base, and more and more relying on brute force to keep itself in power. But even this is meeting with stiff opposition from the toiling mass, though at present joined by a section of the bourgeoisie who have their own axe to grind.

Failing to get solid support in society, the state apparatus is hard-pressed to overcome opposition, and is forced to try measures which are further damaging its position. This volatile situation has created the objective condition to rally the masses to bring about socialist change.

Unfortunately, the left parties are not prepared to take full advantage of the situation, and are therefore responsible for the lingering volatility of the Indian situation, with all its attendant agony and misery for the Indian population.

STOP PRESS: On 3 September journalists throughout India staged a 24-hour protest against the Bihar Press Bill. The strike was virtually total, with journalists in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi backing the protest. The two main domestic news agencies closed for the day, and in Bombay 500 journalists marched through the commercial centre in protest against the Bill.



Vasudeva Nanayakkara, President of the country's largest urban trade union federation, is standing in the Octover election for President of Sri Lanka. (Top) His arrest during the 1980 General Strike (Vasu on left). (Above) Police fail to shut down main Civil Service Union during strike, because of 4,000 workers defending the headquarters. Photos: Militant

Early elections in Sri Lanka

President J R Jayawardena, the reactionary union-basher of Sri Lanka, has called a snap Presidential Election for 20 October.

Although the Parliamentary elections are not due until 1983 and the Presidential contest the following year, JR has pulled this manoeuvre of an unexpected poll while the opposition is divided and unprepared. He himself declared that in this race his right-wing United National Party would be the only horse with a jockey.

And he should know; it was he himself who unmounted his main rival, former Prime Minister Mrs Bandaranaike of the liberal Sri Lanka Freedom Party, by denying her civic rights and barring her from contesting for office.

JR has had more success in removing a potential contestant from the TULF, the biggest of the parties securing the votes of the Tamil-speaking minority. Led by Tamil capitalists, the opportunist political bosses of this party have declared they will not put forward a candidate, clearly in the dubious hope that by being nice to JR he will reciprocate. Thus the fate of the Tamil workers,

peasants and shopkeepers is being handed over to the worst Sinhalese chauvinist under whose rule these people have suffered horrific bloody pogroms.

With pressure mounting from the IMF and with the effects of the world recession biting deeply, the representatives of big business interests have to take an even stronger control over the economy and society, to crush any opposition to their measures. After blatantly fiddling the constitution several times since the last election, parliamentary democracy has in reality been destroyed and replaced with a constitutional bonapartist military-police dictatorship.

If the oppressed Tamil people can't trust their treacherous political leaders, neither can the Sinhalese workers and peasants place their faith in the capitalist SLFP, which itself turned army guns on striking bank and transport workers when it was in power. Only a government of the workers can guarantee democratic rights, a restoration of living standards and the development of the economy for the benefit of all through a socialist plan of production.

Unfortunately the narrow self-interest of the leaders of several workers' parties is

preventing the emergence of one candidate of a united left. The Communist Party is simply standing aside and giving support to the 'liberal' representatives of the ruling class, the SLFP. The group around Colvin Da Silva has also refused to present a common socialist candidate.

Therefore the socialist Nava Samasamaja Party has nominated the President of the largest urban trade union federation, the United Federation of Labour, as the workers' champion. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, a former Samasamaja Member of Parliament, will be well known to trade unionists in Britain and Europe as one of the key figures in the 1980 general strike.

Currently he is striving to build the maximum unity among all trade unionists in Sri Lanka through the work of the Committee for Workers' Unity. Hopefully this goal will come nearer in the course of this election campaign which will be fought on the democratic and economic issues affecting the exploited people of Sri Lanka.

By Brent Kennedy
(British Representative,
United Federation
of Labour)

P.L.O evacuation — — seeds of further turmoil

At a recent conference of world oil experts, the 'Financial Times' reported, there was a straw poll taken to see what they thought would cause the next big 'oil shock'.

21 per cent of them thought it would come about by a revolution in Saudi Arabia and a further 13 per cent from a new war in the Middle East.

The estimations of these oil experts gives a very good indication of the thinking behind the latest US peace initiative in the region. There has been no sudden revelation for Reagan; the region is on a knife-edge.

The social and political crisis in the Arab states has threatened for some time to spill over into open revolution, in the manner of Iran. The general instability which was enormously heightened by the Iran-Iraq war, has now been even further exacerbated by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the humiliation of the PLO and Syria.

More than anything else, the American State Department is seeking some means of defusing the crisis of the Palestinian people, in the hope of heading off a disaster, not only for Israel, but also for Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the other Arab states.

Despite the rhetoric of the PLO leaders, it is clear that even their own rank and file look upon the recent events as a major defeat. Many PLO fighters have drawn bitter conclusions from the lack of support given to them by the various Arab governments who were always so fond of trumpeting their undying support of the Palestinian people.

Being evacuated from Beirut, one fighter exhorted some women to stop crying: "Save your tears," he said, "Save your tears for the Arab leaders." "We are go-

By John
Pickard

ing to push Israel aside for five years," said another, "...and clean up the Arab world. All our rulers are traitors. (23.8.82, 'Guardian').

The PLO defeat will scatter the seeds of revolution around the Middle East like a plague. As the State Department is no doubt aware, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians work in the Gulf States.

But it is one thing for the rank and file PLO fighter to condemn the Arab regimes, as an expression of anger and despair.

It is another for Arafat, who talked in terms of Arab "impotence" and "treason", promising "one earthquake after another" in the Arab world. Because it was through the policies and methods of Arafat and the PLO leaders that the Palestinian struggle was for so long tied to the most reactionary Arab states.

The PLO leadership always fawned on the money and patronage of the Arab regimes, who, in return, were more than happy to see PLO policies tied to a purely national struggle that eschewed all class questions. Arafat may shout "victory" after the new US initiative apparently recognises Palestinian rights, but, in reality, 15 years have been lost. 15 years during which the Palestinian leadership carefully avoided the banner of the Arab social revolution, and the need of common struggle of Palestinian masses and the other Arab masses.

Marxists warned many times during that period of



Demonstration in London during Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Photo: Mark Risher (IFL)

the enormous danger of betrayal inherent in any association with or reliance upon the reactionary Arab rulers, and time and again those rulers have, indeed, betrayed the Palestinian masses.

In the social and political crisis in Jordan in 1970, a PLO leadership with a Marxist programme and perspective could have overthrown King Hussein, but the crisis led instead to the massacre of the Palestinian militias in 'Black September'. The same monarch now has the gall to welcome Palestinian evacuees at the airport in Amman, Jordan.

Similarly in Lebanon in 1976. The civil war which erupted there was based primarily on the social crisis

within Lebanon itself, and no matter how much it became overlaid with national and religious antagonisms, could have been the basis of a mass socialist movement, mobilising the mass of Lebanese, and alongside them, the mass of Palestinians.

The Palestinian militias were caught up in the civil war—but not before Arafat had tried to steer clear, on the grounds that the Palestinians were only "guests" in Lebanon. When the civil war did seem to be going the way of a Palestinian/Lebanese Left victory, it was the Palestinians' 'ally' Syria who gave arms to the right-wing Phalangists and sent their regular army units to bombard Palestinian camps into a bloody surrender. Even to-

day, it has been reported, there is Saudi Arabian money behind the new Phalangist President Gemayel.

The reactionary Arab leaders have never been remotely concerned about the interests of the Palestinian masses, any more than they have been concerned about their own workers and peasants. By building up the Sadats, King Husseins and Co., as the 'friends' of the Palestinian masses, the PLO leaders have for years disarmed and weakened the Palestinian movement.

The struggle for Palestinian emancipation is as much a struggle against Arab reaction as it is against Zionism.

Scattering the PLO around the Arab world will,

in effect, destroy what little political independence the various sections of the PLO had, as the host Arab governments will make sure that the returning heroes, after a suitable welcome, will be put firmly under state control. "We might get a heroes' welcome in Damascus—although I doubt it," commented one Palestinian journalist, "but then we shall be marched off to barracks. As good as prison."

Arafat's decision to go himself to Tunisia—1,200 miles from Palestine—is a tacit admission that the Tunisian government will allow him a somewhat greater degree of freedom because it is not directly involved like the states immediately bordering Palestine.

But despite the leadership of the Palestinian movement, the Arab governments are now afraid of the fall-out of the war in Lebanon.

The imperialist powers of the USA and the EEC, no less afraid for the stability of their oil and other interests, are pushing for some agreement between Israel and Jordan to grant 'autonomy' to the West Bank and Gaza, in the hope of defusing one of the greatest de-stabilising factors in the Middle East, the Palestinian issue.

But they will fail. The Reagan plan will become unstuck. Even if it were endorsed by the Hussein regime—with the West Bank and Gaza 'associated' with Jordan, his army would have to police a large and unstable Palestinian population—it is not going to get the backing of the Israeli ruling class.

It will be necessary, in the end, for the intervention of the mass of the Arab workers and peasants, along with the Israeli working class, to bring about fundamental social change in the area to sweep away Arab and Israeli capitalism, to create the conditions for a genuine resolution of the national contradictions, by a socialist federation of Middle East states.

SOUTH AFRICAN DOCKERS TAKE ON GOVERNMENT

The go slow by 1,000 black dockworkers in Port Elizabeth marks a major step in what could become a historic clash between an independent union and a state employer.

Private companies have already been forced to recognise stevedores organised by the General Workers Union (GWU) in several ports. The stevedores realising the importance of solidarity then had the idea of organising dockers employed by the South African Transport Services (SATS) which controls the state-owned railways and ports. Over 1,100 SATS dockworkers are now members of the GWU.

However, management, who have been supported publicly by the Minister of Transport, have refused to negotiate with the GWU and instead deal with the in-company Black Staff Association (BSA) which the SATS General Manager ad-

By Jim
Byrne

mits is a 'sweethearts union.' Even after workers have left the staff association, SATS continues to deduct dues for them whilst pursuing a 'reign of terror' against union members on the docks.

Dozens have been 'held for questioning,' intimidated, and even tortured. The chairman of the workers' committee in Port Elizabeth, after working for SATS for 13 years, was fired on 24 hours notice.

A bosses' journal has warned of the explosiveness of a collision between SATS and the GWU: "Not only is it the country's single largest employer of labour, but because of the vital service it provides, any labour conflict within it can have a profound effect on the economy as a whole." (Financial Mail 23/8/82)

South Africa is heavily dependent on world trade, importing, for example, 90% of the machinery needed for production. What is more, the dockworkers have historically played an important role in the struggle of all the oppressed for liberation in South Africa.

This is why other employers like Fords, have pleaded with the SATS management to negotiate with the GWU and stave off a confrontation which could close the ports. They are further afraid of the support for the GWU dockers expressed by the 6 million strong International Transport Workers Union). In the United States the International Longshoremen's Association have also demanded that the SATS bosses recognise the GWU.

Dockworkers in Britain can play a vital role in strengthening the organisation of South African dockworkers and the whole struggle for workers' rule by



South African dockers with white management supervisor. Messages of support to address below taking up the call of their International and rendering ever possible assistance to the GWU. Messages of support to: General Workers Union, Benbow Building, Beveridge Street, Athlone, Cape Province, South Africa.

Letters

IEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES? CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

An answer to 'Marxism Today'

Dear Comrades
In an article supposedly opposed to the witch-hunt, the August edition of 'Marxism Today', the theoretical journal of the Communist Party, carried a polemical attack entitled 'The Politics of the Militant Tendency'.

The method used was both simple and familiar—snatch a few facts and quotations out of context, or out of thin air, fabricate them into the structure you wish to demolish and then wade into the attack, thus giving aid and comfort to Labour's right.

It is sad that this supposedly "left" party has had to resort to the tactics we expect from the right, thus totally discrediting the sentiments of the last sentence of the article, "Politics not witch-hunts must be the order of the day."

Let's take just one example. The article states that in 'Militant' there was a

"silence on the Falklands war which, given the context, was tantamount to support for the Task Force." Ignoring the article in the June 1982 edition of 'Militant International Review', the pamphlet 'Falklands Crisis—a Socialist Answer' and numerous speakers at meetings, let's see what appeared in the paper itself.

Ignoring headlines, photographs, captions and cartoons, issues 596 to 607, covering the period 9 April to 25 June (excluding issue 601—I have mislaid my copy) carried the following volume of text (in column inches) (see table below):

Some silence!
Not a word of "support" for the Task Force can be found in these 'Militant' articles. Instead there is something which seems beyond the Communist Party these days, a socialist answer.

Yours comradely
Angela Anderson

Subject	Total	Average per issue
Direct political and military issues	648	59
Argentina—internal situation	231	21
Wider related issues	311	28
Incl:		
Latin America	40	
US policy in Latin America	37	
Fascism	88	
	1190	108



Families welcome home soldiers from the Task Force. But now all the press-inspired "war hysteria" is over, the Tories' real attitude to servicemen can be seen by the bosses' treatment of merchant seamen, some of whom are still in the South Atlantic

Exploitation in the forces

Dear Comrades
I read in the 'Guardian' last week that some of the sailors still on the Falklands are threatening to take industrial action over the stopping of bonus payments. Although as a socialist I could never support a capitalist war, I am sym-

pathetic with these sailors isolated in first world war conditions. Most of them are no doubt 17-19 year old working class youth who joined the forces from a stretch on the dole, attracted by the constant TV and poster adverts of a "career" in the forces which all imply that the last thing you would have to do is fight in a war. They surely now must be sick to the back teeth of the

Tories who, without regard to safety or survival, sent them out to an Atlantic winter, cut their wages, and left them to do gruelling work.

Given their isolation, it must be almost impossible for them to carry out industrial action and win their claim. I think the TUC and Labour Party should take some action on their behalf, because although I would

have a lot of arguments with a young soldier, he has more in common with me than with the Tories or those elite officers. A show of support might even be a step towards 'Militant's' call for unionisation of the armed forces.

Yours fraternally
A Marshall
Norwich

Unemployed defrauded

Dear Sir
I recently became redundant and am unemployed for the first time. Having paid my contributions for over 40 years, I registered my claim for unemployment benefit.

After a lapse of nearly three weeks, I have received a cheque for the princely sum of £45 (two weeks' benefit). I do not get paid for the first three days (although I do not recall being excused paying the first three days of my contributions!).

Furthermore I do not receive any Earnings Related supplement, which surely is akin to fraud as I have been compelled to contribute to this scheme since its inception. The point at issue is: what action is the PLP or the TUC prepared to take in this connection? The answer appears to be, "none".

Is it any wonder that this shoddy, cheap-jack government is forever flexing its muscles? It probably considers that it has nothing to beat.

Yours faithfully
John Charles
Liverpool

A warning

Dear Comrades
I was surprised when a relative of mine, a train driver and member of ASLEF who is usually far from militant approached me with these statements, "The TUC sold us out! Who is this guy Sidney Weighell, and does he really represent NUR?"

"My hours are bad enough, without turning the

clock back and making them worse!" He learns like us all through the process of struggle.

As an ex-employee of Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive I remember the change from bus driver and conductor, who generally worked an early or late shift to One Man Operated buses, where the driver now generally works a spread-over shift, covering part of the morning peak traffic and also some of the early evening peak traffic.

Result: workers who only work and sleep (recreation hours are split up during the day in two or three useless long breaks). For the public a dearer, slower, less reliable service.

British Rail workers beware. This is their intention for you.

Yours fraternally
Denis McCluskey

Back street surgery?

Dear Comrades
In Bristol a private hospital, 'The Chesterfield', is making a bomb out of long waiting lists. Their charge for three days in hospital for a minor 20 to 30 minute operation amounts to £500!

But even if you could afford such a price there is no guarantee of good treatment. Recently I was horrified to hear of a man, not particularly well off, who had waited for some time in pain for a hernia operation (in Bristol the average wait is about two years).

Eventually he decided to spend his savings on a

private operation at the Chesterfield, but could only afford to stay in one night after the operation. Three days later he was rushed to Southmead General Hospital as an emergency.

He was in such a mess that he had to undergo an emergency operation on the NHS to put things right. Private medicine not only means queue jumping for the rich, but it also means a wholesale deterioration of standards and procedures.

'Back-street' abortions were a product of Tory laws restricting abortion. How long before Tory cuts reduce much health care and routine operations to a 'back-street' industry too?

Fraternally
Sue Beckingham
Bristol SE LP

British Rail threaten eviction

Dear Comrades
I was amazed when 'Militant' readers on the Hayes Railway Estate told us how low the British Rail Board were prepared to stoop during the ASLEF dispute.

Not only were rail drivers threatened with the sack if their action went on but families of drivers living in BR rented property were threatened with losing their homes! In our area due to local and national Tory policy on council housing, there would be no easy alternative and private racketeers can charge what they like for a room.

It is a compliment to the determination of the drivers that they were prepared to struggle on despite intimidation. Compare their attitude

(and that of the drivers' wives and kids) to that of the TUC leaders who forced the strike to be called off.

Yours fraternally
Martin Craxton
Hayes and Harlington
Labour Party

What do you do in practice?

Comrades,
I had a friend come round tonight, scared and distraught from the threat of an angry husband. He was a gardener, sent for only two jobs in over two years of unemployment.

He seems to have reached the end of his tether and has spent the day beating her up and scaring their three young children. What do I do with her - this strong and beautiful woman?

I gave her some wine, some coffee, a cigarette, and a cuddle. I told her some things Trotsky said, I told her of our fight for a better life for all - not just women. And she just cried tears of despair, listening, but not believing.

In the end I was reduced to phoning the Samaritans for her and settling her for a talk with them - feeling my inadequacy sharply.

Comrades, tell me, I understand the theory - but tell me, how do I tackle the practical when it confronts me, in all its' horror, on the doorstep at 10.30pm on a Wednesday night?

M.Pracy
Brighton

Stop the BT rip-off

Dear Comrades
The Tories intend to sell off British Telecomms to their friends in big business who can see enormous profits from the industry.

The Tories use as their excuse the desire to spread the ownership of BT as widely as possible by selling small blocks of shares only to "British nationals". BT is already owned by "British nationals" although the vast majority of them have no say in how the business is run or what services are provided.

When British Aerospace was sold off last year the number of small shareholders with less than a hundred shares fell by 93% from 44,000 to 3,300 in only ten

Doing the bosses' dirty work

Dear Militant
I read with interest the letter from J Griffiths on greater democracy in the unions.

In my own branch of the Post Office union (UCW) the union have taken the whole responsibility for devising a scheme called IWM (Improved Working Methods). This has entailed a cut in the real number of jobs at our offices although management have promised no redundancy for two years at least.

We now receive a bonus payment (about £5 to date) but IWM (remember what it stands for) has resulted in more difficult working conditions and a significant rise

months, the shares being accumulated by large concerns with vested interests.

The POEU must organise with the other unions involved a one day stoppage of all BT staff to demonstrate opposition to these proposals.

We must secure the future of the industry by campaigning for a Labour government committed to extending public ownership under workers' control over all sections of the economy and renationalising any areas hived off by the Tories with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.

Then workers' jobs will be safe and services provided for the needs of the community rather than the profits of a few.

Yours fraternally
M S England
POEU Leeds Int.

in stress put on individuals by management. Any complaints are met by the comment: "IWM was devised by your union and you voted for it."

Needless to say I didn't but it is interesting to see how management can manipulate some unions to do their dirty work for them. It is astounding that union leaders can take part in an exercise which cuts real jobs and devise a policy where there is no redress to management.

Such individuals are the silent enemies of the left wing and we must give them as much attention as the capitalists of capitalism.

Yours
Geoffrey Adams
Derby

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Oct 9th.
Eastern	964		2,000
East Midlands	568		1,800
Hants & Dorset	592		1,300
Humberside	463		1,100
London East	672		2,100
London West	300		1,000
London South	1,020		1,500
Manchester & Lancs	782		2,000
Merseyside	865		2,100
Northern	641		2,500
Scotland East	346		1,300
Scotland West	389		2,300
Southern	650		1,700
South West	244		900
Wales East	127		1,000
Wales West	1,491		2,000
West Midlands	675		2,000
Yorkshire	770		2,500
Others	1,469		3,900
Total received	13,010		35,000

ads

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

MILITANT meetings

WASHINGTON Marxist Discussion Groups: 15 September: 'Is Russia Socialist?' 22 September: 'Parliamentary Road to socialism—is it possible?' 29 September: 'The State'. 6 October: 'The Transitional Programme'. 13 October: 'The Marxist View of Terrorism and Violence'. Further information, tel. Washington 478424.

GATESHEAD and surrounding area: Marxist discussion group held every Sunday evening. All those interested please contact Tom McGuinness, 18 Lumley Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. Tel. Gateshead 783262

MERTHYR TYDFIL: Tuesday 21 September, 7.30 pm, Miners Hall (Lesser Hall). Speaker: Alec Thraves (AUEW)

WASHINGTON: 'Which Way Forward for Labour? Witch-hunts or socialist policies'. Speaker: Dave Cotterill. At Columbia Community Association, 26 September, 7.30 pm. Further information tel. Washington 478424.

ASHINGTON Marxist discussion group. Sunday 26 September: 'Tribune's Alternative Economic Strategy'. The Ladies Room, Ashington Leisure Centre. 10.30 am

ESTON: 'Save Jobs—Labour to Power' at 7.30 pm on Thursday 16 September. Speaker: Margaret Reavey. At Eston Hotel, Fabian Road, Eston.

POPLAR Marxist discussion group. Each Sunday night. Ring Dave Farrar, 515 2001.

£4,400 NEEDED EACH WEEK

This week's total of just over £2,600 has been assisted by a £1,000 surplus from the South Wales Militant Summer Camp organisers, in addition to the collection of £325 (plus IOUs.)

Now that the holidays are over and Labour Parties and Trade Union branches are beginning to meet regularly, our cash flow is increasing. But don't let that discourage you! There have been meetings in Fleetwood, Stirling, Carlisle, Blyth, Wigan, and Wakefield, with discussion groups from Towbridge to Sunderland.

We're now getting more official donations from Trade Union branches—(eg thanks to ASTMS Branch 754 this week) and workers still at work, or on picket lines are giving their spare change to our funds, as are members at TU weekly meetings. We should mention Air India pickets and South Shields members of the Boilermakers Society.

Do you know anyone at work who might be interested in reading Militant? Show them the fighting fund column, and explain that whereas most of the mass circulation papers depend on advertising to break even, we depend on our readers!

Thanks also to Stockton LPYS, Newham North-West Womens section, and members of Eccleshill Labour Party, Bradford for their contributions.

Brighton supporters have done well this week, boosting our funds by £155! Thanks to the sponsored walkers, and those at the Militant meeting.

Individual contributions included: £100 from a supporter in Wearside, North Glasgow supporters £90 from jumble, disco and donations, and Militant Photographer (£100). But the bulk, as always, of our finances has been provided by the large number of small contributions rather than a small number of large contributions.

Thanks to an East Ham reader for hire of camping

By Derrick McClelland

gear (£40), South London reader (excess on bounced cheque £20), C Thorpe Nottingham £10, Blackburn readers £10, the Buarth boys from Aberystwyth £7.32, and Edith (Northern housewife £7).

Fivers came from Surbiton supporter, R Roffey (NUPE Reigate), C Pimble (Staffs) R Ruben (Canterbury) and R Connolly (Glenrothes). Donations of between £1 and £5 included those from C Allom (Pensioner) and E White (TGWU

steward), both Isle of Wight, and A Glen (Cowie, Scotland). Whilst £1's were from amongst others, N License (Rotherham) V Sheppard (Newport) J Pacey (Notts NUM), D Campbell (Wavertree LPYS), and a £1 note that apparently fell out of a scab's pocket, passed on via a member of the NUR.

As well as donations, a lot more money from Humberside social activities, plus social evenings in Gravesend, Basildon and North London, helped to swell our funds. We've also benefitted from Bristol haircuts and Leeds clothing catalogues!

We know most of our readers can't afford the sums

that, say, Sir Michael Edwards (£96,000) or Philip Shelbourne (Britoil: £62,000) might contribute were they on the same side as Militant. But what we want is a society where the ordinary blokes and women on the shop floor are able to take the decisions as to what is to be produced and where. The bosses up to now have made enough of a mess of it! And salaries and perks in the private sector are even higher (for the few, of course)!

Roll on socialism! Roll on the achievement of Militants ¾ year target of £35,000 by October 9th! Can you help us!

THIS WEEK: £2,600



Selling the 'Militant' outside the TUC this week. Photo: Militant

Paper sales drive

A fortnight of action (26 September-9 October) is being planned week of October (2nd-8th) is being launched to boost the sales of 'Militant' and spread the ideas of Marxism. Labour Party Conference will no doubt give a large amount of coverage to our paper and therefore create an even bigger thirst amongst working people to actually get a copy themselves each week.

Every 'Militant' seller will be knocking on doors asking the occupiers to take a copy each week; sales are being planned outside all the major factories up and down the country.

Days of action and street sales will also be part of the activity especially in the shopping areas and at transport termini. Now is the time to boost up your order for the paper to counter the

lies and the distortions that are already beginning to appear in the bosses press.

If you are not a seller of 'Militant' already contact your local seller or fill in the tear off slip on the back of the paper. Let's have a record sale in these two weeks and show that the support for Marxism is on the increase.

By Dave Farrar

Classified

LPYS REGIONAL DAY SCHOOL, Saturday 18 September, 11.00 am, Retreat Hotel, Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole. Features: 'Harlan County USA' film of miners' strike. Debate: 'Women and the struggle for socialism'.

BIRKENHEAD LPYS Demonstration against unemployment. Saturday 25 September. 'No Return to 1932'. Assemble 10.30 am, Park Gates. Live Band.

'Witch-hunt '82 poster' (reproduction of Alan Hardman's 'football' cartoon). 1 for 20p + 12½p p&p. 5 for £1 + 50p p&p. 10 for £1.50 + £1 p&p. 50 for £11 inc. p&p. From Nicki Westcott, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

South Africa—13,000 black goldminers struggle for a living wage! South African Labour Education Project presents: 'We live like dogs'—the struggle of black migrant miners in the South African mines. Available for hire from SALEP, 28 Martello Street, London E8 3PN. (Tel: 01-241 0434). £5 to LPYS branches/Labour Party Women's Sections. £10 to CLPs, TUs, etc.

LAST CHANCE TO GREET LABOUR'S CONFERENCE

Get your Labour Party or YS branch, trade union or shop stewards' committee to place their greetings to Labour Party Conference in the pages of Militant. This year more than ever Militant needs your support.

Rates for greetings:
Semi-display: 3 column centimetres £3
6 column centimetres £6
Display: one-sixteenth page £10
one-eighth page £20
quarter page £40
Closing date for copy is 14 September, but send your greetings as early as possible to the Circulation Department, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

TAPES OF THE SOUTH WALES SUMMER CAMP ORDERS NOW TAKEN

Ted Grant: 'What is Marxism?' also 'Marxism and the Labour Party'.
Bob Wylie: 'Marxism and the State'
Rob Sewell: 'Is Russia Socialist?'
Brian Ingham: 'Marxism and the Trade Unions?'
£2.25 each, or £8.50 set, including postage (Profits to Militant Fighting Fund)
from David Llewelyn Davies,
10 Page Street, Swansea SA1 4EZ

FIGHTING FUND DONATIONS

Cut out and send to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Enclosed is my donation of £..... to back 'Militant's' campaign against the witch-hunt

Name

Address

Industrial Reports



Govan Shipyards Leaders worthy of the name

In recent weeks there have been some significant changes in the Govan Shipbuilders Joint Shop Stewards' Committee after certain disturbing facts were brought to light.

The Convenor for the Boilermakers Society/welders shop steward, a position he had held for over ten years, was returned to the "tools", sacked by the union members. The workforce had for years suffered declining working and living

standards as a consequence of the contraction of the industry. Throughout this period, the local union leadership did little or nothing to oppose management tactics.

An example of this situation was the British Shipbuilders Insurance (Pension) scheme. This scheme, instituted to replace the previous non-contributory arrangements in fact has been operated as a virtual employment-orientated 'closed shop'.

New starters are expected to join the scheme or do not get a job. With jobs being so

scarce it is little wonder that almost all do. New employees are in reality paying £365 a year for the privilege of being taken on at Govan. The two tier system of deductions from wages of 4½% and 6½% means a welder is expected to pay £7.02 a week to the scheme. BSIS even expect to be paid back money owed when an employee has been off work sick and is not being paid!

When this scheme was introduced the union leadership endorsed and even promoted it. Other methods of persuading employees to join are also used.

Discontent came to a head recently at a mass meeting of the Boilermakers' members in the yard. A member asked the convenor to reply to the accusation that a standing arrangement existed between him and the management that as convenor he would be paid two nights and a Sunday overtime every week, despite the fact that as a union official he was never asked or expected to work overtime. His reply was astonishing. He said that the accusation was inaccurate. In fact, management only paid him two nights overtime; they gave

the overall convenor at Govan the two nights and a Sunday!

Such a compromising position for a union leader in a position of trust and responsibility was naturally not to be endured by us for long. We now have a new Boilermakers convenor, one who is prepared to keep regular contact with the shop floor and is not prepared to take management handouts. Had we had real control over electing our convenor by a vote at a mass meeting (AGM) instead of it being the responsibility of the stewards, we would have

replaced him before now.

Govan, like many shipyards in this country is in need of massive investment if it is to compete. We need ships, we want to build ships, but we won't be exploited. British Shipbuilders management, aided by acquiescent union officials, have tried to exploit us in the past. No more. We'll fight them all the way in future with a leadership worthy of the title!

By a Govan Shipyard worker

BARCLAY'S BANK

NO TO SATURDAY WORKING

Barclays Bank are opening 350-400 branches on Saturday 11 September—but not to make a profit—but to weaken the bank workers' union BIFU.

At the moment only volunteer staff, working under a separate-employment contract, will work Saturdays, (although the extra work will still be processed on Monday morning). If the scheme succeeds Saturday opening would spread to other clearing banks. It was this that BIFU (then NUBE) took industrial action to stop in 1969.

Banks make money from large deposits placed with them by commercial customers which are then lent out, but this sort of business will not at the moment take place on Saturdays.

The Financial Times (14 May) reported when the scheme was announced that

even a number of Barclays management are "not convinced that the potential gains would outweigh the costs of staff and overheads—estimated at about £5m extra a year."

Neither are Barclays interested in providing a service since they were the first to charge 50p for cashing a cheque and increasing their bank charges when profits were at a record high.

BIFU, however, gave the green light to Barclays at this year's annual conference when a motion was passed, supported by the EC, agreeing to Saturday opening in return for a 28 hour 4 day working week. Barclays almost immediately announced (without consultation) their own proposals.

BIFU's leadership's idea is that Barclays thought that all banks were going to open on Saturdays and when this did not take place regretted making the announcement so therefore only gentle persuasion is needed in for them to break down.

However, the unions campaign of blacking Saturday work and leafletting branches will have little effect. BIFU has fewer members in Barclays Bank than in any other major clearer which is probably why Barclays was chosen by the Federation of English Clearing Banks to re-introduce Saturday opening and reduce BIFU's authority.

If Barclays succeed other clearers would soon follow suit. Barclays must be defeated and this must involve union members in other clearing banks.

It is only by hitting all of the big four banks through strikes and stoppages that enough pressure will be put on the Federation and Barclays to withdraw their proposals. Failure to do so would mean a step back of 13 years for BIFU and the end of free Saturdays for all bank staff.

By a BIFU member



Bank workers on strike last year. The bank union BIFU must take action to save the free Saturdays for bank staff
Photo: MILITANT

HEATHFIELD'S SLOUGH

Heathfield Ltd., (part of Sonoco UK Ltd.) on the Slough Industrial Estate, has been the scene of continuous picketing ever since management locked-out 21 members of the GMWU on 15th July.

The GMWU had submitted a wage claim back in April for a 20p an hour increase on basic rate. After negotiations with management had ground to a halt, a 'work-to-rule' was initiated by the Union.

The company responded by hand-delivering letters to the workers' homes telling them they were sacked, despite many workers having had long periods of continuous employment with the firm (over 21 years in one

case!)

When they turned up for work the following day they found the gates locked. Another 15 members of the union immediately came out on strike.

So far, management have refused to reinstate the sacked workers—even declining to agree to take the matter to ACAS.

Despite the use of scab labour, the hiring by Heathfield's of "security men", racist attacks on strikers and their property; the black & Asian strikers have stood firm on the picket line. Heathfields meanwhile have used every dirty trick in the book to break the resolve of the pickets.

Indeed, on the day I was talking to the strikers the Police arrested one picket—virtually on management instructions—for allegedly hurling a petrol cap. Fortunately one of the shop stewards, was on hand to secure his release—no charges being made by the police.

Most lorry drivers are respecting the picket line but the workers now intend to intensify their action by

holding a series of mass pickets on the 9th, 16th and 23rd of September at the Weston Road entrance on the Slough Trading Estate.

Active support for these mass demos by members of the labour and trade union movement is vital. Moreover, messages of support and donations to the hardship fund, should be sent to: GMWU Heathfield Dispute Committee, 105 Greenford Avenue, London, W7.

By Dave Carr (Reading South CLP)

DHSS BARGOED/ CAERPHILLY

Negotiations have been taking place between CPSA and DHSS with the aims of preventing compulsory redundancies and transfers and the CPSA leadership had a mandate for strike action if negotiations failed.

It is normal for the status

quo to operate while negotiations are proceeding, but the controller of the South East-Wales region decided to transfer two clerical officers from the Bargoed to the Caerphilly office.

This was done without consultation with the unions and was done compulsorily although two members of staff had volunteered to go.

The management had not discussed the reasons for these moves with the unions and refused to defer the transfers ending discussions. CPSA members started all-out strike action in Bargoed on Monday 23 August on what has become a question of principle.

It can be no coincidence that one of the staff earmarked for transfer was Dawn Singer, a leading CPSA activist in South Wales, which gives a sinister insight into management's motives.

CPSA members and DHSS officers throughout South Wales backed their Bargoed colleagues by coming out on one-day strikes on a rota basis. In response to the solidarity management have backed down and

agreed to negotiations if the strike is ended, and withdrawn the compulsory transfers.

However, if they cannot get suitable volunteers from Bargoed they will consider sending someone to Caerphilly on "detached duty" which is almost transfer by the back door. Strikers will consider on Friday whether to return.

By Frank Cuthbert (Caerphilly Labour Party personal capacity)

FLEXI-FLYING?

Hot on the heels of Peter Parker's victory over ASLEF workers we now have an outbreak of "flexi-rostering" in the skies. The Civil Aviation Authority has introduced new "guidelines on pilots flying hours."

To kick off, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

increased the limit on cumulative duty hours allowed during a 28-day period from 160-200 hours, in effect a change from a 40 to 50 hour week.

In addition a whole range of regulations which protected the health and working conditions of pilots are to be swept away at a stroke, position flights (flights to the start of a journey when the pilot travels in the "jump seat" on a flight deck as a passenger) are no longer to be counted as part of the working day.

Rest periods will not be taken at home but may be taken at a pilot's base or even a foreign airport. Controls over time zone crossings (which cause jet lag amongst pilots) are to be scrapped, and (shades of BR) flying duty periods are to be increased by 1 hour.

These changes which put at risk not just pilots but also passengers who travel in their care will be a godsend to airlines hit by a crisis in the world air travel market.

Paul Moorhouse Bristol W LPYS



Industrial Reports

HEALTH WORKERS - Preparing for the 22nd

TOWER HAMLETS

Workers for Tower Hamlets Health District have recently been sent "reminders" of certain effects of industrial action on our conditions of employment.

These effects are loss of holiday entitlement for any month broken by strike action, to be rigidly effective from 1 September.

What we are being "reminded" of is the government circular to management which lays down guidelines for handling industrial action, quite outside negotiated conditions of employment. This action therefore probably has no legal basis.

The guidelines have also been followed by health authorities in other parts of the country since the start of the pay campaign, and some workers in such areas have already lost all their holiday entitlement for this year.

Locally, our management could have tried to implement the guidelines any time, but they have only done so since the strong display of joint union solidarity in defence of one of the London Hospital stewards (see Militant 3 September).

This is just another aspect of the Tories' stream of attacks on trade unionists, an attack on our fundamental right to strike. The guidelines were issued about three years ago, so it seems that the Government have been preparing for a reaction against the cuts in the NHS budget.

Their use comes at a time of increasing support from the public and even from the upper echelons of the medical profession, who are calling for Fowler's resignation, and at a time of a call from the TUC to all union members to support health workers on 22 September, a call that will be answered by trade unionists who are willing to risk the threat of penalties against them for the Health workers' cause.

A London
Hospital worker

ISLINGTON

On 3 September local people in Islington saw 1,000 trade unionists marching in support of the hospital workers.

The call for a one day strike in the borough by all council workers in support of the 12% and in defence of the NHS showed clearly what trade unionists think of the Tories' contempt for workers' health.

The four and a half mile



Islington workers listen to speakers at the rally on 3 September. (Report below) Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

E. KILBRIDE

"My workers are struggling with their conscience the whole time. How would you like a doctor to accuse you of helping to murder some poor woman! It's not easy!"

Jimmy Cuning, NUPE branch secretary at Hairmyres Hospital, East Kilbride is quite clear in his mind what this dispute is all about. Jimmy Cuning knows all about struggle.

As well as the national pay claim, Hairmyres have their own dispute with the Lanarkshire Health board about the gradings of orderlies. It has lasted 13 weeks but an all hospital levy has paid the wages of the three orderlies who have been on strike for that time.

Jimmy Cuning is well aware that the only way their own dispute and the national pay claim can be won is by united action of all workers. He was full of praise for the help factories like Rolls Royce and Sunbeam have given his workers.

He was delighted by the recent call of the Scottish NUM for a 24 hour general strike in support of the

health dispute. "That is the way for us to win."

"That kind of action can help us. The miners, in particular understand the need for a decent health service. If the others see the miners prepared to fight for us they'll join in too"

"When I've got my members together for a meeting I tell them it's not just a wage rise you are fighting for, it's not just these boys' jobs—it's all of your jobs, in fact it's the whole health service!"

By Jeanette Wylie
(East Kilbride LP)

OXFORD

The centrepiece of August's industrial action in Oxfordshire was a mass picket and rally at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, attended by about 200 people.

As well as local NHS staff and other local workers, health workers had cycled from Coventry in uniform to gather support for the dispute and were on their way to Downing Street. Their efforts were greatly ap-

We arrived at the rally in very good spirit after a long march and heard Tom Sawyer, the assistant general secretary of NUPE, who received cheers of support when he called for a one-day strike on the 22nd.

Bob Labi from Greater London Labour Party and Ann Beales, chairman of London LPYS gave support from the Labour Party while

PADDINGTON

At my hospital, St Mary's, Paddington, health workers have learnt many valuable lessons from the present health dispute—the most vital is that unity is strength.

Our JSSC is having weekly meetings and bringing out daily strike bulletins. Mass meetings are held regularly and are very well attended. Laundry workers are striking, many who have never been on strike before.

One laundry worker explained the situation "Management have ignored us for too long. Let them do

our dirty back-breaking job on £58 a week and see how long they last!"

Many nurses, even those in RCN who so decisively rejected the 7.5% are becoming involved in action. All health workers are now building for the 24 hour general strike on 22 September.

A coach left our hospital on Thursday 26 August to demonstrate outside the TUC Health Conference, where the demand was posed to the TUC for a 24-hour nationwide general strike.

We have coaches going down to Brighton to demonstrate outside the TUC conference this week.

Our demands will be for no sell outs by the TUC, full support and mobilisation for a 24 hour general strike on 22 Sept. to win our 12% pay claim and lead the way forward for all other workers to free themselves from the screws of this vicious Tory government!

Our demands will be for no sell outs by the TUC, full support and mobilisation for a 24 hour general strike on 22 Sept. to win our 12% pay claim and lead the way forward for all other workers to free themselves from the screws of this vicious Tory government!

It was said quite rightly that the whole of our wage increase must be 'new money'; there must be no cuts to pay for a decent standard of living for health workers.

Councillor Valerie Veness gave the backing of the council. Sean Geraghty of the EETPU London Press Branch spoke to local borough and hospital workers after the demonstration.

When the rally was over, workers from Whittington, St Barts and the Royal Northern (which has just had its accident and emergency unit

closed) formed delegations to show the daily papers in Fleet Street their wage slips and emphasise how much we need a highly skilled, well paid, well equipped NHS.

It's our health service and Islington will again be ready for strike action on 22 September.

By Ruth Herdman
(NUPE shop steward)

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(NUPE shop steward)

By Ruth Herdman
(NUPE shop steward)

By Pat Edlin

SHEFFIELD

The result of Royal College of Nursing ballot was greeted with enthusiasm by Martin Robinson and Pete Taylor, members of Sheffield's Royal Hallamshire hospital Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

They also welcomed the decision of the TUC Health Service Committee to call for a 24 hour strike and mass demonstration on 22 September.

The week previously, Martin had spoken at a meeting of Sheffield Labour Party Young Socialists and had emphasised the importance of the RCN ballot to the pursuit of the claim and the morale of health workers.

At his own hospital, many RCN members felt frustrated at not being able to take action—and a number had resigned from the College to join a proper union.

He stressed that this dispute had had an effect on the Stewards' committees and had made the JSSC's at each workplace the effective base for action and co-ordination, with a degree of co-operation between the various unions that had not been achieved before.

The TUC Health Service Committee itself was a step forward in terms of co-operation and the pursuit of a common claim, although it had had to agree on issues at the lowest common denominator.

A meeting of stewards from Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley has now agreed to organise visits to factories and unions to build support for the one day strike. Sheffield Trades Council has already pledged support and pressure is building on the TUC to turn this into a 24 hour general strike.

This dispute is not just a wage claim, but about the future of the health service—around the corner are more redundancies and hospital closures—at the Hallamshire, no more nurses have been taken on in the last year and the understaffing poses a much greater danger to the care of patients than the action taken by health workers.

Middlewood Hospital workers have pressed from the start for all out action and for support from other workers. This is the way forward for health workers.

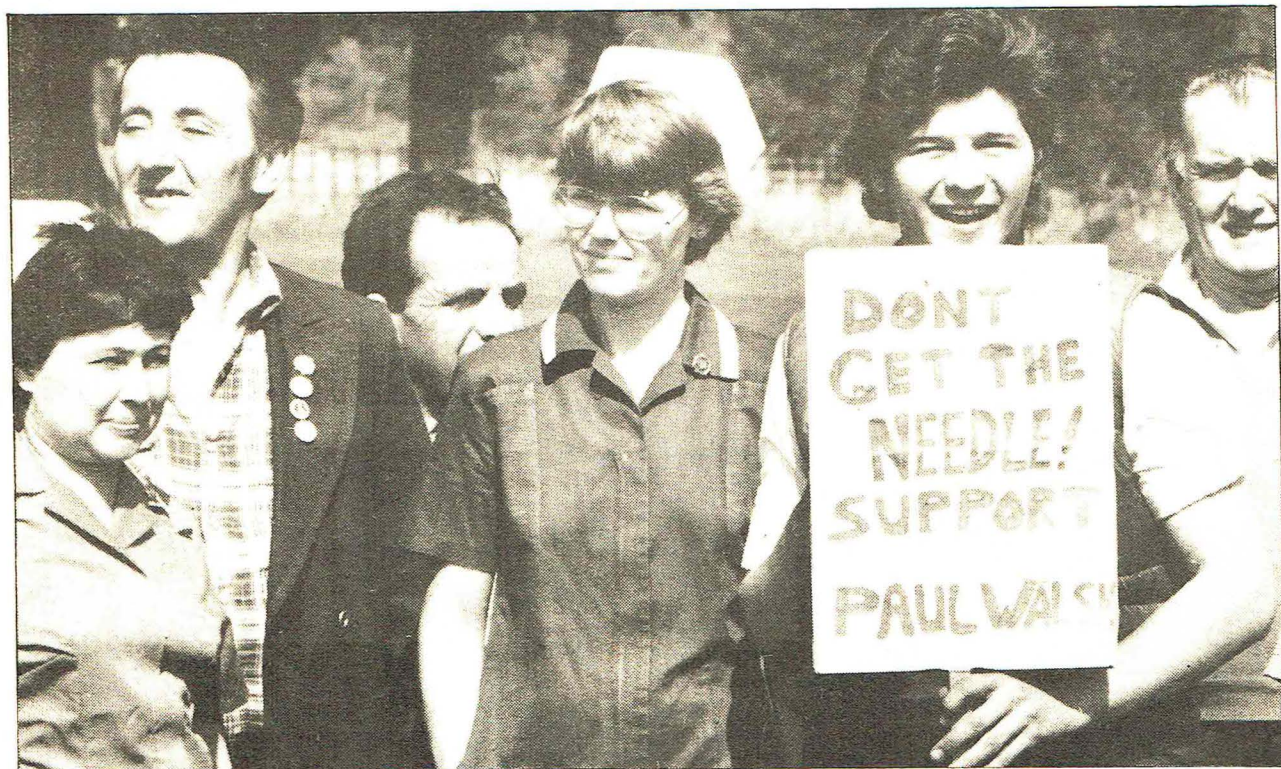
Martin Robinson said 40% of these workers live below the poverty line. It is clear that their only hope is to get rid of this Government and replace it with one that will expand the health service, not destroy it.

ALAN ANDERTON spoke to MARTIN ROBINSON, PETE TAYLOR and health workers on picket duty.

Militant

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HEALTH WORKERS...



Air India: FIGHT ANTI-UNION BOSSES

'Why we're so Determined'

"Could you live on that? You can't even exist on it, and that's why this time we're so strong and really determined,"

So said a lobbyist outside the TUC conference showing me a pay slip of £47.90 for a laundry worker at the Royal United Hospital in Bath. This was for a 40 hour week, plus a

10% bonus.

"Thatcher quotes that anything below £80 a week is below the bread line. What does she think we exist on? A porter doing 40 hours gets £53 take home pay.

"I'm a one parent family and I've worked weekends, Christmasses, without a day off for the last nine months. Judges recently received 18

per cent—without having to fight for it!

"I wouldn't have minded four per cent of a Judge's original wages. Just because we aren't like a factory where we can shut down, the government are taking advantage.

"That's why we need all-out support on 22 September. That's why we're here lobbying the TUC.

"This country has always been renowned for its trade union movement, but if the trade unions don't flex their muscles now then we might as well give up. This government, the Tories, Thatcher and Fowler are trying to crush the trade unions.

"Now of course, they're

Nursing staff at Wrexham Park Hospital, Slough (above) have blacked a consultant after the suspension of a senior psychiatric nurse, Paul Walsh. Paul, a member of COHSE, refused to instruct nurses to administer a drug to a patient without her consent. The staff say they believe in proper care for patients not "chemical strait-jackets".

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

bringing in these anti-trade union laws, this country will go like Poland if we don't fight back.

"I haven't spent Christmas with my daughter for the last 2 years. I've had to work Christmas day and Boxing day. My daughter spends weekends with my mother because I have to work to make up the money. This government is breaking up families because children aren't seeing their parents".

Virginia Marchese, a NUPE member at Royal United Hospital, Bath, spoke to Martin Elvin at TUC Conference.

The strike at Air India is now in its tenth week.

Management have made a direct attack on the TGWU which pre-empts Tebbit's bill by breaking a signed agreement, sacking a shop steward without application of agreed procedures and refusing conciliation and all other means of resolving the dispute.

They have openly victimised union activists, sacking almost half the TGWU membership who refused to be forced back to work until the dispute was fairly settled. They coerced workers to resign from the union and have actively encouraged blacklegging.

Jenny Ray, a TGWU member who was lobbying the TUC told 'Militant' reporters they wanted "backing from TGWU leaders, firm directives from them to TGWU workers and other unions involved with Air India, to black the airline.

"After intensive lobbying

a meeting was arranged with officials and EC members where we outlined what was needed:

"Public support from the leaders in the media and at Congress.

"A call on other unions for support, specifically the AUEW, POEU and unions representing workers on the SITA Telex link, those in IPCS and CPSA organising air traffic controllers and assistants, customs workers in CPSA, TGWU members in aircraft refuelling, airport fire brigades and British Airport Authority workers."

★ Black all Air India flights diverted to Gatwick because of the dispute.

★ Approach foreign unions

★ A national financial appeal to the movement.

"Our final request was for a total boycott of Air India. We feel we got a positive response to our request"

Messages of support etc to Ms J Ray, Air India Strike Committee, 61 Sydney Road, Staines, Middx.

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SMASH THATCHER

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

By Wayne Jones at TUC Conference

tain a family of four, Harry summed up the situation facing the low paid.

"If it wasn't for my mother we wouldn't have been able to pay for our daughter's school uniform. We rang up the council for help but the grant had been stopped in 1980. Tebbit is trying to take us back to the 1930s. They want to grind us under their heel again."

Harry Garner knew too well that the new Tebbit Bill was not, as the Tories try to make out, to 'reform' and 'democratise' the unions but to intimidate trade unionists

with threats of fines and even gaol and stop them taking sympathetic action with workers fighting to defend their livelihoods.

Inside the Congress, delegates representing over 11 million workers understood this too. A motion that pledged "militant resistance to the application of anti-trade union laws, including the use of industrial action is imperative" was overwhelmingly passed, the only exceptions being the abstentions by the electricians' union, the EETPU, the Engineers and Managers Association.

and the Association of First Division Civil Servants.

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill, speaking in the debate, told how the Tories were always loyal to their class in screwing the workers for higher profits—now was the time for the labour movement to devote its efforts to its class.

He said the issue of fighting the Tebbit Bill and the need to support the health workers were clearly interlocked. The best way to defeat Tebbit, he said, "is to give the utmost support to the health workers on the 22nd."

Bill Deal, president of the Fire Brigades Union, stressed that the resolution should not just remain words and demanded assurance that the TUC would respond with action if any trade unionist was jailed or fined. There must

not be a repeat, he said, of the situation recently where EETPU official Sean Geraghty was taken to court but not given support by his general secretary, Frank Chapple, who is to be the next TUC president, while Sean was carrying out the TUC's policy of support for the health workers.

The chance to put words into action will be on 22 September. Solidarity action is essential for the health workers to win, and many sections of the labour movement have already pledged support. But the TUC leaders should come forward with a clear call for a 24-hour general strike on that day. A massive show of working class defiance on 22 September will serve a warning on the Tories and help secure victory for the health workers.