

COAL BOARD COVER UP EXPOSED

'We'll Fight to Save Our Pits'

Despite ballot miners won't tolerate closures

"If the National Coal Board and the press think this ballot result gives a green light for pit closures, they've got another think coming.

"Mineworkers remain adamant. There will be no closures of so-called 'uneconomic' pits except on proven grounds of seam exhaustion or serious safety risk.

"Mineworkers have a habit of picking themselves up by the boot laces and living to fight another day. We in South Wales had to do this after the rebuff when strike action was proposed

By Brian Ingham

alongside the steel workers. Four months later we had a mandate for strike action on pit closures."

This was the reaction of Ian Isaacs, secretary of St John's Colliery NUM, Maesteg, to last week's pit-head ballot result. Ian's reaction is typical of activists throughout the coalfields, disappointed, but by no means dispirited by the

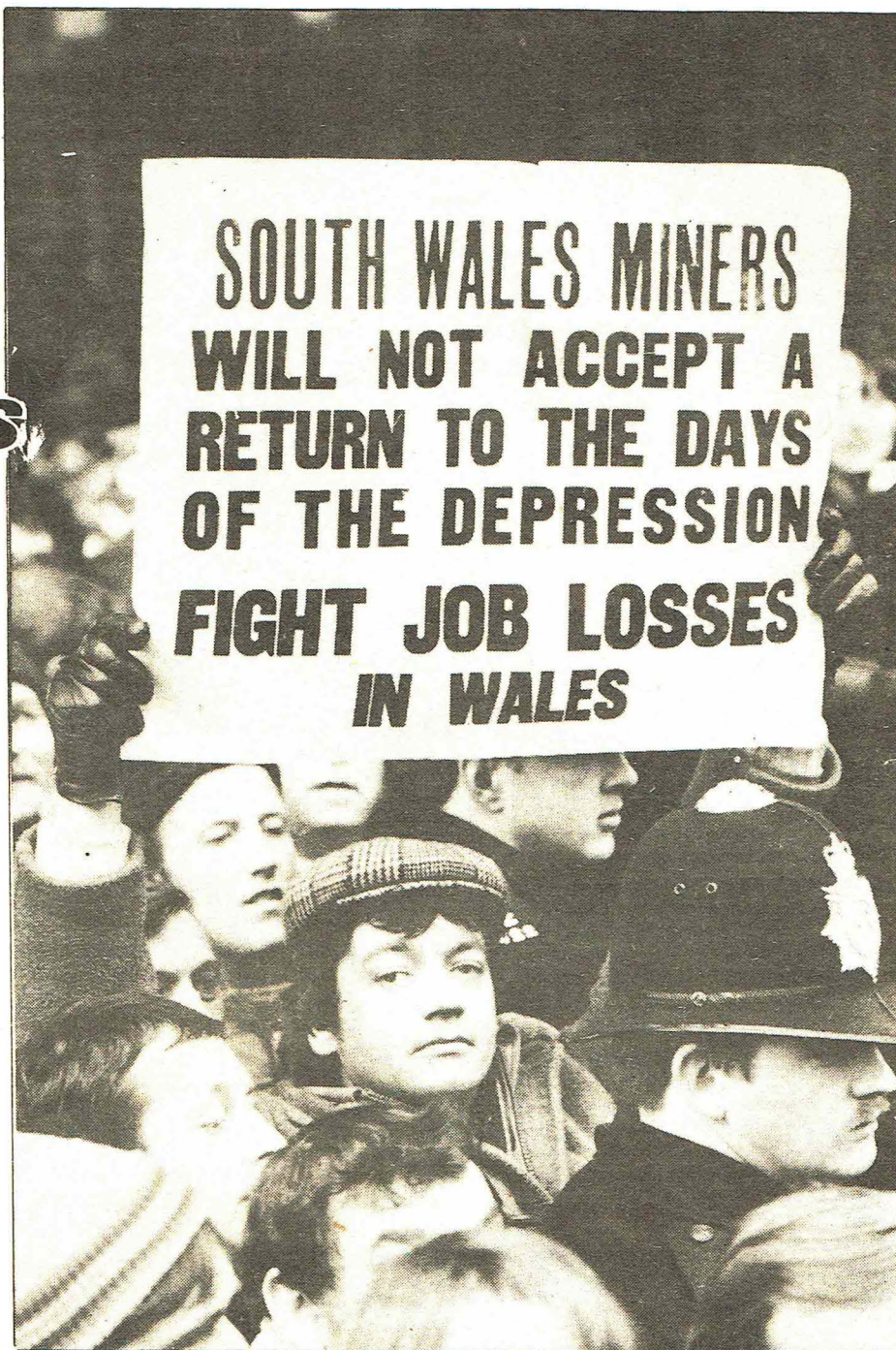
ballot result.

With hand on heart, the NCB management and the Tories have denied NUM charges about plans for massive pit closures. But now, after the vote, a secret NCB document listing 75 "short-life pits" has come into union hands.

Arthur Scargill quite rightly pointed out "had this document been available earlier then the ballot result would have been entirely different."

Norman Siddall, the Coal Board boss, has said that there will be no "butchery". Yet even before the vote was announced there was open press speculation—no doubt after well-placed NCB leaks—that three collieries would immediately come under the axe. Miners will therefore have to remain vigilant and ready to take ac-

Continued on page 15



South Wales miners oppose closures, 1980. Photo: Militant

THATS THE NEW IMMEDIATE RESPONSE UNIT... THEY USED TO ASK A QUESTION THEN HIT YOU NOW THEY HIT YOU FIRST

Brixton / Newham Black Youth Under Attack

After the summer riots of 1981 there was much hand-wringing by the Tories and the establishment at the plight of unemployed black and white youth in the inner cities.

But this week's events in London, although not on the same scale as the explosive events of last year, nevertheless show that nothing has changed.

In Brixton, hundreds of police in new para-military style Immediate Response Units were unleashed.

In Newham, East Lon-

don, Asian youth have launched a campaign to fight the arrest of eight youths who were defending school students from racist attack.

In Tottenham, north London, youths besieged a police station on Monday night in protest at the arrest of a 17

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Don't stand on the sidelines...

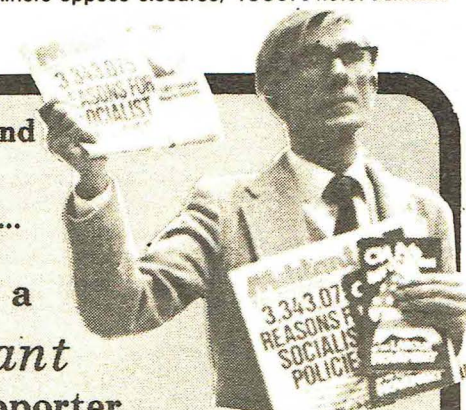
Become a Militant supporter

I want to help in the campaign to defend the paper and stop the witch-hunt. Please send details of how I can assist.

Name

Address

Send to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Telephone 01-986 3828.



Right-wing ruthless in NEC elections

The elections to the various subcommittees of the Labour Party NEC show the ruthless determination of the right wing to undertake a thorough purge, both of the membership and the policies of the party.

In every sub-committee the right-wing have given themselves a crushing majority (see details page 4). What can be in store for the Labour Party can be gauged from the 'instructions' given by *The Times* to the right wing in its editorial a day later.

The Labour Party representation on the Party/TUC liaison committee will be dominated by the Right and this committee, *The Times* commented, "will be working on a joint approach to incomes policy and a number of other sensitive subjects." In other words, the declared and definitive policy of the Labour Party conference will now be systematically subverted by the NEC.

In confirmation of this, *The Times* also comments that the right wing Home Policy committee "might be able to instigate some modification of existing policy and it will be in a position to put a moderate stamp on any new statements on domestic policy emanating from the NEC."

But the right wing will not only set about ditching conference policy: they will be using their stranglehold on the youth and organisation committees to attack *Militant* and the party's youth wing. "Much will depend on the organisation committee", *The Times* comments, "if there is to be an effective follow-through against the Militant Tendency after the establishment of the register, in terms not only of banning Militant but refusing to accept well-known supporters as official Labour parliamentary candidates and taking action against recalcitrant constituency parties. It will be up to the youth committee to initiate action against the Young Socialists which are dominated by extremists."

Right wing ruthless, left wing generous

There is a close coincidence of views between *The Times*, which would no doubt dearly love to see the Labour Party in tatters after an internal civil war, and those of right wing Labour MPs. Frank Field, among others, has recently written to Labour's NEC urging that the LPYS national and regional committees be disbanded and, where necessary, local Labour Parties too—which would mean in his area, for example, the closing down of almost the entire Merseyside Labour Party.

The ruthlessness of the right wing in taking firm control of the NEC committees stands in marked contrast to the attitude of the left when they were in control of the NEC. Some of the

lefts in the Labour Party have been equivocal over the whole issue of the witch-hunt—imagining, perhaps, that the right wing were 'bluffing', or that there would be no serious attack on the democratic rights of the party rank and file.

Some of the left have been generous enough to imagine that the right wing are motivated by the same desire for party unity as they themselves are. When it came to the election of the chairman of the TUC General Council the lefts on that body made no objection to the 'Buggins Turn' principle that gave the position to Frank Chapple, even though his own union's policies are directly opposed to many of the fundamental policies of the TUC.

Some of the 'lefts' paved the way for right-wing attack

The right wing in the movement are not nearly as generous. If Joan Maynard had still been on the NEC, despite the past practice of 'seniority' determining the election of party chairman, there is no doubt that the right would have stopped that position from going to Joan.

Neither should it go unsaid that the activities of some of the 'soft lefts' have directly assisted the right wing. Some of the votes on the NEC elections were as tight as 14-13. Had it not been for some of these 'lefts' abstaining in the elections for deputy leader last year, even these vote would have been reversed. Some of these same 'lefts' have, of course, supported the register all along, opening the door to the general attack by the right wing.

Neil Kinnock and some other 'lefts' cannot now cry foul over the bitter purge launched by the right wing after they have made so much of the running on the NEC in favour of the enquiry and the register this year. The ruthless determination of the right wing comes as no surprise to *Militant*, but perhaps is a salutary lesson to the NEC lefts.

But the key question is not what the right wing will do. Their intentions are transparent. What is important is how the rank and file of the party react to seeing their policies subverted, their membership hounded, reselection of MPs virtually vetoed, and so on.

The behaviour of the right is threatening to turn the Labour Party into a battleground. There may now be a long drawn out struggle over expulsions, disaffiliations, suspensions, par-

liamentary selections and possible legal actions, perhaps right up to an election.

Some of the right are not bothered about this. They no more want a Labour government committed to its conference policies than does *The Times*; a purge for them is more important than Labour's electoral chances, since it opens the door to reversing all the policy and democratic gains of recent years.

Expulsion will provoke an outcry

But the party rank and file is likely to see things differently. They will not take kindly to a right wing, who, by their actions, are

threatening to hand Thatcher another five years of Tory government.

If the NEC embarks upon the road of expulsions there will be an outcry from the CLPs and from the ranks of the trade unions. Few CLPs, if any, will be prepared to accept their membership being purged by this rigged NEC.

With opinion polls showing over 50 per cent of young voters prepared to support Labour, the right will meet with enormous opposition if they move to strangle the Young Socialists' organisation. Even right-wing Labour Party officials at a local level bear witness to the large amounts of work undertaken by the party's youth branches in election periods. If the NEC imagine they can quietly stifle the most hard-working and

vigorous section of the party, they are clearly out of touch with the feeling of broad layers of the rank and file.

Social base of right-wing policies declined

What the right do not seem to understand is that we are in the 1980s, not the 1950s. The growing economic and social crisis in Britain has played no small part in a general radicalisation throughout the labour movement. The 1950s was a period of growing prosperity when there seemed to be some basis for the policies and theories of the right wing, when the right wing could be said to have had a genuine social base.

But that is no longer true. The right wing of the party have been discredited. Their policies failed in 1974-79 and paved the way for Thatcher. The experiences of those years and the even more bitter events of the last three years have pushed the party rank and file in the direction of socialist policies.

Workers want answers to mass unemployment, to the murder of the welfare state, to falling living standards—not a purge of socialists from the party.

The paper majority of the right wing on the NEC, which in no way reflects the views of the rank and file, will not be able to turn back the clock of history. The party membership will resist their machinations and at the end of the day will defeat the witch-hunt.



THAT WAS A BIT UNCALLED FOR BROTHER GOLDING... I HOPE YOU'LL BE A LOT NIGER TO THE LAMBS

BERMONDSEY:

NEC must let constituency select

Now that Bob Mellish has finally resigned his seat the members of Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party will be looking to the NEC to endorse the candidate of the CLP, and support him in the forthcoming by-election.

The NEC refused to endorse Peter Tatchell in the first place because of the threat by Bob Mellish to resign and provoke a by-election earlier this year. Mellish also supported local election candidates against the official Labour Party candidates in the May elections, with the result that



Bob Mellish

Labour lost three seats. Throughout the whole period of Bob Mellish's campaign against the party, right up to the time he resigned in August, the right wing of the

Labour leadership have been silent. They have reserved all their strength for attacking the left while trying to accommodate Bob Mellish. Now he has precipitated a

by-election and will be supporting a so-called independent Labour candidate, the NEC has the duty to support the official candidate and that candidate must be one selected by the CLP and not by the NEC itself.

Even now, there are right-wing councillors in the Bermondsey area who are refusing to say whether or not they will remain members of the Labour Party. The NEC now has the opportunity to make it clear whether they support the Labour Party itself, or whether they are going to give their support to renegades and would-be renegades from the party.

By Bernard O'Connor

(Vice-Chair, Bermondsey CLP in a personal capacity)

With the campaign against the witch-hunt in the Labour Party in full swing, with Constituency Parties, trade unions and Young Socialist branches already protesting and organising against the right wing's attacks, most activists in the labour movement, and particularly *Militant* readers, may have wondered exactly what the "CLPs against the witch-hunt conference" was all about, if they had heard of it.

This Conference, originally initiated by Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP, was attended by about 300 people, of whom 100, it was claimed, were delegates from CLPs. Although these were mainly from London and the Home Counties, others had come considerable distances.

Most of them would have been disappointed that a meeting called ostensibly to defend *Militant* supporters and against any witch-hunt, included people who were not prepared to even listen to the arguments of those very same *Militant* supporters who had been delegated to this conference.

Change of rules

Even on arrival delegates who had been invited from LPYS branches, Women's Sections, trade unions and socialist societies found that they were being threatened with disenfranchisement, by not being allowed a "decisive" vote on crucial issues. Just one instance: Anne Beales, representing the London LPYS Regional Committee, did not 'qualify' as a delegate, on the grounds that regional bodies would not be represented, yet delegates were allowed from such bodies as Local Government Committees, the London Co-op Political Committee and two trades councils.

Also on arrival delegates were presented with ten pages of statements and propositions, which they had not had the opportunity of discussing with their local organisations. This, plus the fact that the standing orders report negated a resolution calling for a merger of this campaign with that formed on 11 September (which had more sponsors than any other resolution on the agenda), caused a move to reject the standing orders report.

The vote for rejection was defeated by 145 votes to 113. Yet the report itself had stated: "In the event of a serious disagreement, delegates from CLPs as the bodies in the forefront of the fight against expulsions, will be taken separately. The CLP vote will be decisive."

This vote apparently was not close enough to indicate a "serious disagreement".

So no separate CLP vote was taken on this or any of the other major contentious issues later on the agenda. So now we have "flexible standing orders"!

It should be pointed out that Jeremy Corbyn, and Ernie Roberts who chaired the session were "only operating the instructions of the steering committee." But Ernie Roberts also suggested later that the 11 September Committee should dissolve into this one.

Some important points were made by the other Labour MPs including Les Huckfield in his address to the conference. And Audrey Wise in her platform speech at the start of the conference repeated the point that *Militant* was right to apply for the register and other groups should continue to refuse, as

By Keith Dickinson
(Hammersmith North CLP delegate)

Militant was in the firing line and in a different position from all the others.

This point did not go down well with some of the groups involved in this conference. In fact this was the nub of some of the acrimony towards *Militant* supporters by a large "claque" at the conference.

The resolution calling for the merging of this committee with the "Labour Steering Committee against Witch-hunts", which was elected at the 2,676 strong 11 September Labour Movement Conference, asked that two delegates from this conference be elected to the Labour Steering Committee. That would have meant a far bigger proportional representation for the 300 at this conference than from the numbers at the 11 September conference itself.

And the 11 September committee had at least four non-*Militant* supporters on it. *Militant* supporters who are on this committee are also clearly known as *Militant* supporters and actually represent large bodies of opinion and organisations. But who does this 30 October Steering Committee represent? And what are their political views?

'Merge campaign' defeated

As the delegate from Greenwich, Eddie McParland, pointed out, one of those on this committee had been rejected as a delegate by Greenwich CLP, and had only got credentials to attend from his ward. In fact most of the members of this committee, apart from the MPs and PPCs, conceal the fact that they are supporters of various small groups on the fringes of the labour movement.

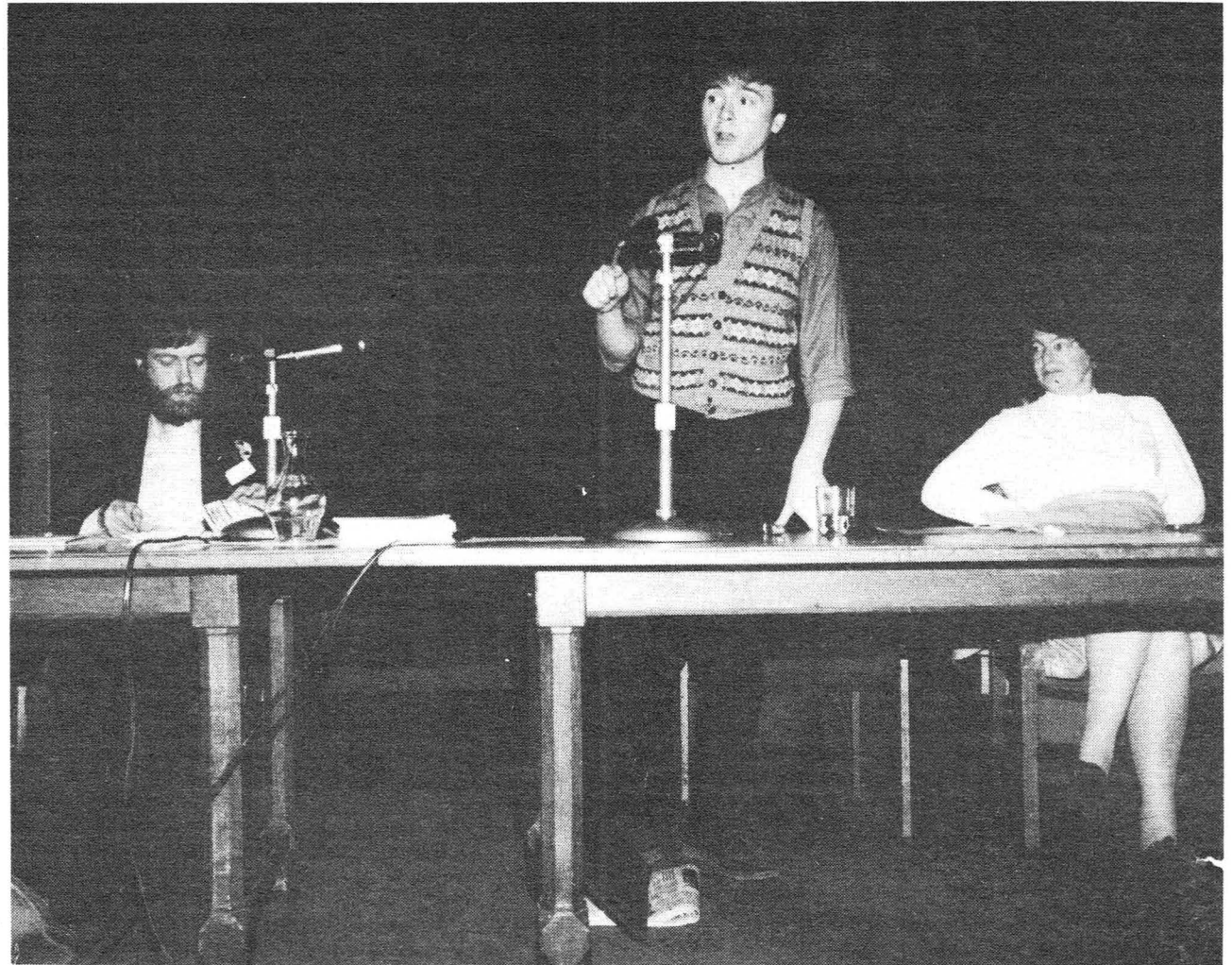
They are not interested in a united campaign against the witch-hunt. In fact they are more concerned with getting publicity and trying to become martyrs than they are about genuinely defending the rights of rank and file Labour Party members. That is indicated clearly by the motions they put through this conference.

A clause in one of the propositions was that "we will maintain affiliation to any disbanded CLP and boycott attempts to substitute new CLPs by the NEC." This was an alleged model resolution for adoption by trade union organisations.

Opposition to this moved by the delegate from Bristol South East, was howled at and defeated. This was just a recipe for handing over constituencies of the right wing bureaucrats.

Another resolution called

UNITED CAMPAIGN NEEDED TO STOP WITCH-HUNT



Laurence Coates, LPYS representative on the NEC, speaking at last weekend's conference

Photo: S. Cagnoni (IFL)

for all organisations to refuse to register or comply with the provisions and asked constituencies to commit themselves to standing their chosen candidate even if the NEC expels them and stands its own. This latter resolution was only defeated on the advice of Reg Race, but even then there was a large vote in suicidal favour.

For reasons of their own, Reg Race and Ted Knight both defended vehemently the need for two organisations against the witch-hunt, if not more. And the resolution calling for a merger of the two campaigns, moved by myself and supported in a very effective speech by Peter Tatchell (whose own Bermondsey CLP had submitted a similar resolution) was defeated.

With only 20 local trade union delegates present, the effectiveness of the appeal of this committee has already been questioned. A lunchtime meeting to elect a trade union delegate to the committee was not successful enough, and had to be reconvened for a later date to appoint a delegate.

LPYS view ignored

Only a small minority of LPYS delegates were in

favour of putting a representative on to this committee. The attitude of the rest was that surely the best committee to defend the LPYS was the LPYS national organisation and the National Committee itself which was 100% against the witch-hunt. And as well as the setting up of a youth committee—without the consultation of the LPYS NC—other committees are proposed for various sectors.

On this showing it looks as though the results of this conference will be very strong on setting up sub-committees but not so strong in getting out and having an effect among the workers whose support we need if we're going to defeat the witch-hunt.

The 11 September Labour Movement Conference Steering Committee has consistently invited representation from Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and others to join Ken Livingstone, Terry O'Neill and the other members of that committee. Just as the conference itself took into the committee two comrades who had doubted the strategy of that committee.

If anything is to be learned from this conference, it is that there is no place for sectarianism in the defence of the movement and that we are going to have to rely on

the workers and activists in the trade unions and Labour Parties to defend the democratic rights and structures of the workers' organisations against the attacks of the Tories and their spokesmen in the movement.

Support for the country-wide conferences on 27 November organised by the Labour Steering Committee is already growing (see page

5). *Militant* public meetings in the main industrial cities are even getting larger gatherings than this conference. With the methods of its organisers, we will have to rely on the 11 September steering committee to coordinate the real fight among the workers to defend *Militant* and generally fight the witch-hunt.

RESOLUTION TO NEC

The following resolution was submitted by the Barnsley LPYS to Barnsley Labour Party General Management Committee on Friday 29 October and passed by an overwhelming majority.

"This CLP deplores the recent actions of certain members of the new NEC in ousting good democratic socialists from various sub-committees of that body. We see this as the start of a witch-hunt of the left in general.

"We note in particular the changes on the Home Policy Sub-committee, the Organ-

isational Sub-committee and the Youth Sub-committee which we see as the start of an attack against the LPYS. It is noted that the LPYS have recently made tremendous gains for the Labour and trade union movement through their campaign for the recruitment of YOP workers into the trade unions.

"This CLP would therefore like to inform the NEC that such actions only serve to divide the Labour Party and the fight against the true enemy, the Tories."

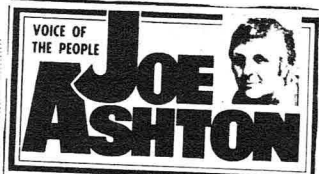
Shop stewards answer Right Wing

The so-called 'Labour' paper, the *Daily Star*, is owned by the same multi-national that owns the reactionary *Daily Express* newspaper group.

Owned by Lord Matthews, who amongst other companies owns the P&O shipping line, the *Daily Star* has a 'left' stance to help its sales amongst the northern working class. To help with this illusion, a regular column is given to Joe Ashton, Labour MP for Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire.

In his column on 13 September, Joe Ashton made an attack on the *Militant* and the September 11 anti-witch hunt conference. Besides being compared with football supporters and 'Fagin' type characters, it was the usual stuff—*Militant* supporters are all middle-class, straight out of university, know nothing about the shop floor and in a few years time will be living in semi-detacheds with good white collar jobs. More seriously, he said *Militant* supporters wanted Thatcher to win the next election and continue mass unemployment.

This scurrilous attack was answered in a letter to the *Star* by the shop stewards committee of Anderton International Ltd., an engineering firm in Bingley, near Bradford (see right).



Labour's red guard goes off with a whimper

A ONE time revolutionaries who plotted to overthrow the state, were always shown in kids' comics wearing cloaks and carrying a big round ball with "BOMB" written on it. Usually they were called "Bombs".

Joe Ashton's column in the *Daily Star*, 13 September

Dear sir,
As a delegation of shop stewards who attended the Wembley conference, organised around the slogan "fight the Tories, not the socialists", we find Joe Ashton's article deeply offensive.

To compare genuine socialists to football fans (with all the connotations of hooliganism) and pick-pockets and petty thieves...is indicative of the contempt Labour MPs have for the people who secure their meal tickets every five years.

To suggest that the age old problem of Labour is that "every so often the universities and teacher training colleges release a wave of young graduates who are convinced that they can solve unemployment and get rid of

Not surprisingly, the *Daily Star* did not print this sharp rebuke of Joe Ashton by these shop floor representatives. Instead they passed the letter onto the MP, who wrote this reply;

"I have very little to add to what I wrote in the original article although it saddens me to see that there are even some people on the shop floor who have been conned by *Militant* Tendency.

When I served my apprenticeship in the AUEW the lads had more sense. I can only point out that where *Militant* Tendency is strong in places like Liverpool, Bradford and Lambeth then the results for Labour have been disastrous. In all three

slums by Monday" is to draw the wrong conclusion from the right tenet.

Yes, the Labour Party is full of graduates, in the Parliamentary Labour Party, who presumably tossed a coin at Oxford or Cambridge which determined which party would further their careers. And to suggest that *Militant* supporters want unemployment to remain at four million, when our shop stewards committee has fought three redundancy exercises in the last two years, along with many other shop stewards organisations, without the support of the trade union leadership or PLP, is nothing short of disgusting.

It is precisely because of their performances that increasing numbers of rank

and file members want a change in leadership of the labour movement.

In reality unemployment and slums are part of the same rotten capitalist system Joe defends, which has been administered for 17 of the post war years by these same right wing Labour MPs.

No Joe—the real Fagins are the employers, the Tories and their stooges in the PLP. But then you know that, you're their voice in the movement, speaking via the columns of the millionaire press.

Yours,
Steve Davison,
Convener, AUEW
Shop Stewards
Committee, Anderton International Ltd.

Yours,
Steve Davison,
Convener, AUEW
Shop Stewards
Committee, Anderton International Ltd.

Yours,
Steve Davison,
Convener, AUEW
Shop Stewards
Committee, Anderton International Ltd.

Yours,
Steve Davison,
Convener, AUEW
Shop Stewards
Committee, Anderton International Ltd.

with right wing sitting Labour MPs, went to the Tories with substantial majorities? And how can he accuse *Militant* of wanting to keep mass unemployment yet in the same breath say we "think we can end unemployment by Monday"?

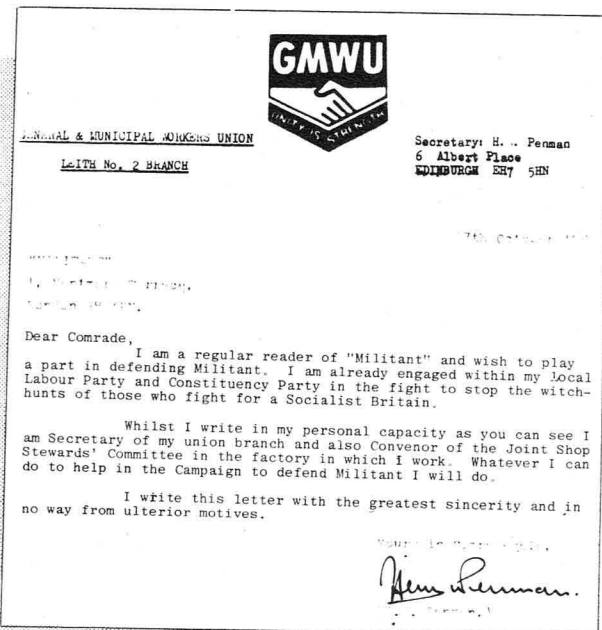
As for his recollections of his distant past when he was in the AUEW, Steve Davison told *Militant*;

"Our shop stewards committee would like the *Militant* to print the correspondence to show rank and file leaders the absolute contempt many Labour MPs show to the trade union activists and socialist fighters in our movement.

"It shows that sections of the party are firmly behind

a full purge in the Labour Party which will no doubt spill over into the trade unions. If the Parliamentary Labour Party intend to carry out Labour's programme, they will depend upon the shop stewards movement to defend that programme and argue the case on the shop floor five days a week, 52 weeks a year."

Outlining the socialist traditions of the AUEW and its Marxist founders, Steve went onto say, "This is hardly the structure of an organisation that was intended to be a bed partner with capitalism. The adoption of the socialist clause in the objects of the AUEW, 'the control of industry in the interests of the community', is testimony to that."



Above, a letter sent to *Militant* from Convener Bro Penman in Edinburgh, offering his support.

NEC: The purge begins

The overwhelming majority of Labour Party members will be furious at the decisions of the National Executive Committee on October 27th, meeting for the first time since party conference.

The 'massacre' of the NEC's left at the hands of the new right-wing majority amounts to a declaration of war on the party rank and file.

It is a clear warning that despite all their pretensions to wanting 'unity' and 'tolerance', the right-wing in the Labour Party are preparing a purge of the party membership and with them the radical policies adopted at conference.

With precision planning, right-winger John Golding successfully moved the deletion of one left-winger after another from the NEC's committees, and their replacement by his cohorts on the right.

Tony Benn, who received the highest vote in the constituency section at conference, and Judith Hart, who similarly received the highest vote in the Women's section, were thrown off the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee. They were replaced by a host of right-wingers, including Golding himself, Neville Hough

(GMWU), Ken Cure (AUEW), and Betty Boothroyd MP.

This move, coupled with the removal of Frank Allaun and Jo Richardson from the Home Policy Committee, is the clearest possible indication that the right now hope to re-write the party's policy democratically decided at annual conference.

It is almost a forgone conclusion that Tony Benn will be replaced by John Golding as the chairman of Home Policy. Even Neil Kinnock's offer to withdraw from the committee in favour of Jo Richardson was voted down by the right. Unfortunately, Neil Kinnock's gesture is a little late in the day. Had he and others not supported the right-wing's witch-hunt from the outset, the present wave of attacks could not have begun.

On the key Organisation Committee, Audrey Wise and Labour Party Young Socialists' representative Laurence Coates were replaced by Alan Hadden (Bolliermakers) and Shirley



Right winger John Golding MP arrives at the NEC meeting on 27 October. Photo: John Arthur

Summerskill. Their control of this committee (by a majority of 14 to 9) will enable the right-wing to launch an attack on all left sections of the party.

At its first meeting on November 10, Russel Tuck (NUR Assistant General Secretary) seems certain to oust Eric Heffer from the chair. There can now be little doubt that at this meeting the right will propose the expulsion of some *Militant*

supporters, and begin the witch-hunt in earnest.

Labour Party members will be disturbed that throughout the proceedings, Michael Foot abstained, thereby tacitly supporting those whose actions can only serve to split the party and jeopardise Labour's chances of winning the next election.

Despite prompting from Dennis Skinner, who urged the party leader to restate his

repeated call for unity, Michael Foot refused to intervene, saying that he had "plenty of other duties to discharge"(!). Dennis Skinner later summed up the fears of the party rank and file when he described the leader as "a prisoner of the right".

The elections to the Youth Committee saw the biggest shake up with the removal of Dennis Skinner, Frank Allaun and Audrey Wise.

Their replacement by Denis Howell and Anne Davis, gives the right-wing a majority of 9 to 4—confirmation that they now intend to move against the Labour Party Young Socialists.

The Young Socialists' finances, its monthly paper 'Socialist Youth' and even the position of National Youth Organiser, Andy Bevan, are all possible targets of a right-wing campaign.

The Labour Party youth section will be vital in the run-up to the coming general election. The LPYS have always been the 'shock troops' in elections, organising mass groups of canvassers for any area of the country. Harriet Harman during her election victory speech last week thanked the Young Socialists for their valuable contribution in that by-election.

Also, the LPYS have been the best recruiters of new members to the Labour Party.

Yet the right-wing ignore these facts and are preparing the ground for an attack on the youth section purely on political grounds—they have lost the political arguments and are now settling scores through organisational methods.

There will be massive opposition from the ranks of the labour movement to any attempt to curtail the activities of the LPYS, particularly in the aftermath of the stage managed purge of the left on the NEC, possible only through the rigged mandate at Labour Party conference.

BY-ELECTION VICTORIES

Peckham

Labour's victory in last week's Peckham by-election is a pointer to the future. The SDP, with a 'strong' candidate were beaten, and the lost Tory deposit showed what people thought of Thatcher's government.

Harriet Harman, the Labour candidate, had her majority cut from 11,000 to 4,000 in a very low poll of only 38.75%. At a time when there are four million unemployed—the unemployment rate in Peckham is 20%—and vicious cuts being carried out, many of Labour's traditional supporters abstained in a solidly working class area. Labour supporters must ask why this is the case.

In Southwark, the right-wing had a hold on the Labour council for the past

20 years. The old council readily implemented Tory cuts, even before they were asked to. In an area of 80% council tenants, a high proportion of them pensioners and socially deprived families, the running down of the social services certainly caused disillusionment with Labour amongst people. A typical comment during canvassing was "You're all the same. Promises, promises and broken promises."

This was the sort of disenchantment the SDP tried to cash in on. They blamed Labour for what their members and people of similar ilk in the last council did. Yet, ironically, they went canvassing as "the old Labour Party", confusing many people as to which was the real Labour Party! The SDP leaflets make dishonest quotes against Labour, and used all the smear tactics available—"Harriet Harman is pregnant—she can't make a good MP."

The Tory campaign didn't really make any impact at all

amongst workers.

Harriet, who was selected last year, has worked extremely hard in the constituency since then and throughout the election campaign as well. Selected on left policies, these came over well during the campaign in media statements.

However, the leaflet and election address, while they generally exposed the appalling record of Thatcher and Co, did not really offer any concrete alternative to the Tories, and the SDP were not taken up enough.

The campaign organisation had its weaknesses as well. The election agent made no provisions for the LPYS to work as a single body, and no proper youth leaflet was allowed—the leaflet drawn up by the LPYS was felt to be 'too strong'. The LPYS also had to fight for public speakers.

Despite this, the LPYS held a mass canvass one Sunday at which 75 people turned up, and 40 *Socialist Youths* were sold. The candidate acknowledged the

LPYS's work in her acceptance speech.

A low turn-out shows, however, that the Labour vote cannot be taken for granted even in Peckham. What is needed is an active campaigning Labour Party alive to the problems of its constituents. The Peckham Labour Party needs to organise a series of mass canvasses in the run-up to the next general election. This would draw in many working class people into the party. An election cannot be expected to won in a short, three week campaign. Only a Labour Party rooted in the working class and offering concrete socialist solutions to their problems can win the day.

As for the right-wing in the Labour Party, maybe they can explain why only 30 people came to hear the 'ever-popular' Roy Hattersly; whereas a packed meeting of over 200 heard Tony Benn!

By Chetan Patel
(Peckham LPYS)



John Spellar claimed in the election campaign that Tony Benn's policies were "destructive" to the Labour Party. Above, thousands of Birmingham workers gave Tony Benn an enthusiastic applause when he addressed the Labour Party demonstration and rally in the city last year. Photo: Militant

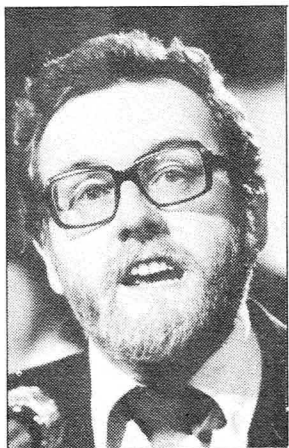
Northfield

Coming in a city where unemployment has risen from 45,000 to 127,000 and in a constituency where the Leyland shop stewards suffered a set-back at the hands of Thatcher and Edwardes, Labour's victory in Northfield will give all Birmingham workers a boost.

In May 1979, the Tories took three of Birmingham's Labour seats. Now Labour has a 8.5% lead over the Tories in the city constituencies.

But to most Labour activists this success will be marred by the political complexion of Northfield's new Labour MP John Spellar. He demonstrated his obsessive hatred for the left, and *Militant* in particular, at the Labour Party conference.

Many of his statements during the by-election were in the same embittered vein, although others also on the right locally tried to restrain the tone of the campaign. However, most Birmingham party members will be concerned that the narrowness of the Northfield result was due to this hostile and pro-



John Spellar, new right-wing MP for Birmingham Northfield

vocative approach of John Spellar. Those Northfield workers tempted in 1979 to vote Tory in disillusionment with the last Labour government were not in the main won back. They either abstained, as the 55% turnout indicates, or even went to the SDP Alliance.

At the NEC's October meeting, John Spellar publicly professed his wish that the maximum number of party members should be expelled. And how many

Low polls show Labour must rebuild support

Labour voters did he hope to win by declaring, the very same day that Tony Benn was due to address a Peckham election rally, that Benn and his ideas were "destructive of the party"?

This was hardly encouraging to most party and trade union activists who see the ideas of the left as the only hope for a solution to the problems of Northfield.

To the ordinary Labour voter, who wants a united party to defeat Thatcher, what is he or she to think of a Labour candidate who launches continual personal attacks on long-standing prominent members of his own party?

Despite all this, supporters of *Militant* and other left-wingers played their part in the campaign. On canvassing in Longbridge ward—one of the main Labour areas—

Militant supporters found many Labour workers who could not be convinced to vote because of the right-wing nature of the candidate.

Since the by-election all the political 'experts' have been consulting their slide-rules to calculate if Labour could win a general election. But its not the number of decimal points of the percentage swing that Labour should be studying, but rather its own policies. If Labour is to retain Northfield and sweep Thatcher out of office, it needs a socialist programme and socialist candidates that can really convince all workers that Labour has the answers.

By Jeremy Birch
(Selly Oak CLP)

27 November conferences against witch-hunt

"Expel the Tories, not the socialists" will be the slogan at the Glasgow rally against the witch-hunt on November 27. Speakers, all in a personal capacity, are, Bob McTaggart MP; Scottish TUC general council member Bob Gillespie; Jimmy Livingstone of the TGWU national committee; Tommy Brennan, convenor of the Ravenscraig steel works; Jim Divine, Scottish regional officer for COHSE; Frances Curran of the LPYS; Terry Fields, Parliamentary candidate for Liverpool Kirkdale; and Bob Wylie representing Militant. The conference will be held at the Partick Burgh Halls, off the Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, starting at 10 am.

And at the rally in Cardiff, the speakers will be Prospective Parliamentary Candidates Ron Davies, Derek Hatton and Llewelyn Smith; Tyrone O'Sullivan of the NUM; Ken Smith of the LPYS National Committee; Andrew Price of Cardiff SE Labour Party; and Tony Saunois, secretary of the Labour Steering Committee against witch-hunts.

Please state when applying, whether you want to use crèche facilities.

CREDENTIALS

VENUE

LIVERPOOL

R VENTON,
C/O 46, THE
WOODLANDS,
BIRKENHEAD,
L41 2SJ.

ROYAL COURT,
ROE STREET,
(NEAR LIME ST
STATION),
LIVERPOOL.

BRIGHTON

R APPS,
C/O 216 WISTON RD,
BRIGHTON.

BRIGHTON CON-
FERENCE CENTRE,
FOYER HALL,
KINGS ROAD,
BRIGHTON.

BRADFORD

P WATSON,
C/O 12 TILEY SQ.,
WEST BOWLING,
BRADFORD,
BD5 7UQ.

CAESAR'S
(TIFFANY'S),
MANNINGHAM
LANE,
BRADFORD.

CARDIFF

F CUTHBERT,
C/O 12 SALOP ST.,
CAERPHILLY,
CF8 1FX.

TOP RANK CARDIFF
SUITE,
QUEEN ST,
CARDIFF.

NEWCASTLE

DAVE COTTERILL,
C/O 5 RICHMOND
TERRACE,
FELLING,
GATESHEAD,
NE10 9DY.

TYNESIDE CINEMA,
PILGRIM ST,
NEWCASTLE.

BIRMINGHAM

J BIRCH
C/O 109 NOR-
THFIELD RD,
KINGS NORTON,
BIRMINGHAM,
B70 1JE.

DIGBETH CIVIC
HALL,
BIRMINGHAM.

LONDON

BOB LABI,
C/O 23 IRONSIDE
HSE,
HOMERTON RD, E9

FRIENDS MEETING
HSE,
EUSTON RD,
NW1

GLASGOW

BOB WYLIE,
C/O 137 MALLARD
TERRACE,
EAST KILBRIDE,
G75 8UF.

PARTICK BOROUGH
HALLS,
GLASGOW.

BRISTOL ON 11 DECEMBER

ROBIN CLAPP,
C/O 55 ORMESTONE
HSE,
WITHYWOOD,
BRISTOL 13

HALL OF MEMORY,
CENTRAL HALL,
OLD MARKET ST,
BRISTOL.



"Not fit to salvage"

For working people in Britain mass unemployment, cut-backs and falling living standards are everyday examples of a vicious, uncaring system. And the authorities are quite open about how they will tackle the social problems

Inspector Basil Griffiths, Deputy Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, told an audience in Brighton recently: "in every urban area there's a large minority of people who are not fit to salvage. The only way in which police can protect society is quite frankly by harassing these people" (Guardian 22 October).

This open voice of repression, treating people quite literally as disposable rubbish, is a threat to democracy and all of us. In reality, such a society is "not fit to salvage".

Unholy Alliance

It is not just Labour's right wing who are afraid of Marxist ideas spreading in the labour movement. If the 'Sun', 28 October, can be believed (and we realise that is a big 'if'), concern has spread to the Stalinist states. Apparently Allan Roberts, Labour MP for Bootle, whilst visiting Grenada in the West Indies called in for a meeting with the Cuban Ambassador.

After his talk was over, the 'Sun' reported, "his Cuban excellency suddenly burst out: 'Tell me, Mr Roberts—why are you in Britain allowing the Trotskyists to take over the Labour Party?'" Of course in the Stalinist states they harassed, imprisoned or shot Marxists, but in Britain these governments' representatives presumably will just quietly applaud the right-wing's witch-hunt from the sidelines.

Falklands financial cost

Buried away in a written reply to a Parliamentary question, the government has finally admitted the financial cost of the Falkland war: £1,600 million—that works out at about £1 million for each islander.

In touch with reality

How would you define 'losing touch with reality'? One of the naval psychiatrists sent to the Falklands' war gave an example to the Guardian, 1 November, of one sailor suffering from this illness. The symptoms? "He has a strong feeling that the war should never have been allowed to happen. He could never manage to identify the Argentines enough as enemies...the Argentines were friends until a short while ago. He does see it was necessary for us to retake the Falklands, but he thinks the invasion itself should have been prevented."

If that sounds pretty sane to you, that's because you don't share the military top hats' definition of what a soldier or sailor should be. The psychiatrist further explained: "Yes we indoctrinate them in the forces. Otherwise they wouldn't fight. That's why we cut their hair the same, make them wear the same uniform, make the same salute and march together."

And that's why with such rigid military discipline, they oppose the demand for trade union rights for servicemen. Just in case there are too many servicemen, who are actually 'in touch with reality.'

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

However many concessions you give the Tory establishment they will always demand more or attack your motives. At the 1957 Labour Party Conference Aneurin Bevan broke with the left and stated that Britain needed an H-bomb. But the Daily Express, 3 October 1957, explained 'the sinister reasons' behind Bevan's conversion. 'Mr Bevan is not long back from Moscow' and he was just carrying out Moscow's wishes, as they wanted Britain to have the bomb. Nowadays Bevan is described as part of the 'legitimate left of the Labour Party; it was not so twenty-five years ago.

Privileged... Pampered... Prejudiced

Many Militant readers may have watched the recent "Forty Minutes" programme on Roedean, out of curiosity to see how the other half lives.

I watched it because I actually went there for seven years.

Public schools are designed to perpetuate the ruling capitalist class (and their wives) by producing pupils with the right ideology, qualifications and qualities to take on the leading positions in capitalist society.

At Roedean there is a strong emphasis on academic achievement and you are compelled to work all the hours of the day to eventually achieve these results. Classes are small, facilities excellent and there is a wide range of subject choices.

There is a shared assumption that you will carry on into higher education. If you start to rebel or flag in your efforts, you are made to feel very guilty for letting your parents down who are paying thousands of pounds to give you this privileged education. Not surprisingly, the end results are fantastic e.g. in 1981, out of the 63 girls taking O-levels (and everyone takes O-levels) 49

passed 5 or more subjects, and 15 passed 10 or more subjects.

Taught to be superior

However, the influence is not only educational but social. You are taught to believe, (or quite possibly believe it already as you come from a wealthy family) that you are superior to ordinary mortals and you should automatically look down on kids from State schools or even the "lesser" (i.e. less expensive) public schools.

You were discouraged from making relationships with the domestic staff and learnt to treat them with a paternalistic and distant politeness. Any girls who had regional accents or who somehow did not fit the Roedean mould were teased and bullied.

The outside world is kept

By former
Roedean pupil,
Kirsty Maclean
(Shingley CLP)

at a distance, presumably in order that the girls are not tainted by meeting people with different backgrounds or ideas. Anyone who has passed Roedean on the main coast road into Brighton will have noticed the high barbed wire fences.

We were not allowed into Brighton without a member of staff until we reached the sixth form and then only on a Saturday afternoon. Boyfriends were vetted; they had to meet the housemistress before you could go out with them and the rules still applied—Saturday afternoons only! Needless to say, most of these relationships are shortlived.

Outside world kept away

There was surprisingly little rebellion against this repressive regime. We had been pretty successfully indoctrinated with the idea that what was happening to us was for our own good and

we were ever fearful of expulsion which apparently would bring social disgrace on our whole family.

The rebellion which did take place tended to be clandestine rather than open—a quick cigarette or occasional joint of cannabis in the toilets, a silent boozing session after lights out, and very occasionally some of the bravest girls would creep across the fields at night to a disco in Brighton.

They were not entirely successful at keeping the outside world at bay and during the late 1960s when I was in the sixth form, there was a group claiming to be marxists and a group claiming to be anarchists (I was an anarchist!), but I'm not sure whether we really believed in the ideas, or just said we did to annoy the staff.

You may wonder how I ended up a marxist and I sometimes wonder that myself. While discontented at Roedean, I was rarely unhappy and while I rebelled against some of the rules I usually drew the line at things which would get me expelled. But somehow I realised, even before I left school, that I was not special or superior and that any achievements I made in life were not so much due to my personality or intelligence but due to the privileged start I had been given.

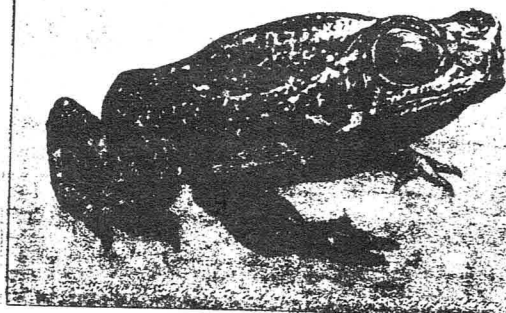
Public schools should be abolished—the educational opportunities and facilities that they provide should be available to everyone free of charge, the snobbish attitudes and the narrow upper class prejudices should not be indoctrinated into anyone. However we have to recognise that public schools are only the tip of the iceberg.

While extremely rich people exist they will always be able to make sure that their children are able to follow in their footsteps.

The abolition of the public schools is not enough. In order to do away with inequality and privilege and the ideology they purvey it is necessary to achieve the socialist transformation which leads to a classless society.

THE TIME OF THE TOAD A Study of Inquisition in America by Dalton Trumbo

John Pickard reviews *Time of the Toad*,
by Dalton Trumbo (Journeyman)
Available, price £2.25 (inc. P&P) from World
Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Tce., London, E83PN



The name of this essay was taken from an article by Emile Zola, who recommended to a young man to eat a toad every morning as a means of

getting accustomed to the poison in newspaper articles. After such an ordeal, Zola explained, anyone could stomach the garbage in the press.

"All nations," Dalton Trumbo writes, "in the course of their histories have passed through periods which, to extend Zola's figure of speech, might be called The Time of the Toad." The particular period in Trumbo's mind covered the post-war years in the USA when the House of Representatives Committee

for Un-American Activities investigated 'communism', particularly in the film industry.

Through the activities of this notorious Committee, with its famous question, "Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?", film producers, writers and directors were blacklisted and hounded out of the industry.

Dalton Trumbo was blacklisted himself and wrote 18 screenplays from Mexico under an assumed name, some of them for films which became very successful. Later on, he was to re-emerge into the limelight after Kirk Douglas and Ot-

to Preminger insisted he receive screen credits for his work on the films Spartacus and Exodus, in 1960.

Time of the Toad was an essay first published in 1949 in the USA by the *Hollywood Ten*. These were screenwriters who were indicted for contempt of Congress after they refused to divulge their trade union and political affiliations before the committee (as was their right under the Bill of Rights), and who were subsequently sent to jail.

The essay is critical not only of those involved in the Committee for Un-American Activities (including such honest men as Richard Millhouse Nixon) but also those who tacitly accepted the existence and activities of the committee by agreeing to declare their own 'innocence' in public, thereby aiding and abetting the conviction of those who tried to use their constitutional rights by refusing to divulge their affiliations.

The essay makes appropriate reading at a time when there are moves afoot to set up 'committees of enquiry' and witch-hunts in the British labour movement. ('Are you or have you ever been a supporter of Militant?')

THATCHER'S BRITAIN

5% of the population own
50% of the wealth.
50% of the population own
only 5% of the wealth.

SCOTLAND...

"I've got some bad news for you," said my wife. I looked up dreading what was coming. "What's that?" I said.

"Emma needs a new pair of shoes. She's starting to get blisters on her toes. She really needs a new pair of shoes."

"She's growing awful fast isn't she?" "Kids do, didn't you know?" "Well the cheque comes in tomorrow. We'll get her a pair tomorrow". "The rent's due tomorrow and the gas bill is due in next week and the telephone bill". I visibly winced.

"I think I'll go down to the Job Centre and see if there's any jobs going". "You were down yesterday". "I know but there's always a chance," said I, trying to sound optimistic but knowing there wasn't a snowball's chance in hell of there being a job for me. I got up and started to put on my shoes.

"I thought you said they were letting in", my wife said "why don't you put on your boots?" "They're letting in too". I put on my jacket, it was still damp from the soaking it got the day before. "I'll not be long, love. Bye bye Emma." "Bye bye" said one-year old Emma.

The bus isn't due for 10 minutes" my wife shouted

from the kitchen. "I'm just going to walk" I said. "Its pouring! You'll get soaked". "It's OK I like walking. Its only half an hour and besides I've not got the fare." "What about the change from yesterday's paper? I gave you a pound." "I...eh", the guilt was pouring out of me. "I bought ten fags. I'm sorry love, I just fancied a smoke".

Just before I left home, I glanced down at my paper. There was a picture of a smiling Lady Diana. She had apparently just made a quick dash from Balmoral to London and back so she could get her hair done. It cost over £1,000 all in.

I've been on the dole since June when I left college. I thought we were hard up living on a student's grant but it was affluent compared to social security. This has been our lifestyle since, more or less. We had a few savings but that was a long time ago.

I was reading in the papers recently that inflation is getting really low. That is no comfort whatsoever. Its a job I'm looking for.

There was a party political broadcast on the other night for the Tories. It said everything was going all right. Things weren't as bad as some people make out. If anyone says that to my face...I'm not a violent man, but I swear..."

By Stephen
Smellie

(East Kilbride LPYS)



Under the Tories, unemployment benefit has been cut in real terms for the first time since the 1930s. Since 1979, they have twice failed to increase benefit fully in line with prices.

Photo: Andrew Ward

EAST MIDLANDS...

As a social worker in Leicestershire, I see many families living in poverty. For many, the problems start when the main breadwinner is made redundant. The problems outlined below are fairly typical.

FAMILY A. The husband had worked in the engineering industry for about 30 years, and has now been unemployed for 3 years. "I couldn't believe it when they laid me off. I kept thinking I'd easily find another one. But as the months went on, I realised I wasn't going to get anything.

"After 30 years of being a skilled engineer, suddenly I was a nobody, I had all this time on my hands, I was under the wife's feet all day,

most of my social life had been connected with my job too. I was involved in the union, and used to drink in the works social club. Suddenly I didn't have the money to go down there, and anyway I felt I didn't belong there any more.

"The worst thing was the effect on my marriage. Being with the wife 24 hours a day meant we started to argue. And worse still, we couldn't afford to go out. We got into financial difficulties, there was one thing after another.

"First we had the phone cut off, then after that bad winter we had an electric bill of £170. The electric got cut off then, and we had to use candles which was really

Jean Thorpe
N Nottingham

dangerous with the kids. From then its just gone from bad to worse, like a nightmare, with the wife on sleeping tablets and me on tranquilisers."

FAMILY B. Husband an electrician, wife and 2 small children. Been on the dole for 18 months.

Interview with wife: "My husband had a good job so we took out a small mortgage. When he lost his job, we fell badly behind with the payments and eventually had to go into a council house. We'd also resorted to going to a private money lender and we got into a real mess—they were threatening us with legal action.

All this worry caused

endless family arguments. It affected the children and they started wetting the bed and refusing to go to school. I just couldn't cope any more. I hadn't got the courage to walk out on the kids but in the end I swallowed a bottle of tablets. I know the financial problems weren't our fault, but I felt we'd failed the children and they'd be better off in care.

After the overdose, a social worker became involved. Things have got a bit better now. We're paying off our debts, but the future is a bit grim. My husband hasn't got a chance of another job and he's very depressed at being stuck at home because he enjoyed his work. He was the breadwinner and proud of it. Now he feels he's got nothing to offer his family. In the last 18 months he's aged 10 years."

NORTH EAST...

Margaret Black lives on Tyneside and is married with three sons. Her husband has been unemployed for two years. He lost his job after suffering two heart attacks. Because he's over 50 and has a record of bad health he's not wanted by the employers. He's been thrown on the scrap heap.

Margaret's oldest son Douglas has been on the dole for two years. His last job was on building the new metro system. Tyneside now boasts of the marvellous new transport system but the people who created it can hardly afford to use it. What a sick joke.

Only Ian the youngest son has a job on the male side of the family. In years gone past the older lads used to give him pocket money. Now he has to help them out of his weekly riches of £32.00.

As Margaret explained, if she didn't have a job they would be faced with disaster.

"I got a job in June on a temporary basis. Before that we were really broke. We were getting really depressed. Dougie left home and got a flat because we were getting on top of each other. Before



Last year well over 2½ million children faced Christmas below the poverty line. How many will it be this year?

that his wife had left him and took the children."

So much for the Tory claim that they would look after the family. Margaret is now the breadwinner.

"I work 10 hours a day. Eight o'clock in the morning until nine at night and Saturdays. It doesn't leave much time for housework. And

husbands and boys don't rally around and do everything. But getting work was like winning the pools. Fortunately I got my job but how long can I keep it up?"

"Doug's attitude is that he thinks that it is a way of life to live on the social security. 'There is no future,' he says. I try to say things

may change in two or three years. He thinks that there is no hope for the country. But even if a Labour government gets in nothing will change. I try to point out that if they join something then they help to change the future. I'm afraid for his future"

By Dave Cotterill

One worker in 25 is among the long term unemployed, compared with one in 250 ten years ago. (Manpower Services Commission)

Few unemployed men have any resources to cushion the blow of losing a weekly wage (The DHSS Cohort Study of the Unemployed) More than three-quarters of all men who were unemployed, had been paid wages well below the national average, less than one in ten received more than £300 in special payments when their jobs ended and most had no savings.

Last November, Timothy Royle, managing director of Hogg Robinson, the insurance broker and underwriter resigned over "management differences". The differences to Mr Royle was the £206,000 he received as a golden handshake. Geoffrey Parsons was chief executive of construction company John Laing until he resigned last year. He received a golden handshake of £161,000.

This article is an edited version of an article by Ted Grant which first appeared in 'Militant' in November 1975

November 7 is the 65th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

Capitalist commentators and even the 'Communist' Parties of the world will try to blur its significance as the first step towards real democracy, a workers' democracy, and a preparation for a transition to socialism on an international scale. But the Russian Revolution can only be explained as part of the worldwide struggle for the transformation of society on socialist lines.

Trotsky pointed out in his 'History of the Russian Revolution' that, in 1917, "in his articles and letters addressed to the Central Committee, Lenin analyses the situation always emphasising first of all the international conditions. The symptoms and the facts of an awakening European proletariat are for him, on the background of the war, irrefutable proof that the direct threat against the Russian Revolution from the side of foreign Imperialism would slowly diminish."

The Russian Revolution was never viewed by Lenin as an end in itself, in the way that the Stalinists later distorted it with the theory of "Socialism in One Country". On the contrary, it was not just Russia, but the whole of Europe which was seething. The bloody slaughter of the first world war brought in its wake unprecedented social upheaval in every country of Europe. The Bolsheviks saw their own struggle—in the most industrially backward nation of Europe—as the spark that would set Europe alight.

Trotsky pointed out in his 'History', that against a strong, conservative, and self-confident capitalist class in Europe, the working class in Russia would have remained isolated and would not have held out for even a few months. But such a European capitalist class did not exist at that time.

The working class did not come to power in Western Europe, but, nevertheless, it proved powerful enough to defend the young Soviet republic in the first and most important period of its life.

February Revolution overthrew Czarism.

The February Revolution in Russia crushed Czarism, and as in Spain in 1936 or Portugal after Spínola's attempted coup in 1974, the real power rested firmly in the hands of the workers and soldiers. The Soviets in Russia were committees like those of the shop stewards in Britain and were formed in the workshops, and armed forces, elected democratically by the workers and soldiers, linked together in areas, regionally and nationally.

The February Revolution began on the 23rd with a strike, not of the most advanced workers of heavy industry or engineering, but of the most oppressed, the women textile workers in Petrograd. On International Women's Day, 90,000 were

on strike, including many soldiers' wives. On the following day half the industrial workers of Petrograd joined the strike. "Down with the autocracy! Down with the war", were the slogans of demonstrating workers in the city centre.

The police tried to break up the crowds, aided by the Cossacks (cavalry troops) some mounted police, and occasionally by infantry. The crowds fought the police, but tried to neutralise the Cossacks and win over the soldiers in action.

On February 25th the order to fire to disperse the crowds was given to the troops. Certain squadrons of cadet officers fired on the demonstrating workers. On the 27th there were more demonstrations. The troops were called out to suppress them.

After clashes with the workers, mainly by officer training squadrons, the troops began to mutiny. "In some places the workers had succeeded in uniting with the soldiers, penetrating the barracks and receiving rifles and cartridges."

The 1,000 year old Monarchy fell under these hammer blows. As in the Spanish Revolution in 1936, when un-armed workers stormed the barracks in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, and were joined by some soldiers, the real power, "armed bodies of men" was in the hands of the workers.

'Compromisers' handed power back to capitalists.

But in Spain in 1936, the leaders of the Socialist and Communist Parties, with the help of the Anarchists, played the role of the Mensheviks in the Russian Revolution, and handed power back to the capitalist class. Without Marxist leadership this resulted in Spain in the defeat and destruction of the labour movement.

In Russia the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries handed power to the capitalists in the form of the Liberal Party, the Constitutional Democrats. In the early months of the revolution, with Lenin in Switzerland, the leaders of the Bolsheviks in Russia put forward a policy like that of Popular Frontism, still put forward by the Communist Party today.

They put forward a policy which would have meant, in effect, that they resigned themselves to the position of a loyal 'left opposition' in a capitalist government, instead of setting a course to change society through a workers' government.

Stalin at that time came out for a union in one party of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, i.e. of Marxists and opportunists. He said, "...we will live down petty(?) disagreements within the party".

Lenin, especially with his return to Russia, began a campaign in his own party to win it round to the goal of Soviet government. Any government that left the old

65 YEARS AGO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION



The Petrograd Soviet in 1917. Trotsky is seventh from the left near the front row

social relations intact—and that would be the course followed by the Constitutional Democrats—would be incapable of solving the problems of the war, the land question, the national question, and so on. Only a Soviet government, Lenin explained, based upon the workers, soldiers and peasants, could take Russian society forward.

"We are not charlatans" Lenin went on "...we must base ourselves only on the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority—so be it...The real government is the Soviet of Workers' Deputies...in the Soviet our party is the minority...what can we do? All we can do is to explain patiently, insistently, systematically, the error of their tactics...We do not want the masses to believe us just on our say so; we are not charlatans. We want the masses to be freed by experience from their mistakes."

Lenin gained party majority.

Lenin gained the overwhelming support of the party rank and file for his tactics. The Bolsheviks had

grown from 8,000 after the February Revolution to 79,000 at the beginning of April. Now they were endeavouring to win the support of the big majority of the working class for their policy of "All power to the Soviets."

At that time the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries retained the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldier delegates.

In April, as a consequence of the annexationist aims proclaimed by the Russian Liberal Foreign Minister Miliukov, there was an indignant demonstration of certain regiments in Petrograd, which was supported by strikes, with many workers joining in. "Among the bayonets of the soldiers glimmered the letters on a streamer 'Down with Miliukov'."

Thus the coalition with the capitalists aroused the opposition of sections of the advanced workers from the earliest days of the revolution.

However, the first All-Russian Congress of the Soviets assembling on June 3rd in Petrograd, sanctioned a new offensive ordered by Kerensky on the war

fronts. There were 820 delegates with a vote and 268 with a voice. Out of those delivering party affiliations, 285 were Social Revolutionaries, 246 Mensheviks, 105 Bolsheviks.

Trotsky observes, "The Congress refused to press a decree on the 8-hour day. Tseterelli (a Menshevik leader) explained this side-stepping by the difficulty of reconciling the interests of different layers of the population. As though any single great need in history was accomplished by 'reconciling interests' and not by the victory of progressive interests over reactionary!"

In a demonstration on June 18th, called by the Executive Committee of the Soviets in Petrograd, 400,000 participated, mainly workers and soldiers. The banners of the workers carried the Bolshevik slogans "Down with the 10 minister-capitalists." "Down with the offensive" and "All power to the Soviets."

Thus, the Bolsheviks were increasing their influence among the masses. But the privations of the war, the increase of prices and the bloody and useless offensive organised by the Kerensky Government in the war

undermined support for those who sought 'compromises' with the capitalist—Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The Petrograd workers and soldiers were reacting to the betrayal, by the Provisional Government, of the ideas of the revolution.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks appealed to the workers and soldiers of the city of Petrograd, where they now had a majority, to wait until they had won a majority in the country. On the 31st of June Lenin, addressing the workers of the capital, wrote in 'Pravda', "We understand your bitterness, we understand the excitement of the Petersburg workers, but we say to them: Comrades, an immediate attack would be inexpedient."

But the indignation of the workers and soldiers, could not be restrained, despite the advice of the Bolshevik leaders. Consequently, on July 3rd a demonstration was organised by the soldiers and supported by the workers. Trotsky quotes one of the participants: "Under the red banners marched only workers and soldiers," "The cockades of the officials, the shiny buttons of students, the hats of 'lady

GO: ER ON



Early days of the Revolution. Soldiers in March proclaim 'Down with the Monarchy' and Long live the Democratic Republic' on their banners
Photo: POPPERFOTO

take action against the Bolsheviks, although 500,000 people had participated in the demonstration.

The theoretical explanation of the 'July Days' is given by Trotsky when he says, "Thanks to the Bolshevik party's taking its place boldly at the head of the movement, it was able to stop the masses at the moment that the demonstration began to turn into an armed test of strength. The blow struck at the masses and the Party in July was very considerable, but it was not a decisive blow."

"The victims were counted by tens and not by tens of thousands. The working class issued from the trial, not headless and not bled to death. It fully preserved its fighting cadres and these cadres had learned much."

The temporary eclipse of the Bolsheviks with the hysterical campaign of slander, encouraged and strengthened the forces of counter-revolution. The landlords and capitalists could not reconcile themselves to the immense power possessed by the Soviets even under the leadership of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The Provisional Government had only a very partial power. It was under the constant pressure of the Soviets even under Compromise leadership.

In Russia on August 28th General Kornilov, liberally supplied with funds by the imperialists and after conspiring with Kerensky, broke with the latter and deployed troops against Petrograd.

Lenin had had to go into hiding. Trotsky had been arrested. Yet immediately the open counter-revolution

reared its head, the Bolsheviks offered a united front to their Menshevik and Social Revolutionary persecutors, against the danger of open counter-revolution.

The Bolsheviks helped to organise committees for the defence of the revolution. Trotsky says, "Of that indifference of the people which made them ready to submit to the least blow of the whip, there was not a trace. On the contrary, the masses were as if awaiting a blow of the whip in order to show what sources of strength and self-sacrifice were to be found in their depths. This mistake in estimating the mood of the masses brought all their (the counter-revolutionaries) other calculations to the dust."

Under direct pressure from the Bolsheviks and the organisations led by them, the committee of defence recognised the desirability of arming individual groups of workers for the defence of the workers' quarters, the shops and factories...The Red Guard announced its readiness to put in the field a force of 40,000 rifles.

The troops of Kornilov refused to take action against Petrograd. They were won over by the delegates and agitators of the Soviets.

Kornilov counter-revolution defeated.

The soldiers of Kornilov never even made the attempt to employ weapons to force their way to Petrograd. The officers did not once give them the command. The Government troops were nowhere obliged to resort to

force in stopping the onslaught of the Kornilov army. The company disintegrated, crumbled, evaporated in the air.

With the collapse of the attempted counter revolution, the Government decided to try to transfer the revolutionary troops in Petrograd to the front. Trotsky writes "as soon as the order for the removal of the troops was communicated by headquarters to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet...it became clear that this question in its development would have decisive political significance."

On October 9th the 'compromisers' introduced into the Petrograd Soviet a motion to create a committee of revolutionary defence, "of the capital, in co-operation with the workers, from the German army. This committee was accepted by the Bolsheviks and then renamed the 'Military Revolutionary Committee'."

This committee, under the authority of the Petrograd Soviet provided the basis for preparations to seize power for the Soviets. The Bolsheviks conducted a mass agitation among the soldiers and workers preparing them for the conquest of power. At a meeting on October 21st the garrison conference adopted 3 short resolutions: (1) The garrison of Petrograd and its environs promises the Military Revolutionary Committee full support in all its steps... (2) October 22nd is to be a day devoted to a peaceful review of forces... (3) The All-Russian Congress of Soviets must take the power in its hands and guarantee to the people peace, land and bread." Hundreds of delegates voted

for this: 57 abstained. There was not a single delegate who voted against!

Step by step, the arsenals, the fortresses, the garrison, through the workers and soldiers of these garrisons and enterprises, came under the control of the MRC. Power was more and more being taken into the hands of the Soviets through this committee. As Trotsky ironically remarks "It was being left to the Government of Kerensky, as one might say, to insurrect."

Throughout the whole period of the Revolution, from February up to October, the Bolshevik Party had been gaining support. Even in the early months, the closer you went to the organisations of the industrial workers, the greater was the support for the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks fought for a majority for their programme of Soviet power and through the experiences of the workers themselves, in the 'laboratory' of the Revolution, they gained a majority. Without the leadership given to the workers and peasants, the revolution, even the modest democratic gains of February, would have been drowned in blood by Kornilov or some other counter-revolutionary general.

But in preparing for power, besides the factories, barracks, villages, the front and the Soviets, the revolution had another laboratory: the brain of Lenin. The approach of a decisive struggle led to waverings even in the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

Zinoviev and Kamenev surreptitiously supported by Stalin, were opposed to the Soviet seizure of power. But as Lenin explained, the success of the Russian and

World Revolution depended upon as short a time scale as 2 or 3 days.

Such a critical situation may have been decades in preparation, but if the workers' leadership failed to point a way forward, the masses can grow disillusioned and indifferent. The possibility of a change of power is lost and the labour movement may be thrown back decades. As Engels also explained, 25 years can be as a day and then in one day can be summed up the essence of 25 years.

2nd Congress of Soviets takes power

The National Congress of Soviets was to assemble on October 25th (November 7th, in the Western calendar) in which the Bolsheviks had a majority. This second All-Russian Congress would take power in its own hands, but it was still necessary to assure the taking power in advance, in order to prevent the smothering of the revolution.

At the Congress of Soviets, when the Congress assumed power, in answer to the Mensheviks, Trotsky declared: "If the real forces were actually against us, how could it happen that we won the victory almost without bloodshed? No, it is not we who are isolated, but the government and the so-called democrats...our great superiority as a party was in the fact that we have created a coalition with the class forces, creating a union of the workers, soldiers and poorest peasants."

The masses seized power firmly. "Who would believe," wrote one of the Russian Generals, Zalessky, expressing his indignation at this, "that the janitor or watchmen of the court building would suddenly become chief justice of the court of appeals? Or the hospital orderly manager of the hospital; the barber a big functionary; yesterday's ensign the commander-in-chief; yesterday's lackey or common labourer burgomaster; yesterday's train oiler chief of division or station superintendent; yesterday's locksmith head of the factory?"

Commenting on the significance of the revolution Trotsky writes "the historic ascent of humanity taken as a whole may be summarised as a succession of victories of consciousness over blind forces—in nature, in society, in man himself. Criticism and creative thought can boast of its greatest victories up to now in the struggle with nature. The physico-chemical sciences have already reached a point where man is clearly about to become master of matter. But social relations still form in the manner of the coral island.

"Parliamentarism illuminated only the surface of society and even that with a rather artificial light. In comparison with Monarchy and other heir-looms from the cannibals and cave-dwellers, (Parliamentary) democracy is of course a great conquest but it leaves the blind play of forces in the social relations of men untouched.

"It was against this deeper sphere of the unconscious that the October Revolution was the first to raise its hand. The Soviet system wishes to bring aim and plan into the very basis of society, where up to now only accumulated consequences have reigned."



sympathisers' were not to be seen...today only the common slaves of capital were marching."

Bolsheviks suppressed in July.

'Izvestia', the official Soviet paper reported, "The troops elected a deputation to the all-Russian Council of Soviets Executive Committee which presented in their name the following demands: Removal of the 10 bourgeois Ministers, all power to the Soviets, cessation of the offensive, confiscation of the printing plants of the bourgeois press, the land to be state property, state control of production."

The demonstrators were fired on by officers, police agents and provocateurs from cellars and roofs of houses. They were trying to provoke clashes, so as to drown in blood the armed demonstration of Petrograd workers and soldiers. The Government brought back troops from the front to "put down an uprising," although it was clear that it was intended as a peaceful demonstration.

The right-wing leaders saw this as an opportunity to



Left: Lenin leaving a meeting in 1921. Without Lenin's leadership in 1917, the gains of the February Revolution would have been drowned in blood. Lenin fought to bring his own party round to a policy of Soviet power.



Right: Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Kerensky, reviews his troops. By October, no troops in or around the capital would support him.

Last month's Presidential election was a victory for the incumbent president, JR Jayewardene of the UNP, a right wing party that represents the interests of Imperialism and big business. President JR Jayewardene received 3.4 million votes.

This result is a setback for the working class of Sri Lanka even though the gap between the UNP votes and the anti-UNP vote has been reduced.

The working class in Sri Lanka representing about one-third of the population has traditionally been well organised compared with other workers in the ex-colonial world generally, and it has been able to use this strength to raise living standards.

After the second world war, the conditions and wages of the Sri Lankan working class were second only to those of the Japanese working class in the developing world. Today, the conditions are very harsh and the masses are amongst the poorer of the third world countries.

The United National Party came to power in 1977. World capitalism saw this as an opportunity to further exploit and dominate the island. This attempt to open up the economy under the strict monitoring of the world bank and the IMF resulted in a savage attack on the living standards of the working class and peasantry. Systematic moves were made to suppress their economic and political rights. The Essential Public Services Bill, which banned strikes in essential services was adopted in October 1979.

Jayewardene consolidates his power

The Tamils in the north in particular have suffered from the oppression of this regime. Arbitrary arrests have been carried out and the army has carried out thuggish and brutal attacks



By Heather Rawling

on the population. Only months after the UNP came to power, President JR Jayewardene had a new constitution adopted. The old one, modelled on the British constitution, was thrown out. His intent was to establish a semi-dictatorship and move towards a bonapartist state. The essence of the new constitutional structure was the devaluing of parliament and the electorate and the concentration of power in the hands of the President. The President can appoint and remove any minister while he himself can choose to hold any portfolio.

A system of proportional representation was introduced in place of the old system of individual parliamentary constituencies, as in Britain. In 1977, the last parliamentary elections, the UNP won 80% of the seats in Parliament, a landslide unlikely ever to be repeated, although it polled only 51% of the vote.

Under a proportional representation system, it is unlikely that any one party will ever again be able to obtain the two-thirds majority in Parliament necessary to amend or repeal the new constitution. Jayewardene without a 'two thirds' mandate himself has thus ensured that his new constitution can never be annulled by legal means.

An unemployment rate of 13% is now claimed by the

SRI LANKA: Marxist



Vasudeva Nanayakkara

Photo: Militant

Finance Ministry, compared with 20% when the government came to power. But this has been achieved at the expense of rising inflation (18%-25% in 1981 compared with 5.7% in the years 1970 to 1977.)

World capitalism supports cut-backs

The growth of the economy has been aided by foreign loans. In the four years 1978-81 real growth in the Sri Lankan Gross Domestic Product (GDP) averaged 6.5% compared with an average of 3.6% per annum in the years 1970-77. But the growth has been more in tourism and service industries rather than in manufacturing industry.

Much of the growth was also due to favourable export prices for tea, rubber and coconuts that account for about 55% of export ear-

nings. But there has been a sharp deterioration in the terms of trade, as prices for imported oil and capital goods have risen and prices for tea, the country's major export, have slumped. Therefore, the recent inflationary boom in the economy was only temporary and there is no possibility of any long term improvement. Manufactured goods are coming up against protectionism in the West. Textiles and garments have been the fastest growing manufactured exports but they have been hit by new quotas in the US as the West also suffers from the world economic crisis.

All over the world, the capitalist class is attempting to solve their economic crisis by forcing cutbacks of workers and peasants living standards. But to no avail... "The addition to government revenues from the large IMF sponsored cut-

backs in welfare payments and subsidies which have fallen from 9% of Gross National Product in 1978 to 5% in 1980 has almost entirely been wiped out by the decline in revenues in tea. Sri Lanka's external debt has risen fast to over Rp 29bn (US\$ 3.12 bn) by the end of 1981." (*Financial Times*)

Trade balance worsens

This is the background to the Presidential election last month. Jayewardene had only served four years of his six year term of office but he sought re-election because the economic situation is expected to worsen considerably. Sri Lanka had a trade deficit of \$700,000 in 1980 and the position is getting worse. The full effect of the fall in prices will be felt next year.

Jayewardene was re-elected President partly

because of the apparent success of his economic policies assisted by remittances from Sri Lankans working in Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries. About half a million new jobs were created, although mainly in tourism and service industries, not manufacturing industry.

Jayewardene's campaign was demagogic and disillusionment had been created by the workers parties. The failure of the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) to field a candidate also assisted Jayewardene's campaign. Six candidates stood in the presidential elections.

Apart from J.R. Jayewardene of the UNP, the other candidates were: Hector Kobbekaduwa of the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) (900,000 votes), Dr Colvin De Silva of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) (59,000 votes) Rohana Wijera of the Peo-

Spanish elections - Historical victory

Never, even in the militant struggles of the 1930s, did the workers' parties have an overall majority in the Cortes. Now PSOE, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, holds 201 of the country's 350 seats.

In one of the most crushing defeats of an outgoing government, the UCD (Spain's liberal Tory Party) got 13 seats, with a dozen cabinet ministers, including Premier Calvo Sotelo, getting the boot.

For two generations, General Franco perfected Spain as a massive torture chamber. The ruthless regime, installed over the bodies of a million civil war dead, tolerated no dissent. The hated civil guard ter-

rorised the working class.

The nightmare is over. Labour has arisen like a phoenix from the ashes. No power on earth can crush the will of the working class to organise and change society.

Army threatens reaction.

The UCD, really a dozen parties, of former Franco ministers and latter day converts to 'democracy', hastily cobbled together after the Caudillo's death, is discredited and riddled with splits. For the workers, UCD rule has meant one in six unemployed, one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe. Forty-five per cent of the 16 to 18 year olds are jobless. Less than a third of the unemployed get any dole. Meanwhile, wages are being eaten away by 15% inflation rate (official figure). Democracy, UCD style,

borrowed much from the Franco era. The police are using plastic bullets against demonstrators. The armed civil guard remains intact.

A month before the election, the latest of a series of plots by right-wing army officers was uncovered. The coup was apparently planned for the eve of the elections. Whether or not this was a serious attempt, its 'discovery' was a grim warning to an incoming socialist government and an attempt to intimidate socialist voters.

Only three arrests were made as a result of the plot, but good news has arrived that the government is taking decisive action: "Officers are being forcibly transferred from their units, usually to remote areas of the peninsula or to the Canary Islands. So far, four officers of the ranks of major and colonel have been affected. There is speculation that up to twenty could suffer a

similar fate." (*Financial Times* 21.10.82). Hardly a thorough purge of an army riddled with Francoist officers!

Media Bias

Another obstacle faced by the socialists was blatant media bias. The state itself finances many right-wing papers, previously controlled by the National Movement—the only legal party under Franco. Premier Calvo Sotelo last year sacked Spain's director-general of broadcasting and installed instead a government minister!

Yet no amount of intimidation and fiddling could stop the massive 46% vote for PSOE. Mass celebrations were seen on the streets in anticipation of a sweeping change for the better.

This magnificent victory in Spain after sweeping victories for the left in France and Greece confirms the entirely changed balance of class forces on a world scale over the past few decades. The capitalists are virtually powerless bystanders faced with the enormous power of the organised working class. Given a real socialist lead the workers could carry through a sweeping and relatively peaceful transformation of society and eradicate poverty, bad housing and unemployment.

Yet the whole tone of PSOE's campaign and of its leader, Felipe Gonzalez, has been moderation in the extreme. "We are the people—sensible, moderate and tranquil," he told a crowd in Barcelona. His programme for Spain's 2 million unemployed is to create 800,000 jobs in four years, which he said himself "looks very little to me." Indeed so

"serene and tranquil" is the PSOE leadership that it was only their goodwill which enabled the government to hang on so long as it did.

Moderation will not placate the generals. Spanish workers won democratic rights through struggle. The prohibition of strikes was lifted in 1976 only because a third of the workforce went on strike the previous year! Democracy was merely a fig-leaf for the capitalists to avert revolution.

Socialist Programme Needed

If the PSOE leaders do not act to change society, then the deep crisis of the economy will force them to backtrack on even their very mild reforms. The lesson of

programme put to electorate

ple's Liberation Front (JVP), Kumar Pannambalam of the ACTC (Tamil Congress) and Vasudeva Nanayakkara of the New Lanka Sama Samaja Party (NLSSP) (17,000 votes)

Anti-UNP vote increases

The results of the elections show that there was an increase in the anti-UNP vote. The candidate of the other bourgeois party, the SLFP, was runner up with 39% of the poll. For the majority of politically conscious workers, the main task of the election was to defeat the UNP. The SLFP is the party of the local capitalists and has had a populist appeal in the past. The masses saw the SLFP candidate as the most likely to defeat J.R. Jayewardene and therefore they supported him rather than any of the candidates of the workers' parties.

One genuine Marxist stood in the elections, Vasudeva Nanayakkara of the New Lanka Sama Samaja Party (NLSSP). He explained his reasons for standing and the programme he campaigned on:—

Marxist programme put to electorate

‘We wanted to campaign around a socialist programme under our own banner, but we also wanted to defeat the UNP. That is why we said ‘Support our programme and ideas and give vote number one to us. But don't forget to give vote number two to the main anti-UNP candidate.’

In this way we could give voters an alternative to the capitalist bourgeois parties whilst adopting the best tactics to defeat Jayewardene. Therefore we did not sow any illusions in the ability of the capitalist parties to represent the interests of the masses. We were able to

reach wide layers of people with our marxist programme. We held very big meetings during the campaign, far bigger than the votes we received. For example, in a district where we had only about 500 votes we had meetings of about 3,000. They said ‘We have to vote for the main anti-UNP candidate (who was also the bourgeois party candidate) but we like your programme.’ We will be able to build on this support in the future.

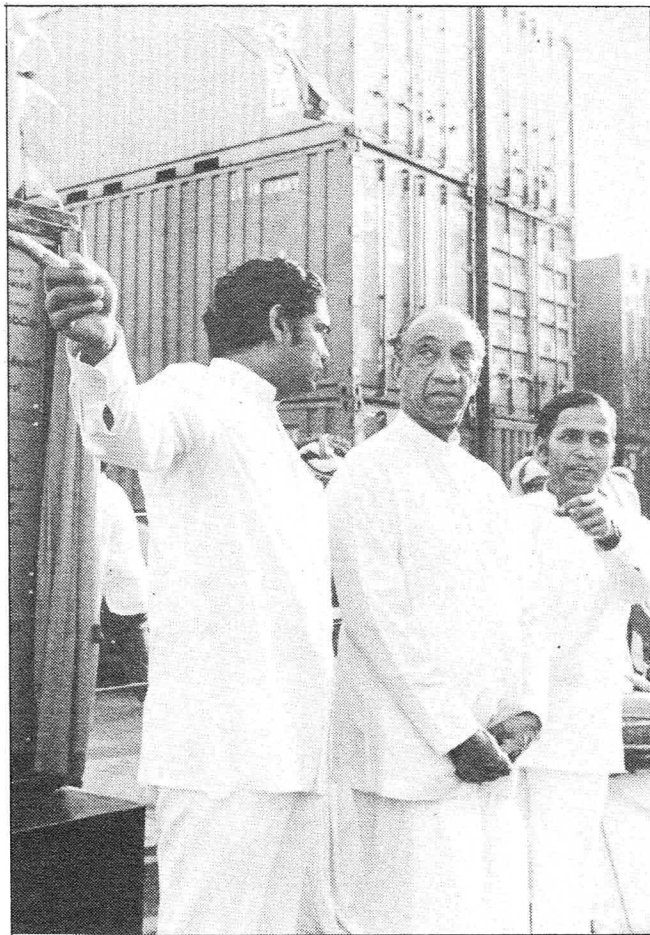
We stood on a programme of the elimination of capitalism and imperialist domination from Sri Lanka, and for the establishment of work place councils, peasant councils and even committees for soldiers and the right to self determination of such peoples as the Tamils. This was the first time that such a programme had been put to the Sri Lankan electorate.

But the masses had a very difficult choice to make. They knew that if Jayewardene was defeated, then his party would still have a majority in parliament and under the present constitution this would lead to confusion. We were the only party that could answer this constitutional difficulty by calling for a completely new democratic administration and so showing the way forward for the future.

Incidentally, the Communist Party went over to the bourgeois Freedom Party totally, folding up their banner and backing them unconditionally. The Left reformists of the LSSP could not offer any alternative programme and their campaign centred around the argument that Jayewardene would disqualify the candidate of the SLFP.

Referendum to postpone parliamentary elections

Now that Jayewardene has been re-elected, he will



Above: President Jayewardene. (centre)

Riot control policeman, Colombo, 1980. Photos: Militant

seek to consolidate his power. He wants to hold a referendum to change the constitution to postpone the parliamentary elections for another six years.

This is the typical act of a Bonapartist (a military police dictator who seeks to act relatively independently from the state machine by balancing between the classes in society, yet still in the last analysis representing the interests of the ruling class). Jayewardene will represent the interests of capitalism and landlordism.

The election results show there is no longer any middle path for the Sri Lankan masses, as the SLFP has

always tried to propose. Now, in this crisis, there is no room for populist reforms.

No middle road

Jayewardene will attempt to win the referendum by weighting the question on the ballot paper in his favour. He would like to move towards a military dictatorship. But he will have to contend with the opposition of the Sri Lankan working class. They have a high level of literacy and a history of a strong workers' movement.



Jayewardene has not introduced his anti-working class and peasantry measures without big battles, including a general strike in 1980, which unfortunately led to a defeat of the workers and their organisations. The situation in Sri Lanka won't last. Either there will be a move for power by a revolutionary movement of workers or a complete military dictatorship and bonapartist regime.

The general crisis bears down particularly harshly on the masses of the third world because of unequal prices. The masses have such a low standard of living that it is impossible for them to

'tighten their belts' without starving to death. There is no solution for them on the basis of capitalism. The only way forward is the overthrow of capitalism and the introduction of a socialist government. If genuine socialist governments were also established in the West, then they could assist the colonial world to develop the resources to eliminate poverty and starvation and plan the use of the world resources in the best interests of the workers and peasants of the world.

for workers

Chile and of Spain itself in 1936 is that the Generals will strike if the workers are demoralised by their own leaders.

Despite the speeches of Felipe Gonzalez, the election results show a deep polarisation of society. Almost 80% turned out to vote—much higher than in 1979. Manuel Fraga's Popular Alliance leaped from 9 seats to become the opposition party with 106. Fraga was a minister under Franco and a brutal Interior Minister in the first (unelected) post-Franco cabinet. In the campaign he said he “understood” the coup plotters.

The bosses' organisations CEOE switched from UCD to Fraga's AP. One hundred families control Spain. The ten top companies are responsible for 37% of imports. These people will do all they can to sabotage the PSOE government.

But the workers too, will

be putting pressure on their new government. Activists in PSOE and the trade unions will be demanding that the leaders use this opportunity for socialist change. The only nationalisation proposal in PSOE's programme is the electric power grid. But workers will be demanding much more power in the months ahead.

By Andy Beadle

SPAIN

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES GREECE

The recent local elections in Greece showed that the massive support for the left in last years general election is holding up.

Last year the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won the election with over half the vote. Over 60% of all votes went to the left parties; this, in a country where only a third of the population are industrial workers. They were responding to a left wing programme which promised major reforms.

Faced with a huge decline in investment, raging inflation and attacks by the ruling class, the PASOK government have capitulated in their term of office and tried to take the capitalist way out of their problems.

On a number of occasions workers in Greece have taken strike action to force PASOK to implement its programme. This time the

demand for action has taken electoral form. The “New Democracy” party, the right wing group who ruled Greece from the collapse of the colonels junta in 1974 until 1981, did not make headway in the election.

But there was a big swing to the Stalinist Communist Party (KKE), particularly in the first round of elections. If the gains by the KKE were repeated in national elections, they would win enough seats to make it impossible for PASOK to form a left government without KKE support.

Even in the villages, “New Democracy” got only half the seats it achieved in the 1978 local elections, while PASOK far more than doubled its seats. In the towns, PASOK won control of 175 municipalities compared with 72 before, leaving New Democracy with just 49 (compared with 128).

In the second round of the elections, the Communist Party gave their support to PASOK in fights against conservative opposition. The Greek working class continue to reject the conservative politicians. They have

turned more to the Communist Party despite its Stalinist history and a history of betrayals of the working class as a warning to PASOK to carry out the policies on which it was so overwhelmingly elected.

ΞΕΚΙΝΗΜΑ

Greek Marxist paper

ΜΑΡΞΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΝΕΟΛΑΙΑ

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Letters

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MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

The human toll of capitalism

Dear Comrades,
Just recently I once again came up against the fact that this system where profit is God is literally killing working class people.

One morning last week whilst at my work as a train driver, I came upon a scene which made me physically sick and shocked me, but later on when I found out a few facts, made me very angry.

A young couple aged 19 or 20 had committed suicide by standing hand in hand in front of a train, where they travel at 70-90 mph. I found out that both of them had

We've had set backs before

Dear Comrades,
It is a sad day when people one believed were socialists become turncoats. I remember in the 1950s hearing Nye Bevan and Foot in Birmingham Town Hall preaching socialism.

However, we've had set-backs before and made a come-back.

Right wing MPs should have a good skilled worker's salary plus expenses, then they'd keep in touch with the problems of the low and average wage earner. Herewith enclosed is a cheque for £15, a day's pay (for the recent day of action).

Yours fraternally,
C Thorpe,
Section 1 AEU,
Great Barr,
Birmingham.

Support from a pensioner

Dear Comrades,
I was getting on the bus last Saturday, when I got talking to an old age pensioner. First she talked about how high the bus fares are now and then she went on to tell me how she had left school at 14 to earn money to look after her mother.

She said workers had always had to struggle just to survive. She told me how workers in Coventry used to be able to get apprenticeships to learn a trade. She contrasted this to the situation today where young people are not being trained. She said she had seen poverty in the past and it was returning now.

I told the lady what the LPYS were doing and I offered her a copy of the *Militant*. After flicking through the paper she declined to buy one saying she was "too old for that sort of thing". Even though she said she agreed with what we were doing and wished me the best of luck. Before getting off the bus she gave me £1 for the Fighting Fund.

This goes to show that older people are with us in our fight against the Tories and gave me more determination to carry on the struggle against the bosses' system and for socialism.

Yours fraternally,
Julie Smith,
Coventry South East LPYS.

been unemployed since leaving school. They had married hoping things would get better and had been living with the wife's in-laws, where overcrowding in a council flat, coupled with the soul destroying way unemployed people are treated, forced them to take their lives.

I fully expected the local press to give this tragedy the big sob story about their lives on the dole. But now apparently suicide among the unemployed is so common in the west of Scotland that it no longer rates an inch of space even in the local Tory rags.

Is there anything more damning of this system than

PTA extended to South Coast

Dear Comrades,
Not only is the repression learnt in Northern Ireland being used in Britain. The people who carry it out are being used too. This was very sharply brought home to me when I was recently coming back from a holiday in France and Spain.

In Dover I was held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act—the PTA. I was taken to one side after I got my passport stamped. The detective who questioned me was from Northern Ireland. The questioning was both rude and hostile, designed I believe to make me lose my temper. Nasty, brutish and (lucky for me) short—only half an hour.

Compared to the many Irish workers deported from Britain, I was lucky. These tactics are supposed to be used solely to "protect" the British public from the IRA. But they are not only being used on the Irish ferry ports on the west coast but also along the South Coast, to harass and intimidate Irish workers.

Fraternally,
Anton McCabe,
Derry Labour and Trade Union Party.

Politicians are two-faced—it's official!

Dear Comrades,
It's a widely held opinion that 'politicians' are not the straightest people around. However, a great new philosopher has come to the rescue of the discredited American and world political system.

He says a president is not always "lying in an immoral sense" when he says something he does not believe. "Hypocrisy is a part of politics," he continued. "As a candidate", he said, "you have to recognise that you can't say what you think about an individual because you may have to use him or need him sometime in the future."

This sort of hypocrisy is built into the British parliament where you have to refer to a Tory as 'Honourable gentleman' or 'friend'!

But guess who the philosopher is? No points for the answer. Its ex-

two young people in the prime of life standing hand in hand in front of a fast train? Young people with all their lives in front of them should be looking forward to enjoying the full fruits of life, but no; this capitalist system condemns them to unemployment, slum housing and despair.

Comrades, we cannot afford the cost of propping up this rotten capitalist system any longer. We must work to build a socialist system where people are free to live decent lives to the full.

Yours fraternally,
David Chapman,
Parkhead ASLEF,
Glasgow.

Doctors on the dole

Dear Comrades,
I was interested to read the article in a previous week's *Militant* on the problems of PMT and the virtual impossibility of getting specialist treatment because of the length of the waiting list.

Ironically, the same day as I read that item in the *Militant*, there was a report in the *Guardian* stating that in the UK in the month of September, nearly 1,500 doctors were registered as unemployed.

This fact really brought home to me the complete madness of the system we live in. The country spends tens of thousands of pounds to train someone to be a doctor, just to let them waste their much needed skills vegetating in a dole queue. At the same time, hospital waiting lists grow and people are suffering unnecessarily or even dying, through lack of health care, due to inadequate funding.

The NHS workers dispute isn't just about pay, its about the threat to our health service posed by this government. Yours fraternally,

J Haggerty,
Swansea LPYS.

president, Richard Nixon. But what does he mean? Is he only 'lying in a moral sense' when he says something he believes?

No, what he's saying is that its quite moral to lie through your teeth in order to defend your interests. Mr Nixon's only saying from the horse's mouth what every active trade unionist and socialist knows about the bosses and their system.

Cynics might say he's merely justifying his actions—or as a much better philosopher, Marx would say, conditions determined his consciousness—but Mr Nixon obviously believes it.

He gives an example. "A president could call a foreign leader honourable and intelligent even if the leader is neither". From this we can tell that because he mercilessly bombed and napalmed hell out of the Vietnamese and Cambodians, he must have loved them all. After all he told them he was keeping the 'commies' at bay for their own good!

Yours fraternally,
Dave Griffiths,
Stafford & Stone Labour Party.

Greetings from a refugee

Dearest Comrades,
In this letter I just want to express my complete support and sympathy for *Militant*.

Like me, there are thousands and thousands who want to say the same and help in the best and surest practical way. Please let me know what I can do.

In the meantime, I want to subscribe to *Militant*. I am a refugee from Chile and I know what it is to have all

against us, and at the same time to have everything to win; history is ours, it is made by the people no matter what the Thatchers, Foots and Healeys say.

Revolutionary greetings,
Venceremos!
L Vasquez,
Colchester.

GET YOUR XMAS CARDS NOW



TOUGH

↑
(INSIDE)



Following the tremendous success of last year's cards we are again offering a set of Xmas cards featuring original Alan Hardman cartoons. The set comprises of six cards and envelopes and prices are as follows:
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Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Jan 8th.
Eastern	248		2700
East Midlands	228		2850
Hants & Dorset	183		2000
Humberside	32		1650
London East	263		3300
London West	224		1650
London South	79		2700
Manchester & Lancs.	278		3000
Merseyside	189		3100
Northern	137		3900
Scotland East	68		2000
Scotland West	208		3000
Southern	308		2500
South West	46		1500
Wales East	25		1500
Wales West	52		2000
West Midlands	136		2800
Yorkshire	192		3850
Others	87		4000
Total received	2983		50000

Target £50,000 By January 8

HELP US WIN OUR FIGHT

Once again socialists in the Labour Party are under attack. This time it is Labour's youth organisation, the LPYS.

Depending on how the new right-wing NEC vote on 'Militant' expulsions, they are also likely to demand that there are no sales of 'Militant' at YS meetings; a ban on the attendance of known 'Militant' supporters within the youth organisation; a ban on collection of money for 'Militant' within youth organisations and the sacking of any known 'Militant' supporters from positions of authority.

Some of the real hard right-wingers even want to shut down the YS completely! Why are the right wing making these scandalous demands? Because the YS has been built up into a fighting organisation through the programme and policies of 'Militant'.

There are now 483 branches—100 more than in 1977! And membership of about 10,000 is now higher than at any time in the past two decades. This proves that real socialist policies are what win people to an organisation, not attacks, not compromises, not empty words, not lies.

We've shown time and again that with a proper socialist programme, workers are prepared to make sacrifices and commitments to ensure a good future for themselves. And this week's donations clearly bear this out.

Thanks to the supporter in the Eastern Region who donated £75, and to the three teachers from East London who donated £25. Thanks also to Daniel Todd a student from Canterbury and D Osler a student from Poplar who both donated £10—a great sacrifice when it comes out of a grant.

Basildon YS donated £12 while Kirkby YS gave us £7.50. Thanks to Sunderland YS who collected £9.42 on the Liverpool bus, while Stoke YS raised £6.32 on sandwiches etc. and Newcastle YS collected £5.25 during

the 16 October Liverpool demonstration.

We have had various donations from trade unions this week, but thanks especially to SOGAT supporters from Wavertree who raised £12, ASTMS Branch 682 from Glasgow, who are opposed to any witch-hunt and donated £10, and AUEW members from Sevenoaks who collected £8.63.

A public meeting in Port Talbot raised £81.56 before expenses, and a meeting in Southampton raised nearly £42. A readers' meeting in Preston with Pat Wall raised £45.60 before expenses; meetings in Ealing and a readers' meeting in Macclesfield left us £19.63 better off. Thanks also to the readers at a meeting in Nottingham who donated a total of £34.

Thanks also to all those who managed to donate a fiver this week: R Phillips (Poole TGWU/NUAAW); Janice Self (Crosby CPSA); Jessie Draper and Beverley Searso (Kimberley YS); J Stewart (Warrington); C Linney (Paisley NALGO); Joe Mullarkey (AUEW from Selly Oak) and especially Pat Sparrow, unemployed, from Wythenshawe. Thanks to all the others there isn't room to mention.

And thanks finally to J Slattery from the Vospers Yard, J Howard (Yate AUEW), S Hicky (Toxteth), H Brown (Piltown), Peter Gunn (Salford ASLEF), and Belinda (6 years old) and Gillian Faulkes (9 years old) who gave £1.32.

All the donations, however small, are great sacrifices when coming from the pockets of working people who either earn pitifully low wages or are on the dole.

But you must keep the money pouring in. It is these sacrifices which make us a force to be reckoned with. We must have the resources to build and fight for a better future. Make a donation to the Fighting Fund or ask people who support the paper for a donation. That's one way you can help us win this fight.

By Kath White

THIS WEEK: £1,391



'Militant' is your paper. Write for it, read it, sell it, and contribute money to it. 'Militant' is your future! Photo: Militant

Militant Supporters Association

Registered Promoter: D Smith, 73 Armond Rd, Witham, Essex.

WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW COMING SOON!

Tickets will be available from the end of this week for our annual draw, where you can win a £500 holiday, to be taken where and when you like, for the ridiculous price of 10p!

We're also giving away a VIDEO, and there are other prizes of electrical goods and books! Will you make a donation to your favourite good cause and have the holiday of a lifetime? Contact your Militant seller for details, or write to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

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 READERS MEETINGS 'WHAT WE STAND FOR'

BLACKBURN Militant Readers' Meeting: 'Which Way Forward for Labour?' Trades Club, St Peters St, off Reackleton St, Blackburn. Tuesday 16 November, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Pat Wall (PPC Bradford North LP). Bar facilities.

SALFORD: Speaker: Peter Taaffe, Ashfield Labour Club, Seedley Tce., (off Langworthy Rd.) Salford 6. Tuesday, 9 November, 7.45pm.

WEST YORKSHIRE series of Marxist Discussion Meetings. Week 1: The need for a socialist planned economy. Week 2: How to win the next election.

Week 3: What role for parliament in the transformation of society.

SE LEEDS: Wednesdays.

NE LEEDS: Wednesdays.

E LEEDS: Wednesdays.

NW LEEDS: Wednesdays.

S LEEDS: Mondays.

W LEEDS: Tuesdays.

WAKEFIELD: Mondays.

BATLEY & MORLEY: Wednesdays.

For further details contact Jon Ingham, Leeds 741961.

CROYDON: Tuesday 9 November at 8.00pm at Cedar Hall, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon. Speakers: Bob Faulkes (EETPU member, personal capacity); Andy Flett (Waterloo ASLEF, personal capacity).

LEWISHAM Militant Readers Meeting: 'Fight the Tories, not the socialists' Speaker: John Bulaitis. Monday 15 November 7.30pm. Small Hall, Lewisham Concert Hall, Rushey Green, Catford SE6.

WANDSWORTH Militant Readers Meeting. Hear Peter Taaffe (Editor of Militant) 'No witch-hunts, no expulsions. Fight the Tories not the socialists.' Lower Hall, Battersea Town Hall, Thursday 18 November 7.30pm.

NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:

FOREST HALL: Details Dave Metcalfe, 0632 665277

NEWCASTLE WEST: Every Sunday. Contact Rob Lowther, 0632 775636.

NEWCASTLE NORTH: Every Sunday. Contact Karen Walker, 0632 732959.

GOSFORTH: Every Sunday. Contact Rob Dennison, 0632 844918.

SANDIFORD: Every Sunday. Contact Gavin Dudley, 0632 652906.

GATESHEAD: Every Sunday. Contact Tom McGuinness, 18 Lumley Gardens, Gateshead (Gateshead 783262).

WASHINGTON: Details, Washington 478424.

BEDLINGTON: Marxist Discussion Groups: Thursday 4 November 7.30 pm 'History of the Labour Party'. Details P Marsden, Blyth 62098.

GLASGOW PARTICK: Speaker Bob Wylie. In Partick Burgh Halls on Wednesday 10 November at 7.30 pm.

TRETHOMAS Militant Readers Meeting. Speakers: Andrew Price and Tony Burns. Note changed date: Wednesday 10 November 7.30pm. Venue: Tynyrwern School, Trethomas.

CAMBRIDGE Militant Discussion Meetings: Thursday 4 November: 'The Witch-hunt and the Labour left'.

Thursday 11 November: 'British Perspectives'.

Thursday 25 November: 'Poland and Eastern Europe'.

Thursday 9 December: 'Militant and the role of Marxism in the Labour Party'.

Venue: The Bath House, Gwydir Street, Cambridge, 8.00 pm.

To find out about meetings or to get your Militant delivered in the Southend area phone Southend 353588.

CLASSIFIED

LITTLEHAMPTON Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting. Friends Meeting House, Monday 15 November 1982, 7.30 pm. Speaker Laurence Coates on 'The Case for Socialism'. Supporting speaker Gareth Rees, PPC Arundel.

Kent comrades mourn the loss of Tony McLean of Maidstone CLP. He joined the International Brigade in 1937 and throughout his life supported the working class fight. He will always be remembered as a gentle and kind man who led by example and taught many young comrades as his role as lecturer. Farewell comrade. Our deepest sympathy to Margaret and family.

WANTED: Accommodation in East London area. Anything considered. Contact Tim White, Box 4, 1 Mentmore Terrace, E8.

'DID LENIN DISTORT MARX?' Public debate between the Socialist Party of Great Britain and Monty Johnstone, of the Communist Party and 'Marxism Today'. 8.00 pm, Thursday 11 November, Large Hall, Islington Central Library, Fieldway Crescent, off Holloway Road, London N1.

ZX Programmers' Exchange. SAE plus 10p stamp: Nick Godwin, 4 Hurkur Crescent, Eyemouth, Berwickshire.



Fifth Socialist Bookfair 1982
5th and 6th November
Camden Town Hall
Euston Road, London WC1
Opening times: Friday 5th November
12-6.00.
Saturday 6th November 11-5.00.
Further details: phone 01-802 6145.

A comprehensive display of Socialist, feminist and radical books, pamphlets and periodicals from a wide variety of publishers will be displayed. They will be available for purchase by trade and public alike.

Industrial Reports

HEALTH DISPUTE: Building our strength for future battles

Last weekend's health service shop stewards meeting in Sheffield gave a graphic illustration of how the NHS unions had been transformed in the seven month dispute.

Delegate after delegate showed how sections never before involved in strikes have taken joint action and gained a degree of solidarity which could be judged by the success of 22 September.

Around 200 delegates disregarded the attempted blocking of this conference by some union leaderships to try to recapture the strength

of purpose forged in the 22 September strikes.

New Joint Shop Stewards Committees (JSSCs) had been formed in many areas, and many of those already in existence had been blooded in battle and transformed. In all areas delegates reported great support from outside the NHS.

But as delegates commented during the dispute they had not been given the chance as health workers, cutting across union boundaries, to give their views on running the campaign. The militancy had been largely dissipated by the inaction of the TUC.

Micky Duffy delegate from Belfast JSSC which

represents all hospitals in that city described how on one of the days of action workers marching up the mainly protestant Shankill Road, met workers marching down the mainly Catholic Falls Road in support of health workers, and held a joint rally.

Micky expanded on how this tremendous unity could be built on in the resolution from North and West Belfast and Derry JSSCs which put in a nutshell the mood of the conference. It applauded the initiative of Leicester and Sheffield JSSCs in calling the conference and noted that the TUC had consistently failed to match the resolve of the

membership.

The resolution recognised however that it was still possible to win the dispute.

A campaign to obtain a 'yes' vote from the membership for all out strike action should be undertaken immediately by the health unions. If a 'yes' is obtained the Tories should be given a deadline early in January for increasing the offer, otherwise all out strike action should be called with accident and emergency cover only.

The resolution furthermore called on the TUC to convene a similar national conference to discuss future strategy and if they refuse, the Sheffield conference

should reconvene anyway.

The final point Micky stressed was that the local JSSCs were an enormous step forward. They should be retained after the dispute where they would be invaluable in resisting cut-backs, privatisation and the dismantling of the NHS generally which would be our next major battle.

By Helen Redwood

(Branch secretary NE London Medical Branch ASTMS)



Part of the huge demonstration in support of health workers on 22 September. Photo: Militant

Epsom

"The hypocrisy of the Tories knows no limits. These pickets were arrested for fighting to keep a ward open, not to close it" commented Marcus Bradley, GMWU steward at West Park Hospital, Epsom.

The court cases of 55 health workers arrested at the hospital come up soon. The workers were arrested on 9 August whilst taking part in a sit-down protest in support of the 12% claim, and management's decision to shut a ward.

The ferocity of police action at the time shocked all

witnesses. A ward sister returned from the police cells wearing an orthopaedic collar. She was later told that the bone at the back of her neck had been cracked.

Since then the workers have fought back. The Epsom and District Allied Workers and Services Committee has been set up covering all hospitals and unions in the area. Marcus, who is secretary, outlined action taken so far.

"When the first hearing came up at the magistrates court, they organised a march to the hospital. Well over 200 supported it. It must have been the biggest demonstration of this type in Epsom for years. The cases were all adjourned and spread over the following months. The first cases come up on 5 November.

"But whatever happens in

the courts, if they think that this will break us, they had better think again. We have spent our time organising and strengthening the unions in the hospitals as well as appealing for support. We have received massive help from trades councils and trade union branches. We've organised another march on 5 November and we appeal for maximum support from all workers."

Marcus Bradley spoke to Bob Stoneham of Kingston Labour Party

March, 5 November, Assemble at 8.45 am at Bretgrave Road, Epsom. March to magistrates court. All donations and invitations for speakers should be sent to George Finlayson—EDAWSC West Park Hospital, Houghton Lane, Epsom, Surrey.

Rosslynlee Hospital

"Our branch has taken more industrial action per member than any other in Scotland." Michael Masson, COHSE nursing shop steward at the Rosslynlee Hospital in Midlothian explained why.

"We are well organised and everyone is behind us; even Nursing Officers have been on strike."

The workers fear for their jobs. Twenty vacancies have not been filled in the last two years. In the geriatric wards there are five nurses for 30 patients, six per nurse rather than the four which there should be. The management support our fight for more staff but their hands are tied; they have been told by the Scottish Office that they cannot have any more money. An example of the lengths

they have gone to to save money is that the supply of milk for a ward with 19 patients has been cut from 20 pints a day to 12, a saving of less than £2 a day, on the grounds that "a lot of milk has been wasted"! It sometimes means going round the hospital asking for milk.

Even more seriously, they are trying to get relatives to come in and get involved in the care of patients. Up to a point this is a good thing, but it is being used to get round staff shortages. In one case, a laundry maid employed in the hospital was asked to come in and nurse her father, but after discussing it with the shop stewards she refused.

"We cannot lose this fight now," said Michael, "bit by bit they will cut back the health service, especially the 'unprofitable' sectors like mental hospitals. We have

one patient who has been in this hospital since 1938, there is no profit in patients like that.

"Up until the early sixties, Rosslynlee was known as the Midlothian and Peebles Asylum, and we are still using blankets with M&PA on them.

"Since this industrial action started I must have lost about £300 in wages. If they had taken a ballot in May or June, there would have been solid support for all-out action. Now there is too much inter-union argument and there would be a smaller majority.

"There is no more action that my branch could take; we are tied up by the Mental Health Act and cannot turn people away, though it is strictly emergency situations only."

By Pat Craven

FREEMAN'S

Workers at Freeman's poulterers, in Newent, Gloucester have been on strike now since 18th August over union recognition. The Victorian approach of management towards the union is only equalled by the workhouse conditions in the plant.

For example there are no first aid facilities, even though employees are asked to work with knives at great speed, operate a bandsaw, and work with pressurised net-clippers (to which one employee has already lost part of a thumb). There is no qualified first aid assistant.

Workers are continually expected to work without any sort of protective clothing, even though management agree to provide such items, forcing people to buy their own wellingtons and rubber gloves.

Failure to do so, results in damaged hands and soaking wet cold feet.

An older worker at Freeman's factory is on 87p an hour. Adding insult to injury management have the audacity to demand that workers—mainly women—clean men's toilets, paint the premises and repeatedly lift heavy items.

After nearly 12 weeks the workers are as determined as at the start. This dispute is turning into the Grunwicks of the South West. Much support has come from local unions and Pearl Hughes (Strike Convenor) recently spoke with Tony Benn at a local Labour Party meeting.

Messages of support and donations are now vital:—Please send to Pearl Hughes, 19, Knights Way, Newent, Gloucestershire.

UNION WORLD

The new television channel, Channel 4, is to screen a series called 'Union World' (produced by Granada TV) every Saturday night at 6pm, starting on 6 November.

The programme hopes to cover subjects such as the NHS, privatisation and Teb-

bit's Bill, and will include a weekly feature called 'Media Watch' to "give trade unionists the opportunity to comment on the press coverage of union affairs".

If the programme is as sympathetic as it says it wants to be, then maybe it will counter balance some of the distortions and lies which are churned out by Fleet Street.

'Union World' has asked trade unionists to put forward suggestions on subjects they want to hear about. Many trade unionists will have their own choices of the best subjects such as fighting redundancies, or how to achieve greater democracy and accountability in the unions.

By Pat Edlin

USDAW elections

The next few months will be crucial for all members of USDAW. Along with the Annual Elections for the TUC and Labour Party conferences, its the two-yearly election for the executive and the eight divisional councils and the Presidency of the union.

This year, standing as the broad left candidate for President, is Jeff Price, a prominent activist within the union and a well-known Militant supporter. The programme the broad left will be conducting the election on, will be raising those issues vital to USDAW members. £90 for a 35 hour week was the decision of this year's Annual Delegate Meeting.

But so far little progress has been made in achieving it. Attacks on the working conditions of the union's members continue unabated as the employers attempt to maintain their profits at the expense of those who work in retail distribution. Job hours have been extended and a campaign is being mounted by some bosses and sections of the Tory party to scrap the Sunday trading legislation.

Jeff Price will also be proposing in his election address that a low-pay campaign is begun to bring together all those who work in the low-pay sector, for the establishment of a national minimum wage. Many USDAW members feel that by uniting all low-paid workers in a single campaign, they can combine to bring about a national minimum wage that is so desperately needed in low-paid jobs.

Over the next few months Militant will be carrying regular articles on USDAW and the problems that members face. We urge all those members of USDAW who wish to see a real fighting leadership to support the broad left candidate and to attend the rallies and meetings that will be held up and down the country.

Join the Broad Left, and join in the fight for an USDAW leadership that will defend the interests of its members.

As President, Jeff Price will be fighting for:-

- ★ £90 for a 35 hour week.
- ★ An end to redundancies and closures.
- ★ A better deal for part-time workers.
- ★ Total opposition to Sunday trading.
- ★ A campaign against low pay involving other unions.
- ★ The return of a Labour government committed to conference decisions.
- ★ A fighting union leadership which stands by its members.

Get your branch, division or federation to write to Jeff Price and to speak to your members. Send in nominations for Jeff Price for the presidency. For nominating details contact: Jeff Price, Newcastle F180 branch, No. 1/23. Address: 150 Dilston Road, Newcastle, NE4 5AD. Telephone 0632 730861. Nominations close 6 Dec. 1982.

By George Williamson

(Eastern Division Councillor)



Industrial Reports

Save our pits

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

tion to defend their jobs and their industry.

NUM activists preparing for the inevitable struggles in future will also want to weigh carefully the experience of this latest pay campaign. One thing is certain. There will be widespread support for the campaign launched by Arthur Scargill and the NUM Executive.

A breath of fresh air has blown through the NUM with a union President and an executive at last prepared to go out with a vigorous campaign in an attempt to bind miners together behind union conference policies.

Many miners came back from the rallies enthused and convinced fully for the first time of the case for a "yes" vote. Unfortunately only a minority of miners were reached in most pits. If there had been a longer campaign with mass meetings in all pits addressed by leading national speakers then a "yes" vote may well have been achieved.

Some miners were worried at the massive stockpiles of coal and the fact that Christmas was nearing. Also these fears may well have been allayed if the union had announced a clear timetable for industrial action with the

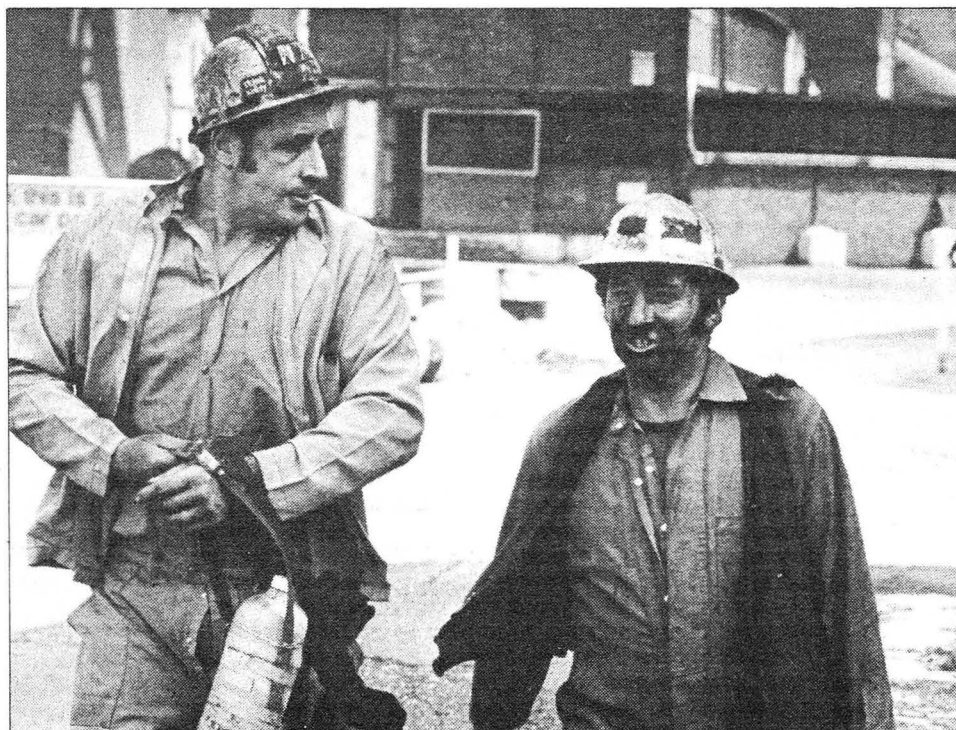
overtime ban continuing at least until January, with strike action beginning at that time if necessary.

Some miners were almost certainly influenced by the blatant interference from radio and TV which gave massive publicity to speculations of early voting returns against industrial action. There are now demands for future ballots to be only over one day in order to eliminate such interference.

Resentment has also developed over the role of the white collar section COSA following their nine to one rejection of action. The demand is now bound to grow for COSA to be wound up as a separate "area" and instead for it to be fully integrated into the geographical NUM areas where COSA members could participate fully in the democratic debate and decision making of the NUM at local level.

But once again, some differences in voting among miners can undoubtedly be put down to the divisive nature of the incentive bonus scheme. Miners in certain pits regularly earn from £50 to £60 a week in bonus, while other pits like St Johns Colliery, Maesteg, are lucky to earn even £5 a week and often have to count their bonus in pennies. A campaign to scrap the incentive bonus system and integrate those earnings in the basic wage is now one of the union's main priorities.

An overwhelming majori-



Miners at Snowdown colliery in Kent, one of those pits already down for closure by the NCB

ty of activists will undoubtedly draw the conclusion that it was absolutely correct to link together in the campaign the two issues of jobs and pay.

Amongst those miners who voted "no" there will even be some remorse now following the disclosure of the NCB 'hit-list'. But the conclusion is being drawn by some activists that if the two issues had been connected on the ballot paper but as separate questions, then there would already be a mandate for action on jobs.

Because of the incentive bonus scheme and the 9% offer from management, above the figure being accepted in most of industry, then there was not, at this stage, a general united, national mood for action on pay. On jobs, however, the feeling was entirely different.

At Ashington Colliery in Northumberland, for instance, where this time there has seemingly been a vote against industrial action, last April a 77% vote in favour was recorded by a massive vote of the NUM, NUM

mechanics and NACODS when the question was put whether these miners would take strike action if no investment was forthcoming to remove the danger of closure from their pit.

There is now talk of having a new national ballot in order to secure a fresh mandate for action to defend jobs. Almost certainly, a massive "yes" vote will be recorded should such a ballot take place.

This time, the NCB and the Tories were making a show of preparing for long-

drawn-out confrontation. In some pits, stoppings were being erected across the main travelling roads in order to seal off pit units. Management wanted to give the impression they were confident of victory.

But the real feeling of big business generally was expressed in the wild cheering among businessmen at the CBI conference once the NUM ballot result was announced.

For all their gimmicks and propaganda, big business, Tories and NCB management have no confidence they can defeat the NUM in an all-out trial of strength. This time there is to be no immediate struggle. But the issues at stake remain on the agenda for the NUM; retirement at 55, a four-day week, a realistic basic wage and a rate protection scheme.

None of these issues will be dropped. Also, the overtime ban has highlighted the serious under-manning throughout the industry. Action on jobs will remain the central issue for miners.

If the Tories and the NCB management become complacent following this vote and begin moves to close pits then even without a fresh mandate in a formal ballot there could develop as in 1981 spontaneous action from below in defence of jobs.

The struggle is not over. It has only been postponed.

By Brian Ingham

Birmingham strikes escalating

SOCIAL SECURITY

As unemployment rises the pressures on workers in the Department of Health and Social Security increase.

The strike in Erdington and other Birmingham social security offices is for sufficient staff to operate the social security system after increased legislative changes in the system and subsequent staff cuts.

The majority of staff working in social security offices have to face unemployment within their own families, while at work they have to implement a rotten system.

The DHSS and the government know this strike could have happened in any of the inner cities. The breaking point in Erdington came on 15 September when after weeks of intolerable pressure, a supplementary benefits receptionist turned up for work to find her two colleagues had gone sick.

She just couldn't face a never-ending queue of claimants yet again. CPSA and SCPS members in the office decided that enough was enough. Until an adequate number of staff were provided they would walk out of the office.

Immediately the dispute was made official and strike pay organised. Management merely offered a temporary relief to be pulled out when some staff had completed training. Members over-

whelmingly rejected that offer because it did nothing to resolve the office's longer term problems. Since then, other Birmingham offices have taken official strike action in support of their colleagues in Erdington and to show their own staffing problems.

All this has happened in the second largest city in the country and the social security system has been shut down but with little impact on the Tory-controlled media. Contrast this with the reaction to "Operation Major" in Oxford.

Striking CPSA members have suffered severe financial hardship. Their strike pay has been 50% of net pay. They represent the lowly paid, even when at work, so they need to know they have the support of the wider labour and trade union movement in the fight.

Messages of support and financial assistance to Richard Horton, CPSA Regional Secretary, Room 337 DHSS, Fiveways House, Islington Row, Birmingham. Cheques made payable to Birmingham Strike Fund.

PS An offer of some more staff, but with unacceptable strings, has been turned down by 427 votes to 26. Escalation to the whole of the city is now almost inevitable.

By Gill Tromans
(Regional Vice-Chairman West Midlands DHSS, personal capacity)
and Roger Castle
(Regional Secretary, East Midlands DHSS)



Social Security strikers in Birmingham

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

COUNCIL WORKERS

"Scab! Scab! Scab!" were the angry cries of pickets outside Birmingham Social Services headquarters where 1,200 social service workers have been on strike since 23 October.

This followed the sacking of three social workers who

refused to co-operate with an efficiency survey commissioned by the Tory council.

The strike is escalating daily. In children's homes, where workers have suffered poor working conditions and a lack of staff due to cuts, workers are angry that the service that they provide under great pressure is deemed by the Tories to be inefficient! Staff of one home brought a group of adolescents to the Social Services head office and despite the pleas of management they left them for the officials to look after.

Workers in the City Treasurer's Department are refusing to collect money owed to the council so revenue is being lost daily.

The workers are responding magnificently to the strike call despite the lack of direction by the two unions involved, NALGO and NUPE. In August NALGO agreed to call out all its members working in the council if anyone was dismissed for not co-operating with the survey. Yet only the social service workers have been called out on indefinite strike.

Militant supporters in NALGO and NUPE are demanding that the unions call out all council employees to win the dispute.

"I think we should carry on the strike even if we get no strike pay," said one worker at Monday's mass meeting. These workers deserve the fullest support.

By Lesley Hughes
(NUPE Social Services Branch)
& Denise Taylor
(NALGO Birmingham Branch)

HEALTH DISPUTE...

Tories Offer Nothing New

The health workers' dispute has reached a critical stage. At the time of writing, representatives of the TUC Health Services committee were meeting the conciliation service ACAS.

The talks, proposed by ACAS chairman Pat Lowry, were not to discuss a new and improved offer but to "examine ways in which discussions might be reopened to enable difficulties to be resolved."

Health workers would be bitterly disappointed if after seven months of industrial action, the battle was to be cancelled so far short of our 12% claim. It is still possible to gain a victory which would give new heart to the entire working class.

A clear and decisive call from the NHS unions to campaign for a 'yes' vote on strike action is vital. As the delegate from Belfast at last weekend's Sheffield conference (see report page 14) said, if a 'yes' vote is given then the government should be given a deadline in January for an improved offer otherwise the unions would call an all-out strike with accident and emergency cover only.

Despite the lack of a clear lead, workers throughout the country are still prepared to take action in support of the NHS when the issues are fully explained. After the NUR sent out leaflets to all members putting the issues, local initiatives have secured the promise of strike action from many areas such as Merseyside and North Wales District Council and Glasgow No 5 branch. Paddington Station is due to close and workers at Kings Cross plan a mass meeting in support of health workers.

Craft workers on London transport buses have also pledged support. Despite the transport unions by and large leaving it to individual branches to decide on the nature and degree of action, there is still enormous sympathy for other trade unionists.

Throughout the country, health workers themselves have shown a militancy never seen before, a united struggle involving many different unions. The unity forged will be of incalculable value in future fights.

But workers in the NHS will be angry if all their efforts were to fizzle out. It has been the vacuum created by the procrastination of the Health Service Committee which has stood in the way of mobilising our magnificent support to the full. However late in the day it may be, firm action now for victory is essential.

By Colin Piper
(COHSE Leeds 257 branch)

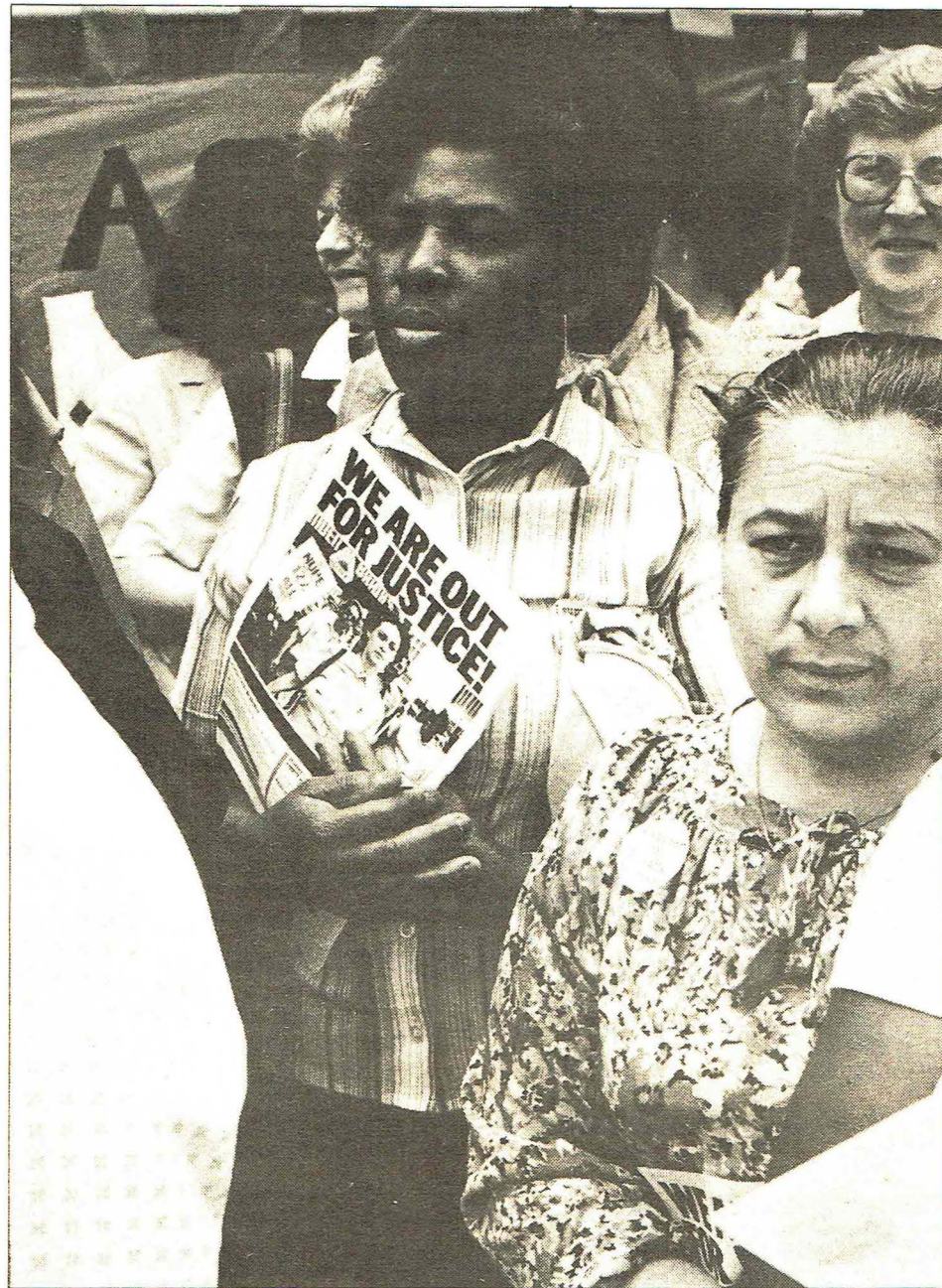


Photo: Andy Moore

Above and below: health workers have shown great determination in this pay battle, using the tactics of limited strikes, occupations and demonstrations over the past 7 months. It is vital that an all-out strike with emergency cover only is now called.



BRIXTON

(from front page)

year old black youth.

The real reason for the appointment of Sir Kenneth Newman as head of the Metropolitan police, formally in charge of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, was seen in Brixton on November 1, with the virtual military operation centred on the demolition of semi derelict houses in Railton Road, on the instructions of the Tory Lambeth council. These tactics sparked off a riot.

The Tory media have proclaimed that these houses were simply a 'den of iniquity' for muggers, drug peddlars etc and had to go. Whatever the truth, it is clear many workers, including black workers, were unhappy with the activities in these houses. But the press have lumped together with the small criminal element, ordinary black youth who used these houses as a meeting place and social centre, forced to do so because of the total lack of any decent youth facilities in the area.

Tory hypocrisy

All workers want to see rotting and dirty derelict buildings demolished, but it is hypocrisy for the Tories to claim their acts in Railton Road are in any way 'progressive', especially after they have cut the Direct Labour Organisation back at a time when there are 10,000 outstanding repairs needed to council properties in Lambeth.

At the same time, workers including the majority of black workers will not be happy with a massive police presence in their neighbourhood.

On Monday in Brixton hundreds of police complete

with all their paramilitary paraphernalia descended upon the area, unannounced, in the early hours of the morning, closing down whole thoroughfares and carrying out arbitrary 'stop and search' tactics. It is a real indictment of this capitalist system that it needs hundreds of police with riot shields and fireproof overalls just to demolish a few slums!

But while the Tories, police chiefs and the press bemoan the 'break down of community relations', they remain silent over the activities of police in Newham.

In September, Asian school students were attacked three times in one week at the Little Ilford school by gangs of white youths. The school students could not rely on the police for protection so older Asian youths from local sports clubs came to their aid on September 24.

An unmarked car appeared with what appeared to be clubs got out. The youth took these to be the racist attackers, yet they were in fact plain-clothes police! Almost immediately, uniformed police appeared and arrested eight Asians, aged between 15 and 21.

However, the Asian youth are fighting back. They have launched a campaign to defend the Newham 8. This Friday, November 5, there will be a picket of West Ham Magistrates court in Stratford beginning at 10 am, marking the beginning of the court case. The picket will be swelled by local school students who have said they will strike on that day in the support of these youths who came to protect them.

The labour movement must give full support to campaigns such as that in Newham, and use its strength to end the police harassment of black and Asian workers and fight for the society which can end unemployment and social deprivation.

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