

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 630
10 December 1982

20p

Poland

A year of Martial Law.
Why was Solidarity
crushed?

See pages 8-9

Obscene Wealth



Photo: MILITANT



Photo: MILITANT

Poverty Wages

Tories redistribute wealth - In favour of the rich

Not content with fiddling the unemployment figures, it has been revealed this week that government statistics vastly underestimate the numbers of full time workers living in poverty.

A report by the Low Pay Unit shows that nearly 1 million low paid workers are not included in government figures.

Whilst the government has relied upon the employers' statistics, the Low Pay Unit has also looked at the figures which show what the employee actually gets. The results are shocking.

One in every four full time

Certain industries are notorious as poverty traps. e.g. A staggering 93% of all women working in the clothing industry get less than £90 a week.

The report shoots down some of the Tories' most oft-repeated myths. The claim that youngsters are "pricing themselves out of a job" is shown to have no factual basis whatsoever. Only 4% of males and less than 1% of females aged 17 or under get more than £90 a week.

But low pay is not confined to the young. The report shows that 40% of all men who are low paid, are aged between 25 and 59.

Since the Tories came into office it is the low-paid and unemployed who have suffered most. A recent DHSS report showed that 75% of former workers, now unemployed had been

By Jim
Christie

workers in Britain now earns less than £90 a week. Women are especially exploited with over 50% of all full time women workers getting these miserly wages.

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

NEC RIGHT SABOTAGE YOUTH VOTE

By a Militant
reporter

Labour's right wing have slashed £11,000 from the budget of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

That is their answer to the most successful year of campaigning and growth in the history of the LPYS, including a 3,000 strong lobby of YOPs workers and an 8,000 strong anti-Tory demonstration in Liverpool.

Frustrated in their plans to carry out a full-scale witch-hunt in the party ranks, they are turning their attention to trying to

sabotage the LPYS.

The NEC Youth Sub Committee on 7 December agreed to accept proposals that the Young Socialists' budget would be cut from its 1982 figure of £26,550 to the 1983 figure of £15,200.

The LPYS £9,000 campaign allocation has been shifted to the Labour Party Campaign Committee. The LPYS will be expected to approach this committee for approval and finances for any campaigning activity.

An indication of how this money would be used was given when the committee turned down a request that Laurence Coates, the YS representative on the NEC,

should be invited as a non voting co-opted member on the General Election Campaigning Committee when youth matters were being discussed!

Laurence Coates and Kevin Ramage, LPYS national chairperson, proposed that the Youth Committee should ask the NEC to reverse its decision to transfer the £9,000 campaign allocation. This was defeated by 7 votes to 4.

Amazingly, the chairperson of the National Organisation of Labour

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

Militant

N. IRELAND - TERROR TACTICS REPEL WORKERS

The latest bombing in Northern Ireland was met by workers with feelings of revulsion and outrage.

The deaths of off-duty soldiers and civilians will increase once again the possibility of a wave of sectarian reprisal killings of ordinary Catholics, followed by further reprisals against Protestant workers, and so on. Indeed, the campaign of killings by the Provisionals and the INLA, including the assassination of former RUC members, and the nature of the campaign, for example, killing a school bus driver in front of his passengers, seems almost designed to repel working people and increase sectarian bitterness.

Moreover, if there was a further deepening of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland, the only ones to gain would be the enemies of the working class.

But the bombing also brought into sharp focus the decision of Ken Livingstone, the leader of the Greater London Council, and other GLC members, to invite representatives of Sinn Fein to London.

The hypocritical Tory press, of course, have had a field day. No socialist should be influenced by their hysterical editorials or the sickening crocodile tears of the Tories over Northern Ireland. They have kept a stony silence over the repression of Catholic communities by the army and they have had little or nothing to say about the deaths—including those of young children—caused by the army's use of lethal plastic bullets. The constant use of repressive measures against the Catholic community has been the main factor in their support—albeit minority support—for Sinn Fein.

Neither has there been any orchestrated press campaign about the daily atrocities committed by the Tory government against the living standards of British and Irish workers, not least the young, the old and the sick.

But notwithstanding the hypocrisy of Fleet Street, the mistake of the Labour lefts in inviting the Sinn Fein representatives to London was not so much in their upholding free speech and freedom of movement

within the country, as in their failure to make absolutely clear what should be the position of the labour movement.

It is one thing to invite Sinn Feiners to London to give them an unopposed public platform for their sectarian views, but it would have been another matter entirely if, for example, they had been invited to debate with the non-sectarian viewpoint of the labour movement, and to answer for their sectarianism before an audience of Labour workers.

The position of the labour movement must be clear. Labour cannot afford the slightest ambiguity or fudging of the issues. The labour movement must condemn without qualification the sectarianism that has plagued Northern Ireland, including that of Sinn Fein and allied organisations, and it must similarly condemn the tactics employed in Ireland by the republican and loyalist groups, of bombings and assassinations.

Terror tactics will not in any way, shape or form aid the working class. The campaign of assassinations directed against the British

army, the RUC and former RUC personnel will not move the North an inch nearer to a united Ireland.

In so far as there is any movement at all, it would be in the direction of a sectarian civil war, something that would be a disaster for the workers in all of Ireland and Britain. If sections of the republican para-military groups believe that they would be able to re-unify Ireland by provoking a sec-

tarianism, on the scale of Palestine or Lebanon.

The failure of the labour movement to put a clear class position—something that is a mistake in London, but a tragedy in Ireland—must be corrected. The Labour Party in Britain is moving away, at least at the level of its rank and file, from the non-partisan, i.e. Tory, approach of the past.

The last Labour Party conference condemned the

The labour movement must press ahead vigorously with the aim of building non-sectarian working class political struggle in the North of Ireland. The key to a solution of the problems faced by Catholic and Protestant workers lies only with the organised labour movement, fighting on class lines, for socialist policies.

The labour movement in Britain can derive no inspiration from the politics of Sinn Fein. But on the other hand, the struggle of the Northern Ireland health workers, with Protestant and Catholic fighting side by side against Thatcher, and the magnificent march for jobs by 500 Young Socialists who demonstrated along the Falls and the Shankill Roads—these are the examples that should inspire socialists in Britain.

It is through the labour movement and *only* through the labour movement that workers in Northern Ireland will find a means of eliminating social ills like unemployment, low pay, slum housing as well as the vile sectarianism created by capitalism.

Labour cannot afford the slightest fudging of the issues. The labour movement must condemn without qualification, the tactics of terrorism and sectarianism.

tarian civil war, they are making a disastrous mistake.

A civil war would not re-unify Ireland. It could only re-divide the North, but at the cost of enormous blackmail and suffering, the break up of the class-based trade union movement, the creation of a massive refugee problem and preparing a fertile soil for a new and bloodier round of sec-

use of plastic bullets and called for their withdrawal. After a decision at the previous conference, Walworth Road has taken some tentative steps to go ahead with a conference in the North, with a view to setting up a genuine non-sectarian Party of Labour, something that in itself would represent a huge step forward.

'THE VERDICT IS GUILTY - NOW FOR THE TRIAL'

The five members of the Militant Editorial Board have been invited to attend the next National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on December 15, for which a motion declaring 'the Militant tendency to be ineligible for affiliation to the Party', has been placed on the agenda.

In a letter replying to Jim Mortimer, Labour Party General Secretary, the Militant Editorial Board have mapped out their proposals for procedures at next week's NEC meeting, to stop it resembling a 'kangaroo court'.

The letter begins, "We...note Michael Foot's comments in his speech on 30 November. We entirely agree...that those who deflect Labour from the task of defeating the Tory and Liberal/SDP enemy and bringing to power a Labour government will not be forgiven by Labour workers. The right wing majority on the NEC, in pursuing a witch-hunt against Militant, are turning the labour movement in on itself. Undemocratic and unconstitutional expulsion will split the party from top to bottom.

By a Militant Reporter

"Michael Foot also admonishes Militant for threatening legal action against NEC members. But what other recourse does Militant have when the right wing are determined to trample on the constitution in their vendetta against Militant? Without the threat of legal action we would not have been accorded a hearing from the NEC before summary expulsions were carried out."

Bans abolished in 1973

The letter reminds the NEC that declaring Militant ineligible for affiliation is unconstitutional, as the system of bans and proscriptions (in which Militant was never included) was abolished by the 1973 Labour Party conference. The letter continues, "Unless...we are allowed certain elementary rights during our meeting with the NEC—rights incidentally, we would automatically have in a court

of law—we would regard the meeting with the NEC not as a fair hearing but as a kangaroo court determined to ratify predetermined conclusions and disciplinary measures."

The letter then maps out seven points which would, at least, give the members of the Militant Editorial Board a fair hearing at the NEC meeting.

Firstly, it asks that the Editors be supplied with all resolutions and documents relating to the proposed disciplinary action, alongside asking the NEC to clearly set out the constitutional points under which the action is being taken, as well as the constitutional rules that have allegedly been breached by Militant.

The letter notes that the Register has been implemented "in a completely arbitrary and inconsistent fashion", pointing to right wing groups which have been accepted and other groups that, while not being accepted, have had little or no action taken against them.

Secondly, the Editors want an assurance that the NEC meeting will not be discussing their expulsion,

because if such action was proposed, prior notice for the Editorial Board as individual members of the Labour Party, would be needed for them to prepare their case.

Thirdly, the opportunity would be needed to answer allegations made against Militant which may have influenced NEC members, and also point 4 states that if a fair hearing is to be allowed, all the so-called 'evidence' compiled in the Hayward-Hughes Enquiry should be available for study by the Editors, so it can defend itself against these accusations.

As the letter states, "It would be a serious denial of our right to natural justice if we were not allowed to see and to answer this evidence at our meeting with the NEC...There are clear indications that the submission of a significant part of this so-called evidence, including some of that from a number of regional Labour Party organisers, is clearly factually untrue and based on the serious misrepresentation of both the views of Militant supporters and their activities. Some of the so-called 'evidence' is clearly

nothing more than malicious gossip."

As far as the Party rank and file are concerned it seems clear that the only 'evidence' which was sought by the enquiry was critical evidence. No one was ever asked to comment or give evidence in support of Militant supporters.

The remaining points ask for the basic rights of being able to state their case and put questions to the NEC, General Secretary and National Agent, be allowed a secretary to take notes, and allowed sufficient time for the proceedings.

Fight the Tories not socialists

The Editorial Board's letter was discussed by the Organisational Committee of the NEC on Monday, but it was rejected. Jim Mortimer said that while he had no objection in principle to the publication of the 'evidence' used in the enquiry, this could not be done because some of it had been submitted in confidence!

A letter from Jim Mortimer has been sent to the Editors urging them to accept the invitation "in the

form it was extended to you", this letter being passed by the committee with 10 for (including Neil Kinnock) and 7 against (including Alex Kitson). As Tony Benn said at the meeting, directing his comments at the right wing, it should be clear that they will now be fighting the party instead of the Tories, in the build up to the election.

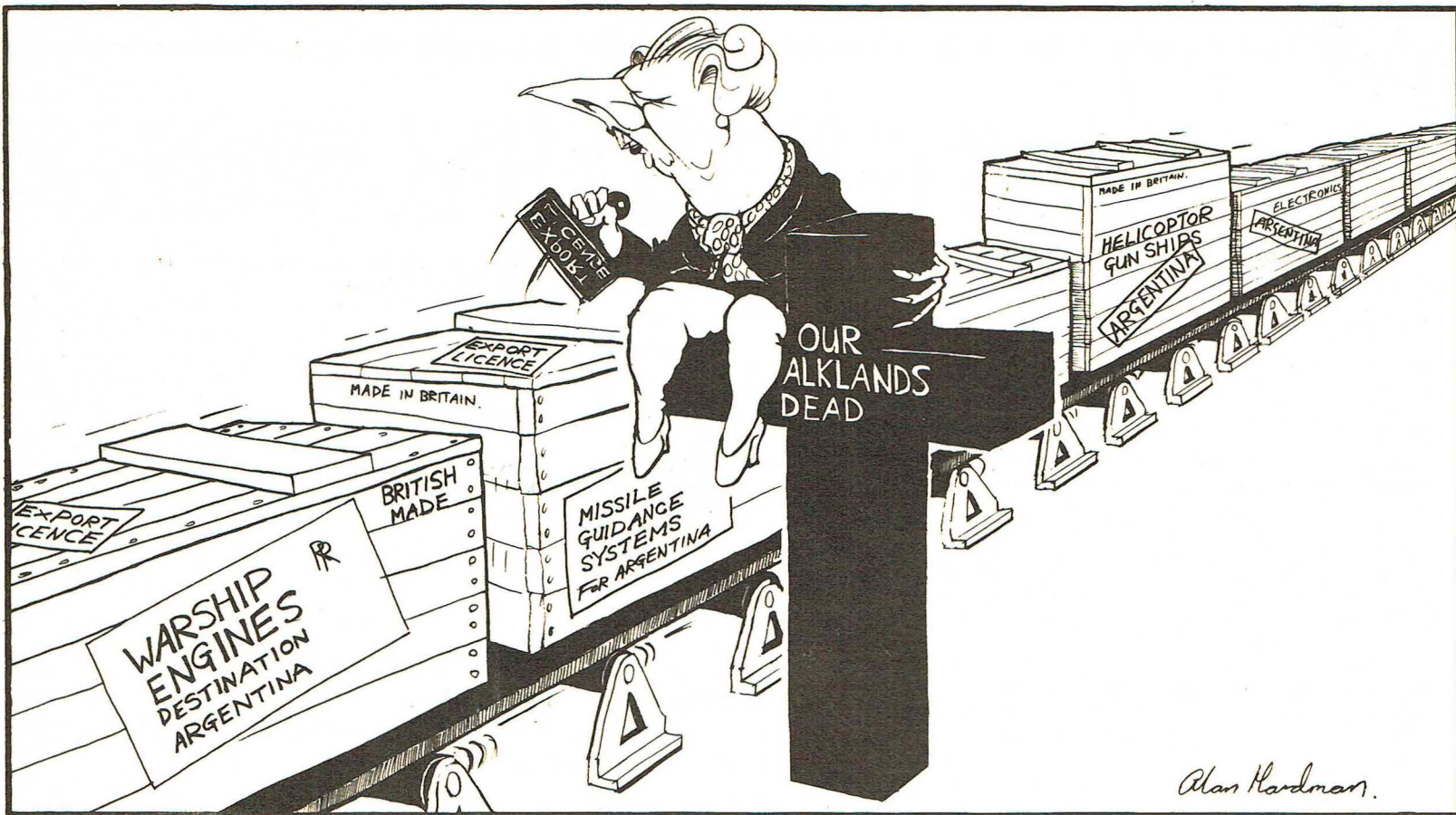
The ranks of the labour movement are totally opposed to any witch-hunt against Militant, and are incensed that the right wing should launch a purge when the thrust of Labour's attack should be aimed at the Tories, especially with a general election looming. And they will be watching the NEC closely—if the NEC cannot afford the most basic rights of a fair hearing to the Militant Editorial Board, their real aims will be exposed for all the labour movement to see.

The witch-hunt has nothing to do with defending the Labour Party's constitution—Militant is quite prepared to answer those false charges—but is an attempt by the right wing to drag the Party back to the worn out and failed policies of the right wing, to make Labour a 'safe' party of capitalism, blunting Labour's sharp edge of socialism.



The Militant Editorial Board. From left to right, Clare Doyle, Peter Taaffe, Lynn Walsh, Ted Grant and Keith Dickinson.

Photo: Militant



Stamp out Police Racialism



John Fernandes (left) picketing the Hendon College with supporters following his sacking
Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

The impression given by the Home Secretary Whitelaw's rejection of the idea that racist behaviour should be a specific offence under the police discipline code, was that it was either not a problem or that the police could deal with racism in their ranks themselves.

However, essays and notes written by police cadets on a multi-cultural studies course at the Peel Centre, Hendon, deny these contentions.

The civilian lecturer on the course, John Fernandes, released the essays, in which police cadets described their views on coloured people, and has subsequently been removed from his post by the police. Sections of the essays are quoted in the "Policing London" magazine, published by the GLC Police Committee Support Unit.

Opinions shown in the essays vary from the repugnant and psychopathic ("Can a 12 bore shotgun blast a black man into tiny pieces at twelve yards"; "Do black people burn better with oil or petrol on them") to the prejudiced and ignorant ("On the whole most blacks are unemployed, like rastafarians who go around

with big floppy hats, roller skates and stereo radios, smoking pot and sponging money off the state"; "Quite frankly I don't particularly have any liking whatsoever for Wogs, Nignogs and Pakies...so send them packing, carpet bags, funky music, curries, all their relatives, and stereo transistor radios..."; "Sikhs don't go to the barbers because they wear turbans. They have long greasy hair like headbangers").

Other essays told of there being less unemployment if only there were no blacks (the mass unemployment of the 1930's, with hardly any blacks, is lost on these characters), and seeing

blacks as being disproportionately prone to violent crime or "sponging off the welfare state".

A few of the essays did acknowledge racism as a problem. ("I'd personally like to kick the heads in of all the cadets who are prejudiced...and simply use colour as a way of separating them from us and using them as scapegoats").

These cadets are all potential officers in the Metropolitan Police, and it is clear that the attitude of the police towards the black population has given the go-ahead for racists to try to find a "career" in the force.

The action of the police in sacking the lecturer for bringing to public attention the racist essays, indicates their complete lack of concern in tackling racism. It is an absolute disgrace that the lecturer should be punished while the Tory Home Secretary does nothing about the racism in sections of the police force.

Not only in London, but nationally, black and white workers through the labour movement must fight for democratic control over the police, including the right to sack racists, and to control the day-to-day policing policies.

LABOUR RANKS DEFEND LPYS

Increasing numbers of Constituency Labour Parties and labour movement organisations are coming to the defence of the LPYS.

Brighton CLP have passed a resolution congratulating the LPYS on the success of the Liverpool October 16 demonstration, and goes on to demand:

- ★ no censorship of LPYS publications, with the reversal of the decision not to reprint the LPYS pamphlet, 'Ideals of October';
- ★ an increase in the LPYS budget;
- ★ that the elected national officers and the National Youth Officer should not be removed from office;
- ★ the NEC give assistance to the LPYS in boosting the sales of *Socialist Youth* in preparation for the general election.

The resolution ends by

saying, "We believe it is suicide for the Labour Party to contemplate attacking its youth section."

Similar resolutions have been passed by Gateshead East, Crosby, Dulwich, Louth, Cambridge, Warwick & Leamington and Bolsover CLPs.

Also, 23 Labour MPs have signed a statement defending the LPYS. They are Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Harriet Harman, Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard, Ron Brown, Ray Ellis, Bob McTaggart, Willie McKelvey, Martin Flannery, Stan Newens, Bob Litherland, Stuart Holland, Audrey Wise, Jo Richardson, Frank Allaun, Reg Race, Allan Roberts, Doug Hoyle, Jim Marshall, Michael Meacher, Ernie Roberts and Les Huckfield.

Women's Conference

The delegates present at the West Midlands Labour Party Women's conference in Birmingham recently overwhelmingly supported a resolution opposing witch-hunts and expulsions in the Labour Party.

More than 100 women from CLPs, Women's Sections and trade unions heard delegates from Kidderminster Women's Council talk of the need to fight the Tories and not the socialists in this pre-election period. It was pointed out to the conference that those in favour of expelling *Militant* supporters would carry on to completely mutilate the left-wing of the Labour Party.

Students and LPYS set up Labour Club

Despite attacks on the Welsh Labour Students' regional committee and the LPYS, not only by the NEC but also by the 'anti-Militant' leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students, these two wings of Labour's youth in Wales recently combined to show the power of true socialist policies.

On Wednesday December 1, the inaugural meeting of

This was evident from a recent speech by John Golding in which he said that after the *Militant* he would like to move on, using different methods, to deal with groups such as the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. In her vocal and almost hysterical attack on the two Kidderminster delegates after the meeting, Mrs Golding vehemently denied that her husband had ever said this and threatened to report "the mover of the resolution", although she did not say to whom.

Happily, this unpleasant event was countered by the many women who approached the Kidderminster delegates to buy copies of *Militant* and to pledge their support in the fight against witch-hunts and expulsions.

Rhydyfelin Technical College Labour Club was held.

After a week of action by WLS and Pontypridd LPYS, the meeting was an outstanding success. It was attended by over 30 full time and part time students of the college. All those who attended stepped forward to join the Labour Club, and many proceeded to join the Labour Party.

This was the first club to

Right wing's new ploy

In a recent TV interview, John Golding made it clear that the right wing on the NEC were going to try to raise once again the question of the constitution, to introduce for example one person, one vote in CLPs, when electing the party leader in the electoral college.

Further proof that a campaign has been under way for some months is contained in a letter obtained by *Militant*, from Birkenhead MP Frank Field, soliciting support for the campaign. The letter, dated 31 August, states:

"A small group of Labour Party activists...have come together to campaign for one person, one vote in the constituency section of the electoral college.

"Because this reform is about how local Constituency Labour Parties act, our initial aim is for these people to act as a focal point for the coming campaign...could you talk about the campaign with members of your GC to see if anyone will act as a local contact?"

"We plan to launch the campaign by publishing the list of grass roots supporters. This will be followed by getting local support for a resolution asking the NEC to draw up guidelines for one person, one vote for the constituency section of the electoral college."

The campaign, we can predict, will receive the unqualified blessing of all the Tory newspapers. If the votes of Party members are taken away from the debates and discussions of the branch meeting, away from the issues at stake, and isolated to individual postal ballots, it will after all, be these same newspapers who will assert enormous influence by distorting and falsifying the views of the left.

When the campaign now entitled 'Labour Franchise' is launched in earnest, it will be opposed by the majority of the party rank and file who will see it understandably as the thin edge of a wedge, as the beginning of a campaign to reverse re-selection, policy decisions and other gains of recent years.

Party members, however, will look in vain for a letter from Walworth Road to Frank Field or John Golding asking for their campaign to be 'Registered', or for the Party General Secretary to conjure up a "working definition" of a 'member' of the one person, one vote campaign.

be set up, in a week which sees the possible setting up of five further Labour Clubs by WLS in other FE colleges. Too long has this area been overlooked by the labour movement, especially at a time when they are brimming with disillusioned youth who are looking for an alternative to the conditions that they face.

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'

BLACKPOOL The King's Arms Talbot Rd., "Which way forward for Labour." Speaker: Pete Harris, Blackburn CLP at 8.00pm on Thursday 9 December.

TOWER HAMLETS Monday 13 December at 7.30pm at Vernon Hall Roman Rd. Speaker: P Jarvis NGA (personal capacity)

CAMBRIDGE Wednesday 15 December at 7.30pm. Speaker Jane James. Venue: Bathe House, Gwydir St., Cambridge.

ROTHERHAM: 'What future for South Yorkshire'. Speaker: Martin Elvin, and local trade unionists. 7.30pm. Sunday 19 December WEA rooms (above Ratcliffes Printers), Corporation Street, Rotherham.

HUDDERSFIELD Marxist Discussion Group:
Wednesday 5 January: 'The State'
Wednesday 19 January: 'Ireland'
All meetings start at 7.30pm at Huddersfield Library, Children's section.

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.

NORTH WALES on Wednesday 15 December at 7.30pm in Royal Victoria Hotel, Nr. Prestatyn Railway Station. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

ELLESMERE PORT on Tuesday 14 December at 7.30pm in Ellesmere Port Labour Club, Heathfield Road. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

WEST LEEDS Marxist Discussion Group:
Tuesday 14 December 8pm on 'Do wages cause inflation'
For further details contact Jon Ingham on Leeds 741961.

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LABOUR AND TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL called by Cambridge LPYS. Saturday 29 January. Trade unions in the area are invited to sponsor this school. Contact Chris Ballard: (0223) 211229

Help yourself by helping us. We need organisers/fund-raisers in all parts of the country. Write now to: National Association of Disabled Writers, 18 Spring Grove, Harrogate, Yorks HG1 2HS.

Militant Supporters Association

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

WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Tickets are now available 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.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS ADVERTISE IN MILITANT

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1/16 page.....£10
1/8 page.....£20
1/4 page.....£40

All greetings must be received by 29 DECEMBER at: Circulation Department, Militant, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

| Area | Received | % of target achieved | Target Jan 8th. |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Eastern | 1132 | | 2700 |
| East Midlands | 494 | | 2850 |
| Hants & Dorset | 479 | | 2000 |
| Humberside | 346 | | 1650 |
| London East | 1206 | | 3300 |
| London West | 457 | | 1650 |
| London South | 1316 | | 2700 |
| Manchester & Lancs | 1121 | | 3000 |
| Merseyside | 1075 | | 3100 |
| Northern | 806 | | 3900 |
| Scotland East | 439 | | 2000 |
| Scotland West | 780 | | 3000 |
| Southern | 1154 | | 2500 |
| South West | 188 | | 1500 |
| Wales East | 183 | | 1500 |
| Wales West | 288 | | 2000 |
| West Midlands | 640 | | 2800 |
| Yorkshire | 825 | | 3850 |
| Others | 2866 | | 4000 |
| Total received | 15795 | | 50000 |

Target £50,000 By January 8

GIVE US A XMAS PRESENT

With only two weeks to go before 25 December how about donating an Xmas "present" to 'Militant'?

Adverts in The Sunday Times Magazine will give you a few ideas. How about a Sable coat for £7,000, or one stamp (a penny black) for £95!

By Kath White

The 'Sunday Times' last week also offered a various selection from their Christmas Gift Guide: a necklace of cultured pearls for only £125, or you can save £60 on a Chess Computer which will then only set you back £69

Bit too expensive? Then how about some gold toothpicks for only £49.50. Yet a report out this week from the Low Pay Unit says that the families of millions of full-time workers are below the poverty line (details front page).

The only way we are going to change this situation is by stepping up our fight for socialism. But to do this we need cash.

From the trade union movement this week we received: £10 from J Omara (Blackley TGWU), an NUT member from Leicester £5, B Rooney (steelworker South Tees) £5.30, D O'Mara (Edinburgh North AUEW) £5. J Harvey (TGWU, West Scotland) donated £10, and R Gardiner (West Scotland NALGO) gave us £5.

C J East (Croydon POEU) donated £4, M McNeil (South Tees NUPE) £2, I Carding (Openshaw EETPU) £1, S Moran (Bradford Idle NALGO) £1, and 3 EETPU members from Norwich donated £1.50. F Rason (fireman, Waltham Forest) donated £1, J Edwards (Glasgow CPSA) 70p, and B Curley (Blackley EETPU) gave us £1. We've also been promised over £6 from Milton Keynes Trades Council.

Thanks to all the Labour Party Young Socialists branches this week who made

donations or raised money for us; Brighton YS £34, Macclesfield YS £10. £10 was donated from a Mid Yorks Weekend School; £10 each was raised from Stockton and South Tees YS's from the coaches which attended the YS demo a few weeks ago. Openshaw Youth for Labour Group have sent us £4.20.

Thanks also to the YS supporters who made donations: G Carrington (Manchester Stretford YS) £10, P&M Cunningham (Dunfermline YS) £10, R Hartill (Bristol South YS) £5, S Howard (Plymouth YS £2.50, D Ward (Stockton YS) £1, and Hazel Flynn (Coventry YS) 40p.

Thanks to Royton/Wardle Women's Section who donated £10, Forderbridge Labour Party in the West Midlands who sent £5, and also to all the various areas that held public meetings.

A meeting in Lambeth raised £63 with the help of donations from M Lindsay £30, and A Rosser £10. One in Lewisham raised £24, Nelson and Colne £21; and thanks also to all the other areas, unfortunately we cannot mention you all. Supporters in East Hull organised a raffle (winner S Sims) to get money for the fund.

Finally thanks to all the individuals this week who also contributed to our target: T Oram (East Ham) £26, A Ward (Croydon) £18, M Singleton (Brighton) £6, F&A Cotter (Havant) £5, Edith (a housewife, from Sunderland) £5, J Sutton (Birkenhead) £4, J Cowling (Newcastle North) £4 and P Williams (Colchester) £2. And all the supporters who managed to donate a £1; P Greenfield (AUEW) Paul True (Bath) S Gent (Fenham LP) Steve Weeks (a Mitcham

school student), M Deardon (Dagenham), J Marrable (Scunthorpe), and F Miller, J McNamara, J Holland, C Penton all from Toxteth.

Thanks again for all the sacrifices made but don't forget. We've still got £8,000 a week left to raise—the equivalent of each supporter selling three books of raffle

tickets. Don't forget the Militant Xmas Cards and the Calendars (see ad page 12 for details). Use the Appeal Sheets to ask any sympathisers and supporters for an extra-special donation which will be their Xmas present to Militant.

THIS WEEK: £3,000

BUILD SALES

Despite the attacks of Labour's right wing (or more correctly, because of) Militant's sales continue to grow. As one journalist interviewer on 'Face the Press' remarked "Militant is extremely good value" and it is the remark of several new readers of the paper that it is the best they've ever seen.

Militant is now sold in every major town in the country and increasingly in the smaller towns and villages, in fact everywhere from Inverness to Penzance! In the last three days we have had six people write in to ask to sell and we ask all our readers to find new readers, as the crisis of capitalism is forcing working people to

search for a socialist way out.

Workers in factories and offices can have bulk supplies sent to their homes or workplaces and so establish new groups of readers on the shopfloor which are vital if we are to progress to a more regular paper. Take a bulk order (sale or return) for your Labour Party Ward or GMC, trade union branch, Trades Council, etc.

If you are prepared to help build a mass Marxist paper use the tear off slip on the back page or write to: Circulation Dept, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986-3828.

By Dave Farrar



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Cheques, P/Orders payable to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN.

OBITUARY

Last Tuesday, 200 labour movement comrades, as well as friends and relatives, attended the funeral and memorial meeting in Bristol of Sue Beckingham, a long standing comrade and courageous fighter.

Sue died on 2 December, at the tragically early age of 36, after a year-long battle against cancer.

The courage and determination shown by Sue in the face of enormous suffering will remain an example to us all. They were in keeping with the strength and will she displayed all through her life.

Sue was successful in getting a degree in mathematics at Sussex University where she met Bryan whom she married in 1967. Encouraged by Bryan, already a *Militant* supporter, Sue helped set up a Labour Club at Maria Grey College, Twickenham, where she took a certificate of education.

Sue joined the Labour Party in the historic year of 1968. The great events of May in France and August in Czechoslovakia, when workers moved in their millions to transform society, helped convince her that only Marxist ideas showed the way forward for working men and women of all countries.

Sue began fighting for *Militant's* ideas in the National Union of Teachers, helping to produce the *Militant Teacher* magazine and actively involving herself in the teachers' strike of the 1969/1970 period. She first joined the Labour Party in the Balham branch of what was then Clapham Labour Party, in London.

In 1970 Sue and Bryan moved to Bristol, where for the following 11 years, Sue was a lynch-pin in the Labour Party Young Socialists. In 1972, for example, the year her first son, Simon, was born, Sue represented Bristol West LPYS at the Scarborough Conference, when she spoke on a socialist approach to control over the army including trade union rights for service personnel.

After reaching the age limit for the LPYS, Sue became Youth Officer in Bristol South East CLP, a post she held conscientiously for nine years until her death.

Her second son, Shaun, was born in 1976, the same year that Bryan left his own teaching job to write and spread the influence of the ideas of the *Militant*. Sue made enormous sacrifices to care for the family and to allow Bryan to carry out this important work as fully as possible, but she never gave up her own activity in the labour movement, fighting for socialism.

She held numerous ward positions in her local party and continued as a delegate to Bristol South East GMC for nine years. Sue was well known and respected throughout the South West as a delegate to numerous Regional Conferences of the Labour Party, and as a speaker she was particularly strong on the struggles of working class women in the fight for socialism.

Only in April of this year, in pain after one of her most distressing operations, Sue spoke at a meeting of 200 in Knowle, in Bristol, alongside Tony Benn, on the struggle

to defeat the Tories, explaining how socialism and the use of modern technology could end the drudgery of work for both men and women.

But what Sue will be remembered for most is the enormous courage and energy she summoned up to carry out her responsibilities as a delegate to this year's Labour Party Conference only ten weeks before her death. Others not possessing Sue's iron will would have long given up trying.

By September breathing, speaking and even moving had become difficult and painful for Sue, as a result of the spreading of her illness. Her eyesight was coming and going and she became tired very easily.

She struggled to attend conference each day and worked on her speech each evening.

She wrote it and re-wrote it in the moments when her eyes were good. Then, she memorised it in case they failed her when she reached the rostrum.

She took all the pills she safely could, and waited her turn on the Wednesday. Another delegate was ready to step in if Sue felt too ill. Tony Benn, who helped her enormously through the period of her illness, advised that she should explain at the beginning of her speech that she was ill but that she was determined to move the resolution.

But when her turn came, Sue went confidently to the rostrum and made the speech exactly as it is here, with no reference to her illness and her difficulties, without hesitation and with a clear voice and political conviction second to none.

Sue had enormous confidence in a future free from want, depression and war. From the ideas of Marxism she also knew that nothing came without a struggle.

The example she leaves for us, of tenacity and will-power, must not go unheeded. The numbers who came to honour her memory on Tuesday testify to the respect and admiration she inspired by everyone who knew her.

The Labour Party gave the use of their Labour hall free of charge for the meeting addressed by Tony Benn, Meg Crack (Chairperson of the CLP), Margaret Crear (a personal friend and comrade of Sue, a member of Rochdale CLP), and Peter Taaffe (editor of *Militant*). The local TGWU supplied a coach free of charge to carry the mourners from the crematorium across Bristol to the hall.

Bryan and the two boys, Simon and Shaun, have all our sympathies and they understand now that the best way to honour their wife and mother is to carry on the fight for socialism with renewed vigour.

It is for that reason that Bryan has made a special appeal for donations in Sue's memory to the 'Militant Fighting Fund'. Please send to Bryan Beckingham, 62 Haverstock Road, Knowle, Bristol BS4 2B2.

Despite her illness, Sue attended the Labour Party conference this year as the delegate from Bristol South East.

She moved Composite 50 in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament, the closure of US bases in Britain, the removal of any cruise missiles by the next Labour government, opposition to arms sales to all fascist regimes and the nationalisation of the armaments industry. The resolution was passed on a card vote.

We reprint extracts of Sue's speech in moving the composite.

Comrade chairman and comrades. If there is any single question that is a real condemnation of capitalism, it is the terrible waste, destruction and squandering of resources on arms spending and war.

In 1980, the world's spending on arms was £200,000 million. Just two startling facts: it would take only 1% of military spending—£2,000 million, not very much compared with the total military spending—to provide safe water for the whole world within a decade, getting rid of some three quarters of the world's diseases. Yet in Britain there is more military spending than on health and social security combined....

There is nothing accidental about war. It is not the whim of individuals but it arises from the contradictions of capitalism itself: profits, markets, prestige, domination. Look at the Falklands War.

It was not the whim of a dictator to invade the Falkland Islands. Just four days before Galtieri made that decision there was the biggest workers' demonstration in Argentina since 1976, the beginning of the coup. Galtieri's was a last ditch attempt to stop revolution in his own country, to stop his own regime being put down. That was the reason for that war.

And who are the real victors of war? Not the million a year who die from war—ordinary sailors, soldiers, workers, peasants. The real victors are the arms manufacturers who make enormous profits out of arms. (Applause)

That is why this composite calls for nationalisation of the arms industry under trade union control, to end the profiteering from war. This would make possible the massive cuts that we want in arms expenditure, the massive cuts in defence that we want, and the channelling of resources into things like education that we

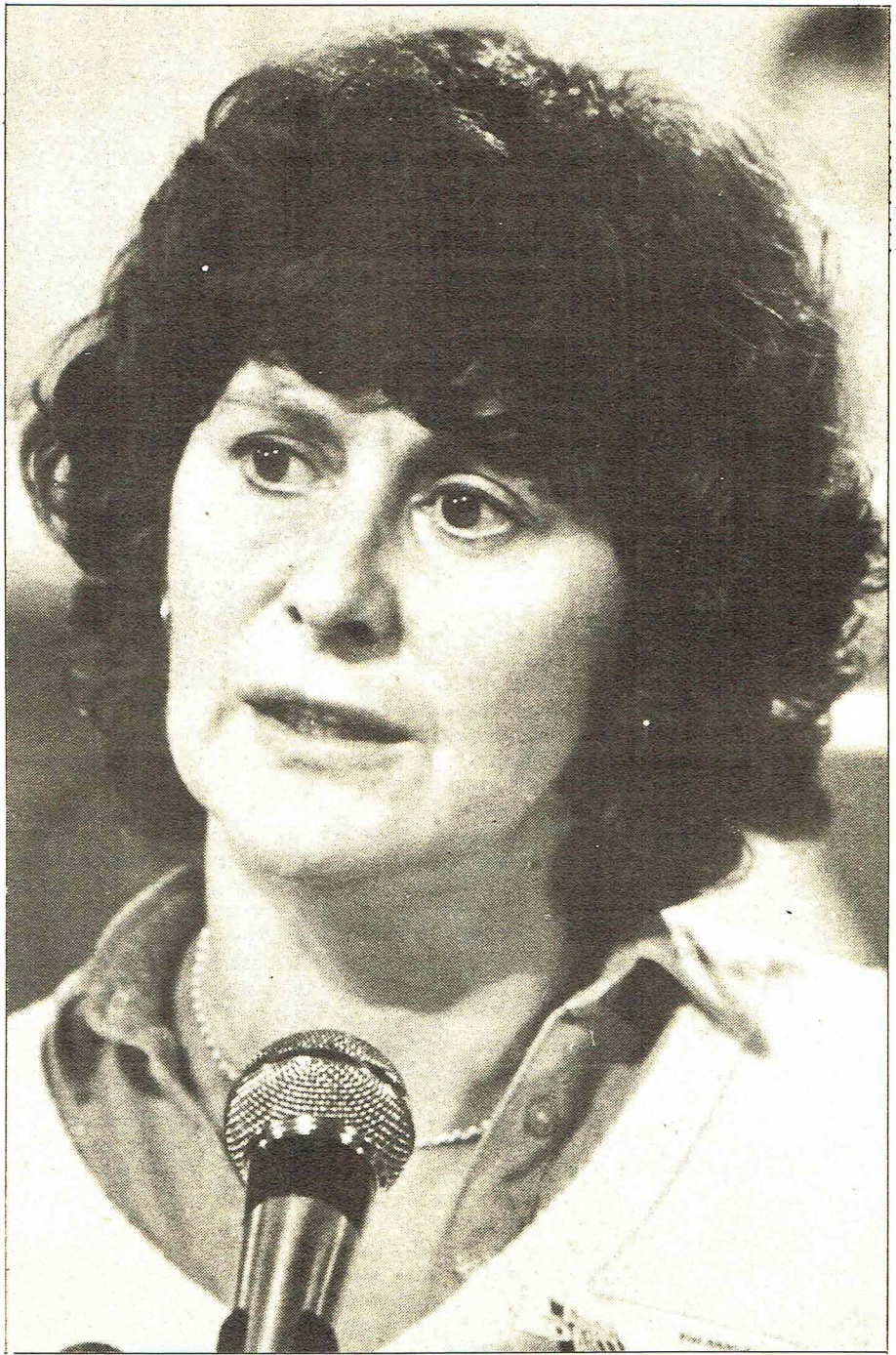


Photo: John Smith (ITL)

Sue Beckingham

'The struggle for peace is the struggle for socialism'

need, social services that we need, and health that we need.

But neither do we want workers in those industries to be made redundant, unlike the dockyard workers and sailors at Chatham and Portsmouth who got the chop under the Tories....

We demand no redundancies, but retraining to produce useful products. Under nationalisation of the arms industry, this could be possible. This would be possible, in fact. It is the only way it is possible to produce the things that we need: we need to own and control the arms industry itself.

We demand too, as on other issues, that conference decisions are carried out by the next Labour government. It was a scandal that under the last Labour government, defence spending was actually increased and

that Callaghan, Healey and two other ministers secretly took the decision to spend a further £1,000 million on modernising Polaris. (Applause)

Neither do we want Labour ministers being best friends with reactionary leaders abroad. Remember David Owen and his friend the Shah of Iran. The next Labour government must implement no sale of arms to reactionary regimes.

Finally, we reaffirm last year's conference policy for unilateral nuclear disarmament....

In the northern hemisphere alone there are now 1,000 bombs for every city with over 50,000 people. It has even gone into space with the development of anti-satellite weapons. What defence is there against such weaponry?

Even a total worldwide ban would not take away

the knowledge of being able to make nuclear weapons when they were needed. If disarmament is to be on any lasting basis, there must be a fundamental social change, not just taking to bits the weapons.

Comrades, it is the same class that gains from nuclear armaments and war as from unemployment, low pay and cuts in services. To defeat unemployment we look to organised labour. To take up low pay we look to organised labour.

It is to the organised working class that we must look to take society out of the hands of the warmongers and profiteers. While capitalism remains there will be war. The struggle for peace can never be separated from the struggle for socialism. (Applause)



Selective memories

The ruling bureaucrats in the USSR have removed all mention of the infamous Stalin purges of the 1930's from the official Soviet Encyclopedia. So, with a stroke of the pen, the arrest, imprisonment and killing of old Bolsheviks and other offenders against Stalin and his clique just disappears. Very convenient.

Of course this re-writing of history has happened before. It was particularly prevalent in the regime of Stalin himself. Stalin's purges may be "forgotten" but his old methods clearly aren't.

Hughie knocks TV

Attacking the "left wing bias" of the television media, Hughie Green of Opportunity Knocks fame, stated, "The media has its own Arthur Scargills who, instead of mining for coal, are mining the minds, the minds of British people". This will be news to trade unionists who sit through union bashing editions of 'Nationwide' and the like. But seeing as Hughie made these comments in this month's issue of the official Tory party paper, *Conservative Newline*, it is doubtful he will score much on the ol' clapometer.

Scrap slump

"Leave it to the market" say the Tories. "The hidden hand" of the market would regulate the economy and give wealth to all. Having been clobbered by this hidden hand for three years, not many workers would believe that. It can't save British industry; it can't even knock it down efficiently.

When the Rohm and Haas chemical works on Teesside opened ten years ago, it cost £22 million. It closed in August thanks to the marvels of capitalism with the loss of 240 jobs. The firm tried to sell the plant but no one was interested. They sold some equipment, but not much was in demand because factories are closing down nationwide. And now they can't even get rid of the scrap steel. No one wants to move it because the "hidden hand" has depressed the price of scrap steel so it's not in any firm's economic interest to move it. With more plants being demolished in the area there's going to be a hell of a lot of spare steel totally unused.

One-sided case

While a Soviet delegation was visiting Hackney, East London recently, the flag of the USSR was raised above the town hall. This provoked one Hackney citizen to run amok in the building, shouting and struggling with council officials, knocking over a chair and scattering papers. When brought to court for his misbehaviour, he found an ally in the magistrate, Mr John Nichols. Fining the accused only £5 and binding him over for 12 months, Mr Nichols proclaimed, "The hoisting of this flag was calculated to provoke some citizen of Hackney...In my opinion...I consider that while (the accused) stands before the court he could well be accompanied by whoever it was authorised the raising." If someone had carried out a similar protest in No 10 Downing Street when Mrs Thatcher met the former racist leader of Rhodesia Ian Smith and then been brought before Mr Nichols for sentencing, it would have been interesting to see whether the accused would receive such sympathy, let alone a mere £5 fine.

Forty years ago

The December issue of the TUC paper, 'Labour' had a report from a soldier in the Middle East who spoke of the excellent response which his talk on trade unionism had generated in a soldiers' club. He asked for some more literature 'to carry on the work for industrial democracy'. In the Second World War the bosses resisted any attempt to organise in their 'holies of holies', the armed bodies of the state. Some soldiers were given honourable discharges in order to get them out of the army as quickly as possible.

'Rich, arrogant and wrong'

A cursory glance at the gathering in Folkestone recently of young(ish) people, might not at first have signalled anything unusual. But the 100 or so people frequenting the Leas Cliff Hall and Southcliff Hotel were in fact the bloom of their class.

All white, all well-off, all confident (ie arrogant), all eligible and all wrong. The Kent Young Conservatives were having their annual conference.

I went along to study the enemy at close quarters. If I wore a suit and tie and looked disdainful every time "workers" or "trade unions" were mentioned, I might even find myself a wife from good breeding stock.

Different Species

The male of the species seemed to be clearly drawn into two types. A minority wore dark suits, dark ties and had greasy slicked back hair, a la Hitler. They had spots and sneered a lot. They looked like undertakers but were probably young stockbrokers. They are very serious and are the last ones to get asked to parties.

The other sort dresses casually with flares and kipper ties or wide collared open neck shirts. They either have ridiculous perms or thin beards and leave squash racquets on the back shelves of their MG sports cars. They say they only come for the partying. They are either students, computer programmers or estate agents.

The females are identical. All horsey and perfecting their Penelope Keith impersonations. Most of them seem to have been inspired

by Mrs Thatcher, although it was noticeable that men far out numbered the women and very few women, if any, spoke or asked questions during the conference.

But they were running the bookshop where one could buy YC pens, key-fobs and pamphlets extolling the denationalisation of everything from Gas to God, to "Yes Minister" and a Tony Benn book (placed next to a pamphlet entitled "The right approach to mental health").

Tennis player, Buster Mottram, who used to belong to the fascist National Front, recently explained why he now wanted to become a Tory MP. He said that under Heath many people had drifted away from the party but now they were being welcomed back with open arms. Watching and listening to this crowd one realised how right he was.

Cecil Parkinson got the warmest applause when he "frankly" admitted that unemployment was not going to drop before the next election and that it was going to climb. He could offer no solution. There is none. All we can do is retire people earlier and "reduce" figures with training schemes.

But the good news was that Thatcher is going to get away with it. The workers, battered by the government, disillusioned by the careerists in the

Labour Party, are caving-in crowed Mr Parkinson.

A relentless hounding of the working class; that was what these "class fighters" want to safeguard their privileges. Even a speaker from 'Aims of Industry' was somewhat taken aback when he was answering questions on the platform, by demands for the total privatisation of the NHS!

Extreme Right

On Sunday morning—Rememberance Day—the YC's received a delegation from the South African embassy and were shown a film extolling the virtues of that wonderful state. One of the

By Mark Tiley
(Dover CLP)

diplomats was billed as South Africa's first black representative.

He did not say much except echo the platitudes of his boss about how SA was changing and becoming a better place. The coat he wore was lovely mohair. It would probably cost a black South African worker living in a township three months' wages.

Immediately after receiving this black man so warmly—washed down by generous helpings of South

African wine at 10 in the morning (and this after socials that went on until about 5 am)—the YCs debated repatriation for immigrants to "alleviate inner city tensions".

It was passed. They were wrong. It is not black people that need repatriation but themselves, back to the 19th century where they belong. Dr Who, where are you, now we need you?



A young intellectual from the YCs at Tory Party conference

CLASS OF 75

I was brought up for the most part of my life in a village in Northumberland. When you left school it was the tradition to go down the mine.

But with the steady closure of small pits in the '50s and '60s, the only pits of any size left were Dudley and Weetslade, Bates, or Lynemouth colliery. So when we left school in 1975, the majority of us had to look elsewhere for employment.

Nelson village where we lived was centred in Cramlington, one of these supposed up and coming new towns, so a fair few of the lads went into the building trade. The majority went onto the new industrial estate into light industry, such as Courtauld's Wilkinson Sword, Commercial Plastics etc., and one or two like myself travelled the 15 miles into Newcastle to do apprenticeships in heavy

By Nigel Waite
(Felling Ward,
Gateshead East LP)

engineering or the yards.

As the years went by things started to get bad. The first lads to be hit were those on the buildings. The contracts in the new town were folding up.

Next to go were the ones who'd gone into light industry. From about 1977-8 onward, even to this day, lay off's, closure's and two and three day weeks racked the estate.

Now I was pretty smug at this time. After taking loads of stick for getting up at

5.30am and taking low pay, I'd come out of my time in December 1979 on good wages as a qualified electrician in a safe industry.

With my wages I moved into Newcastle to be near my job in the Vickers Scotswood works. But the closure of Tress Engineering and Vickers Scotswood in 1980 launched the attack on heavy engineering on the Tyne, and shattered my pipe dreams.

Parsons laid off and talked of closure. Churchill's paid men off, and things were far from rosy in the shipyards.

I got a job at Marconi Radar, only to be sacked a year later, and witness another 300 redundancies. Then came the greatest blow of all; the closing of Consett steel works.

I have now been on the dole a year. The industries and factories like Vickers, Parsons, British Steel, the

shipyards, and the mines, used to suck up the youth of the North East like vacuum cleaners. Now they only take handfuls.

But I'd like to make this warning. Through my experiences I was brought into politics, to the correct weapon to fight this sick system. However, now on the banks of the Tyne there are thousands of disillusioned youth, who have never had a job and will never get one. If something isn't done to help these youth, the explosion, when it comes, could far overshadow the riots which took place in Toxteth and Brixton. It is up to Militant supporters to give all the support they can to the Tyneside LPYS branches to help to recruit this mass of youth into the socialist movement, before their anger and frustration lead them into fruitless violent struggle.



Fay Collins at her home in Brighton.

Photo: Denis Doran (Militant).

'We need socialism - in our time'

'For pensioners today, getting by is very difficult. If you go to a supermarket for food you get a few few coppers off but they don't serve small quantities.

"So if you buy there you waste food if there's only one or two of you. If you want small amounts you just have to go to local shops where things are dearer.

"They also stick the blooming supermarkets miles away so with the bus fares up, people can't afford to come in from outlying areas.

"You try to save, you've got to put by for gas, electricity, our phone which is our lifeline to the doctors. But everytime the bills come in they're higher and there's always something going wrong. Last week it was our electric kettle which set us back £6.50. We also had to bring in a plumber for a new tap washer.

"We don't drink and don't smoke, so what goes by the board is food. Our only 'luxury' is television. We don't go out at night because we can't get buses, can't afford a cab and we're afraid to walk home after dark!

Fay Collins, a pensioner and member of Brighton Labour Party spoke to Roger Shrivess.

"Working class families can't save much for retirement, if you need a new pair of shoes they have to come out of one week's money, but unless you're in absolute abject poverty you can't get help. If you ask for help they call you scroungers and beggars so people just leave things alone and are glad just to see their days go by.

"A lot of pensioners are sick of this and sick of that but you have to organise. We got a petition down here to do away with the standing charges for electricity and gas and my husband got 500 signatures himself and sent them off.

"Look at our gas bill, we go very careful and we used £2.11 worth of gas but we got a £9 standing charge. Old people are about the last people who should have to economise on heat but last winter's electricity bill was £120.

"It was bitter cold and we're not supposed to go into a cold bedroom; we both have heart conditions. But if

we'd put the fire on, heaven knows what the bill would have been then!

"They talk about Militants but without militants we wouldn't even have pensions. Rod Fitch came to our pensioners meeting and spoke. He was marvellous but everything he said he'd do, he did. Some people, even Labour people, their ears don't hear what their mouths are saying.

"When Bowden, (the Tory MP for Brighton Kemp-ton) spoke to our meeting, one woman told him with the money she'd got herself insured for, she couldn't even get her big toe buried. He said she should put her premiums up to £200 or £300 and 'take it out of the estate' People had paid in for this for years-take it out of the estate, indeed!

"When we went to lobby MPs over pensions the Hove MP Tim Sainsbury told us that prices in his chain store hadn't gone up above 7%. I asked him 'Where have you been Rip Van Winkle?' and Joe, my husband told him MPs probably spent more on whiskey a week than we got in pensions.

"A little meta! scourer in a bargain basement costs 42p. If my daughter didn't buy us things like our furniture we wouldn't have

anything. What do people do if they haven't relatives, or they don't look after them?

"We want politicians who'll fight for us. I'm very disillusioned with Labour in power. When Wilson took over I cheered like hell, I thought at last a left winger. Now at least like Bevan and the Health Service we'd get some reforms but he did almost nothing except pander to the establishment.

"When Foot beat Healey in 1980 we were on a cheap off season holiday. I said 'oh marvellous' to one of the people there and to my surprise everybody agreed with me. But now he's gone back on so much. The right wing have used him.

"We've been active Labour Party members for fifty years. I haven't got much longer but I'm worried about my grandchildren. One is 20 and he's had no job since he was 17. What kind of world is that to bring children up in?

"Ordinary Labour Party members want answers, they want the left, they want Militant. How can you win an election if you expel people and disband parties! People like Healey say they don't want to frighten the electorate but they frighten me I can tell you!"



Members of British Pensioners and Trade Union Action Association lobby for abolition of gas and electricity standing charges

Dear Sir,

I was a pensioner delegate to yesterday's LSCAW conference. Pensioners have no time to waste on witch-hunts; our time is getting shorter.

We in BPTUAA, are opposed to all cuts in social services. There are now 10½ million pensioners and some of us fought for the NHS which started in 1948. The Labour Party NEC may not discuss health, but we do. We pensioners use one third of NHS services and treatment, and most of us cannot afford (nor would we wish) to join BUPA.

In Harlow, for instance, we need a geriatric ward in our hospital. Instead, the area health committee have closed at least one ward, and the alcoholic unit at Bishop's

Stortford. Pensioners are frightened by what these 'appointed' health committees are doing. We are entitled to live out our lives in comfort and dignity.

I was very glad to see so many young people fighting to preserve and improve the quality of working class life which the Tories are trying to destroy. We must all fight to the last ditch to save the NHS and the principle of health care as a right free to all.

Real socialism is the only answer, we pensioners want to see it in our time.

Yours fraternally,

Mary Thomas,
(Sec. Harlow and District Pensioners and Trade Unions Action Association),
Personal capacity.

New Tory trap

Your headline "Unemployment; One million Tory lies" covers more than at first appears, for there is a new trap for the poor to ensnare them into more poverty later.

Since 1977 every person, male or female must have a 90% possible cover for pension rights, ie. a contribution credited every week. If they are unemployed they must sign on as available for work or they will have no contribution credited. Married women will no longer be covered by their husband's contributions after the late 1990s and unless they have enough credits they will receive only a part pension on retirement.

Already many people have

been out of work for a number of years and everyone must be made aware of the pitfall to ensure they have a contribution credited weekly. By not signing on because they are not due cash benefit now could result in losing pension credits for the future.

Penury now and again in old age. The age of retirement is likely to come down and many workers will find themselves with part pensions and perhaps by then no Social Security benefit to bring them up even to poverty level.

By
Mrs Sheila Gent
(Newcastle)



Thomas Fair, right, at a meeting in Bradford.

"I've been a member of the Labour Party two or three times, this last time about two years. I've been buying the paper about six years.

"I joined the party this time because I realised that *Militant* was a part of it and the *Militant* was the only section that would ever get what the working class people wanted. Otherwise, honestly, I wouldn't have rejoined.

"I left before because I wasn't satisfied and I was sure it could be done better. It was a mistake and I realise that. But I first joined the Labour Party in 1935.

"I'm a member of UCATT. I was branch chairman, federation secretary for ten years and joint committees of the shop stewards of the Northern district and we met the employers regularly. I've a good working class record and have 50 years' record on the trades council and in the trade union.

"Why I support the *Militant* is that it's one that I can agree with and that I know now after all these years will

get us socialism.

"The last Labour government, it had great opportunities did that government but the right-wing element prevented that government from achieving the road to socialism. In doing that it turned the people away.

"Many people saw the opportunity lost. The wage freeze policies were against the workers achieving a fair deal and they gave way for the employers' benefit. And that's why I support the *Militant*.

"I feel sorry for the Labour Party for trying to expel the *Militant* and I am sure that events will prove that, as their policies of witch-hunts have always done, they should not have the witch-hunt. *Militant* is paving the way for socialism."

Thomas Fair, aged 71, a member of Bradford North Labour Party, spoke to Heather Rawling.

Photo: Militant

Photo: Andrew Wiaard (Report)

POLAND... A year of martial

December 13 sees the anniversary of the declaration of Martial Law in Poland, when thousands of Solidarity activists, including most of the leadership, were arrested and the union dissolved.

If the regime of General Jaruzelski is now prepared to lift martial law, it is not from a standpoint of weakness, but, on the contrary, from a certain knowledge that Solidarity has been effectively stifled.

Many workers have asked, how was it possible for the Solidarity trade union to be defeated in the first place? How was it that a trade union movement, encompassing the overwhelming majority of the workers, could only stay alive for just over a year? Why was the Polish regime itself not compelled to grant permanent concessions on free trade unions?

The strike movement that gave rise to Solidarity was indeed a movement of enormous scale. Workers protested in July 1980 against the high-handedness of the then Geirek regime in putting up food prices when they already had to queue for hours each day to get many basic necessities. Protest strikes which began in the shipyards in Gdansk soon spread to other enterprises and other cities.

Within days, if not hours, the spreading strike wave engulfed other shipyards, transport, the coalmines, engineering industries, car workers, steel workers, farm workers and many others. Hundreds of enterprises and millions of workers were soon involved, linking their strike committees to one another and raising common demands.

The Polish workers showed a remarkably high degree of organisation from the very beginning. Through the strike committees, the city-wide and the regional coordinating committees, the mass of the workers were able to play an active participating role in the unfolding struggle with the government.

The "Gdansk Soviet"

When the government were forced to agree negotiations, they took place initially in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk and the proceedings were broadcast by loudspeaker to all the workers and delegates from other workplaces who had assembled in the yards. Hundreds of delegates took tape recordings in order to relay an accurate account of the meeting back to their own members.

It was no accident that the "Observer" in Britain dubbed the workers' committee in Gdansk as the "Gdansk Soviet". In so far as it directly represented the workers in struggle, in the most democratic manner possible, in its structure and its workings, it did indeed resemble very closely the 'Soviets' thrown up in struggle by the Russian workers in 1905 and 1917. Moreover, it had all the potential power of the Russian soviets.

By
John Pickard.

The demands of the workers inevitably began to point in the direction of political action. Beginning with economic and industrial issues—wages, pensions, health and safety, working hours, and so on—it was inevitable that they would grow to encompass political issues.

The workers demanded a monument to those workers killed by the regime in the food protests of 1970. They began to demand genuine freedom of the press, that their demands be broadcast on the state radio and television. Inevitably, they also demanded the right to associate in a free trade union, separate from the official trade unions which were seen by the workers as a part of the machinery of the ruling bureaucracy.

Industrial issues inevitably led to Political demands

Even in a capitalist country, it is clear, at least to the most advanced workers, that there can be no sharp dividing line between industrial and political issues. The fight for wage rises, better conditions and above all the fight for jobs in Britain today is clearly linked to the policies of Thatcher and the need to confront her government.

But the link is even more self-evident in a country like Poland where the overwhelming majority of the economy is state-owned. To discuss any significant reforms in the lives of the workers and their families is to discuss with the government. Politics cannot be kept apart from industrial issues.

Even at a local and regional level, the demands of the workers followed the inevitable route to political issues. In the face of government claims of food shortage the workers themselves raised the demand for fair rationing—and the closure of all 'special shops' used to service the upper layers of the bureaucracy.

When the government complained about the level of production the inevitable response of the workers was to scrutinise the work of local officials. As the Solidarity movement grew in strength and confidence, the workers began increasingly to demand the replacement of corrupt officials, locally and regionally, and in the period immediately before the declaration of martial law, large layers of the union membership were raising the demand for the election of officials, and the right of recall.

These conditions—the election of officials and the right of recall—were spelled out by Lenin as basic necessities, but they are anathema to the Stalinist bureaucracies.



Workers demonstrating in Warsaw in August this year. Photo: UPI

Why was Solidarity

Among the mass of workers participating in the strikes and the formation of Solidarity, there was not a glimmer of a demand that could have been construed as a wish for a return to capitalism in Poland.

From the beginning of the strike movement in 1980, the workers demands showed in embryo the demand for political revolution, for the replacement of the totalitarian bureaucracy by a democratic system of workers' control and management. But although the workers' demands became sharpened somewhat by their experiences, the programme of political revolution was never spelt out by the leadership of the movement.

When the strikes first began, the Polish government was rocked to its very foundations. The agreement by the government to accept—in words at least—the existence of the free trade union in August 1980 was a sign of its weakness in the face of the massive strikes.

The movement of the workers had left the bureaucracy hanging in mid-air without any social base. The real power in Poland rested in the hands of the workers' committees. The Polish bureaucracy were left in a far weaker position than they had even been in 1956, in 1970 or in 1976, when other movements of workers threatened their position.

It would have been impossible for the Polish regime to have simply crushed the Solidarity movement in those early days. The workers' movement had grown to encompass more than ten million members in

a few weeks, and at its height in the Spring of 1981, as many as 13 million workers were involved at any one time in protest general strikes.

Rural workers, white collar workers and even sections of the lower levels of the bureaucracy were influenced by the rising tide of dissent and opposition. Any attempt to use the army to intervene against Solidarity would have meant its disintegration.

The soldiers would have gone over to the side of the workers and the bureaucracy would have collapsed.

Leadership had no programme for political revolution

If the leadership of the worker movement had had the perspective of political revolution, if they had advanced the programme of the overthrow of the totalitarian regime, organising and mobilising support in that direction, then the bureaucracy would not have lasted a week.

The other Stalinist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe clamoured for measures to be adopted against the workers' movement in Poland. They all feared the possibility of the contagion of workers' democracy spreading across the borders into their own states. Their borders with Poland were closed, Western television and radio broadcasts were jammed and the Warsaw Pact made threats about the need to protect their own 'strategic interests'.

But if the Polish working class had consciously taken power, then even these regimes would have been unable to stem the tide. A socialist class appeal to the Warsaw Pact armies would have led to their disintegration also.

It would have been entirely possible, if the Polish workers had come to power on a programme of political revolution, to have made a decisive impact on the rest of Eastern Europe. Workers democracy in Poland would have shone out like a beacon in Russia, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and so on, placing a question mark against the stability of all the other one-party Stalinist states.

But the tragedy of Solidarity lay in the fact that despite the awesome power at its disposal, the leadership of that movement always sought to contain it within strict bounds. The inchoate, spontaneous movement of the mass of the workers needed leadership and direction; it required the programme and perspective of political revolution. Having the power in society was not enough. The workers needed to become conscious of the fact.

But from the very inception of the movement in July and August, the Solidarity leadership around Lech Walesa were constantly counselling caution and restraint. Had it not been for the pressure of the movement itself, had it been left to the 'leaders' of the first strike movements, there would not have been a Solidarity trade union established in the first place. At each stage in the growing

strike movement in mid-1980, the leaders hesitated, only to be propelled forward by the momentum of the struggle.

The leadership of the movement was tied to the intelligentsia of the Catholic Church and the "dissident" movement, many of whom were in reality 'opposition bureaucrats', without any confidence in or perspective based on the working class, with no programme or policy of political revolution.

They offered no policy that at any time seriously threatened the existence of the ruling bureaucracy. On the contrary, they fostered the illusion that the Polish workers could 'gradually' democratise their country, first by establishing a free trade union and then by reforming the economic and social system.

In effect, they offered an impossible 'accommodation' with the bureaucracy. In what was in effect a situation of dual power, the dissidents like Jacek Kuron attempted to 'square the circle'—to maintain a free trade union in a totalitarian state. They did not see that one or the other would be forced to give way.

The leadership took for good coin the 'concessions' made on paper by the bureaucracy at a time when the latter had no option but to do so. Even the London Times commented (March 29, 1981) that the Solidarity leaders "have been doing their best to prop up the existing regime while trying to negotiate with it. They have not used the power they have to sweep it away."

In a book largely sympathetic to Solidarity,



ty crushed?



Lech Walesa

published before the declaration of Martial Law, Denis MacShane wrote:

"In the many millions of words written about Walesa, and in the scores of thousands spoken by him to journalists since August 1980, it is impossible to find a coherent political or trade union theory which either explains his actions or provides definite clues to his behaviour...he is a master of necessary equivocation, deflecting questions about the political role of Solidarity, or fears of a Soviet in-

tervention, with a skill that would do credit to a diplomat with a lifetime's experience in dodging difficult questions."

In other words, the Solidarity leadership had no policy on the most basic issue of all—where the union was going and what it was to do with the governing bureaucracy.

From August 1980 onwards, articles in *Militant* argued unambiguously that it was impossible for there to be any lasting 'compromise' between the free trade union and the bureaucracy.

The very basis of the

totalitarian regime in Poland, like the others in Eastern Europe, is the untrammelled control of the economy and the state by the bureaucracy. These 'Bonapartist' regimes, whilst they rest on a state-owned economy, are regimes of command, not consent. There is no place in the

The Bureaucracy itself understood the situation

political set-up of the bureaucracy for free trade unions.

The bureaucracy understood, correctly from its own point of view, that a free trade union would be unable to limit itself to the bread-and-butter economic issues. Free discussion and debate about wider political and economic issues would inevitably raise the issue of the role of the bureaucracy itself, and, if left alone, a free trade union would give rise to free political dissent, and to ever more serious threats to the position and privileges of the bureaucrats.

Consequently, from August 1980 onwards, the Polish bureaucracy tacked and veered, always stepping back from a confrontation it felt it would lose, but then stepping forward again to recover the lost ground. New obstacles and barriers were constantly being placed in the way of Solidarity.

Despite the August agreement that brought the union 'legality' in the first place, the bureaucracy only conceded ground when it as-

forced by a confrontation to do so. Not an inch was ever given up willingly.

Although the agreement was supposed to remove state censorship, in practice it was never removed. Other concessions made on wages and conditions were under pressure, immediately they had been achieved.

The bureaucracy knew what it wanted but for a whole period of time it lacked the power to get it. Solidarity, on the one hand, had enormous power, but lacked the sense of purpose and direction that it needed to overthrow the bureaucracy. As a result, Solidarity and the government lurched from one crisis to another, none of which solved the basic question of who should run society.

Meanwhile, throughout 1981, the economic situation worsened. Had there been a political revolution that would have overthrown the bureaucracy, it would have been possible to raise wages, cut hours and at the same time increase production. The democratic involvement of workers in running and managing industry would have swept away the waste and mismanagement for which the bureaucracy is daily responsible.

But Poland 1981 had the worst of all worlds. The economy was not given the breath of fresh air of workers' democracy, and at the same time the actions and struggles of the Solidarity union at a local level limited the actions of the bureaucracy nationally. The result was a decline in production and an even more chronic distribution of food.

Solidarity leaders accepted price rises

The union had come into existence as a result of protests over food price rises and shortages. But by the middle of 1981, the shortages were even more severe and the government, still holding the levers of economic power at a regional and national level, never looked like doing a thing about it.

The leadership of Solidarity had no perspective or programme for the removal of the parasitic bureaucracy, of the logic of their position was such that they more and more found themselves acting as the mouthpieces of the bureaucracy. The same leadership who had always counselled caution and moderation, who had even tried (unsuccessfully) a 90-day 'cooling off period' without strikes, now, incredibly, accepted the need for economic 'austerity' and price rises to revive the economy which was in a state of collapse.

In the months prior to the declaration of Martial Law, the national leadership of the union spent most of their time acting as 'firemen', dousing the flames of protest and dampening the expectations raised by the workers in the various localities.

Had it been necessary in the final analysis, the Eastern European bureaucracies would have resorted to invasion to stop Solidarity. There was always an element



Jacek Kuron

of bluff in the many threats made by Brezhnev and in the huge manoeuvres undertaken by the Warsaw Pact forces on Poland's frontiers.

These threats, to be sure, had a greater effect on the dissidents and the intellectuals around the leadership than on the rank and file of Solidarity. But at the same time, Brezhnev would have been prepared to use force as a last resort.

There would have been an enormous price to pay in terms of East-West trade, instability elsewhere in Eastern Europe, demoralisation of troops, and so on. But if it would have been necessary to preserve the position of the Stalinist bureaucracies, they would have waded in blood, as they did in Hungary in 1956.

But by December 1981, intervention was not necessary. The Polish bureaucracy had skilfully and successfully exploited the lack of a real leadership in Solidarity to a point where it regained the initiative itself.

It is not possible to keep up the momentum of a mass movement like Solidarity where there is no perspective of a victory and where each crisis only seems to lay the basis for yet another crisis. There arose, according to Denis MacShane, a constant plea by the rank and file Solidarity members "for some stability, a bit of peace and quiet, a few months without a major or even a minor crisis."

As in revolution, so also in counter-revolution, timing is of the essence. The bureaucracy carefully prepared to reassume full power, while the strength of Solidarity ebbed. Kania, who had replaced Geirek only a year before, was himself displaced by General Jaruzelski in October 1981, a clear signal that the bureaucracy was preparing its move.

Serious defeat for the workers

The declaration of Martial Law went ahead on December 13. Solidarity was dissolved and thousands of activists were arrested. Many workers continued for days to put up an heroic resistance to the armed forces and dozens were killed in the attempt, but this resistance was nevertheless on a far more limited scale than would have been the case had it been a year earlier, when the power of the working class had been at its peak.

The significance of the declaration of martial law should not be underestimated. It represented a decisive defeat for the Polish working class.

There have been workers' protests since December, notably in May and August this year, but despite the bravery of the workers involved, they are movements incomparably weaker and more isolated than those that gave rise to Solidarity in mid-1980.

Since Martial Law, the conditions of Polish workers have deteriorated. Thousands of activists are still interned. Others have been victimised: there are 200,000 unemployed, according to official estimates.

Despite the wage increases that were achieved in 1980-81, prices have shot up so that the living standards of most working families have been seriously eroded.

At the end of September, the average wage increase on the previous year was 45 per cent. Yet in the period from January to August—eight months—average prices had risen by just over 100 per cent. The whole burden of Poland's economic crisis has been placed on the shoulders of the workers.

The workers are therefore more weighed down with the job of keeping body and soul together than they have ever been, and if the Polish bureaucracy now feels itself able to release Lech Walesa and lift the Martial Law regulations it is precisely because Solidarity is no longer a threat.

Since Martial Law 250,000 members of the 'Communist' Party have been purged to add to the 600,000 expelled or resigning during the Solidarity period. Jaruzelski will probably now begin to take the first tentative steps to rehabilitate the Communist Party.

There is no fundamental difference between a Stalinist regime based upon 'Communist' rule and an open military dictatorship; the former still rests upon its military-police apparatus while the latter, in a crisis, is more direct and reliable for the bureaucracy.

But the release of Walesa and the return to 'civilian' government are necessary cosmetic changes for Jaruzelski, to give the appearance of a return to 'normality' for the benefit of his Western European trading partners, upon whom his economy still depends.

Whilst the Polish working class suffered a crushing defeat last year, it has not settled the issue for good. None of the economic measures of the Jaruzelski regime will stave off new economic crises in the future and, in time, the workers will regain their confidence and morale.

There will inevitably be new movements of workers again in the future: but with an important difference. Many will have absorbed the lesson of 1980-81, that free trade unions are incompatible with totalitarian bureaucracy. They will have understood the vital need for a marxist leadership and they will raise more certainly than ever the banner of political revolution: "Down with the Bureaucracy! For workers' democracy and socialism!"

Swedish marxists fight witch-hunt

The new social democratic government in Sweden has started with a devaluation which cuts real wages by 5%. The ministers are stressing that there will be no new reforms—cuts in the public sector are more likely.

At the same time the leadership of the social democratic youth, the SSU, has started new massive expulsions of the supporters of the marxist paper *Offensiv*. It is no coincidence.

"The SSU leadership want to nip it in the bud, because they know that the support for our ideas will grow in the coming years. More and more workers and youth will not accept a 'crisis solution' which lays the burdens on the working class. *Offensiv* stands for the demand of a socialist programme for the government, and is therefore attacked."

This was the message from the SSU-conference against expulsions in Stockholm on 13 November. Two-hundred and fifty SSU members from eighteen out of twenty-seven districts and about thirty branches attended. It was the biggest left wing social democratic conference for decades.

There wasn't a single sign of pessimism at the conference, despite the expulsions. On the contrary, optimistic reports from different parts of the country showed the impressive work of the threatened branches. Delegates spoke about the campaigns their branches had conducted against the bourgeois government 1976-82; their support for workers in struggle; interna-

By Per-Ake Westelund
Stockholm

tional solidarity; branch-made leaflets and papers; the possibilities to get new members, and so on. One branch, which has nine expelled members, reported ten new members in a study-group.

This stands in contrast to the decline of the SSU as a whole, both politically and in activity.

Today, a total of 107 members are expelled. There is also a standing threat against about fifteen branches. The conference showed a united way forward in the defence of marxist ideas. "We are still SSU-branches, whatever the leadership says. We will continue our work and recruit members to the SSU."

The conference decided to start the 'SSU committee for socialism', which will lead the branches' fight for reinstatement. The first political campaign is against youth unemployment.

The labour movement in Sweden has, by international standards, a strong bureaucracy. The SSU has, for example, 150-200 full-

timers. In the post war boom, the leaders of the SSU, played a role in achieving 'co-operation' between workers and employers. Reforms and higher living standards could 'buy' calm and stability.

But all this has now totally changed. The new government still seeks to co-operate with the employers, as in the fifties and sixties, but in a recession this means the living standards of the workers are under attack. This will turn workers and youth against their leaders, seeking for a socialist way. This process will take time but it is inevitable.

The conference had invited the SSU NEC to a debate on the expulsions. But the NEC didn't dare to come. They are afraid of an open, political discussion. Instead an *Offensiv* readers' meeting was held. The fighting fund collection of £1,300 was a splendid example of the support for marxist ideas.

The labour movement veteran, Anton Nilson, who is 95 years old—and was a fighter in the Red Army after the Russian revolution, gave an optimistic lead in his contribution at the readers meeting; "The expulsions are rude stupidity. I respect you in the highest degree. Don't give up."

These words and the whole conference itself was a strong answer to the bureaucrats in the SSU. Time is now working in another direction than in the fifties and sixties. The support of marxist ideas will increase in the coming years.



Top: Front cover of Marxist paper *Offensiv*. Below: Crowd gathers in Stockholm in the 1980 General Strike. The powerful workers' movement in Sweden are starting to look to socialist ideas.



International notes



Germany

German workers are feeling the brunt of the world economic crisis. Unemployment now stands at 2 million, the highest rate since 1948. 8.4% of the workforce is unemployed. 1.033 million are on short time working. Job vacancies are down to 66,646.

As the economic crisis in Germany deepens, the government is attempting to cut back on public spending. They are attempting to introduce a student loan system in replace of the 'means test' grant system. That would mean that a student on a full grant, i.e. working class students, would have to pay back £10,000 for the privilege of a university education.

Imagine the economic nightmare if two working class students got married. Before they started their working life, they would have debts of £20,000. Many working class students would be reluctant to take on such financial commitments, especially in a climate of high unemployment. The German labour movement has much in common with the British labour movement in combatting the evils of unemployment and cut backs in state spending.

Honduras

Honduras was the last call of President Reagan's whistle stop tour of Latin America. US capitalism is painfully aware of the strategic importance of Honduras. To the south is left wing Nicaragua, to the west is right wing and civil war torn El Salvador, and to the north is Guatemala. Honduras is regarded as the linchpin in US regional policy on Central America.

But the influence of US imperialism is not as great as it used to be. Instead of direct military rule, they are forced to attempt to determine the political structure of the country by proxy. The fear of Reagan, representing big business in America, is that the whole of Central America could fall into 'communist' hands. "If Honduras falls to the Marxists, so does the rest of Central America".

US involvement in El Salvador is well known and one Western diplomat has revealed that the 'US no longer believed in democracy in Honduras but simply wanted to shore up what it perceived as the most stable institution in the country: the armed forces.' (*Financial Times* 3 December 1982.) The president of the liberal government, in power for a year, is the first civilian pres-

By Heather Rawling

ident for eleven years.

Sr Ephraim Diaz, a Christian Democrat, said "Honduras doesn't have its own policy. It is determined by the armed forces and the US embassy." There has been a spate of disappearances of leftist political figures over the past year. Some twenty Hondureans are presently missing after being arrested by security forces. Many others have been tortured and threatened with death if they speak openly after their release. Most are trade union and student leaders.

The economy of Honduras is in a severe crisis. Shortages are part of daily life and inflation means wages buy less and less. The conditions of life are ripe for social revolution.

SRI LANKA

In last week's *Militant* (issue 629), we published a letter from the General Secretary of the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union in Sri Lanka about the anti-union activities of Unilever in that country.

Trade unionists in this country have already responded, showing the internationalism of the working class. We print below some of the letters that have been sent in protest.

FROM LEITH NO 2
BRANCH G&MWU

Dear Sir,

The recent activities of Lever Bros (Ceylon) Ltd. against officials and members of the CIWU in Sri Lanka has been brought to the attention of this branch. The issue having been debated at some length at a Branch Meeting the following resolution was passed unanimously.

"That this Branch protests most strongly against the prolonged persecution, intimidation and victimisation of our fellow Trade Unionists in The Commercial and Industrial Workers Union who are employed by Lever Bros. (Ceylon) Ltd. As

trade unionists in the Chemical Industry we do not intend to tolerate anti-union activities against our fellow workers anywhere in the world and reserve the right to take whatever action we see fit on their behalf."

In conclusion may I say that it can do very little for good Industrial Relations in this country when carrying out negotiations with Unilever Ltd. to know that they permit their wholly owned subsidiary in Sri Lanka to behave in a manner which reminds one of the behaviour of the anti working class Military Junta in Argentina.

I know it is in your power to stop this abuse of basic Human Rights. Please exercise this power at once.

Yours faithfully,
H. Penman,
Branch Secretary.

FROM REGIONAL
ORGANISER, LAN-
CASHIRE G&MWU.

Dear Mr Trevor,

My attention has been drawn to a situation at your Company's subsidiary in Sri Lanka. Last July a General Strike was called after the murder of a union picket. The company management

have used the State of Emergency declared after the General Strike by the government as a shield to obstruct the recognition of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union in the Company's factories by using a campaign of intimidation and violence in the shape of hired thugs. I frankly find this alarming.

The relationship between the GMWU and Lever Brothers has always been one where reasonableness and mutual respect has been the hallmark. To find that such a company, even somewhere as remote as Sri Lanka, can countenance such appalling behaviour on the part of some of its management is a shock to say the least. I must therefore register a protest on behalf of our union and its members and express the hope that something can be done by the Parent company to bring about a settlement to this dispute, which can be seen as one which will ease the sense of concern that will be felt by all TUC unions who deal with Lever Brothers in this country.

Yours sincerely,
M. Gaitley,
Regional Organiser.

When the left quit the Labour Party

This year saw the 50th anniversary of the split away by the largest ever left-wing in the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party (ILP).

Many interesting and important lessons can be drawn from this period of Labour's history, which are of particular relevance today with the renewed attacks on socialists in the party by the right-wing.

The 1932 split itself took place over a relatively minor question, involving the standing orders for Labour MPs in the House of Commons. But this issue was part of a deeper division in the party between the ILP, who were affiliated to the Labour Party, and the leadership of the Labour Party.

The conflict was intensified during 1931 against the background of growing economic collapse and world-wide slump. Fearful of the ILP developing into a powerful left-wing force, the right-wing Labour Party leadership, prepared to move against it using very similar bureaucratic methods to those of today's right wing against the Marxists.

ILP's Programme

Although many of Labour's right-wing leaders at that time, including the leader Ramsay MacDonald himself, had their origins in the ILP, the party itself was moving steadily to the left during the 1920s. With the impact of the Russian Revolution, and spurred on by the failure of MacDonald's first, and short-lived, Labour government in 1924, the ILP had adopted the programme of 'socialism in our time'.

This programme marked a great step forward and a significant break from the reformist right, who had placed the question of socialism in the dim and distant future.

The programme of 'socialism in our time' called for the nationalisation of all public services held in private hands, the nationalisation of banks and financial institutions, and for the introduction of a minimum wage.

Despite these extremely radical demands, the programme had major weaknesses. Most of industry was to be left in private hands. All they

By Ben Eastop
(Peckham CLP)

would face would be pressure from a socialist government, and publicly owned banks. Such a scheme, would have left the overwhelming economic, and therefore political power, in the hands of the capitalists who still had easily enough strength to undermine any socialist government.

The ILP had an Achilles heel. It was not a Marxist party with a fully worked-out analysis of events or a clear programme and strategy for bringing about socialism.

This was a major reason why the ILP leadership failed to respond to the attacks from the right-wing with an effective campaign of opposition. As a result, the rank and file, of the ILP drifted further and further towards disaffiliation, thinking if they were free from the throttling hand of Labour Party bureaucracy it would be a short cut to socialism.

During MacDonald's second Labour government of 1929-31, a hard-core of 19 ILP MPs formed the main left-wing opposition to MacDonald's increasingly anti-working class policies. MacDonald's policies stemmed from trying to make the working-class pay for the bosses' international crisis.

In Britain unemployment reached a then all-time record of 2,700,000 in August 1931, a rise of 750,000 within a year. Costs unemployment became a major financial issue for the government.

1931 crisis and betrayal

Financial institutions in the City increased the pressure on the government to cut the dole to safeguard funds for big business. Big business began demanding a 'national government' to meet the crisis.

In the summer of 1931 a further financial crisis forced MacDonald into a corner. New York bankers would only bale the government out with new loans, if drastic cuts were made in civil service pay and government spending.

The TUC refused to agree to any cuts, but did not mobilise the movement to

meet the threat from the bankers. MacDonald totally capitulated. He resigned office on 23 August and the next day accepted the "King's Commission" to form a coalition government with the Tories and Liberals.

None of the Labour Cabinet ministers had been consulted, let alone the movement as a whole. The rank and file were horrified that MacDonald could form a government in alliance with their class-enemies and the collaboration of the King.

National government

The National Government clearly flew in the face of the expressed wishes of an electorate who had voted in a Labour government. New elections were delayed until the autumn of 1931. All the capitalist media and publicity backed the capitalist parties of 'National Unity'.

The new government was overwhelmingly Tory with just a few token members of MacDonald's 'National Labour Party', Labour was severely weakened in Parliament, with only 52 seats, although it still polled 6m votes and its hard-core support remained intact.

After MacDonald's departure, the new leaders of the Labour Party, were scared the party would swing to the left to meet the capitalist

No leadership

crisis. They prepared to take action against the ILP. MacDonald had even advised another right-winger, Morrison, to stay in the Party to meet the left-wing threat.

The action proposed was to make ILP MPs fully conform with the standing orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party and obey their policies. This dispute over the Standing Orders of the PLP had been simmering for some time. The ILP leaders were indecisive about what action to take and failed to give any direction to the rank and file activists at Labour's 1932 Easter conference.

The mood amongst ILP members, however, hardened and developed into a strong movement for disaffiliation. At the ILP's own conference in July 1932, members voted by 241 votes to 142 to disaffiliate from the Labour Party.

Undoubtedly the Labour leadership was preparing to deal with the ILP, possibly by expelling their MPs for refusing to obey Standing Orders. Fenner Brockway, at this time chairman of the ILP recalls in his book 'Inside the Left' that Lansbury, the new chairman, was ada-



Top. Some of the leaders of ILP. on 1931 delegation to Downing Street. Third from left, David Kirkwood MP, Fourth from left, Jimmy Maxton MP.



Bottom. 100,000 greet unemployed workers' march at Hyde Park, 1934. By then having left the Labour Party and refusing to pay the political levy in trade unions, the ILP was unable to intervene as workers moved to the left.

mant about the standing orders.

Still without any clear direction from its leaders, the rank and file of the ILP, reacting against the Labour Party bureaucracy, travelled from separatism to isolationism. At their conference, delegates voted not only in favour of disaffiliation, but also to refrain from paying the trade union political levy.

From Isolation to Irrelevance

This cut them out from political discussion at trade union branch meetings and conferences. As a result the ILP drifted into a disastrous period of ultra-leftism, during which many ILPers lost long-standing positions in the movement, and became politically isolated. The decision not to pay the political levy was reversed at the 1934 conference, but by then the damage had been done.

The tragedy of the ILP has important lessons for those of the 30s. During the 1930's at a time of deepening crisis for British capitalism, the working class more than ever needed clear socialist leadership. The ILP leadership, whose rank and file was moving toward Marxist conclusions, was nevertheless unable to address itself to the necessary tasks. With no clear perspec-

tives, the leaders drifted further away from the focus of the mass movement and began to flirt with the Communist Party.

The CP had no credibility amongst the mass of the workers, especially after its miserable ultra-left period of 'social Fascism' when it equated Labour Party members with fascists.

By the time of the second World the ILP was small, floundering and had no sense of direction. The crushing events of world history had left the ILP as an insignificant rump.

From being the core of Labour Party activists, the ILP had become an isolated sect. Its membership had fallen from 17,000 members in 1932, at the time of the split, to only 4,400 in 1935. Ironically during this same period, the Labour Party had begun to move to the left, a development which the ILP, in its absence, was unable to influence.

Differences with today

Today the labour movement finds itself with similar fundamental questions to those of the 30s. During last Labour government, sections of the ruling-class raised the question of a National government. Some sections of the right-wing leadership

in the Labour Party have indicated that they would not be averse to a form of coalition with the SDP/Liberals if Labour did not win an outright majority in the next general election.

The rank and file of the whole movement would be as adamantly opposed to any such betrayal as they were against MacDonald's.

In a sense, the Owens' and Jenkins' etc who have already stabbed Labour in the back to try and prevent a new Labour government coming to power, are fulfilling the same role as MacDonald in 1931. Labour's rank and file want to know how many more of their allies remain in the party, waiting to do the same at a later stage.

While there are similarities between today's situation and that of the early 1930s, there are clearly differences between the ILP then and Militant today. Unlike the ILP, Militant is not a separately organised party, but represents a current of Marxist ideas in the LP. Militant is not leaving the labour movement, and no matter what manoeuvres the right-wing try they cannot suppress Marxism and separate it from the movement. All their attempts to do so will be in vain and only provide further impetus to the growth of Marxist ideas.

Letters

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

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Education: Squeezing out the working class

Dear Comrades,
As a student I receive a grant from my home local authority Knowsley in Merseyside. My first year grant included £130 parental contribution which rose for

the second year to £300 despite the fact that my father had been made redundant from BL cars at Halewood before the grant was assessed.

My grant may be reassessed in April but the money is needed now, not in six months time. This only show the fallibility of means testing students.

The Tories proposals are the first step to recreating an

upper class intellectual elite and keeping all those with the necessary educational requirements but without the benefits of wealthy parents out of further education and on the growing dole queues which is presumably where they think we belong.

Yours faithfully,
P Moran,
Plymouth Polytechnic.

Outdated textbooks Outdated system

Dear Comrades,

As a student teacher the main problem on our minds is the effect of the "merger" of our college with Manchester Polytechnic next year throwing lecturers on the dole and stranding students in mid-course. The Tories assure us the 'merger' will secure the college's future but forget to tell us the Poly is subject to massive cuts also.

Even more alarming though was being given the task of teaching Maths to a 12 year olds group. I was given a textbook that stated

"For measuring large areas we use the acre. A unit of length not often used now is the chain which is 22 yards long. Another unit of length is the furlong which is 220 yards."

So I was to teach from a book printed in 1965 still using antiquated terms like "chains" "furlongs", yards and feet. What the hell do the Tories care about the education of working class youth? They are trying to destroy the education system.

Drive them out now and get a Labour government that will fight for the working class.

Yours fraternally,
Martyn Edwards,
Moss Side LPYS and
'City of Manchester
'College.



Leicester school students protest at cuts.

USA: When witch-hunters wrecked the Socialist Party

Dear Comrades,
Bill Hopwood in his article (26 November) mentioned the tremendous vote for Eugene Debs in the 1912 presidential election. Unfortunately after 1912 the

Socialist Party rapidly declined in influence. One reason could well have been the expulsion of left wingers in 1912. Yes, they had witch-hunters as well!

With the success of the Socialist Party, built by the working class; it was 'infiltrated' by all kinds of careerists. At the 1912 convention there were 293 delegates, of whom 32 were

journalists, 21 lecturers, 12 mayors, 160 were doctors, dentists, ministers, employers etc and only 30 manual workers.

That convention voted to expel some of the left wing and in 1913 'Big Bill' Haywood was thrown off the NEC. The name of Haywood lives on in the US labour movement, but who remembers the pygmies who

expelled him?

At the 1912 convention, the SP boasted 150,000 members but by 1913 it had fallen to 78,000. Then as now building party membership did not interest the right wing.

Yours fraternally,
Richard Knights,
Liverpool.

Tories murder everything

Dear Comrades,

Everywhere you look you can see the destruction caused by this government. When I started at British Steel, everywhere you looked there were big signs "Safety First". Not any more; now it is all save money. They used to give prizes for safety records, but now they give away Metros for boosting production.

The death rate has soared. Since last Christmas eight had been killed in ten months. That's more than in all of 1975 when 2½ times as many worked here. And yet the management try to deny that it is due to cutbacks, greater pressure to produce and less training. I know men who want out just because the job now is so unsafe. They are afraid for their life. All this in the name of increased production.

It is sickening when blokes you know are killed, just to

make a profit. And still they threaten to close down the industry, what's left of it.

Also there is a threat to ICI. Once people came here for jobs but now unemployment is 30% and its not just jobs, the Tories are destroying everything.

There used to be Eston Hospital and Normanby Hospital; now they are just rubble and kids play there. The cuts have been so bad that they have even taken away the goalposts, the swings and roundabouts.

The council's children's home was closed. Now it is re-opened as a charity. Is this what they meant by privatisation?

After all that, whats left? Even what used to be free is going. You used to be able to walk on the Eston Hills, but now there are fences and private property' the way. This is what the fancy Tory slogans really mean.

Yours fraternally,
Martin Maley,
ISTC and LPYS.

Free ad for leeches

Dear Comrades,

I received my hospital appointment card through the post this morning and I was so angry! Enclosed in the envelope, from Hackney Hospital was a duplicated notice telling me that from October 1982, visitors who receive treatment from the NHS will have to pay for it.

Some people, very kindly, are exempted, including visitors who are state pensioners. But...there's always a 'but', the exemption does not necessarily apply to non-urgent treatment!

The form urges all visitors to take out medical insurance cover. This is a free advert for insurance companies, paid for by the NHS ie. out of workers National Insurance contributions. But worst of all is the advice

given to students to take out insurance cover from "specialists in student health insurance" including BUPA and the Private Patients Plan. Medical treatment should be free and the best available to ALL people as a right. Nobody should have to pay.

Companies like BUPA are leeches on the NHS. I wonder, did they give a contribution for this free bit of advertising? Hackney Hospital is a training hospital and I was asked if I'd mind students attending while I was seeing the doctor. How many nurses and doctors does BUPA and Private Patients Plan train?

The unions in the NHS and members in the Labour Party should stop such forms being sent out.

Yours fraternally,
Hazel Roberts,
Hackney.

Save the service that saved our son

Dear Comrades,

Reading Ray Hardman's article about hospitals depending on charity and dedication reminded me of when my two sons were born. My first son Shaun now 5 was born blue and the cord was wrapped round his neck so he spent the first six hours of his life in the Special Care Baby Unit.

My second boy Mark, now 2 spent the first four weeks of his life in the Baby Unit, having been born six weeks early and not having developed the sucking action necessary for feeding which babies gain at the 38 weeks of pregnancy. He had to be tube fed until he had learned to suck.

We are really grateful to those specially trained nurses for our youngest son's life in particular. If we had the NHS the Tories want—i.e. non-existent, we could not have afforded hospital treatment on my husband's nurses wages and my son would not have lived.

When I look at him I thank my lucky stars for the wonderful nursing staff who deserve better treatment than that witch in No 10 is giving.

From first hand I know how badly paid they are and how marvellous their work is. We hate the Tories, let's get them out. Preserve our health service and give our babies a chance of life.

Fraternally,
Lynne Tice.

GET YOUR XMAS CARDS NOW

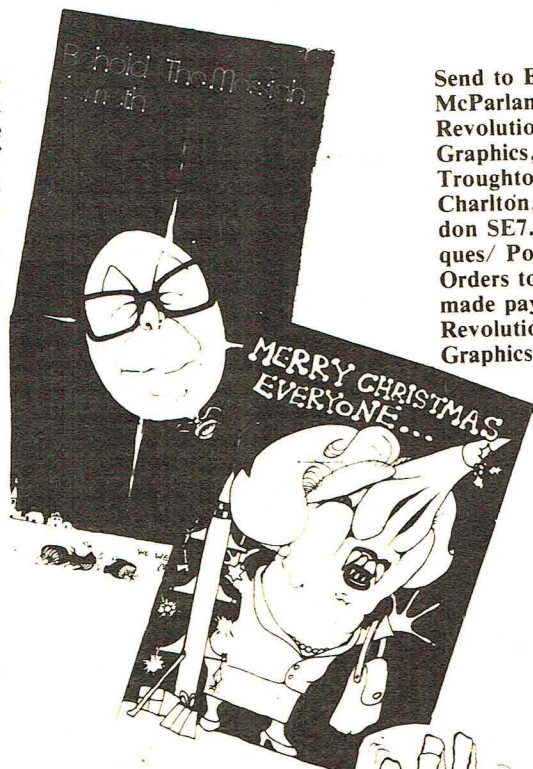
Following the tremendous success of last year's cards we are again offering a set of Xmas cards featuring original Alan Hardman cartoons.

The set comprises of six cards and envelopes and prices are as follows:
1-5 sets £1.25 per set (including p&p)

For resale:
10 sets £5 (plus £1.25 p&p)
20 sets £10 (plus £1.60 p&p)
30 sets £15 (plus £2 p&p)
40 sets £20 (plus £2 p&p)

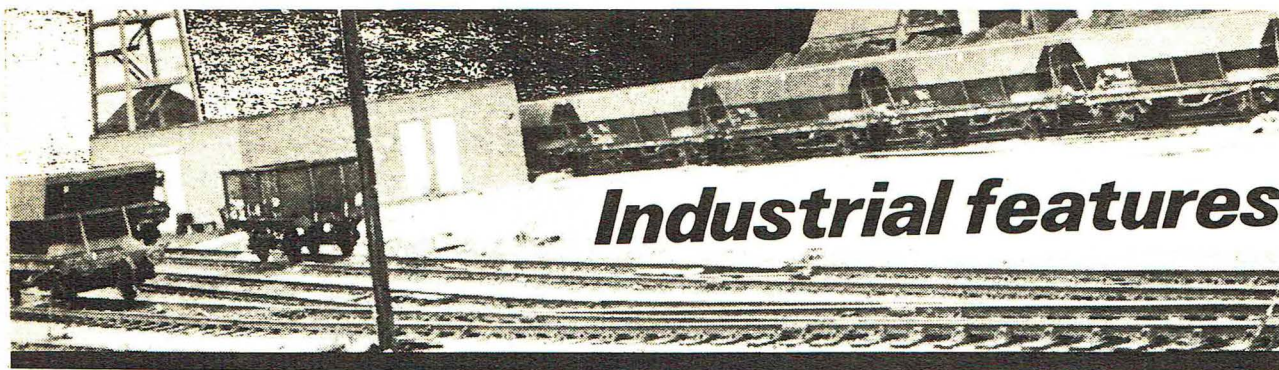
Cash must be sent with every order.

Send to Eddie McParland, Revolution Graphics, 81 Troughton Rd, Charlton, London SE7. All cheques/ Postal Orders to be made payable to Revolution Graphics



YOU'RE MAD IF YOU BUY THESE CARDS





What is work like in a factory, office, shop or shipyard? How have strikes been conducted, successfully or otherwise? How does a union activist conduct his or her work?

These and other issues we hope to feature here. But it is vital that our readers participate in producing these features. Why not write to *Militant* about your union organisation, your workplace or issues discussed among your workmates?



Many jobs, particularly in the NHS, face constant emergencies. Photo: Militant

Should strikers cover for emergencies?

Many of the current industrial disputes have had to tackle the problem of whether to provide emergency services during industrial action.

The health workers with hospital patients, civil servants with DHSS claimants, even such disputes as that in British Telecom have had to decide on whether to maintain accident and emergency cover in a strike, and how to maintain effectiveness if they do.

In *Militant*, 12 November, Brian Ingham interviewed Peter Doyle an area organiser of National Union of Public Employees in the North East about the course of the health workers' dispute.

In the second part of the interview, Peter Doyle spells out the careful way in which the unions have approached the question of accident and emergency service.

"Health workers throughout the dispute have shown a very caring attitude towards the lives of ordinary working class people in the hospitals. We've adopted a class approach. In effect, Britain's National Health Service is a service for working class people. There's been a tremendous growth of private medical practice and private insurance schemes.

"By and large you only have working class people in the hospitals and we have said that it would be criminal of us to inflict damage on other workers and their families.

"We have maintained a high level of industrial action in this dispute in the North East. We have stopped sections like central stores (CSSD) departments and have taken out at times laundries and driving and also organised a series of lightning strikes in other areas.

Working class at risk

"But we have pointed out to anyone who will listen to us that we are fighting with one arm tied behind our backs, because as long as accident and emergency service is provided the Tories are quite happy. That is in fact the level of service they wish to provide throughout the country!

"We also argued consistently that if we go into this fight maintaining emergency service for working class people, then at a

certain stage we as a union would come along to other trade unions and say "we need and expect your support for our action.

"We would say 'we are holding our own members back, and telling them to not damage your children, your wives, your parents or your husbands. If we are doing that then we can expect your support.' And we've had a great deal of support and trade unionists haven't let us down.

"The only occasions where accident and emergency service has faltered has been where management in a district health authority has gone out of its way to provoke a confrontation. And we believe that on each such occasion it's been upon the instruction of the government.

"In one particular hospital we had the farcical situation where management stated they had the right to withdraw a certain per-

centage of a worker's flat rate of pay. Our union members would clock in on a Monday and carry out their normal 40-hour duty. And if it didn't come up to the levels that management dictated, then management the following week would take from 10% up to 50% of that worker's flat rate.

"In one hospital, the management decided to take 10% off the flat rate of a group of workers in the laundry, who had already carried out their week's work and normally expected to be paid for it. Management not only took the 10% off this group but also said that they intended to take off the following week from a group of clerical workers. They told us any group of workers within the hospital was open to this kind of management "industrial relations".

"So we immediately called a meeting in this hospital for a Monday. On the Saturday in preparation for this meeting, I arranged that we would have free buses, standing by at the mass meeting. Every single worker in the hospital turned up at the mass meeting from scientific workers, clerical workers and ancillary workers.

"We put the situation to them, that it was no longer just a threat. Management had already taken action and we asked for a stoppage. There was a vote and it was unanimous. We then asked for accident and emergency cover but the workers said "on your bike, we are not prepared to provide accident and emergency."

Sense of frustration growing

"There is nothing that we could do in that situation. But withdrawal of emergency cover wasn't the fault of the workers. It was the fault of the management. We levelled this charge at them and said they would have to accept the responsibility.

"We then packed all of the workers who were now out on strike into the busses and sent them up to all the other hospitals in that district and within half an hour every single hospital in that district was out on strike, without accident and emergency cover.

"The outcome was that management re-instated the 10% they'd taken, withdrew the threats and indeed gave us their promise that they would never, never use that type of management technique again. They paid all of the workers for the two days that they were out on strike and sacked 27 blacklegs. A victory for the workers in that instance.

"We've been able to maintain this very high morale and mood of solidarity in Northern division because the management have occasionally used these techniques and we have been ready for them with forward planning, with good work in the co-ordinating committees and with regular morale-boosting meetings.

"Incidentally, arising from the dispute that we had in that hospital all remaining non-unionists finally joined up. In fact management created the situation where we now have 100% membership in all of the hospitals.

"Also we had, for want of a better way of putting it, a palace coup in one hospital, where the union lay representatives had not been involved up to that date, not called meetings, not issued leaflets and not involved themselves in the co-ordinating committee.

"When the workers in that hospital found out what had happened they replaced them with a new secretary, chairman and stewards. So the mood of solidarity was even further increased by a much more militant-line. One of the hospitals that had been a weak link in the chain was a weak link no longer.

"After the frustration of the dispute some health workers are now saying that the only way to win a dispute is to withdraw accident and emergency. I think that's very dangerous.

"Not only would it lose us public support, it would inflict further pain and damage on our class, which is already suffering under a tremendous burden of poverty and pain. But I'll give you an example of the mood within the health service.

"One mass meeting I attended and organised, a hospital hairdresser stood up who had never spoken at a meeting before in his life. He spoke out of sheer frustration. About 330 people were at that mass meeting in one hospital and they realised that this man was making a confession—a confession of poverty.

"He explained that for 2 years before the dispute he and his wife had attended jumble sales approximately a fortnight before Christmas and queued from very early in the morning to be first in the queue to buy the best toys in the jumble sale. They'd take them home, clean them up and repaint them if necessary, parcel them up and that was the children's Christmas presents.

"That had gone on for 2 years, but he was finished with that. he said "the most important thing in the world to him was his children and he wasn't going to see them suffer poverty any longer, and if it meant people dying then so be it.

"That's the frustration within the health service, a very dangerous form of frustration. The TUC must support us fully and make sure we can win disputes and gain ourselves a civilised living wage without risking the lives of working class patients."

We invite readers who have been involved in disputes where the question of emergency cover has arisen, to write to us, giving their own views and experiences.



Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Workers in industry have shown themselves willing to strike in support of NHS workers whose ability to take action is limited. EETPU members in Fleet Street struck in August in support of health workers despite legal action by the bosses.

Industrial Reports

Raindi Workers — on strike for Union recognition

The workers at PS Raindi who have been on strike for over ten weeks now, are more determined than ever to ensure a successful conclusion to the dispute over union recognition.

These few weeks are crucial for both the company and the strikers. The bosses are running out of time to meet the deadline for delivery set by such firms such as *Debenhams, C&A* and *Lord Anthony's* for their Christmas sales.

It is for this reason that the bosses have employed all sorts of tactics to break the strike. These include threatening to close the factory down, physically threatening some of the workers on the picket line, pleading poverty in the local press and even willing to recognise the union—without of course the reinstatement of the sacked workers and only if the workers go back to work immediately.

The lack of seriousness on the part of the employers to negotiate a proper settlement can be judged by the fact that every time the T&G official has arranged to meet and discuss with him he has conveniently arranged to be at Birmingham.

The support for the strike is growing day by day. Local Labour Parties and various trade union branches have given support financially and on the picket line. The Raindi workers know their success is vital because thousands of other workers, mostly Asian women work-

ing under similar conditions in the rag trade see this as a test case.

A victory at Raindi would mean thousands of workers joining the ranks of the Labour movement. Whilst a defeat would set back the struggle to unionise the low-paid in sweat shops for over a decade. One of the reasons why Raindi Brothers have managed to get away by paying only £35.00 for a 50 hour week for such a long time is the fact that unemployment is the highest amongst Immigrant workers.

Furthermore, not being able to speak English, as is the case with almost all the Raindi strikers, it is impossible to get a decent job, except of course, in the rag trade. Workers are appealing to the organised labour movement to support this strike to bring to an end the Dickensian working conditions that still exist in the large cities.

Sardul Singh Ladywood Labour Party spoke to Kashmir Singh, Surjip Singh and Pall Gill.

Donations and messages of support to Raindi Strike Committee, care of the T&GWU Regional office, Victoria Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands.



Workers at APV company occupying the factory to defend their jobs. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Occupation at APV Company

On Friday 19 November, 1982, the Shop Stewards of the APV Company Ltd were called into a meeting with the works manager, Mr. J. Hubbard, and the production director, Mr. J. Lyden.

Mr. Lyden informed the stewards that as from that moment, the factory was on a 30 day notice of closure. He wanted no discussion on the matter and expected everyone to "assist in the smooth run-down of the factory".

When asked why, after 22

years of making and selling a highly successful product, Mr. Lyden replied that the Cleveleys factory was no longer viable and that the Company intended to transfer the work and machinery to their Crawley factory where production would be continued.

At a works conference on 25 November the stewards and trade union officials met Mr. Lyden and after four and a half hours of discussion no proof of non viability was offered and Mr. Lyden refused to make a joint approach to any of the government agencies for assistance.

From this date, the men were working normally but were refusing to allow anything to leave the fac-

tory. When management were informed of this, they grossly over-reacted and took everyone "off the clock" and instructed them to leave the factory.

The men refused to do this and countered the Company's attack by occupying the factory. The men are being supported in their action by their brothers at the Crawley factory, who, as well as refusing to handle any work normally done at Cleveleys, are also offering their full financial support. The workers at Cleveleys consider this a bogus redundancy situation and just another case of stealing the jobs of workers in the already beleaguered North.

The APV group have already closed one factory in

the North West. The stainless steel plant of Marton Blackpool was closed in Mid-1980 with the loss of 110 jobs, and whilst the workers at Cleveleys are fighting for their jobs, we would say to anyone working for the APV group, who is next? Consequently, the workers at APV Cleveleys appeal for support, moral or financial, in their struggle and would request that any donations be sent to:—*Brother D. Hartley 42 Repton Avenue, Blackpool.* If you need any further information please telephone:—*Brother Bob Crawford—works convenor on 0253—852234.*

By Bob Crawford

Air India



One of the Air India strikers addressing the Labour Movement Conference at Wembley in September. Photo: D Doran

On the 6 December the fuellers at Heathrow Airport blacked all Air India flights. The management asked each fueller individually, if they would service Air India planes and when they refused they were suspended without pay, breaching a standing agreement.

A meeting of all fuellers agreed to continue blacking and to call a 24 hour stoppage if management did not pay suspended workers. This blacking means that all Air India flights have to be fuelled in Frankfurt or Shannon.

At time of writing the strikers were waiting to hear from Shannon whether the fuellers there would black Air India planes as well.

Catering lorry drivers have refused to load food onto planes. They warned management if they were to do it there would be repercussions, this led to the 1pm flight being delayed for one hour.

These actions have given the Air India strikers a real boost, one striker summed it up with these words "even after five months we will still carry on the fight. Any attack on the trade union movement is an attack on the whole working class in this country. The trade union movement is the only protection the working class have. It is a pity to abandon that so quickly and easily. It is Air India's fight but also the fight of all Heathrow workers. We thank the fuellers and caterers for their fullest support."

By Brian Blake
Ealing North CLP
and Paul Couchman
Feltham LPYS

USDAW Liverpool

Liverpool shopworkers have challenged their Victorian style bosses. When Hagenbachs (Allied Bakeries) decided to cut shopworkers' hours from 40 down to 35, meaning a loss of about £8 a week, they left the United Road Transport Union which had gone along with everything the bosses had done without even consulting the workers, and joined USDAW in protest.

However the bosses then sacked about 50 workers, women and young girls but the workers have replied to this intimidation by picketing six shops in the city centre. This has been very effective with about three quarters of customers supporting the dispute by not going in the shop.

More support is needed, however, especially for workers at other shops and the bakeries. For further information and letters of support, contact Hagenbach workers, USDAW, 145 Edge Lane, Liverpool 6.

By Mick Hogan

Durham teachers take joint union action to defend education

'No cover' and 'goodwill' withdrawal sanctions have now been extended to virtually every one of Durham's secondary schools.

This is the first full joint action to be undertaken by the NUT and NAS/UWT for 14 years, a fact which underlines the seriousness of the issues at stake.

Labour controlled Durham is the only authority to have determined to cease to provide cover staff to deputise for absent teachers in secondary schools. Several Tory authorities, including Hereford and Worcester, have considered this, but have temporarily backed off.

Doug McAvo, Deputy General Secretary of the NUT, told a joint mass meeting of more than 500 at Durham Johnston School, that, "some of those must be rubbing their hands with glee that a Labour authority has taken on this issue". If Durham get away with this then supply provision throughout the whole country will immediately be in jeopardy.

What this would mean to education can be gauged

from a case at Bishop Auckland, before the union's defensive action really took effect, when the classes of one remedial teacher were left without any proper replacement teacher for the whole of last summer term. This might save the council money, but what does it do for the pupils? Or for the work of other staff who lose valuable marking and preparation time baby-sitting for these unfortunate classes?

Unfortunately the leaders of Durham's ruling Labour group seem determined to enforce the cuts and to use the opportunity to try to break the power of the teaching unions. Councillors Terrans and Dunn have further increased the bitterness of the dispute by claiming that they have never had the goodwill of teachers, thereby denigrating the countless hours of work which have gone into providing a wealth of extra-curricula activities,

and by using pupils to take home letters attacking the teacher's action. From a Labour council this is unforgivable.

It is essential that the strongest possible action is taken to win this dispute now. 'Moderate' action will only prolong the trouble. As one Framwellgate Moor pupil has written in a letter to the *'Durham Advertiser'*, "The county council does not care if we are left out in the cold...they will just leave us outside and blame it on the teachers when the blame lies solely with the county council".

A council which prefers to attack its own teachers and pupils, rather than taking a lead in resisting Tory cuts, will only inspire contempt and disillusionment amongst working class voters and youth. The Labour Party should be at the forefront of fighting the cuts—not implementing them.

By Ian Hunter
(Durham Division NUT,
personal capacity)



Industrial Reports

Stop privatisation of British Rail Hotels.

The Tory Government with the willing aid and assistance of their lackies in the British Rail Board are determined not only to run British Rail into the ground, but tear it apart limb for limb, hoping no doubt to kill off any question of an integrated transport system.

The latest destructive move is the decision to sell off the last remaining twenty-one British Rail hotels. Only two of a chain of twenty-six hotels when the Tories took office will be left. These are facing re-development problems and no doubt once public money has been spent on them they too will be up for grabs.

Who better from the Tories and bosses' point of view, to preside over this lucrative carve-up of railway assets than the estate agents and business transfer specialists, *Druce & Christie?* Their brochure informs would-be-buyers that they can buy one or more, or even a whole portfolio of properties. Whilst the vast majority of working people couldn't afford to eat breakfast at most of these high-class establishments, no doubt the City tycoons,

By Martin Elvin

speculators and property-sharks can't wait to get their hands on these properties.

The BTH chain of hotels is not only one of the largest but has four or five star establishments in some of the best areas of the country, from both a business and environmental aspect. These include prime city-centre sites in Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and all the other major cities including London, where there are no fewer than five in the middle of town. Elsewhere, there is the *Turnberry* in Scotland, with two championship golf courses, and other hotels at tourist areas, such as the Scottish Highlands and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Like most of the BRB and its subsidiaries there has been a chronic lack of investment, but most staff will treat with scepticism the suggestions that the group of hotels doesn't make profits. Such stories are no doubt aimed at keeping the prices of these hotels as low as possible for the benefit of the property sharks.

In 1979 the Grosvenor Hotel outside Victoria Station in London took £1,451,000 for food, drink and accommodation, by last year this had more than doubled, whilst the Midland in Manchester was only just behind that.

High prices and low wages

The issue of BTH raises a whole number of questions for the NUR and for the labour movement generally. The cost of a single room with bath is £37, for one night at the Great Western. Lunch is from £6.00 upwards! The life-style of those who use these hotels is a million miles removed from those who work there. A hall porter at the Great Eastern, for example, receives £56.00 after deductions, for a 39 hour week, whilst those on reception get even less.

It is outrageous that after so many years of Labour governments since nationalisation, that such extremes prevail, not only in these hotels, but in society as a whole. Nevertheless, the BTH hotels, together with a number of other subsidiaries now under threat of de-

nationalisation have provided extra money for the rail industry as a whole and this money must continue to flow into the nationalised industry and not to the coffers of some catering boss.

In the past two years, already three hotels in Scotland have been hived off to form the Gleneagles Hotel Company, whilst two have also been partly denationalised in a separate deal with private hotels at Derby. The laundry service is due to go also, with the closure of one plant and the taking over by St Georges Laundries of two other plants, and the awarding to them of the contract for BR and BTH Linen etc.

Already, where privatisation has taken place, conditions for the workforce have worsened and trade union organisation will be threatened with further denationalisation.

A further dire warning is contained within Druce's own literature about the sale, when they remark that, *the Grosvenor at Victoria will make a useful terminal hotel for whoever ends up running the London-Gatwick rail-air link*, the cancer of privatisation here is spreading to the main rail network.

The message is clear, the rail unions, particularly the NUR cannot stand by any longer. The NUR Annual General Meeting has a clear policy of total opposition to privatisation. These words must be turned into action.

NUR representation means despite the poor conditions and low pay workers in the BTH chain have some of the strongest trade union



Photo: Militant

Catering workers have long suffered low pay and long hours. Strong trade union organisation is vital to improve working conditions.

organisations in the catering trade where there are still large numbers of unorganised workers.

The enormous industrial power of the NUR must be used now to halt this latest

asset stripping operation, to safeguard the pay and conditions of BTH staff and ensure that the next Labour government re-nationalises without compensation, all those sections sold off.

UCATT MEMBERS FIGHT THE LUMP

Forty-two trade unionists, including the UCATT stewards and safety-rep were made redundant at the Harry Mall building site in Pimlico.

This site had a good history of union organisation with a high standard of safety and good wages, as the majority of men were directly employed by the major contractor. Management claimed there was a shortage of work in the Harry Mall group (including their subsidiaries—Verry)—and that no sub-contractors were working on their sites.

Five days later, a sub-contractor on a Verry site advertised for carpenters on "the lump". A picket was immediately organised which was successful. The sub-contractor was forced to take on union labour, a success never before achieved in London.

Pickets are now outside the William Verry site, 13-15 Bloomsbury Square, WC1, near Holborn tube. The pickets have turned away all concrete supplies and that is slowing down the job, but other supplies are being taken through by scab labour. The firm appears to be suffering because they have applied twice to the panel—i.e. for arbitration—. The latest decision on

By Alan Watson

6 December is that the firm were wrong to sack the men and negotiation can begin as soon as the picketing is stopped. The immediate reply of the pickets was "no chance".

The lump is so rampant in London that the pickets welcome the decision of the Regional Committee of UCATT and the Transport and General Workers (Building Section) to bury their differences and establish a picket of all jobs in the "ground" within a square mile of the City of London, early in the new year. This is a crucial struggle for the future of building workers.

Messages of support and finance are urgently required: including support on the picket line, particularly of unemployed building workers. For details contact: Tim Baster, 56 Princess Road, NW6. Telephone: 01-519 7095.



UCATT must protect workers against bosses and Tories any-union attacks.

Forty-two trade unionists, including the UCATT stewards and safety-rep were made redundant at the Harry Mall building site in Pimlico.

SCROOGE TACTIC IN HARLOW

Management at Harlow Post Office were taken aback by the swift 24 hour stoppage called by the workers in response to changes in the Christmas working arrangements, which could have meant losses in pay.

Normally there is a guaranteed ten hour day which management were planning to scrap this year.

Over the counter in the Post Office you can now get stamps at a discount, 30p saving on 20 stamps. The Post Office's aim obviously is to make the postal workers pay for the discount. For some time the friction between management and shop floor has been heated. This

year management were even refusing to cooperate with the annual Christmas Kiddies party.

The feeling of the men was summed up by one experienced worker on the picket line who said "they've removed the meat from the bone, now they're going for the marrow, enough's enough!"

For many postmen their working day begins at 5am. They are responsible, irrespective of time of year or weather conditions, for mail collection and delivery. This six days a week, for a basic £90.99 for 43 hours.

The pressure on the workers was expressed by the

merriment when a worker turning up to the picket line at 10am, announced his arrival by saying "what a lovely sleep I had".

Already after the day stoppage management have made concessions, including guarantees for the kiddies' party. The ruling class and their representatives may think that mass unemployment means they can push workers around more, but Harlow UCW have demonstrated that there is plenty of juice left in the TU movement tank.

By Bob Edwards

CPSA

The one day strike by all members of the civil service unions CPSA and SCPS in the Department of Health and Social Security on 3 December was a great success. It was a magnificent show of solidarity with strikers in Birmingham and Oxford.

Although no exact figures are yet available from the unions, management themselves estimate that 320 of the DHSS local offices were closed to the public out

of a total of 530. Even in the offices which opened many of the staff were on strike. This turnout shows the real support amongst the membership that these strikes have.

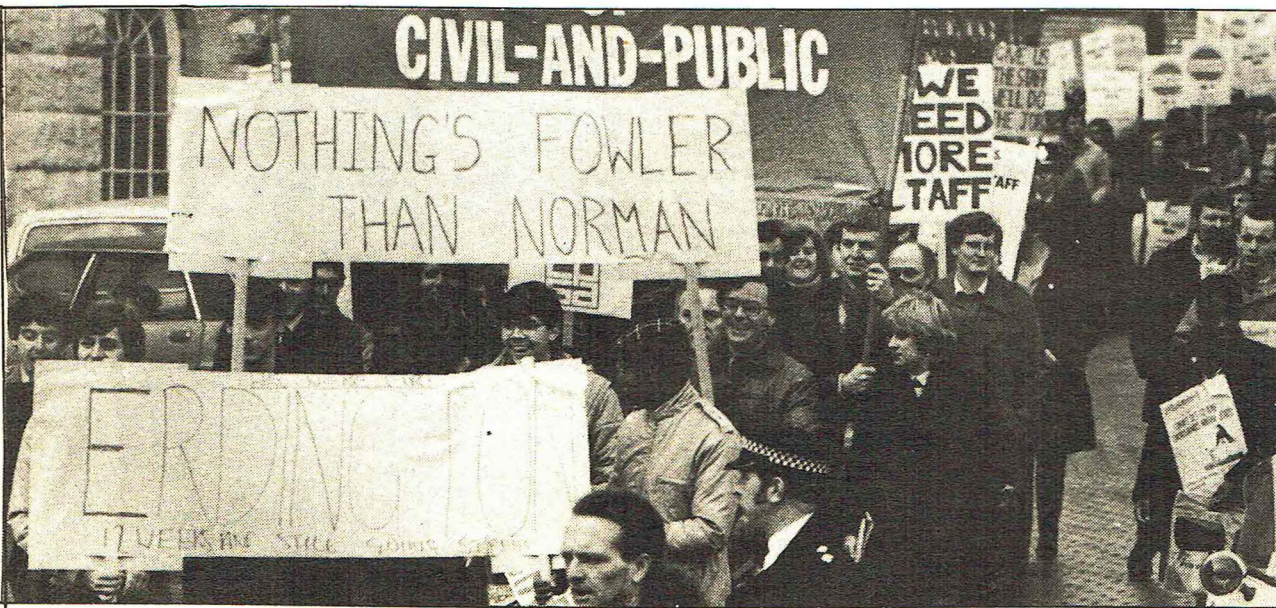
A call for major escalation is now certain. The DHSS section executive of the CPSA is likely to call an all out strike of DHSS members early in the new year. A special meeting of DHSS delegates will take place at the close of the special pay

conference on Thursday to consult the delegates on the next step in the campaign to win adequate staff levels in the Birmingham and Oxford areas.

By Roger Castle and Gill Tromans (CPSA NEC members personal capacity)

CPSA-BOLD CAMPAIGN NEEDED ON WAGE CLAIM

PHOTO: Stefano Eagnon (IFL)



The DHSS day of action in Birmingham (see page 15). Civil servants are angry at staff shortages and low pay

On 9 December, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) holds a special pay conference to draw up its campaign strategy for the 1983 pay round.

By Bill Boyle.

This type of conference is a new development in the union and one which involves union members not only in formulating the claim but in drawing up plans for implementing it.

The mood of ordinary civil servants is increasingly hardening in the face of Tory attacks on the conditions of service of thousands of our members. In Birmingham and Oxford, offices are out on strike because they cannot stand the pressure of undermanning any longer.

The mood can be judged by decisions at the special pay conference held by the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) on Monday to hold a ballot of all members and recommend to

them all out strike of the civil service to win its claim. The days of one-day and half-day strikes as a main strategy of industrial action are over.

The conference will also discuss the Megaw inquiry into civil service pay. Already, motions on the agenda show almost universal condemnation of the Tories' thinly disguised attempts to depress real wages to a new level. The first motion on the agenda, presented by the Executive Committee, puts forward a stance of opposition to Megaw.

In the section dealing with the pay claim and campaign

strategy the main aim of the Executive Committee is clearly outlined—to end low pay in the civil service. Over 70,000 civil servants claim family income supplement, earning the distinction of being government employees living officially below the poverty line. To end this scandalous position, the executive are posing a flat rate increase in 1983 with an underpinning minimum percentage figure to compensate the higher grades.

Although unity this year is vital if all the unions are to be successful, CPSA must insist that the flat rate claim is not dumped at an early stage in the negotiations.

The details of the claim will be thrashed out at the conference but more important is our members' willingness to fight for that claim. A massive campaign will be needed after the conference. Motion 222 outlines the executive's plans for such a campaign.

The Executive Committee are leading from the front at this conference, in contrast to previous 'moderate' executives who have refused to

do any work to achieve a pay claim.

It is unfortunate, however, that the Executive Committee in motion 287 reject the idea of our own members paying claimants at emergency centres and instead proposed that "emergency payment procedures carried out by local authorities under statutory obligations should not be opposed by CPSA."

Emergency centres will be opened by management whether or not we man them. Militant supporters at Conference will be arguing for our own union's members to man the centres. Otherwise we will have no control over them, the press and media propaganda will be vicious and try to undermine the morale of our members out on strike. Motion 308 from Customs and Excise Liverpool outlines the correct strategy for an all out strike.

This conference is only the beginning of the campaign but it will arm all of the delegates with the determination to make this pay fight successful.

NEC right wing sabotage youth vote

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Students (NOLS), Geoff Norris, voted with the right wing against the LPYS resolution. The LPYS have always argued for more resources for NOLS, and many Labour students will be disgusted at this stab in the back for the LPYS which has been to the forefront in fighting for the interests of working class youth. NOLS were rewarded with thirty pieces of silver—an increase in their budget from £7,350 to £10,000.

Tom Sawyer (NUPE) attempted to salvage something from the clutches of the right wing, proposing that this £9,000 would be made exclusively available to

the LPYS with a guarantee that they would have the same access in the past. This was not put to the vote.

The right wing's vindictive hatred of the LPYS successes was shown when plans for a national weekend school for the YS regional committees to prepare for winning the youth vote for Labour at the election was turned down.

The school, a constructive proposal to discuss Labour's programme for youth, and such practical questions as canvassing techniques was to involve about 100 YS members. Labour Party General Secretary Jim Mor-timer had even agreed to

speak at the meeting.

A counter proposal moved by John Golding for a meeting just of the chairpersons of regional committees and the regional secretaries, who are full-time Labour Party officials, plus the LPYS National Committee was agreed. But as YS members pointed out, such a meeting could be arranged at any time; the YS proposals had been to gear up the whole of the YS for the election. It seems that Labour's right are afraid of mobilising the talents and enthusiasm of the LPYS membership.

The only concession the right made was that the threat to censor the LPYS document 'Northern Ireland, the way forward' was modified. The YS, in consultation with the General Secretary, would

look at the objections he had made to the document to see if an agreement could be reached. Eric Heffer described the NEC's censorship plans as being more in keeping with a Stalinist party than with Labour.

Once again the witch-hunting right wing of the Labour Party are prepared to try to mutilate the most active, most campaigning and fastest growing section of the Party. There will undoubtedly be a storm of protest, not only from YS branches but from constituency parties, union branches and student Labour clubs.

The labour movement needs a strong fighting YS with bigger not smaller resources. The YS are confident that the labour movement will restore, and more, the money stolen by Labour's right wing.

STOP PRESS S. Wales NUM vote to strike

The conference of the South Wales National Union of Mineworkers has voted to strike in January in defence of their jobs. The area has been starved of investment by the NCB so that the management will be able to 'justify' the closure of pits on economic grounds.

The South Wales NUM are not prepared to accept the destruction of their industry and thousands of jobs. Full report in next week's paper.

WEALTH & POVERTY

FROM FRONT PAGE

paid well below the national average. The Child Poverty Action Group have estimated that 2½ million children face Christmas below the poverty line.

But at least the family of one, formerly unemployed, man will not go short this holiday. It was also revealed this week that ex-Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, whose bungling helped lead to the Falklands conflict, has just got his third job—a part time director of Barclays, estimated salary £15,000 a year.

Carrington can only devote part of his precious time to this job, as he also rakes in £60,000 a year as Chairman of GEC and an estimated £40,000 for being a director of Kissinger Associates, the highly-paid think tank for failed 'statesmen'.

The Tories in power have intensified the obscene division between those in deepest

poverty and those with money to flaunt.

Howe's last budget for example gave an extra £555 to those earning £20,000 a year and only £70 to those earning £5,000.

With the cost of living hitting the poorest hardest, as the price of necessities has risen 4% higher than prices generally, it is going to be a desperate Christmas for millions. But for the top 1% who own 25% of all the wealth in this country it will be luxury as usual.

The last Labour government came into office promising to bring about a 'fundamental and irreversible shift in power and wealth in favour of working people and their families'. At the end of their five years in office the distribution of wealth was the same.

Next time the Labour government must be armed with clear socialist policies to end the power of the wealthy and ensure that everyone, not only has a decent Christmas, but prosperity all year round.

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