

## School leavers, students...

# Trained for the Scrap Heap

**WHAT CHANCE** do the Tories give any youngster today of getting a decent job? Even if you study and get qualifications all you seem to "qualify" for is the dole queue.

The system of private profit cannot provide youth with jobs. The Manpower Services Commission expect three out of five 16 year old school-leavers, that is about 300,000, will be out of work for the next year.

If you stay on at school another year to 17 your chances are not much better. They estimate 280,000 17-year olds will be out of work as against 300,000 in work. That includes school leavers, people who become unemployed and youngsters who go back on to the scrap heap after the Youth Training Scheme has given them a year on £25 a week. The work is usually drudgery with no training and little prospects.

### Fears for the future

But what about further education? Won't that get you a qualification and a decent job? Even that is far from certain. And Tory plans for education put even the chance of "improving yourself" in jeopardy.

When students at Liverpool Central College of Further Education finished their 'O' and 'A' levels many headed straight for the pub. But during their celebrations they voiced their fears of what would happen.

For 'A' level students there was more than the usual tension about results. Students at FE colleges are predominantly working class, and they know if they don't get good grades this year it could mean the end of their education.

Some 'O' level students felt there may be little point in doing 'A' levels next year as there would probably be no places in universities or polytechnics for them. Four years of Tory rule has seen



The Miners' Gala, a carnival with a serious political nature, a focus for the fight against the Tories.

Photo: Militant

IN A cynical piece in *The Times* on Saturday July 16, a virtual obituary was written for the Durham miners' gala—with all the pits closing down, they said, numbers at this festive labour movement event were "dwindling".

But these gentlemen of the press got their answer when over 200,000 workers paraded in the sunshine. It was possibly the biggest turn out at the Big Meeting since the war. Some corpse!

The crowds were led by 69 National Union of Mineworkers banners and 35 colliery bands. Such

# Durham Miners Gala— Biggest since the war!

was the size that it took four hours for the march to assemble.

The press try to make out the Gala as just another carnival, and certainly it is a labour movement rally with a festive flavour. But its political nature can be measured by the cheers and applause given to the five

top labour movement speakers who addressed the crowds—the loudest cheers going to Benn and Scargill.

Hundreds of *Militants* were sold with miners showing a special interest in last week's centre page feature on the gala.

The Tory press may wish to think that as the

toll of mine closures goes on, so the miners and their families are increasingly wallowing in demoralisation.

But as Saturday's mass turnout shows the mood of confidence and the fighting spirit is still very much in evidence. Events such as the gala will not fade away but become

rallying points, not just for the NUM but for the whole trade union movement.

By Ray Physick  
(Sunderland North CLP)

Full report—see page 15



# MPs-Breaking the pay limit

By Bob Wade

WHEN PARLIAMENT debated privatisation on 24 June there were only 20 MPs in the house. When it debated Tory proposals for the Youth Training Scheme there were about 25. When the MPs discussed their pay on July 19 the place was crowded!

Not for them a 'mere' 4% rise like anybody else. The thought of having to survive on just under £300 a week drove them to new bounds of militancy.

Leader of these 'brave' rebels Tory back bencher Edward Du Cann complained to cheers from Tory and Labour MPs that a "career" in Parliament should not be open only to those who saw an MP's salary as "irrelevant because they were rich". YOPsters, unemployed or hospital workers can be forgiven for thinking the present £14,500 is 'rich'.

MPs will now receive increases that will bring them up to an annual salary of £18,500 by 1987. But this is not the whole story. There's a lot of money to be made from the 'perks of the job'.

There's the secretarial allowance of £8,820. MPs from outside London can claim 'subsistence allowances' of up to £5,674. Ministers and London MPs get 'London weighting' of £852 a year.

Then there's the travel concessions for constituency work of 25 pence a mile petrol money or travel vouchers for rail, sea or air journeys. They can also get travel warrants for the family. In Parliament, phones, stamps and stationary are free of charge, and if you have to draw up a Private Members Bill you can claim £200.

## MP's antics over pay

But while this week's antics over MP's pay can be expected from Tory MPs, representatives of the millionaire class who are recruited from big business, it is a scandal that they were backed up by Labour MPs. Indeed the Labour front bench wanted MP's pay increased to £19,000!

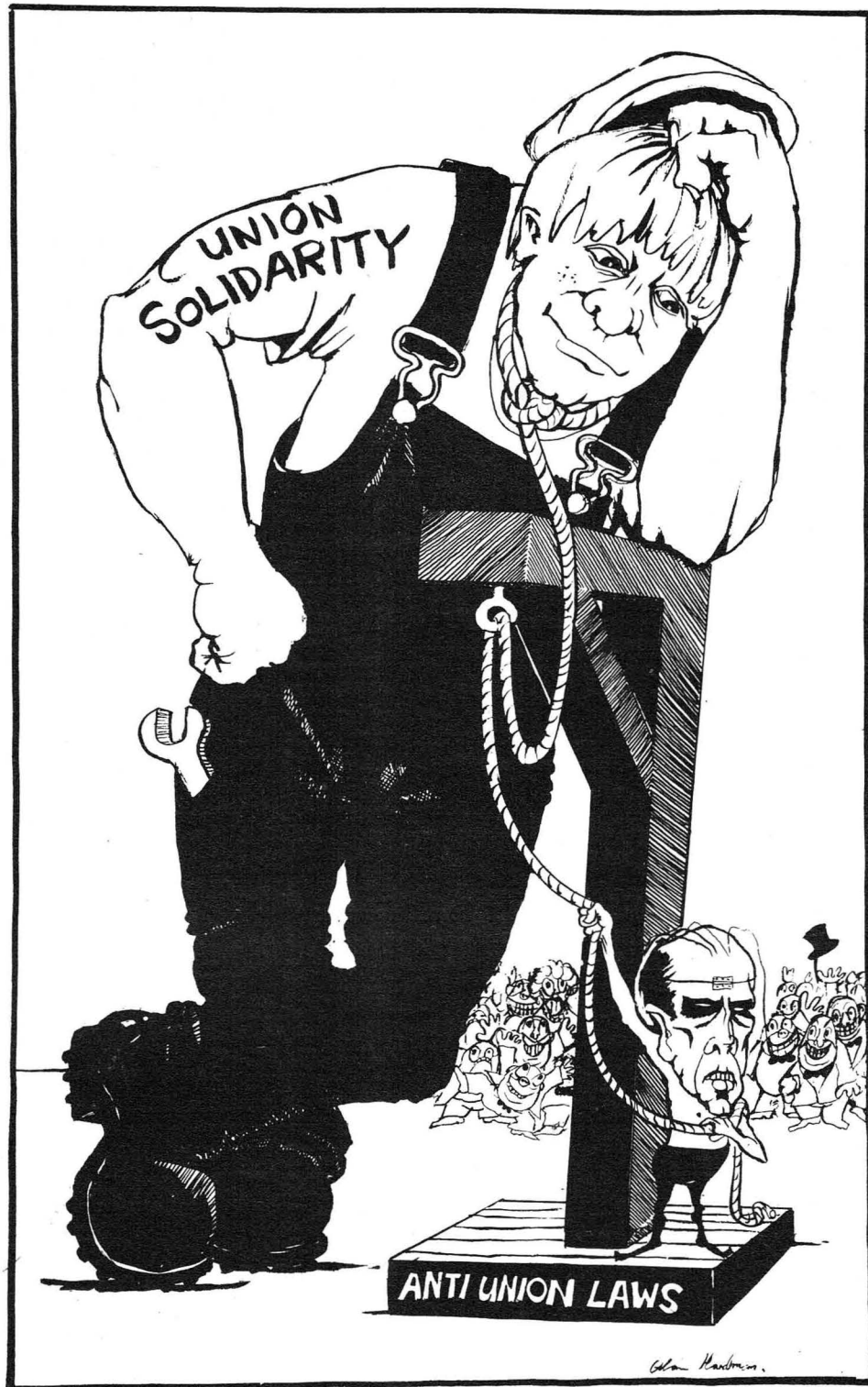
How can Labour MPs accurately stand at the head of the class they represent, the working class, when they are living

in the economic world of the average boss? They can become divorced from the reality of working class life.

In turn workers scrapping by on falling living standards will become cynical about the high life styles of their so-called leaders. Of course right wing Labour MPs are vociferous in their defence of high Parliamentary salaries, yet they are the first to call for wage restraint for the rest of the population.

Fortunately there is a growing mood within the labour movement for Labour MPs to take only the wage of an average skilled worker. Left wingers like Dennis Skinner already donate a proportion of their salary back to the movement, and the two recently elected Marxist MPs, Terry Fields and Dave Nellist, are carrying out their election pledge of only taking a worker's wage.

This must become Labour Party policy. Then we can ensure that the workers' party, the Labour Party, does not become infected with middle-class careerists who are more interested in feather-bedding their own comfortable lives than putting the hopes and aspirations of the working class as their top priority.



# Cutbacks and Heatwave Threaten Water Supply

**I don't wish to spoil anyone's holidays but we'll have to hope that the recent hot spell is not repeated all summer long. For it could spell dangers for our sewage and water supply.**

**Tory government cutbacks have already affected our water supply, and if there is a long drought there could be a risk to health, according to at least one union leader.**

Gary Cooper NUPE's national officer responsible for the water industry, warned last week of "grave dangers of a major collapse of the sewage and water supply network" arising from a combination of a prolonged heatwave and Tory cutbacks. Only water pressure was holding the system up in some areas he claimed and "if this pressure or the system dries up there are more dangers of collapse."

Even before the recent heatwave William Waldergrave, a Tory minister at the Department of the Environment warned that "because of economic restraint the public will have to accept lower levels of water quali-

ty." (*Water Bulletin*, 8 July) Already in some areas there has been some risk to health. If nitrates reach a high level in the water supply it can prove deadly to young babies and cause stomach ulcers in adults.

## Pipes damaged by acid rain

The government has admitted that 150 of the country's 3,500 water sources have sometimes exceeded the EEC's quota on nitrate content. In the River Ouse in the Bedford area, the EEC level was exceeded on 52 days last year.

The recent problems of acid rain from chemical plants has also led to corrosion of some water pipes with the consequent danger of more lead entering the water supply.

All these problems require more investment and a national plan. But the Tories are refusing both. Now in-

vestment is especially needed in Britain's crumbling sewage system.

For even if the hot spell does not continue, I'm afraid that there is no guarantee that a British seaside holiday will be safe. The Coastal Anti-Pollution League found that 83 out of 158 beaches surveyed did not meet the EEC's standards; either the sewage was not pumped far enough out to sea or it was not treated adequately, or both.

If you stay at home you won't escape the problem. Because Britain was the first urban industrial society, it has the oldest sewage system. In London most sewers are over 70 years old. Just to maintain and repair the national sewage system £310 m is needed to be spent on capital works every year.

The present figure of £205 m is only two-thirds of that necessary. So the country suffers from 3,500 sewer collapses, and 1,500 major blockages every year—at a cost of between £70 m and £100 m. Yet since 1974 overall capital spending in the water industry has been halved in real terms.

Last year the House of Lords Select Committee report warned that "there is a significant risk of decay in

the sewage system getting beyond the Water Authorities' control". They called for greater expenditure and criticised the government because "there is no national plan and it is difficult to see what national policy, if any, exists".

Big business will not solve the problem. They just exploit people's need for water in order to make profit. 43% of current expenditure has to go to pay off loans and interest charges.

But a massive programme of investment is urgently needed to safeguard the water industry. This would also be fairly labour intensive (replacing old sewers, water pipes etc) so it would bring down unemployment. But the Tories are not going to listen. They are prepared to gamble with our health.

**By Gavin Dudley**  
(NALGO,  
Newcastle and Gateshead  
Water Company)

## CORRECTION

IN LAST week's paper an article on Broadgreen wrongly described a meeting held there as a Militant meeting. It was in fact, a Labour Party meeting.

# Labour's Publicity Shambles

By a Militant  
Reporter

AT LAST week's meeting of the NEC press and publicity committee, the party's right-wing were subjected to bitter criticism for their running of the election campaign. Even the chairman, right-winger Gwyneth Dunwoody, admitted that the publicity side of the campaign had been 'disastrous'.

Left-winger Dennis Skinner, hit out at the right's attempts to disclaim responsibility. "You cleared us off all the committees", he is reported to have said, "You got rid of all the left-wing chairmen, you said you knew how to run the show. Well, you can't blame us for what happened—you're responsible."

It seems that even Jim Mortimer, the party's General Secretary, took objection to the attempts of Roy Hattersley, in particular to distance himself from the organisation of the campaign.

He pointed out that the day to day running of the campaign had been in the hands of a committee of six. The six were Mortimer himself, party leader, Michael Foot, Denis Healey, Peter Shore, John Golding and Roy Hattersley—all of whom, he said had to take responsibility.

Although the Tories always have far greater resources, the incompetence and bungling of the right-controlled publicity machine

has been a source of astonishment for both NEC members and rank and file members alike.

For example, the leaflet aimed at the elderly understated Labour's manifesto commitment on pensions, and most areas received the leaflet on the day after the closing date for postal votes. The leaflet on nuclear disarmament was not available until May 27—over half way through the campaign, and after the public attacks on party policy from right-wingers Jim Callaghan and Denis Healey.

The committee passed a resolution, moved by Dennis Skinner, calling on the NEC "never again to employ an advertising agency for the conduct of an election".

A fact that will particularly outrage party activists, is the massive sum spent on opinion polling. In all £151,000 was paid out to MORI for private polls—so private in fact that no-one outside the campaign committee actually saw them. Not the party's own press department, or even members of the NEC!

Weighed against the amount spent on grants to constituency parties, the figure is an obscene waste of money—for every £2 spent of the CLPs, £1 was paid to MORI.



# Rally speaker was decorated

One of the guest speakers at the September 10 mass *Militant* rally will be veteran Swedish Marxist Anton Nilsson, whose lifetime of struggle can only inspire any socialist today.

Early in the century, Anton joined the Young Socialists in Sweden, which at that time were more influenced by anarchist ideas than by Marxism. In 1908, then aged 20, Anton took part in an attack against an English boat "Amalthea", which was being used to lodge strikebreakers during a bitter dockworkers strike in Malmo. Some strikebreakers were killed. Although terrorism was not supported by the majority in the labour movement, nevertheless there was a strong sympathy for this action against the bosses.

Anton was sentenced to death for his part in the attack, which was later commuted to life imprisonment. Over the next few years a massive campaign was waged in Sweden and internationally (French Dockers even blacked Swedish ships) for the release of the "Amalthea Men".

He was eventually released by the first government with Social Democratic participation, in 1917.

After training as a pilot, he went straight to the Soviet Union to join the Red Army

## by Trotsky

as a pilot, in the fight to defeat the capitalist armies of intervention that had been sent to try and destroy the workers' state created by the Russian Revolution of 1917. At one stage he was elected commander of the Red Army Air Force on the Baltic Front, and was decorated by Trotsky. In the course of his stay in Russia, Anton knew Zinoviev and Kollantai and met many other leaders of the Russian workers movement.

In the late 1920's he returned to Sweden, where

he was shortly expelled from the Communist Party (together with the majority of the party), as the Communist International degenerated into a bureaucratic Stalinist machine.

During World War Two, he wrote anti-Nazi articles in the few papers that would print such material, and in 1949 he joined the Social Democratic (Labour) Party. To this day Anton defends the aims and objectives of the Russian Revolution against the crimes of

'MARXISM IN OUR TIME—  
SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR LABOUR'  
SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 10.30-5.30  
(Followed by the film *Battle for Algiers* until 7.45 pm)  
WEMBLEY CONFERENCE CENTRE, LONDON

Speakers include:

Ted Grant (Political Editor, *Militant*)  
Peter Taaffe (Editor)  
Anton Nilsson (Former Red Army pilot)  
Terry Fields MP  
Dave Nellist MP  
and others

Tickets: £2 (£1 unemployed)  
Order from MILITANT RALLY,  
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Stalinism, describing it as "an example to all humanity".

Likewise Anton's life of

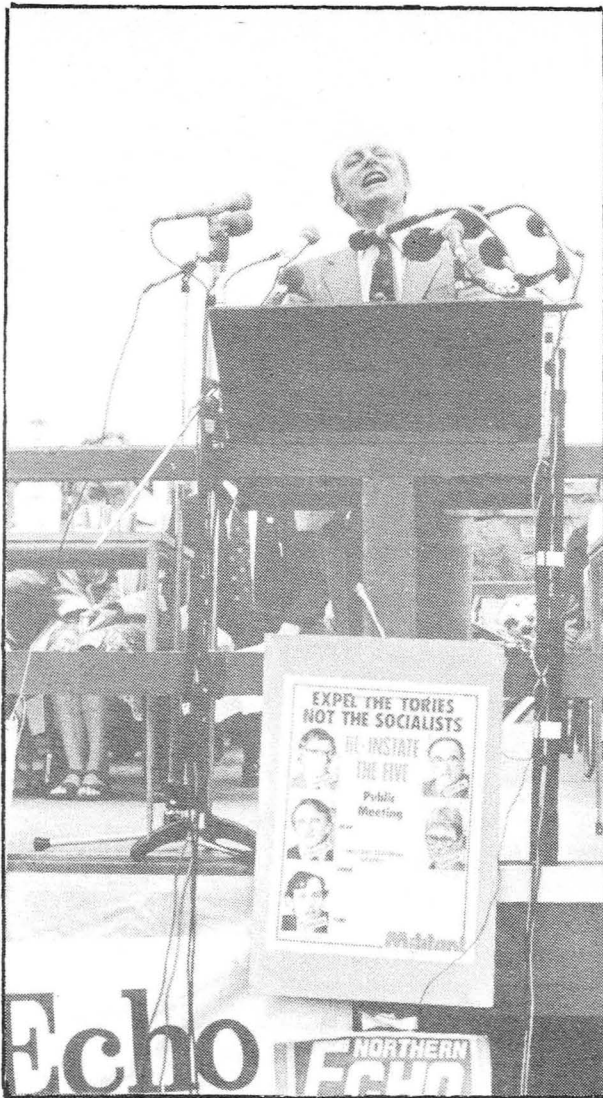
over 75 dedicated years of active struggle for the working class movement, is an example to socialists today.

## Vote for socialist candidates

TERRY FIELDS MP and Pat Wall have been nominated by their constituency parties to stand for the election to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

Terry Fields has been a fireman for 26 years until his recent election to parliament where he won with a 4% swing to Labour. He was a member of the Fire Brigades Union executive, 1977-83 and was their nominee last year to the NEC, where he secured 1.3 million votes. He has been a member of the party for 16 years.

Pat Wall has been a party member for 33 years, standing as the Labour candidate in Bradford North during the election. He is President of Bradford Trades Council, and is a previous candidate in the constituency section for the NEC, last year receiving 103,000 votes.



Neil Kinnock speaking at last weekend's Durham Miners' Gala, but perhaps the platform posters were not all to his liking.

## New plans to witch-hunt ideas

ALTHOUGH THERE has been no full discussion on Labour's National Executive about the election defeat, the party machine at Walworth Rd has not been idle. They have drawn up convoluted plans to try and stop party member hearing or reading dangerous ideas.

When the witch-hunt against *Militant* escalated last year, we stated that it was basically an attempt to censor ideas. This is borne out by the proposals from the party's General Secretary which were put before the Organisational Committee last week.

In a document worthy of Franz Kafka, attempts are made to establish which groups should be allowed access to such party facilities as circulation of leaflets, pamphlets on party bookstalls, advertising meetings at party conference.

The document tries to claim that its criteria are based upon the establish-

ment last year of registered groups within the party. But organisations which are unable to register, because they contain members of other political parties will be able to have their requests for help "considered individually". However groups which are eligible, but have not done so, will get no facilities at all.

By Colin Barber

Confused? You will be. Now even if you are registered Walworth Road refuses to promise that it will sell your material. But they guarantee that groups eligible to register, and who have not done so, will be excluded.

Similar arrangements will apply to the diary of events at Annual Conference. But in true Stalinist style, here they have added an extra twist. They are concerned

that constituency parties might have minds of their own. Now they are not "registered groups", so they have created another criteria to stop them expressing unapproved ideas. The document states that "discretion would be exercised" where it appears to the party headquarters that a constituency party is acting as a front for an organisation which is not on the register.

What a farce! Instead of directing the party's organisation towards the class enemy, the Tories, they are now being directed inwards at trying to police political ideas, sifting through to see which ideas from party groups are acceptable, how far they should be supported etc.

They will not succeed. for you cannot witch-hunt ideas. You cannot separate Marxism from the labour movement, no matter how many plans emanate from Walworth Road.

By Phillip Andrews

## Golding removed from executive

LABOUR PARTY activists will welcome last week's decision by the Post Office Engineers' Union, POEU, not to renominate right winger John Golding for Labour's National Executive.

Golding's obsession with attacking the left in the party has rebounded upon him. At the recent POEU Conference members voted for an executive who were determined to fight to protect jobs and stop the privatisation of the Telecoms network.

Golding has had the reputation as a fixer. He has admitted that his selection as a Labour candidate was fixed by his friends, and he gloried in last year's ruthless purge of the left on Labour's

executive. Even *The Guardian* editorial, 15 July, thought it fair 'to chuckle at the dilemma of a man who could fix the Labour Executive in his sleep yet somehow forget to keep control of his own backyard'.

You can only fix, plot and manoeuvre for so long. But Golding's right-wing ideas are now out of date.

Activists can however take one lesson from Golding. They must ensure that their representatives are as determined to fight the Tories as Golding has fought to expel the socialists.

The first step in achieving this is by voting Terry Fields and Pat Wall onto Labour's National Executive.

## Shore's secret friends

"LORD Shackleton, The Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation Ltd. Peter Shore, Member of British Parliament.

Question: What brings these two together?

Answer: The membership list of the Trilateral Commission.

This secretive organisation, with annual meetings, brings together bankers, big businessmen, capitalist politicians, and a handful of right-wing Labour leaders from the three Trilateral regions, the United States, Western Europe and Japan. Launched by David Rockefeller in 1975, the

Commission is financed by various US foundations and undisclosed big-business sources (see *Militant* 15 April, 1983).

Its deliberations are clearly intended to promote common policies to preserve a world fit for the big multinational corporations to live in.

*Militant* has obtained a copy of the full membership list, which includes Peter Shore, now hopefully contending for the Labour Party leadership. The TC's New York secretariat has confirmed the authenticity of the list, the latest compiled and accurate "as of 15 Oc-

tober 1982".

Among Peter Shore's fellow TC members from Britain are three directors of Rio Tinto Zinc, including the chairman. Bankers, including chairman of Barclays and Sir Eric Roll of Warburg & Co, are also well represented.

Tory MPs on the TC include Edward Heath, Peter Tapsell, and Terence Higgins. Several former Labour MPs are listed, including David Owen, now leading the SDP, and John Roper who lost his seat on 9 June.

The only British trade union leader listed is the retiring general secretary of

NALGO, Geoffrey Drain. Shore's front-bench colleague Denis Healey, as we have previously reported, is also a TC member.

The question Labour Party members will be putting to Peter Shore is this: How can he claim to be able to lead a party created to represent working people and whose constitution includes fundamental socialist aims when he belongs to an organisation made up of capitalist leaders and dedicated to promoting the world-wide economic and strategic interests of big business?



Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 9 July
Eastern	1821		2700
East Midlands	1851		2600
Humberside	888		1300
London East	2238		3300
London West	1111		1650
London South	2669		2500
Manchester & Lancs	2102		3000
Merseyside	2340		3400
Northern	2040		3550
Scotland East	1159		2100
Scotland West	1426		3000
Southern	2726		3150
South West	1161		2000
Wales East	1003		1500
Wales West	1014		2100
West Midlands	1729		3100
Yorkshire	1744		3400
Others	4392		5000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>33414</b>		<b>50000</b>

## Now for a record 3rd quarter

IN THE final ten days of the second quarter there was a tremendous rallying round by all our supporters—£1,000 a day came in!

If we can do that again regularly in the third quarter we will go sailing over the target, which is £50,000. We might not have reached the target but the work done for the election and the finance raised for the campaign by our supporters is worth remembering. It amounts to many thousands of £s, and very worthwhile.

However with the Tories returned, we have got to arm ourselves financially. The Tories are attacking our living standards and now our trade unions. We must build up our resources as much as possible for the inevitable struggles. This is your chance to help us.

With nearly 38,000 readers—£1 from every one would make the target easy work. So start by asking every sympathiser now!

But, thanks again to every one of our readers and supporters who made some great contributions during the last week. Well done London South for reaching your target.

Thanks to B. Faulkner Liverpool 40p, the cook from Castlemilk Fire Station who donated a £1 from her

**Total sent in since last week: £10,088**

low wages, Brian Lawless Liverpool £1, Jo Anderson Liverpool £1 for a paper, P. Glover and C. Doran Bootle Constituency Labour Party both £1, Bill Murray Edinburgh UCW £1, Mr & Mrs Arnold, two Old Aged Pensioners from Nottingham £2, Davyhulme (Manchester) Labour Party Young Socialists £2, P. Mackin Motherwell EETPU £2, John Stevenson an OAP from Glasgow, £3, Brian Moore Strathclyde NALGO £3, Nigel Thomas Llanelli over £3.

Thanks also to all those who managed to contribute a fiver, or more; Wallace Ross Glenrothes LPYS £5, T Ray Connelly, Glenrothes LP £5, Gary Moyles Lochgelly LP £5, Withington LPYS (Manchester) just over £5, to A. Winslade who deserves special mention as he donated his holiday money and a supporter from Sheffield who donated his back pay. Hopefully others, in sympathy with our ideas will follow these examples.

We received many large donations this week, although unfortunately we cannot mention them all. But thanks to Garston LPYS (Liverpool) £10, Richard Thorpe and Muriel Browning (both from Llanelli) both donated £20, R Walsh (Davyhulme BIFU) £20, the supporter who donated a "wind-fall" of £50 from Hull, and the £50 anonymous donation from Scunthorpe.

Thanks to Caerphilly LPYS for their donation of £50, and the supporter from Leicester who donated his trade union expenses of £55. Thanks to the Perth supporters who had a final rally round and sent us £40. Unfortunately it arrived too late to be included in the final figure.

There were many last minute socials in areas up and down the country as well as sponsored events and jumble sales, which always prove good fund raisers. With the summer here now is the time to plan your event. How about a barbeque or Fête? The Summer Draw made a record summer profit of £2,532. So thanks again to all those who sold tickets. The outstanding areas which did well were Hull, Sunderland, Bristol, Southampton and Rotherham.

Do not wait to start your fund raising for the quarter—organise your area NOW. It is vital that every penny raised is sent into us—we can reach this quarter's target if we start now.

## Make it hot for the Tories

DESPITE the weather, or maybe because of it, sales continue to soar! Workers are eager to discuss the ideas of socialism and indeed are attracted to *Militant's* Marxist ideas. Last weekend we had bumper sales at both the Durham Miners Gala and the Tolpuddle Martyrs rally.

We can't afford to let the Tories have a rest this summer, the fightback has already started and it is Marxism that shows the only way out of the crisis. Young workers especially are coming to our ideas, for one example at a SOGAT '82 Youth

meeting 18 out of 24 people bought our paper.

But we must not be complacent, we've got to reach the places the other papers can't! Go to the youth clubs, the streets, the parks, the beaches, anywhere youth can be found and use our paper to build a movement that will not only kick out the Tories but also the system they support.

For more information on becoming a *Militant* seller, contact 'Militant Circulation' on 01-986 3828, or write to 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



PHOTO: Denis Doran

**Sell socialism  
Sell 'Militant'**

Selling *Militant* at last Weekend's Durham Miners Gala.

# ads

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words.  
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.  
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

## Militant Readers' Meetings

**SOUTHEND** Militant Readers Meeting. Tuesday, 26 July, 8pm Cliff Hotel, Hamlet Road, Southend-on-sea. Speaker: Kim Waddington.

**MANCHESTER** Militant Readers' Meeting. Speakers: Terry Fields MP and Phil Frampton. Starts 7.30 pm, Thursday 28 July at the Newall Green Pub, Greenbrow Road, Wythenshawe (on the 101, 310, 293, 294 bus routes).

**EDINBURGH:** Speakers: Ted Grant (Political Editor, *Militant*), Dave Nellist MP (details from local sellers) Postponed until further notice.

**LITTLEBOROUGH:** Speaker: Dave Farrar at Wheatsheaf pub, Church Street on Monday 25 July at 7.30 pm.

**OLDHAM:** 'Lessons of the General Strike'. Speaker: Dave Farrar. Tuesday 26 July, 7.45 pm, at the Mare and Foal, Ashton Road, Oldham.

**MIDDLETON:** Militant Readers Meeting. Thursday 18 August, 7.30pm, Middleton Civic Hall, Long St. Chairman: Councillor Leo Deace, Speakers: Terry Fields MP, Margaret Crear.

## CLASSIFIED

**BERMONDSEY LPYS**, Annual Disco. Saturday 23 July 8.00pm, buffet and late bar. Bermondsey Labour Club, 133 Lower Rd, near Surrey Docks tube. Unwaged £1, waged £2.00.

**SOCIALIST BANNERS**, hand painted by skilled artist. LPYS, LP, TU, orders to Tony McKenna, 19 Ashgrove, Musselburgh, East Lothian, Scotland. Sample photos available.

**AMBULANT** male disabled comrade requires nurse for holiday. Medical attention needed minimal. Contact Iain Campbell, Carlisle (0228) 21068.

## FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Write to: 'Militant Tapes', 26 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone 0527 73795.

Cath Ross and Jeff Price (Newcastle) are proud to announce the birth of their second daughter, Amy, on Friday 15 July.

**TOWER HAMLETS** Bolsheviks congratulate Rosy and Matt on the birth of their son, Mick. Build the Marxist youth movement.

## SOUTH WALES MILITANT SUMMER CAMP

August Bank Holiday

Friday 26 August-Monday 29 August

For the eighth time we are organising our highly successful camp in the beautiful surroundings of Horton on the Gower Coast (10 minutes' walk from Port Eynon and Horton beaches).

It will provide not only an excellent introduction to the ideas of Marxism, but also a superb holiday for the family. Price £10. Write to 181 Hanover Street, Swansea SA1 6BP.

## Northern Weekend School WOMEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Saturday & Sunday 20 & 21 August 1983  
at the Textile Hall, Bradford.

Sessions on:

The Family

Speaker: Leslie Holt, Liverpool Women's Council

Women & the Colonial Revolution

Speaker from SALEP (South African Labour Education Project)

Positive Discrimination

Speaker: Margaret Crear, Rochdale Women's Council

The Role of a Trade-Union Activist

Speaker: Doreen Purves, CPSA, Executive Member DHSS Section and Secretary Newcastle Central DHSS Branch.

Low Pay and the Minimum Wage

Speaker: Sheila Woodhead, Rochdale Women's Council

Bradford Textile Hall is on Westgate, very near the City Centre.

The school will open at 10.00 am on Saturday morning and the sessions will start at 10.30.

A crèche will be provided.

Booking fee for School: £2. Book now (or ask for further information) by contacting Margaret Crear, 11 Hadden Way, Shaw, Oldham, Lancs. Telephone: (0706) 842702.

A Southern Weekend School with the same topics will now be held in London on 24 & 25 September.

## INQABA YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers Tendency  
of the African National Congress.

New issue. Special 56 page issue on ZIMBABWE perspectives and reports. Subscription rates for four issues including postage of £3.20 from BM Box 1719 London WC1N 3XX





The LPYS has been in the forefront of a campaign to link YOPsters to the trade union movement (Above) Demo in Lancashire.

## YOP's Deadly Toll

Last Thursday's excellent *TV Eye* programme on health and safety on YOP schemes highlighted the negligence of the Tory government, the Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission.

As a result of neglect, in the last year seven deaths and 300 serious injuries on YOP schemes have been reported which could and should have been averted.

The *TV Eye* programme (July 14) highlighted the deaths of three YOP trainees; Derek Cain, Sean O'Brien and Andrew Lewis. Derek Cain, aged 17 died last year when he had been working on a YOP scheme with the firm Plumbs in Sheffield.

He died horrifically when he was struck on the head by a blade from a paper threshing and bailing machine. He was unsupervised and later found dead at his machine in a pool of blood.

Plumbs were later found guilty of seven breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

They were not even registered under the Factories' Act, so why were they chosen for YOP by the MSC?

Sean O'Brien from Coatbridge, Strathclyde died two months before Derek Cain,

suffering a horrible and painful death. Sean was working at a scheme at Rosehall Engineering and had been cleaning down a metal frame with paraffin, resulting in his overalls being soaked in paraffin.

His last words to his mate as he stood beside a paraffin heater in his break, were "look at the steam coming off my overalls." One second later Sean exploded in flames.

His father emotionally described how Sean, mortally injured, welcomed his mother at the hospital; "Hello mum, no problem." He died soon afterwards.

Andrew Lewis, aged 16, from Ebbw Vale, also died last year, in a crushing machine. There was no guard on the machine, no emergency stop button and no supervision for this young worker undergoing 'training'.

His family still haven't recovered from the shock. His mother described how she and her husband used to

be lively forty year olds going out dancing three or four times a week. Since Andrew's death they haven't gone out except for a quiet walk on the hills around Ebbw Vale.

A spokesman from the MSC glibly answered this situation saying the *accident rates on YOP schemes are only half of that of industry as a whole*. Yet the MSC figures for accidents underestimate the true situation. Because YOP schemes are not at present covered fully by the Health and Safety Act accidents on YOP schemes are not automatically reported.

Secondly, even the government's figures show a decline in health and safety standards.

### Trade Unions Must Stop Decline in Safety Standards

In 1981-82 reported accidents on YOP schemes increased by 90%. The intake of YOP trainees was up by only 50%. At the same time there has been a cutback in the number of factory inspectors in the last three years by 16%.

Following the death of his son Richard Cain is taking up a crusade on behalf of all youth on government training schemes. He is pressing ahead taking the Department of Employment, Mr Norman Tebbit and the MSC to court.

In February 1982 as part of a mass lobby of Parliament of YOP trainees organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists a delegation of six met Norman Tebbit. We described to him what was happening on the schemes.

His replies were patronising and glib. Later he talked of 'extremists' manipulating youth and raising 'wild expectations' amongst them.

Now with the schemes being expanded and renamed the Youth Training Scheme, the trade union movement has a responsibility to take up the gauntlet on behalf of the youth.

Every scheme must be trade union approved before being allowed to go ahead. What happens at present is that schemes are given the go ahead by trade union officials at regional and national level.

These union officials are in no position to examine the actual conditions trainees are working in. Consequently many unscrupulous employers, with a complete disregard to safety get through the net.

The rank and file in the trade union movement will be outraged, demanding that the TUC should withdraw all co-operation with the MSC on the introduction of YTS, unless trainees are fully covered by the health and safety at work act.

★ no YTS Scheme should go ahead without being checked and certified by the Health and Safety Executive.

★ no YTS scheme should be given approval unless agreed at a local level by trade union members in union organised workplaces.

## LPYS Camp

### Only two weeks to go

THERE ARE only two weeks to go to LPYS summer camp, described by one of the last years visitors as a week of sunshine, sport and socialism.

Of course the LPYS can't guarantee the weather but we can guarantee a full programme of sports and social activities. Football, cricket, swimming, discos and film shows every evening; there will be a guest appearance from top Welsh reggae band *Nightheat* and the 'never to be forgotten' club nights.

The warmth of comradeship at the Labour Party Young Socialists summer camp makes it a holiday to be remembered. But the summer camp isn't only for fun and games—there is also an excellent programme of political events.

Seminars on subjects like Red Clydeside, Religion and Racism are held with rallies including a *Socialist Youth* meeting with Terry Fields MP and Willie Griffin, LPYS National Chairman. A rally on the *Fight against privatisation* with Tom Sawyer of NUPE and Phil Holt of the POEU speaking, and a debate on *Which way for-*

*ward for Labour* with Denzil Davies MP and Laurence Coates, the LPYS representative on Labour's National Executive. A discussion about Ireland with Clive Soley MP speaking is also on the agenda.

A professional creche and visits and events are organised for the kids, so bring them along.

### 'Sunshine, Sport and Socialism'

With only two weeks to go make sure you book your place now. LPYS branches should ensure that every low paid or unemployed worker wanting to come to the camp gets along.

Sunderland LPYS have already raised £200, Bradford YS raised £50 from one TGWU branch and in Glasgow Labour MPs, union branches and Labour Parties have donated, including £50 from Craighton CLP.

Clearly a bold appeal to sponsor low paid or unemployed youth will meet with a sympathetic response from the labour movement Labour MPs and individual LP members.

### LPYS SUMMER CAMP 1983

Saturday 30 July-Saturday 6 August  
Bracelands Campsite, near Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire  
PRICE: £25 for adults; Children under 12 £12.50 (under 3s FREE)

Bring a tent, sleeping bag, stove and cooking utensils. Food can be bought on the site from the LPYS campshop or bring your own.

BOOK NOW! For further details write to LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

### Debate wins LPYS members

DESPITE the defeat of Labour in the general election, the LPYS in Grimsby and Cleethorpes were undaunted, celebrating the victory of Terry Fields and Dave Nellist and starting the fight against the Tories straight after the results were announced.

Besides paper sales and YS meetings and sales at the dole, the YS leapt into the fight against Thatcher with a debate against the Young Tories.

Over eighty people attended, two-thirds supporting the YS. Our speaker outlined the disastrous record of the Tories since 1979, their anti-working-class attitudes and their greed for profit.

The socialist alternative of a shorter working week, a scheme of house building, building schools and hospitals etc, nationalisation and jobs for all was put

forward.

The Tory devoted much of his speech to attacking the *Militant*, saying how unpopular we were, how we'd caused Labour's defeat, we were all totalitarians, out of touch with youth and even said we should get out of the Labour Party.

Comrades gave countless examples from the floor of the failures of monetarism and warned the Tories that Labour was far from extinct. Within a couple of years we said, they'll have enormous struggles on their hands—proved by the NUR's threat to strike announced earlier in the day, the proposed Telecom strike and the possibility of the miners fighting 65,000 redundancies.

The debate was an excellent event. Ten new names were collected, several papers sold and the Tories well and truly hammered.

By Olwen Davies  
(Great Grimsby LPYS)



## SHELLEY— revolutionary poet

IN JULY 1822 one of the world's greatest poets was tragically drowned off the Italian coast—he was only thirty three years old.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the world's first revolutionary poets. He was upper-class by birth, but was always an intellectual rebel. Expelled from Oxford University in 1811 for the publication of the pamphlet, *The Necessity of Atheism*, he travelled to Dublin where he spoke, wrote and distributed pamphlets on behalf of Catholic emancipation and the repeal of the Union.

It must be remembered that this was in pre-Darwin and Marx society, where democracy was for rich land-owners only, voting being by property qualification.

The young Shelley was influenced by the French revolution and believed in democracy and the rights of working people:

*"Men of England,  
wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay ye  
low?  
Wherefore weave with toil  
and care  
The rich robes your  
tyrants wear?"*

*Wherefore feed, and  
clothe, and save  
From the cradle to the  
grave  
Those ungrateful frones  
who would  
Drain your sweat—nay  
drink your blood?"*

*Sow seed—but let no  
tyrant reap;  
Find wealth—let no im-  
poster heap;  
Weave robes—let not the  
idle wear;  
Forge arms—in your  
defence to bear."*

Shelley came into constant conflict with the state and was persecuted by government agents. In 1818 he left England for Italy and never returned. This is perhaps due to the Lord Chancellor's ruling of 1817, which robbed him of the custody of his children. He also encountered difficulties in finding a publisher for his work.

Shelley was an instinctive socialist and died 26 years before scientific socialism was founded by the publication of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. In this context his revolutionary thought is often emotional rather than dialectical. Nevertheless socialists reading Shelley will find a superb expression of their hope in mankind.

*"Let a vast assembly be  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with measured  
word that ye  
Are, as God has made ye,  
free—"*

*"Rise like lions after  
slumber  
In unvanquishable  
number—  
Shake your chains to earth  
like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen  
on you—  
Ye are many—they are  
few."*

By Tim Murgatroyd  
(Brighouse LPYS)



Counter demonstrators shadow the recent SPUC anti-abortion march on June 25.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

# Right-wing move against abortion

WITH THE Tory victory in the general election, we can see new moves by the Right to restrict women's rights to abortion.

Already, we have seen a demonstration of 20,000 anti-abortionists, supported by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, the Catholic Church, and many Tory MPs (including those ironically who supported hanging!). Moves are bound to be made in the next year or so to introduce a bill to reduce abortion rights.

The anti-abortionists are seeking a reduction in the legal time-limit for abortions, in a "pre-emptive" strike, as a test to see how far they can get in attacking a woman's right to choose

whether or not to have an abortion. The lessening of the time limit for abortions accompanied with the much publicised and horrendous stories of live foetuses etc, may seem persuasive for some. But many late abortions are carried out purely because women who can't afford to pay are faced with long waits for a NHS bed.

But of course, we must favour early abortions—they are safer, less painful physically and psychologically for women. If women could have abortions easier, there would be less need to terminate pregnancies so late.

Rich women don't have any trouble, they can get an abortion as soon as they like.

There's no shortage of clinics willing to perform abortions for money. For the rich, abortion on demand is essentially a reality, but for working class women, the situation is very different. Working class women suffer the worst of economic and social hardship, lack of information about contraception, and lack of access to nursery facilities.

Working class women have to go to the NHS, with long waiting lists for beds, needing two doctors (usually male) to approve the abortion, it being in the hands of the doctors, not the women themselves.

No one can want a return to the pre-1967 days when women had to go to the

backstreet butchers, when many women died in their hands.

We must campaign against these people who have closed their eyes to the reality of capitalist society today and who are attacking a woman's right to choose whether she has a child or not.

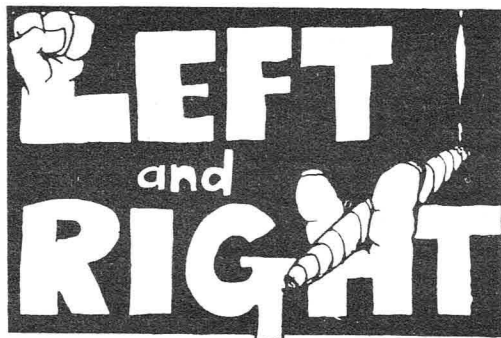
But ultimately, we must place the blame on the inadequacies of the capitalist system for failing to solve the problem that it has created. It is not as if women actually relish the prospect of abortion, the intolerable pressure of pregnancy comes about in the context of the present system.

Free, safe, legal abortion on demand could im-

mediately relieve working class women of the tremendous strain of pregnancy, but we must provide the conditions that allow a woman to keep her child if she wishes—freely available contraception, increased nursery facilities etc, not to mention decent housing and a liveable income.

We must link up the call for abortion on demand with all these other issues, and recognise that only the socialist transformation of society can provide both women and men with the conditions which give them a real choice on whether to have children or not.

By Gill Porter  
(Peckham LPYS)



## No escape for Tories

On the hot and sticky evening of July 7, many MPs were out on the House of Commons' terrace that overlooks the River Thames. Boats passed to and fro, but then came a riverboat with a disco blaring and people dancing—a riverboat party, a common sight. However, as the boat reached Parliament, the disco suddenly went quiet and the raucous chanting of "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie—Out, out, out!" suddenly filled the air, much to the annoyance of the Tory MPs present. The disco then came back on and the boat sailed on its merry way.

## Fleet Street put the boot in

All the national press carried a picture on July 15 of a policeman mercilessly kicking a demonstrator outside Liverpool's Walton Prison. The demonstrator, Mick O'Brien, was carrying out a sit-down protest over the jailing of Denis Kelly for a murder they believe he did not commit. The *Mirror* attacked this police brutality as did,

ironically, the *Sun*: although it called the demonstrators "a mob" and stressed there would be a police investigation into the attack. Yet the rest of Fleet Street—despite the stark evidence of the photograph—went out of their way to play down this blatant example of police brutality. Almost apologising for the incident the *Express* said it happened "in the heat of the moment" while the *Mail* said simply "tempers boil" with no other reference. The quality press simply ignored it. The *Telegraph* said the policeman was "removing" Mr O'Brien, while the *Guardian* captioned their photograph as "police tackle a demonstrator". More ominously the *Times* said simply that the policeman was "dealing" with Mr O'Brien.

## Tasteless choice for science award comes unstuck

Thatcher has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society, the country's premier body of scientists who give this award to those who have rendered "conspicuous service to the cause of science". Her contribution to 'science' was based on the fact that she used to work in laboratories at a glue factory and an ice cream flavour producer. Well, a lot of her policies certainly stick in the throat. However, not all the Society are pleased at this choice—indeed many are angry they could not make it to London for the meeting which voted Thatcher in as a Fellow. As one member put it, "If trade unions are to have a postal ballot, why can't we?"

## REVIEW: VIETNAM

AS PRESIDENT Reagan strains at the leash over Central America he might be advised to get hold of the recently completed documentary series on the Vietnam War. These excellent programmes drew heavily on the information collected in the book written by Michael MacLear.

MacLear uses material previously unpublished, first hand accounts and official documents from the countries directly and indirectly involved. One of the staggering statistics highlighted is the estimated financial cost of US involvement—\$236 billion.

## Human cost

This of course does not compare with the cost in human terms for the Vietnamese people and the American working class. "...In 1971 fewer than 5,000 American soldiers required hospital treatment for combat wounds. Four times

that number, 20,529, were treated for serious drug abuse..."

The extent of the devastation of Vietnam can only be partly comprehended, "...the explosive equivalent of five Hiroshima size atomic bombs was dropped in the Khe Sanh area. The daily average was 5,000 bombs, the most concentrated bombing in the history of war-fare..." The courage of the Vietnamese, their struggle against domination by foreign powers, and their victory over an army that was expected to win the war in ten days rather than lose it over ten thousand are all ingredients of this excellent book.

DAVID CHURCHLEY  
reviews the book  
*Vietnam: The Ten  
Thousand Day War*  
by MICHAEL MACLEAR  
available from World  
Socialist Books, price  
£2.25 (including p&p)



# Class struggles of World War II

## Engineers at war

The bosses and their class would have us believe that the class struggle 'disappeared' during the Second World War, which marked the end of the days of mass unemployment of the early '30s. In fact class consciousness and organisation grew. Shop stewards committees flourished, and youth and women came to the forefront of the class struggle.

Barbara Humphries reviews 'Engineers at War' by Richard Croucher, available from World Socialist Books, price £5.50 (including P&P)

AS THE British economy climbed out of the recession in the late 1930s, almost entirely based on rearmament, the whole atmosphere in industry changed.

In the aircraft industry, there was increasingly a demand for skilled labour. This increased the confidence of the workers and the situation of the early 1930s where people feared taking on shop stewards' positions for fear of victimisation was reversed.

Croucher explains, "Uneven and hesitant as it was, nonetheless it was quite noticeable. The effect of seeing old mates, even in ones and twos coming back into the shops, was out of all proportion to the numbers involved. The iron workshop discipline of the previous few years, when it was not unheard of for men to be sacked for laughing at work, slowly began to dissipate."

Industrial militancy was sparked off by one section of the class, which had not previously been involved in struggle—the apprentices.

In 1937 strikes of apprentices took place nationally. They set up a strike committee and adopted an Apprentices' Charter. In Coventry 800 apprentices marched on the offices of the *Midland Daily Telegraph* to demand an accurate report of their action.

### Bosses' Fascist sympathies halted

The strike achieved trade union rights for apprentices, and big local increases in wages.

Also the Aircraft Shop Stewards National Council produced a paper, *New Propeller* which was read by 1 in 6 aircraft workers. It helped establish a strong shop floor organisation, and spread socialist views amongst the membership.

The employers in the aircraft industry were known for their pro-fascist sympathies, which they broad-

cast in their own paper *The Aeroplane*.

The shop stewards responded by threatening strike action against firms such as De Havillands, which were intending to supply planes to Franco's side in Spain. Engineering workers were also approached to use their skills by producing ambulances for the Republican side.

After the outbreak of war in 1939 there were still one million people unemployed, and the unions pressed for industrial conscription. As in the First World War trade union officials collaborated with the government's orders for compulsory arbitration and the banning of strikes, so all industrial action was initiated unofficially.

The first main task was to defend the unions, especially those shop stewards who were sacked or even arrested. The Communist Party was seen as being in the forefront of this, and as a result the government put a ban on the *Daily Worker*, the CP newspaper.

### CP turn around after Russia invaded

After Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, the position of the CP somersaulted. They no longer regarded the war as an 'imperialist' war. This meant that they used their position in industry mainly to call for increased productivity. They called for Joint Production Committees to attempt to by-pass "incompetent management".

By 1942 they achieved their membership peak—56,000 members. This base was mainly in industrial branches—in Coventry alone they had 33 factory branches.

But their opposition to strikes began to alienate many workers who wanted to defend union rights. The initiative of the Left began to pass to groups outside the Labour Party, and the loosely organised Independent Labour Party. They criticised the Joint Production Committees as being "class collaborationist". Although small in number they gained the support of 40 shop stewards committees.

This small but important industrial backbone allowed them to play a role in key industrial disputes, which the



Glasgow apprentices taking strike action in 1937.

CP was opposing. One such dispute was the resistance of engineering apprentices to Bevin's scheme of conscription into the mines.

Richard Croucher finally describes the 1945 landslide victory for the Labour Party, and shows how the shop stewards movement helped to win that victory. During the last years of the war many new recruits were brought into the trade union movement and were encouraged to pay the political levy, including many women workers (at this stage trade unionists had to 'contract in' to pay the levy).

In 1944 over one million days were lost in strike action. The main issue had been the fight against redundancies. As the war came to a close trade unionists argued that factories should be turned over to production for peace and workers should not be laid off.

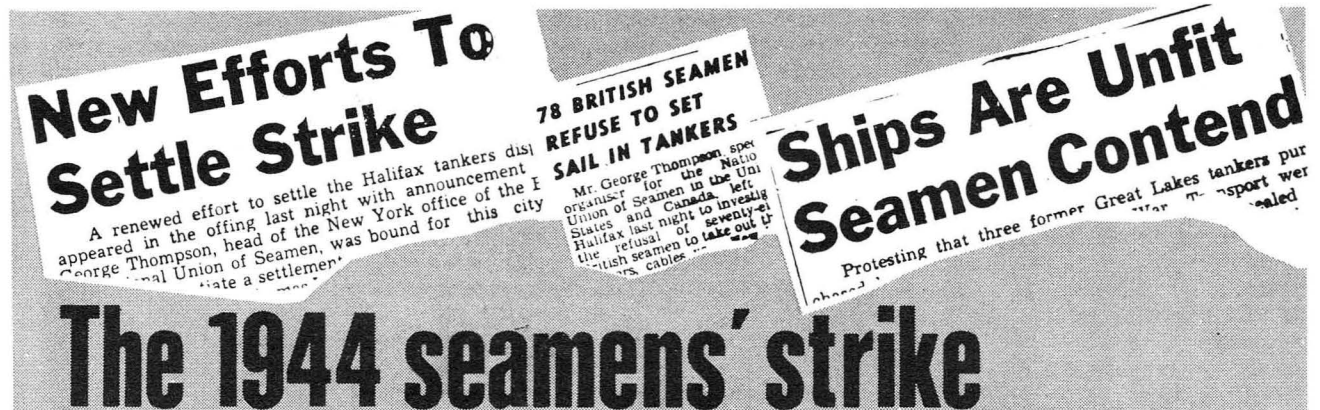
Thousands of engineering workers marched in London carrying banners saying "Make the Tories redundant on July 5" and "Engineers demand the 40 hour week—vote Labour". At the Napier's plant in Acton (which under Thatcher has shut down) 9,000 workers

lobbed for peace production plans. In Birmingham the Labour Party and Trades Council collected a shilling from every trade unionist and raised £525 from 10,000 people. Shop stewards organised election meetings in the workplace and at factory gates. Union newspapers were distributed in the factories.

It was this mobilisation of the trade unionists which defeated the well-heeled Tory Party machine in every major industrialised area and led to an unexpected Labour majority of 158 seats. The same sort of cam-

paign will be needed again in the future to secure a similar victory for the Labour Party.

*Engineers at War* is an excellent contribution to the history of the labour movement in Britain. It describes in detail a period of labour history, largely unwritten about, in which important gains were made by the working class, and it is an inspiration to us as trade unionists today, working against a background of recession and attacks on the labour movement.



ENGINEERS were not the only section of the labour movement who fought back against the dictates of the bosses during the Second World War.

In the winter of 1943-44, 78 merchant seamen went on strike after being sent to Canada to crew ships at Halifax, sold to the British government. They were to sail them across the Atlantic to Britain.

The seamen's anger began to brew at the conditions they faced when they arrived at New York. Their spokesman, Thomas White, told the press at the time, "We were treated like a bunch of immigrants on arrival at New York and were denied a hot meal for 37 hours during the trip to Halifax".

When they eventually arrived at Halifax, they found three of the ships totally unseaworthy. The three were over forty years old—one had even been under water for six months! The men refused to sign on as crew, saying they had been victims of "misrepresentation by the

War Ministry".

A workmate of mine (who does not wish to be named) was a member of the seven-strong strike committee that led the strike. A veteran of the Battle of the Atlantic and the war in the Pacific, he told me about the state of the ships:

"They were flat-bottomed tankers built for the Great Lakes and not for deep sea conditions like the Atlantic. They can't adapt to rough seas—the state they were in they would have rolled over on wet grass!

"The boiler rooms were old and worn out and the decks all buckled. When we filled one up with ballast, streams sprang up through the deck! They were supposed to be ready by February but there was no way.

"We refused to sail in them and formed a committee of seven, bringing in the Mayor of Halifax and a union rep to represent us."

However, the National Union of Seamen official was far from sympathetic. Attached to the War Transport Ministry offices in

Canada, he told the seamen to sign their articles and 'get on with it'. The War Ministry then threatened the seamen with court proceedings and even threatened to hand them over to the Royal Navy for punishment.

A cruel blow was struck to the striking seamen when the Ministry stopped their pay. As the Strike Committee put it in a statement at the time; "The great bulk of these seamen come from London where they have left their families. Quite a number of them have as many as six children under the age of 14 living in one room as a result of the bombing of London.

"The men deplore the attitude of the Ministry which fails to recognise the practical opinion of men who have loyally served their King and country and deplore the despicable action of the Ministry in attempting to bend the will of the men to cover up the Ministry's mistake by cutting off families from their means of livelihood."

The dispute lasted three months, during which the

seamen won a victory after a Court of Inquiry ruled the Ministry should continue to pay the seamen until the strike was settled. The strike itself ended when the Ministry finally agreed the ships should be made seaworthy before they set sail.

The dispute was not without its conclusions. The strike leaders after the dispute pledged themselves to "carry their fight for reform (of the union) back to the executive council in England through the local branches of which they are members".

And, as the strike committee member told me, it was clear who really benefited from the war; "the people who sold those tankers made millions. It was a right racket. There's people who are still rich today from the millions in profit they made from the war."

By Maureen Wade  
(East Ham LPYS)



# UNION DEMO

## The alternative to postal ballots

When Norman Tebbit first introduced his Green Paper on trade union democracy, he claimed that it was all about "restoring democracy in the trade unions" and, he said, "surely nobody can argue against the principle".

Many of us in the trade union movement have been fighting for years for greater democracy within our own unions and when someone like Tebbit seems to jump into bed alongside us, it is time to get out and inspect the sheets!

The election of full time officials by postal ballot is the option put forward by Tebbit because, he says, "It reduces the risk of manipulation", and eliminates the practice of "secret meetings at which unrepresentative minorities flock to the trade union elections to ensure that positions of great power are filled by people elected on the tiny percentage of the available vote."

The EETPU and my own union, the AUEW, both already operate what Tebbit would describe as his ideal system of postal ballots. Both unions are presently dominated by the right wing, which may have some bearing on Tebbit's preference for this system of voting.

In fact, while this issue has come to the fore because of the Tories' proposals, postal ballots have been a serious bone of contention in the AUEW since they were first introduced in 1972. Relatively speaking, the AUEW is one of the most democratic unions affiliated to the TUC, despite the fact that the present right wing majority are attempting to re-write the rule book, in the sense that our 202 full time officials have all been elected since 1972, initially for three years, and then for five years.

Under the previous system of voting, our full time officials were elected through a branch ballot, but because branch attendances have declined over the years, we were getting a situation where only around 5% of the membership were electing the full time officials.

### Register out of date

The right wing used as one of the arguments this indisputable fact, in order to justify the introduction of the postal ballot system, which has unquestionably produced a higher proportion of the members voting. The same arguments have been introduced in relation to other trade unions where perhaps only a small proportion of the membership are able to attend the branch meetings regularly because the branches are geographically rather than industrially-based.

### By Alec Thraves

(President, Swansea No. 6 AUEW, personal capacity. Secretary West Wales AUEW Broad Left)

But even under the postal ballot, the returns have been far from staggering. For example, Terry Duffy was elected president in 1978 on a poll of just over 18%, and Gavin Laird recently squeezed in as general secretary on a poll of less than 24%—hardly a real participation by the membership.

The financial cost of running the system is also extremely expensive, being over a quarter of a million pounds in 1982, and is no doubt one of the reasons why the right wing would be prepared to accept handouts from the Tory government.

**"... the main reason why the Tories are so keen to give away government money to run the postal ballot system in the unions, is that they believe that with the assistance of the media they can have a decisive influence on the outcome."**

But a serious criticism of the system of postal ballots lies in the fact that the electoral register is always out of date. In not one of last year's 47 separate elections in the AUEW, would there have been a register which included all the members.

Some estimates would suggest that as many as 200,000 of the union's one million members are not on the electoral roll. Because of this many AUEW members have great doubts about the so-called democracy involved in the postal ballot system.

It is virtually impossible for the AUEW balloting department to keep the electoral register constantly up to date, making allowance for the introduction of new members, and the registration of old members. Hundreds of examples can be given in each district where bus drivers, hospital workers, and other ex-members still receive their ballot papers even years after they have left the union.

Last week, Norman Tebbit announced his plans to "deal" with the unions—proposing to impose postal ballots for union NEC elections, ballots before strikes and bringing the political levy into question. This article deals specifically with the Tories' plans on postal ballots and poses a socialist alternative.

When members change their address, despite informing their branch secretary, the ballot paper is still often sent to the original address, to be filled in by some amused doctor or librarian who has since moved in.

It is a completely false argument of the Tories for them to claim that they want to see more participation by the members in elections. Their proposals will reduce members' involvement.

### Press barons distort issues

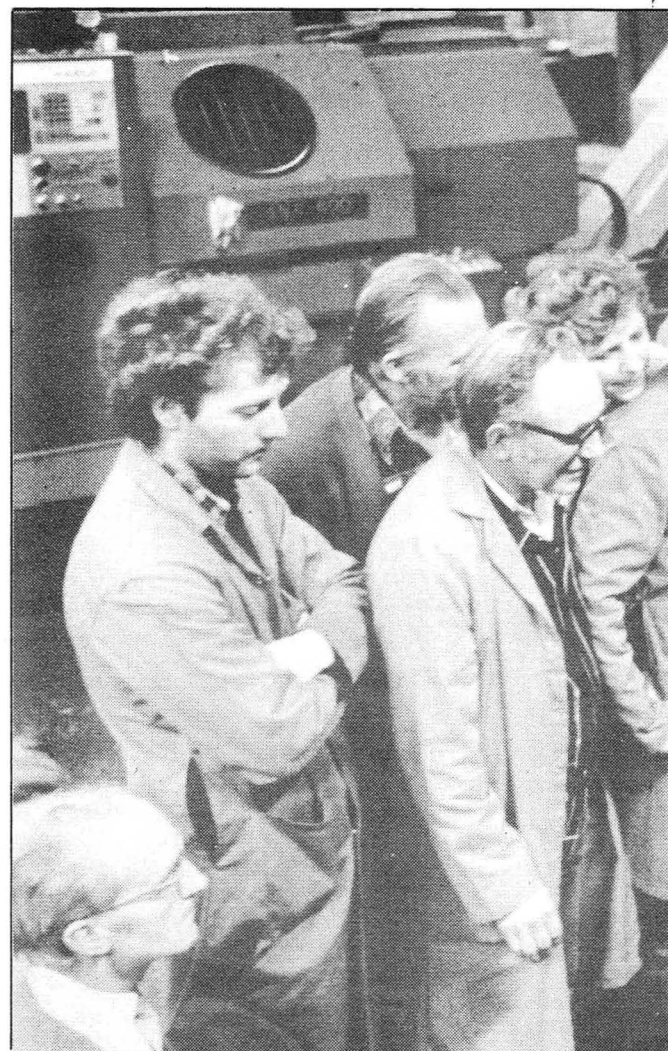
Tebbit and the Tories talk about "unrepresentative minorities" plotting to get their favourite candidates returned. But there could be no "minority" more "unrepresentative" than the handful of press barons who would seek to twist and distort the issues beyond recognition in order to influence postal ballots.

The very basis of trade union organisation, as the name implies, involves the coming together of workers to discuss their common problems, and to fight for their common interests. Whilst the labour movement has consistently struggled over decades and centuries for the organisation of workers, the employers and their political representatives, the Tories, have always sought to atomise and isolate workers into small groups or individuals to make it all the more easy for them to impose poor wages and bad conditions.

Exactly the same principle applies in the campaign of the bosses and the Tories to introduce postal ballots. Workers would be taken away from the shop floor discussions, from the union branch meetings, and from any kind of common discussion and activity with their fellow workers, to be isolated as individuals in their homes, and subject to all kinds of domestic and economic pressures.

### Press helped AUEW right wing

Moreover, workers in this situation would be subject to the enormous propaganda of the press and media in trying to influence workers in the casting of the ballot. All the newspapers and the television intervene directly in the elections within the trade union movement with their constant and relentless repetition describing the right wing leaders as "moderates" and the more militant



Workers occupying APV factory, Blackpool 1982.

leaders as "extremists".

Some newspapers, and columnists like Woodrow Wyatt, directly intervene in the union elections to the extent of publishing lists of so-called extremists and so-called moderates, urging workers, naturally, to vote for the "moderate" slates.

The right wing of the trade unions go along with this process willingly, desperately hoping that the union members will "participate" by first reading and absorbing the free mass propaganda on their behalf and then by putting a cross next to the bosses' and the Tories' favourite candidates. Had it not been for the enormous support of the press and the media, the right wing would have not have taken control in the AUEW in the last ten years.

More often than not, while this kind blatant interfering and electioneering is accommodated by the right wing in the trade union movement, campaigns by the left, with their own leaflets other than the official election addresses, often lead to disciplinary action on those members distributing leaflets, and sometimes also the candidates supported by the leaflets.

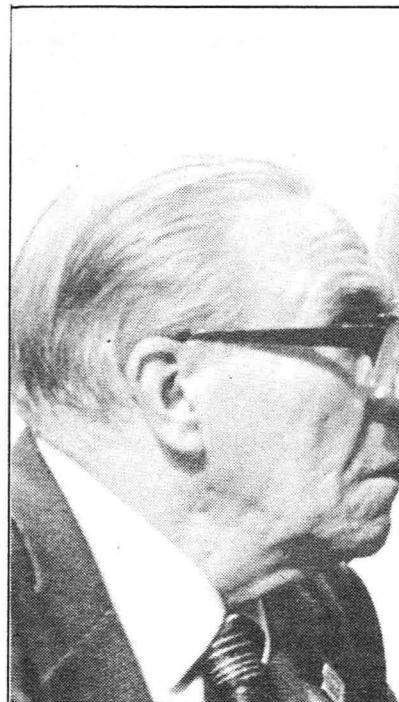
Needless to say, with the polarisation between the left and right, disciplinary action is usually handed out to those involved in the left camp, while a blind eye is turned to the enormous press support and leaflets supporting the candidates of the right.

Many AUEW members are also concerned about the fact that the AUEW uses its own staff and ballot department to oversee all postal

ballots, without out even the candidates allowed into the ca

When Terry Du was president of the was met by some n solute disbelief. I dominated by the ri to no one who woul for Duffy, yet he w first ballot.

Any disbelief a union rank and file no doubt mis-plac be allayed if t scrutineered by members of the tra



Three AUEW leaders. L to R, John Boy and Terry Duffy, president.

Some members o have called for the toral Reform Societ own department, a native to postal ball Left supporters still to the old days of b In fact, it would l



# CRACY



Photo: John Smith (IFL)

de scrutineers or themselves being

y was re-elected union, the result members with ab- a division still ht wing, I spoke admit to voting s elected on the

d fears of the on this score are but they would e ballot was ank and file e union itself.

either of these steps. Using the Electoral Reform Society with a system of postal ballots, would do absolutely nothing to increase the active participation of the members in the decisions and policy making bodies of the union, in many respects it would make the position worse.

What is the Electoral Reform Society in any case? It is an organisation supported and sponsored by employers as much as anyone, which campaigns for the introduction of proportional representation. As an organisation it has nothing in common with the traditions and the organisations of the working class.

elected through the trade union itself.

What kind of balloting, then, would be the most appropriate to involve the membership of the trade unions? A 23% poll for the election of our general secretary under the postal ballot system is a scandalous state of affairs, added to which the electoral register is inaccurate, the "electorate" are divorced from the real issues and the press and the media have an enormous influence.

Socialists cannot support postal ballots in the trade unions, because they isolate and remove members from real participation and largely give the election to the media.

But on the other hand, there is no justification whatsoever for advocating a return to the old system of branch ballots, where as few as 5% of the members elected the entire leadership of the union. The alternative to both of these undemocratic and unrepresentative methods of voting should be to transfer the voting for full time officials to the real centre of gravity of the union, that is the shop floor.

If all our union members are not able to attend their geographical branches, participate in the debates and cast their votes, if branches are poorly attended, then, in order to obtain maximum participation of

the membership, voting should take place where the members are to be found, at the point of production, in the factory.

Better still would be the corresponding reorganisation of branches on to an industrial basis—making special arrangements for unemployed

members and those in tiny workplaces—so that the whole life of the union rank and file including elections rest firmly on the shop floor.

Voting could still be done by ballot, with a ballot box, in a similar way to the National Union of Mineworkers' pit-head ballots. Under these circumstances, the ballot could be organised by the shop stewards, who in most cases are the only officials that the majority of members know and take seriously.

Prior to the elections, the shop stewards could actually ensure the distribution of literature in favour of all the candidates, could call shop or factory meetings, where the candidates or their appointed deputies, could be invited to put their respective views on the vital problems confronting the membership.

In this way, the crucial issues facing the union could be brought to the attention of the members, and the union would determine the conduct of the election and the debate, not the columnists of the *Sunday Mirror* or other newspapers. This obvious advantage of full and democratic discussion, full debate and participation of the members, would be added to by removing the heavy financial burden of postal ballots.

## Support reform

This is the type of voting system which would terrify the bosses and their representatives in the labour and trade union movement, and it is a reform which should be supported by AUEW members, particularly those involved in the AUEW Broad Left movement.

There are probably other ways in which our union could be made more directly accountable to the rank and file.

Not only should changes be introduced in the method of balloting within the unions, but the National Conference of the union consists only of a meeting of the National Com-

## Right wing leaders play into Tory hands

The abuse and distortion heaped upon the trade union movement in recent years by the Tories has often been added to by many right wing trade union leaders. During the last elections, the Conservative Party's own press releases sought to justify its trade union proposals, using quotes from right wing leaders of the trade union movement.

Terry Duffy, for example, was quoted as having said that "If Mr Callaghan had proposed government money for unions' postal ballots, we would probably have accepted it." There was also Sid Weighell, former general secretary of the NUR, saying, "militants only win through apathy and not popular support."

"Trade unionists are not top of the pops. Were not a popular group in society," said Eric Hammond, general secretary elect of the EETPU, in the *Sun*, December 2 1982, "this is because most trade union leaders are not representative of the ordinary members."

"I believe that the single reform that would give the greatest benefit to the trade union movement", Frank Chapple was quoted as saying, "is the provision of secret ballots, for the election of its leaders".

Frank Chapple

Photo: Militant

mittee of a few dozens of members.

It would be far better if the AUEW had a full conference with the active participation and representation of the branches, reflecting the pressure on the shop floor. That would especially be the case if the branches were restructured, not on geographical lines, but on industrial lines to facilitate the active participation of the members, in other words based in the factories.

## Out-dated structure

At the moment the union leadership is based on an out-dated structure. A dead structure in determining the fate of a living trade union.

All these democratic changes must be fought for by the development of the new Broad Left inside the AUEW.

The temporary success of the right wing in gaining a majority in the AUEW is an indictment of the old Communist Party-dominated Broad Left which more and more abandoned its political discussions, in favour of being simply an election machine, and not a very good one at that.

The old methods must be replaced by a fighting and militant Broad Left leadership, based on a socialist programme for Labour, and encompassing democratic demands such as those outlined above.

In the coming months and years, AUEW members will be faced with enormous struggles in defence of jobs, wages and conditions, not to mention the trade union rights established over many decades. If the membership are to withstand the attacks that will be launched upon them by the Tories and the bosses, the AUEW and the trade union movement generally must reflect intimately the involvement of its whole membership by rooting itself firmly on the shop floor, where the unions came from in the first place.



and Gavin Laird, former and present general secretaries

Photo: D Doran

the Broad Left se of the Elec- instead of our d as an alter- ts other Broad all for a return anch balloting. wrong to take

Workers have even less control and check on the Electoral Reform Society than they have on their own union departments. There is no substitute inside the labour and trade union movement for the open scrutineering of elections by respected and authoritative rank and file members,



# GREECE

## PASOK leaders' foreign retreat

**DESPITE HIS party's crushing defeat in the 1981 elections Konstantinos Karamanlis, the former prime minister in the right-wing capitalist New Democracy government retains enormous power under the rigged Greek constitution.**

As president he has considerable power of veto, and considerable influence.

On 28 June he made a public speech in which, after having loudly praised his own premiership of 1974-79, he attacked the socialist PASOK government's foreign policy. Praising the USA as Greece's friend, he spoke in favour of continued membership of both NATO and the EEC and for retention of US military bases.

Every word was an assault on the foreign policy supported by 60% of the electorate in 1981. PASOK's election manifesto said that immediately on taking office it would pass a law withdrawing Greece from the military wing of NATO, all nuclear weapons would be thrown out and US bases would have to leave within a very short time.

### Reactionary role

On the EEC, the government would hold a referendum over "re-negotiating" Greece's terms of membership. All these promises, especially those concerning NATO and US bases, received enormous support.

Greek workers have long known the reactionary role of NATO, and prime minister Papandreu, when in opposition, summed up their view of the EEC as "a club of multi-national monopolies" and NATO as "the military suppressive machine—the state—of multi-national capital."

### US bases

PASOK's central committee in 1981 declared that the Greek ruling class and its NATO allies were agreed on using Greece as a base for defending US interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, and that Greece's absorption into the EEC was intended as a barrier against socialism.

But these fine words and dazzling promises have not been lived up to. As with its promises of economic reform, the government has retreated ingloriously. Embroiling itself in lengthy, secret discussion with the US government over the base issue, PASOK were cajoled, threatened and blackmailed at every step.

While hundreds of thousands of Greek workers, students etc marched time and time again against the bases, the government kept them deliberately in the dark as to what was happening. The truth about the negotiations has been revealed by the controlled press of Turkey's military junta!

Within the last few weeks an agreement has been reached allowing US bases to stay for a further five years. Papandreu wants them to leave after the end of that period, but US negotiators demand the matter be left

over for re-negotiation after the five years.

Admitting the truth of the Turkish press revelations, Papandreu added that agreement had been reached over the so-called 7:10 balance of military aid received by Greece and Turkey from the US.

Papandreu revealed also the meaning of military 'aid', ie loans with a fixed interest rate of 12½% to enable Greece to buy weapons from America. So far it has cost Greece \$250 million simply to service these loans. No other NATO country has such an agreement.

Yet instead of using these facts to mount a campaign both in Greece and internationally against US imperialism, the government has actually agreed to dig the hole deeper, and buy 100-140 F-16 'planes from the US. The US 'aid' will only cover a part of this purchase

### Huge arms debt

To buy these F-16s will cost \$13½ billion—without spares or servicing. This will be a colossal burden on the Greek economy. To put it into context, USA sold in 1979 \$14½ billion worth of arms to the world!

It will cost the Greek economy more than was spent on health, education and social insurance from 1977-83. The debt will be 2½ times the total value of all fixed capital invested in Greek industry, and approximately half of Greece's annual national income!

Membership of the EEC has also had a devastating effect on Greece's economy. In

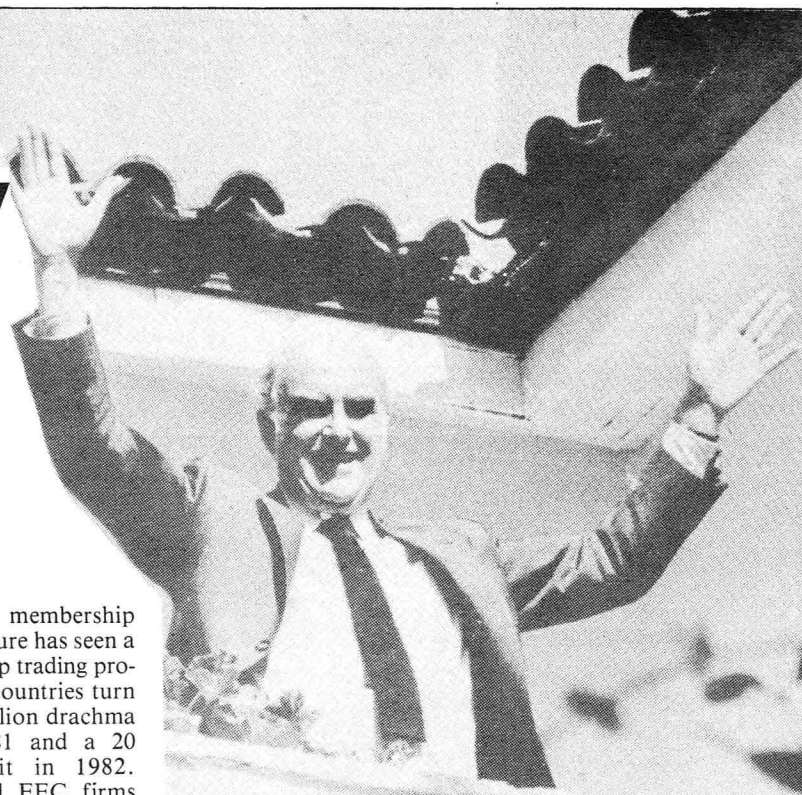
two years of membership Greek agriculture has seen a pre-membership trading profit with EEC countries turn into a 10½ billion drachma deficit in 1981 and a 20 billion deficit in 1982. American and EEC firms with assembly and packaging plants in Greece have been closing down, finding it cheaper to export to Greece.

### Climb down on EEC

PASOK's stand towards the Common Market has undergone a rapid change. In March 1976 PASOK stated that Greece did not need participation in an international capitalist organisation "under any terms". This was changed to holding a referendum on re-negotiation terms, then to fighting within the EEC for reforms. Now Papandreu has just begun a six month term as President of the EEC commission! He talks of a "Europe of the people"!

The masses who voted for Papandreu expected immediate action and results over foreign policy, especially as PASOK argued that before the problems of the Greek economy could be solved, Greece had to extricate itself from Imperialist domination.

**But foreign and domestic policy cannot be separated.** Greek capitalism arrived late on the scene and from the very beginning has been dependent upon initially Britain and since the war, the United States. A blow against US imperialism is simultaneously a blow against Greek capitalism and



Papandreu applauded by workers in 1981.

vice versa. Withdrawal from NATO and the expulsion of US bases would be a shock to world capitalism but it would not alter at all US and EEC capitalist domination of the Greek economy.

The United States is the biggest single foreign investor in Greece, controlling an estimated 30% of fixed capital in industry, invested in the most strategic and profitable areas of the economy.

Since the end of the Second World War the USA has used Greece as a school for counter-revolution, developing its methods of safeguarding its international interests. Methods of alliances, economic ties, and covert interference in government. Apart from Greece's membership of NATO and the presence of US military bases, the US sponsored the law passed in 1953 that constitutionally safeguards US investments in Greece, a blatantly colonial law.

### US domination

Until 1964 there were US advisors in every Greek ministry. Washington trained the military, police and secret police, placing Greece's state machine under its control. No-one doubts the CIA's role in sponsoring the Colonels' coup of 1967 and the subsequent dictatorship. The relationship of Greek capitalism with the USA is more reminiscent of Latin America than Europe.

Papandreu's policy of national and international reconciliation with capitalism must be replaced by a socialist policy. Withdrawal from NATO and the EEC, and the socialist transformation of Greece are inter-related tasks that must be tackled boldly and immediately.

The faint-hearts of both the PASOK leadership and the two "Communist" parties argue that such a policy is unrealistic. Greece is too small a country to take on the might of America, they argue. And what if Turkey

declares war?

Firstly, the US does not have the power of the past. The whole of the third world is in ferment and rich, armed-to-the-teeth America finds it impossible to intervene in Latin America, its own backyard. Bold measures will not bring down the irresistible wrath of America, rather they will give an example and an enormous boost to the struggle against imperialism everywhere.

### Rulers divided

The internal situation in Greece has never been more favourable for socialist change. In 1981 workers' parties received massive support from the peasantry. The workers have shown themselves determined and resilient in struggle. The ruling class is still seriously divided.

As for Turkey, the military dictatorship there, sponsored by the USA, has not solved a single problem. An indication of the boiling discontent of the Turkish masses is Evren's moves towards "liberalisation". Though the US has used the threat of Turkey as a blackmailing issue, they are horrified at the thought of a "limited" war between the two countries which would ruin the economies of both countries, put arms into the hands of the masses and start enormous revolutionary explosions.

The implementation of genuine socialist policies would act as a stirring example to the workers and peasants of Turkey, offering the prospect of a socialist federation of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus.

Armed with an international perspective, the Greek revolution would not be strangled by NATO or anybody but would open up a new way forward for mankind.

By our Athens correspondent



The workers' parties in Greece have received tremendous support from the peasantry.

### Militant Pamphlet

## GREECE — Workers demand socialism

Price 35p + 15p p&p from *Militant*,  
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN  
Articles from *Militant* 1976-1981



# INDIA

**THROUGHOUT India, from the vast cities to remote towns and villages, workers and peasants are rising up against intolerable conditions and demanding elementary rights.**

There seem to be demonstrations, pickets, agitations on every street corner. Independent labour fronts are springing up everywhere. Some are previously unorganised groups such as the formerly backward looking tribal workers or white collar staff. Others are like the descriptions of the soviets which sprang up in Russia at the time of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

In Kerala in South India, the "Marxist Youth Federation" recently won major concessions from the state government after a heroic struggle. The Federation called for picketing of the Government Secretariat as part of its agitation to get unemployment relief restored after it had been cut off back in May 1981.

## Police bloodbath

The police opened fire injuring 250 people with an unknown number killed. The Congress Home Minister Vayalar Ravi said there was "maximum restraint on the part of the police" The blood bath the government unleashed could not break the gherao (mass picket) by 25,000 young workers and the besieged state government was forced to make concessions.

India has vast resources including 90 billion tons of coal. But antiquated machinery and work methods make output per manshift the lowest in the world. Inhuman exploitation of the 600,000 miners has provoked them to fight back. Thousands of miners recruited deliberately from previously backward tribal groups rose to their feet to join the January 1982 'bharat bandh', the general strike in support of Bombay textile workers.

In the mining area of Eastern Maharashtra, engineers have recently formed a militant trade union front to press for better conditions and pay, which are bad for all grades in the coal industry, with workers' earnings 30% to 50% below average industrial wages.

## Corruption rampant

Crisis, corruption and inefficiency are rampant in the industry. A recent government commission demanded the entire enterprise should be shut down due to low production. The lack of coal combined with the failure of the last monsoon (vital for hydro-electric power) has meant a complete shutdown of industry in many parts of South India.

Everywhere there is a feeling that an explosion in society is close. Most people

By Dick Peterson

have no respect or fear of authority. When asked about the danger of dictatorship it is said time and again that the people have felt their power and any attempt to impose a police state would meet with massive resistance.

Top representatives of the capitalists have total contempt for the present government and can not see any way forward for their class. In their private gatherings in the clubs left behind by the British Raj, the ruling class are hopelessly divided.

## Landless

Some demand the suppression of workers in the most bloodthirsty terms but the wiser ones realise this would only make matters worse by provoking the working class. A section of the tops are even beginning to think they would be better off in a regime modelled along the lines of the Stalinist states.

A third of the population is landless according to a report from the International Labour Office. The true figure is probably much higher representing the hundreds of millions who exist on an estimated 26 rupees a month (£1.60). Efforts at land reform by central and state rulers are ineffective.

This has led to a state of near civil war in rural areas with more and more peasants looking to the workers' parties for a bold lead to seek a revolutionary way out of their terrible predicament.

## Congress splits

The ruling Congress Party continues to disintegrate. All sections of society show contempt for Mrs Gandhi and her hangers on as shown by the shattering defeats in state elections in South India earlier this year and more recently in the northern state of Kashmir. The attempt to impose central authority in Assam was a fiasco showing the crumbling of the last vestiges of Congress support in the most downtrodden layers.

Corruption is rampant, and the judges turn their blindest eye to the gangsters in high places. Incredibly this virus of class struggle has even reached the ranks of the Secret Police who held a series of agitations for better conditions, one leader attacking Gandhi on a day of action for her "infamous betrayal".

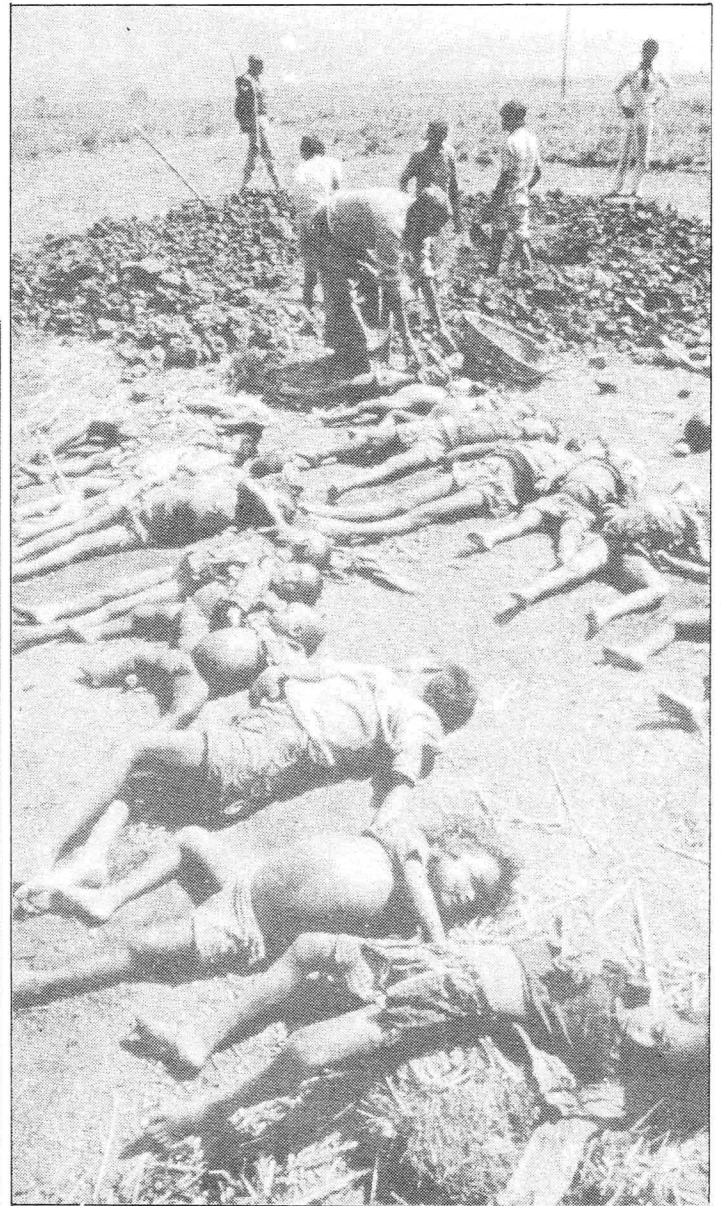
Mrs Gandhi pinpointed industrial relations as India's number one problem. Not surprisingly since the work days lost in strikes in 1982 created probably a world record. The Bombay textile workers alone clocked up 90 million worker days, and over all the country probably 200 million man days were lost.

A storm is on its way. With a Marxist leadership, the whole of India could see the end of capitalist misery and exploitation.

# Before the storm



A new hotel in Delhi for the few super-rich, the bosses' enjoyment is lessened by their fears for the future.



The Assam massacre was a bloodthirsty attempt to impose a solution.

# BRAZIL Fear of revolution brings bankers' reprieve

By Roger Shriver

ON 15 JULY, fearful of enormous social unrest on an unprecedented scale and of third world governments refusing to pay all debts, the central bankers organisation, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) extended the deadline for repayment of a \$ 400 million short term loan to Brazil.

The decision came as a compromise between those banks who wanted to squeeze every penny owed back out of debtor countries and those who saw the long term danger to the entire banking system and to the stability of capitalism in South America.

## US banks

Brazil's total debts stand at \$90 billion (about £56 billion). The chairman of BIS earlier in the week had refused to extend the deadline, but pressure particularly from American banks and politicians reversed the decision. The top nine US banks have \$13.3 bn loans to Brazil, an incredible 46% of their capital. If they were pushed too far, they feared Brazil might impose a moratorium on all debt repayments.

But all over the world, capitalist strategists shuddered at the political implications. The riots over layoffs and spiralling cost of living in Sao Paulo this April gave warning that the poorest and most downtrodden of Brazil's population were beginning to demand part of the supposed "miracle" in the economy.

Enormous extra sacrifices might lead to a revolutionary upheaval. Strikes the



The riots in Sao Paulo this April. A warning to the military regime and to capitalism internationally.

previous week by 100,000 oil and engineering workers paralysing the country's two largest oil refineries gave added emphasis to the danger.

But the patched up agreement still puts a heavy burden on the Brazilian masses. One of the strings to the banks extension was that indexing of wages should cease. Inflation gallops ahead at about 130% per year, and indexing just keeps workers' heads above water. Now automatic wage rises will only be for 80% of price increases, so there will be a big cut in living standards, possibly as much as 30% although slightly lessened by the de-indexing of rents.

Wages are already very low, usually between £25 and £50 a month, and constitute less as a percentage of production in manufacturing industry than 30 years ago. Just under half live below

a poverty line based on absolute hunger, with only Honduras and Peru in Latin America worse according to the United Nations. Companies in "great difficulty" are to be allowed to cut wages even further. Already 400,000 jobs have gone while the potential working population is consistently rising even higher.

## Strikes spread

So it is unlikely that the bankers' hurried change of mind will ward off trouble for long. Some of the middle class groups now in opposition to military rule are advancing very timidly, scared that they might frighten the generals into taking back their 'generous' offer of elections. But the city poor, in industry and the shanty towns are getting impatient.

Lula, leader of the oil

strike and organiser of the Workers' Party is gaining support. Lula's oil strike may have been stopped for the time being, but the oil workers and 70,000 metal workers who also struck last week are among a large number who agreed to take part in a one day general strike against the austerity measures.

The generals are forced to rely on right wing union leaders from government backed "unions" and the Communist Party who originally postponed the threatened general strike for fear of the Workers Party gaining support.

With the ruling class within Brazil split on tactics, and worldwide banks arguing with governments as to who should carry the can for bailing out economies battered by capitalism, the stage is set for explosive developments.





VIEW? COMMENT? EXPERIENCE?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Green light in Leamington

Dear Militant

In Sir Dudley's Smith's constituency, with a Tory majority of 13,000, the LPYS has made a considerable impact. We have had regular sales of *Socialist Youth* and *Militant* on the dole queue and the Parade and have received a tremendous response.

We found an ideal location next to a set of traffic lights. This boosted sales as a large queue developed everytime the lights changed to red.

One bus driver, to the astonishment of his passengers, opened the doors and admitted an eager seller who hopped off a few seconds later with a 20p clutched in his hand.

In three paper sales, with only three or four sellers we have sold forty-eight papers—which just goes to show there is a great demand for *Militant's* 'extreme' ideas even in a town like Leamington.

Yours fraternally  
Cath Weare and  
Sherry Long  
Warwick and Leamington  
LPYS

## Anti-Soviet propaganda

Dear Comrades

I refer to an item in *Militant* (1 July) headed "Workers' Democracy" ('Left & Right').

From the report in *Soviet Weekly* you draw the inferred conclusion that since only 70 amendments and additions were forthcoming it "proves" that there is no workers' democracy in the USSR. Your conclusion is silly and none-too-honest.

Surely it is not impossible that the proposed new law could be so agreeable to the

workers on collective farms that the number of amendments were minimal. It is only too evident that you do not say what the new law is!

I am not a member of any political party—so I hope you will not draw another mistaken conclusion from my letter. By and large I am much in favour of "Militant Tendency" and your paper but I am sick to death of seeing and hearing spurious anti-soviet propaganda in our reactionary media.

Despite the above, I wish you all success.

From a socialist OAP.  
HG Randall (Mr)

## What about proportional representation

Dear Comrades,

Now that the election is over, perhaps it is time to look more closely at some of the side issues that surfaced, eg. proportional representation.

Many workers may feel some sympathy for PR because of the unfairness in the relationship between the number of votes cast for a party and the number of seats it gains in Parliament.

For myself, I don't think PR will get very far until Labour are once again set for victory. It would be used to stop a future Labour landslide. (A case of changing the rules if you are losing).

Nevertheless, I look forward to some discussion in *Militant* about it, bearing in mind, that after a socialist transformation of society, some sort of superior voting system would be necessary; did not Lenin call for PR in the Pamphlet "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme"?

Yours fraternally  
Mike Zamorski  
Leytonstone  
London

## United Biscuits hypocrites

Dear Comrades

The week before the United Biscuits redundancies were announced in Liverpool, I saw an advert for production management traineeships which stated that "due to expansion the company UB (UK) Ltd now has four extra traineeships to offer..."

Applicants were told they would have to work shifts, long hours and have a desire for hard work. The management here need reminding of the shifts, long hours and hard work put in by the workers at Crawfords.

I hope the workers at Crawfords are successful in fighting against the closure, and give a lead to other factories, especially in Merseyside under such threats.

Yours fraternally  
Jackie Wakefield  
Hull North LPYS

## What future for old people?

Dear Comrades

My future wife is a good neighbour to two elderly sisters aged seventy-four and eighty-four. The husband of one of the sisters, aged seventy-five is getting violent his mind starting to go.

The husband is sent to hospital for two weeks' rest and comes home drugged up to the eyeballs. This is just one case, how many more similar cases are there. Is this the answer—drugs?

My own personal opinion is that he needs special care and attention, without the use of drugs. It seems to me at the moment they are short of staff to help him and drugs are the easy option.

Is this the outlook for elderly people that need help, care and attention? The responsibility lies flat and square on a Tory government which has no concern about elderly people in our society.

Yours fraternally  
Derek Berken  
Brentford and Isleworth  
CLP

## Oh No Neil!

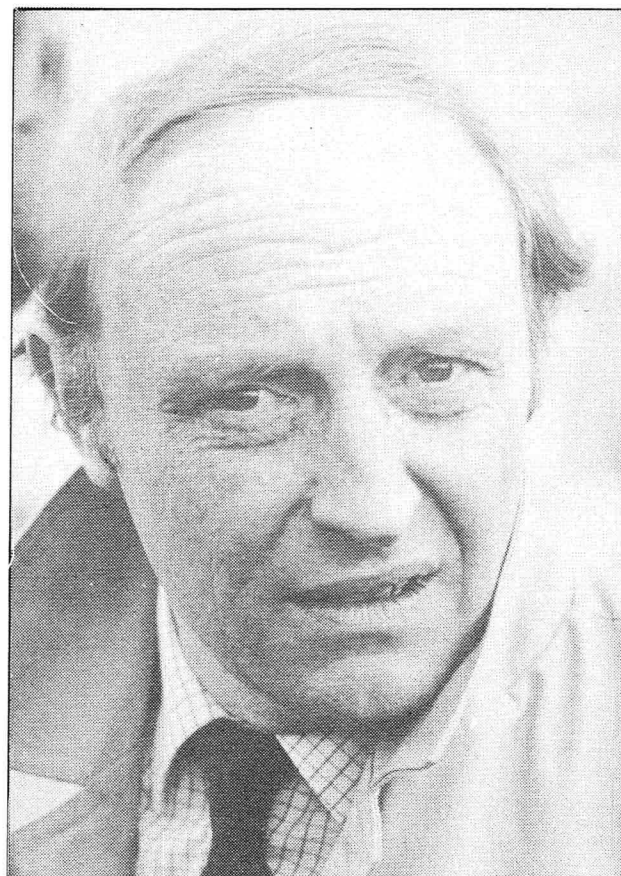
Dear Comrades

I was disgusted to read in last week's *Militant* that Neil Kinnock had sided yet again with the right-wing. His vote at the Organisation sub-committee of the NEC to force the Constituency Labour Parties of the five *Militant* Editorial Board members to proceed with their expulsion should be noted by all party members.

The election, has proved that expelling socialists does not win votes. But in Broadgreen where a radical, bold socialist programme was put forward there was actually a swing to Labour.

If Neil Kinnock is to become leader, will he continue the witch-hunting policies of previous leaders, which will split the party, or will he drop the witch-hunt and concentrate on building a mass Labour Party to defeat the Tories and bring about a socialist society?

Yours fraternally  
Steve Billcliff  
Bow and Poplar LPYS



Neil Kinnock

Photo: Militant

## Manx on the March

Dear Comrades

I have just read the article in *Militant* (8 July), "Britain's First Soviet", about the "Manx General Strike" in 1918.

As a Manx person, it was with great pleasure that I learnt of these events, almost by accident, when I was looking through some old documents in the Manx Museum. When I delved even further I discovered a whole wealth of material, on a history which is rich in the struggle of the Manx working class.

As with the 1918 'Bread Strike' which shook the Isle of Man to its foundation, these events were never presented to us in our history classes at school. Which poses the question, why not? In fact trade union organisation is presented as something alien to the island.

As the article points out, nothing could be further from the truth.

There is in fact a strong labour tradition in the Isle of Man and it is something that Manx working people can be proud to continue.

Yours fraternally  
Alistair Wood  
Sussex University  
Labour Club

## Shock of the dole

Dear Editor

I have just read the leader article on unemployment in *Militant* (8 July). In sunny and "affluent" Brighton the unemployment figure is over 15% and I became part of that percentage at Easter this year.

As an AUEW Branch Secretary I am aware all the time, not only of the gradual destruction of the engineering industry in Brighton, but also the problems many of the members I represent

face.

Some of these problems; sudden loss of work—boredom; sudden loss of colleagues—boredom; sudden reduction in your standard of living—perhaps the biggest problem of the lot.

So Mr Lawson don't tell us that a reduction in the unemployment benefit will be an incentive for four million of us to find work, £25 per week is not a lot!

Yours fraternally  
Mark Steel-Perkins  
Brighton

## Save 'special' classes

Dear Sir,

Could I please enlist your support in helping to prevent the closure of special and remedial classes within certain schools. Tory cutbacks are forcing the closure of such classes, in particular Holmefield 1st school, Bradford.

My daughter aged seven attends such a class, and will be placed in a bigger class at the end of this term. Children with certain learning difficulties desperately

need these classes, in order to reach the educational standard required in schools today.

I have drawn up a petition asking parents and neighbours for their support. I have been interviewed on local Radio.

Will you support me in my fight to stop the Tories making such cuts in the future?

Yours fraternally  
Susan Holt  
Holmewood  
Bradford 4



Photo: Militant

The fascist British Movement show their ugly face.

## Fighting Fascism

Dear Comrades,

Chris Bain (*Militant* 8 July) questions the principle of opposing access to the media for fascists.

If today's fascist groups establish a foothold in the future, their leaders will be presenting a law-abiding face in the media at the same time as fascist bands are launching a war of attrition against the organisations and activists of the working class, as happened in Italy and Germany.

This would take place with a greater or lesser amount of collusion from the capitalist state, depending on the circumstances. In order to prevent them reaching that position we certainly need to counter fascist ideology.

But past experiences shows that the ultimate success of the socialist forces depends at least as much on the level of resolve they display in opposing the system and its counter revolutionary thugs.

Fascism stands for the complete destruction of the

labour movement and democratic rights, and we therefore have to mount all-out opposition to it from day one. This would include appeals to the TV and press unions to black fascist material.

If we were to stand back and concede a media platform to fascism from a distorted sense of fair play, we would lose credibility with workers later when we tried to alert them to the danger posed by fascism and expose the sham legality of its capitalist backers.

The right wing of the movement advocate a softly-softly, 'constitutional' approach because they fear the mass mobilisation of the working class almost as much as reaction itself.

However, it's only through mass mobilisation on a positive socialist programme that fascism will decisively be beaten.

Yours fraternally  
L. J. Wright  
Leeds South & Moreley  
CLP

## Militant banned in Beswick

Dear Comrades,

At a recent meeting of the Beswick/Clayton ward a resolution was passed banning the sale of the *Militant*.

The proposer tried to justify this by claiming that as the Editorial Board had been expelled it was right to ban the sale of the paper.

It was obviously a blatant attempt at political censorship and in the words of one party member was more suited to the "tactics of Stalin's politbureau".

The right wing in the local Labour Party have lost the political arguments time and again and in their attempt to stop the growth of support for *Militant* they are resorting to desperate methods.

They won't succeed. The fact that they are afraid to allow a paper to be sold shows the weakness of their position.

Yours fraternally  
Rob McGregor and  
Mark Davies  
Manchester Central CLP



Fords, Dagenham during the 1978 strike

## Fords say Militant different

Dear Militant,

For three years we have sold *Militant* in the main entrance of Fords Dagenham.

Two of us were recently approached by a plain clothed security man who had already spoken to other comrades in the same area.

He said, 'You know you're on private property' I said, 'I understand it's not illegal to be on private property if you're not obstruct-

ing or damaging anything.'

He agreed but said, *Militant* could not be sold there because it was political. I said there were Tory national and evening papers being sold there. He said that that was different.

I wonder if its anything to do with the increase of *Militant's* sales and influence that they start to harass us after all this time.

Yours fraternally  
Matthew Taylor  
& Lee Waker  
Dagenham LPYS



# The destruction of construction

Photo:  
Andrew Wiard  
(Report) III

**SINCE 1979 Mrs Thatcher and her Government have decimated the construction industry and as a result nearly every member of the working class has been affected either directly or indirectly.**

In some areas one in two construction workers are on the dole and the majority of those still lucky enough to have a job are wondering if they will still be working this time a week from now.

The big contractors grab what work there is. Most of them engage in what is known as Management Fee Contracting.

Under this system a contractor takes on a job and subcontracts it out to other firms. Health and safety at work and direct employment are just words of the past under this system.

The Tories have helped their paymasters with the 1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act which enables private contractors to compete with council Direct Labour Organisations for council work.

## Private contractors

Private contractors are even tendering for maintenance jobs under £10,000 value.

The council and its tenants suffer through the use of substandard materials and shoddy workmanship. Private companies aren't interested in the people who have to live in houses, all they want is to get their money and take off.

One contractor was taken off Coventry City Council's selective tendering list because of the repeated failure to produce work to the required standard.

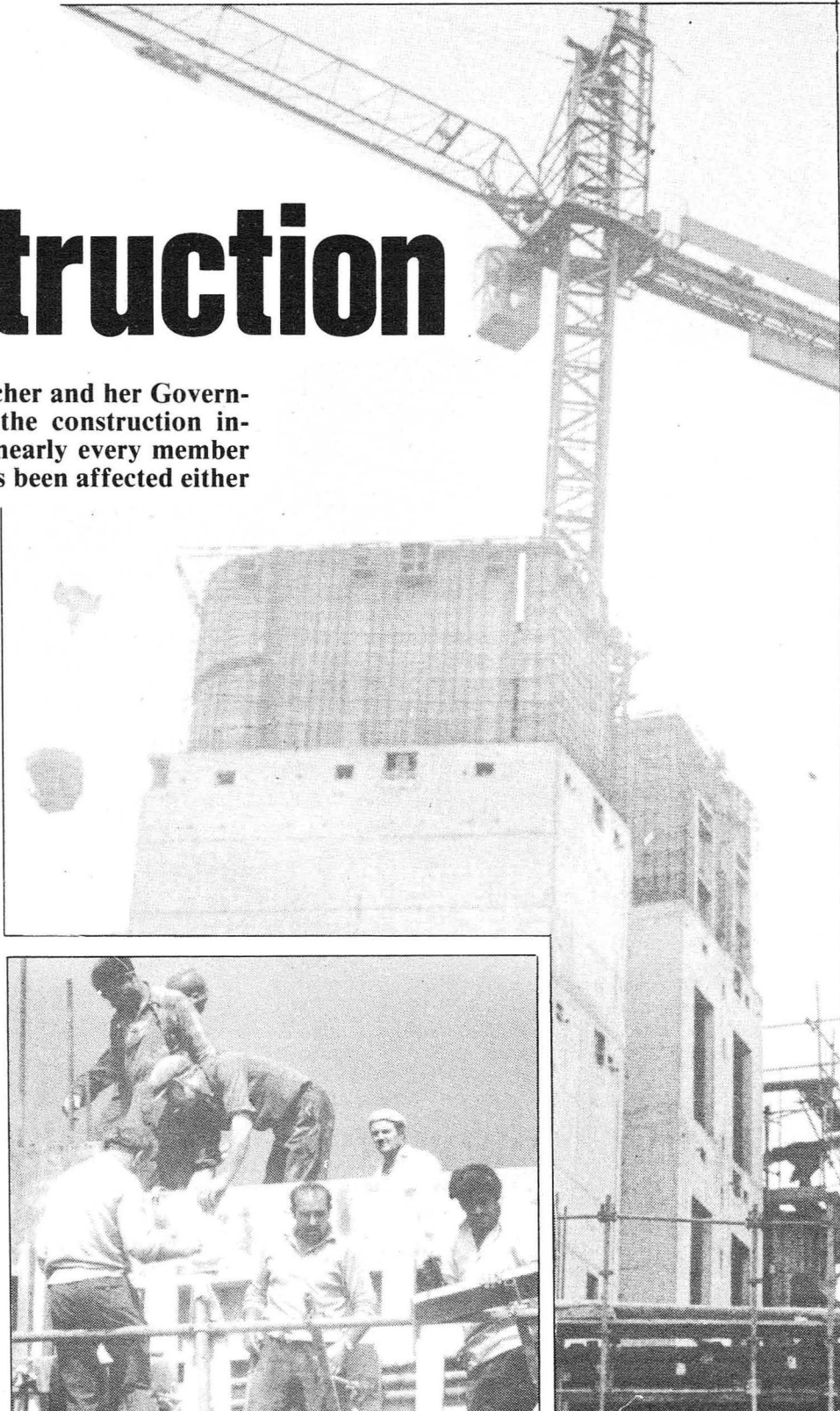
With private contractors moving into the public sector more and more DLOs are being run down or closed. Since 1979 more than 51,000 jobs have been lost in DLOs.

Unemployment in the construction industry means that union organisation is almost nonexistent in an industry notoriously difficult to organise at the best of times.

Go on to a site now and you'll have great difficulty finding someone to stand as a steward or safety rep. Most people who want sites organised don't work on them anymore. They're on the dole thanks to the black list that employers claim doesn't exist.

What little safety there was on site has gone straight out of the window. Firms are using minimum amounts of scaffolding, trench shoring, etc., because it increases the tender price or their overheads thereby reducing profits.

This year is "Site Safe '83". Employers are shouting in the press slogans like "put safety first" and



Building work has always been dangerous, but rarely more so than now.

"XYZ Construction Ltd supports Site Safe '83"—telling lies about how they care for their employees.

They care alright. Forty-five men killed on building sites in the first 3 months of this year.

John Selwyn Gummer sums up the Tories' attitude to construction workers, "cowboy workers, those who are careless and ignore safety, not only risk their own lives but also those of their workmates."

I notice the Tories never mention cowboy employers, once again safety is pushed onto the worker, it becomes his responsibility.

The bonus system doesn't help safety in any way. A scaffolder is given a price for an area of scaffold, not how many ties hold it to the building. The same as a groundworker is given a price on the yardage of drainage he can lay, not for the shoring up of the trench.

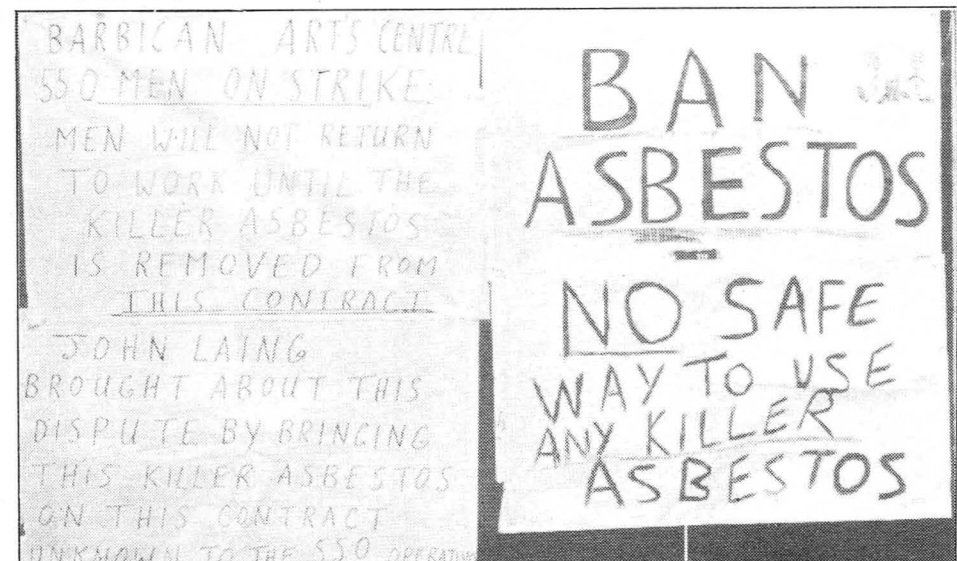
Employers say you can't have the money and safety, so a married man with kids, a wife, and mortgage needs the money and takes the risk but all too often the wife becomes a widow and has to live off the pittance the state gives her.

Construction work desperately needs to be car-

ried out. New housing, both public and private: new roads; new sewers to replace the collapsing Victorian ones in use now, or is that one of Mrs Thatcher's Victorian values to find your street flowing with filth because some sewers collapsed.

Carry out the work that needs doing and there will be full employment in the industry. We can get most of these young people off the dole and give those who want them real jobs in the construction industry.

By a UCATT member  
in the North East



Barbican workers protest at asbestos in 1976. Dangerous materials are still a major problem.

# A struggle for basic rights

THE PROBLEMS and dangers for construction workers "lucky enough" to have jobs can be illustrated by just one site in South Yorkshire.

Workers are involved in the building of a new coalwashing, sorting and loading plant next to a large colliery. This entails enormously varied structures and civil engineering works. Altogether over 1,200 are employed by firms in contract to the NCB, which also has people working at the site.

Hundreds of different jobs are carried out—site clearance, crane driving, steel erection, pipe laying and so on. Many are divided up by the main contractors and given out to small sub-contract gangs.

This creates many problems and difficulties for union organisation and uniformity in wages and conditions. Some sub-contract gangs are run by "cowboys" who move on from site to site, sacking men after the job is complete and employing others at the next site.

Workers employed by such people have the constant threat of the sack hanging over them and any attempt to organise may result in dismissal and non-union labour brought in to take their place.

**In the last three years 450 construction workers have died. And already this year there have been more than 70 deaths.**

They are often on low wages and have to put up with appalling conditions. On this particular site a recent dispute blew up that ended in partial victory against this system.

Three workers were given notice on the grounds of no more work being available, two were given a week's written notice and the other was told he was no longer required at the end of the shift.

This bombshell was not accepted by the men and they met to discuss the issue on the following Monday. The sub-contractor refused to meet them, just as he refused to discuss anything with them before.

On the Monday, the sub-contractor hired three new men, despite saying there was no work, and also claimed payment from one worker for the replacement of a machine which he claimed had been damaged through negligence and incompetence. Various other statements were made in front of witnesses which led to the workers involved seeking police advice.

Of the thirteen workers employed by this sub-contractor, eight decided to strike and the others carried on working for that day. The eight sat in the canteen from 8.30am to 4.30pm and were sacked.

The following day they mounted a picket of the site and after a mass meeting the rest of the site supported them. Faced with such a show of solidarity, the main contractor withdrew its agreement with the subcon-

tractor and offered the eight men redeployment.

Five accepted the new jobs (and far better pay) as they were offered the same work. Three have refused because they are machine drivers and have been offered labouring jobs, with a consequent reduction in earnings. They are still hopeful of a satisfactory conclusion as the work still requires machine drivers, and they have 20, 15 and 7 years experience. The situation is complicated by the fact that the main contractors have already laid off some drivers. It is now rumoured that the sub-contractor has decided to sell up and put himself into voluntary liquidation.

The machine referred to is ten years old, has been leaking oil at a gallon a day, often has to do 150 miles a day round the site on various jobs. In fact the nuts on one wheel were shaken loose and no wheel brace was provided to tighten them up. When it came off the driver was told it was his fault.

The sub-contractor had no store of oil, grease or maintenance tools and told the men to cadge off others, he did not even provide holiday pay.

Workers were often frightened to leave the job for teabreaks and worked unpaid overtime to finish jobs rather than get the sack.

One worker had been sacked and re-employed nine times in the last seven weeks! All of them were on different bonuses.

The sub-contractor just wasn't prepared to talk about their grievances and was looking for an excuse to dismiss the men. He had graciously allowed them to join a union, but said he would not negotiate and would ignore the union anyway.

If it hadn't been for the solidarity of the rest of the site, these workers would be back on the dole. Despite tremendous difficulties the union organisation has been built up. The workers are split up into little huts, many groups come and go and no job is safe. Redundancies have been postponed for the moment but are constantly threatened.

It was the health workers' dispute that activated the workers there into electing stewards and representatives. AUEW construction members won a full-time nurse on site after an accident in which one worker had broken his leg and an ambulance was slow getting there.

They made a firm stand over this and now this latest issue has compounded the need for unity throughout the site. There was 100% support from the rest of the site which proved that unity is strength.

Alan Anderton spoke to  
UCATT and AUEW  
(Construction) members

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)



# Industrial Reports

## Schweppes' divide and rule tactics

**THE TORIES' destruction of jobs on Merseyside is going on with relentless momentum. Latest on the chopping block is the Schweppes factory in Aintree.**

**But as this interview with the plant's convenor, Tony Hayes shows, the spirit to fight back is there. Tony Hayes spoke to Jim Hollingshead of GMBATU No 5 Branch.**

Support for our fight is growing around the country. Sidcup, the largest factory in the drinks group have agreed not to take over our work, the distribution

workers are supporting us, and on July 15 a meeting will take place in East Kilbride, to ask them to refuse Aintree's work.

We're building links but it's quite difficult. I'm the senior stewards' representative for the whole group, so I already have the contacts with stewards and convenors but the management are refusing me access to the rank and file.

The case we are putting to the shop floor is basically that although we're on the line now, this is just the first skirmish in every one's battle and everyone's war. Let me

stress again, we're just the first to be attacked.

The idea of making concessions to management isn't—and as we've learned to our cost—never has been viable. In 1981 management came along and said to us, "we want 114 redundancies in Aintree". They said the plan was to take our canning line and send it to Bristol, otherwise Bristol would close. In view of that we agreed a voluntary redundancy programme.

Now look at us! We're on the chopping block. But no one in Bristol should feel safe either. Schweppes go a bundle on five year plans, and we're just coming to the end of one. Some time ago they showed us a slide

show of their next brain wave for the industry's future. *The Bristol factory was just not mentioned at all!*

On top of that they announced that they had shelved a plan to close Aintree and East Kilbride, in favour of just closing Aintree. None of us know the details of the plan but it seems obvious that it includes the run down and closure of one or more other factories in the drinks division.

**They want to pick us off one by one'**

Schweppes are playing it very clever. They're using the old divide and rule tactic. If they announced multiple closures they'd

be a rallying of the workers all over the country. They're trying to pick us off one by one, at the same time attempting to convince the other factories that they're safe if we go under.

Support around the country must be rallied. Sidcup, Bristol, Fireham and the distribution workers are behind us, but all the factories must be mustered for the fight now, or they will have to fight later from a position of weakness having lost the first battle of the war.

We face a closure date in the first half of next year. This is not a favour from management. It's to uproot a drinks production line because it takes ages to get them running properly on their new site.

Secondly, the distribution and marketing of the goods will be a problem for them without Aintree. It will take time for the distribution depot in Warrington to get used to working without us. It has to service the whole North West, probably their most popular market outside London.

The last point is their own tactical consideration. They want a long drawn out affair to sap the resolve of the workforce and demoralise our people here.

We intend to keep our people on the ball, build support in the other factories and with the help of the LPYS and *Militant* around this country, we'll build up our fight.

## Aire Valley Yarns VICTORY

**TWENTY ONE Asian textile workers in Farsley, between Leeds and Bradford, have been victorious in their fight against a reactionary management.**

The 21 workers at Aire Valley Yarns Ltd. were on strike from March 14, after shop steward Liaquat Ali was sacked.

The sacking took place after management discovered workers had formed a branch of the TGWU. After two months of 24 hour picketing with solidarity action by the labour and trade union movement from Leeds and Bradford. The management have recognised the TGWU and have agreed to negotiations. Both sides are to accept the outcome of a tribunal on the question of the reinstatement of Liaquat Ali.

This major victory for the strikers will act as a beacon to textile workers in the sweat shops throughout West Yorkshire who are being mercilessly exploited.

## Liverpool CEP strike

**TWENTY PEOPLE organised by the GMBATU branch 5 at the Community Maintenance scheme in Liverpool, a CEP scheme, have been out on strike since Monday, 11 July.**

Management refused to speak to the branch convenor after the shop stewards had been into see management over a safety matter and the union members at the scheme not wanting to work with non-union labour, which is branch policy.

They got nowhere, so the convenor tried and was told by management they would not discuss with him because he was a "bad influence". They wanted to speak to a paid official, yet the branch convenor is a full-time official. When this was made clear management were disinterested, so the workforce voted to take strike action.

Also on the Monday two girls started but were kept away from the union members. They were told lies by management who tried to make them strike-break.

On the Tuesday they stopped at the picket and they joined the union!

On the Wednesday one of the union members who abstained on the strike vote (but said she would go along with

the majority) resigned and went along to the TGWU and joined them. Then the boss, who thinks he's Henry Ford and still in the 1920s, brought in seven young lads who were desperate for a job. They also joined the TGWU but after being told it was an official GMBATU strike, still went and scabbed. The TGWU were informed of this and kicked them out.

These lads do not realise that they will not be getting paid because the MSC and Liverpool City Council have stopped all funds.

The management also brought ACAS in and that came to a stalemate. There is a management committee meeting on Wednesday 20 July but the union reps are not invited, so the workforce are going to lobby the management committee with their demands:

- ★ Recognition for the convenor and any other union official.
- ★ Payment for time lost during the strike.
- ★ Dismissal of the seven strike-breakers.

**By Derrick Jones**  
(GMBATU No 5, and Community Maintenance Shop Steward)



## JOB CENTRES

### No to Saturday opening

**BRADFORD** Job Centre was again heavily picketed by CPSA and SCPS members supported by unemployed activists from Sheffield on July 9.

For the last 11 weeks the Bradford and Leeds Job Centres have been picketed on Saturday mornings with the aim of making sure that Saturday opening, (at present only a 'pilot scheme') isn't allowed to become permanent.

Civil Service workers have travelled from Halifax, Sheffield, Selby and Hull to protest.

Despite this the government have pushed ahead on an experimental basis at a number of Job Centres lasting for 13 weeks until the end of July.

The Tories want Saturday opening to create the illusion they are improving services

for the unemployed. This is crass hypocrisy. Besides the fact that it is their policies that have pushed million on to the dole in the first place, they have actually hammered this service.

The government have scrapped the Occupational Guidance Service, slashed Job centre staff despite the dramatic rise in unemployment, and even have plans to shut job centres down. And in reality, if an unemployed person saw a job he wished to apply for at the Job Centre on a Saturday, he would have to wait until Monday anyway as the vast majority of industries shut down on Saturdays or only have

The Tories want Saturday opening at Job Centres to create the illusion they are expanding services for the unemployed. At the same time they are shutting Job Centres down.

minimum staff present who cannot deal with job applications.

One lesson of this dispute so far has been the need for the unions, especially those in the DHSS, Job Centres etc, to fight with the unemployed.

In Sheffield the Centre Against Unemployment has developed an excellent relationship with the union branches concerned. Activists from the Centre have travell-

ed to Bradford to help on the picket line and have also helped with a dole queue petition concerning the closure of two Job Centres in Sheffield in the Autumn.

Union branch officers have attended 'Users' meetings at the Centre to keep us updated with developments. The centre is determined to defend Job Centres' services and also the jobs of workers in them.

## Brixton UBO

**BRIXTON** Unemployment office staff are on strike over the dismissal of one member of staff Dale Russell, a former union activist who is to be sacked on 29 July.

Management state the reason for the dismissal is due to Dale's sickness record. They gave Dale his final warning and staff procedure was completely ignored.

Charges aimed at Dale Russell can easily be used against anyone. At present two members of Brixton DHSS are being victimised by management resulting in one resigning, the other, the

author of this article, is becoming more sickened by the system we live under—he is about to explode!

Management know they must cut staff, but due to the recession people tend to keep their jobs so now the management turn to foul means to get their cuts.

We demand no action be taken against Dale Russell prior to the hearing of his appeal. Solidarity support has already been received from Brixton DHSS and other support is to follow.

**By a Brixton DHSS worker**



# Industrial Reports

## 100th Durham Miners' Gala

# A carnival of solidarity

**TENS OF thousands of working class people throughout the North East of England lined the streets of the old city of Durham to celebrate the 100th annual Miners' Gala on Saturday, July 16.**

No fewer than 69 banners from the Durham area alone, many representing collieries that have long since been closed, wound their way slowly through the crowded narrow streets. Each had their own Lodge bands beating a defiant note which, no doubt, brought back a flood of memories to the older, retired miners who quietly looked on in pride.

Amidst a tremendous cheer from the crowds, Michael Foot and other leaders of the labour and trade union movement looked silently on from the balcony of the Royal County Hotel, as the Chopwell Lodge banner with its portraits of Marx, Lenin and Keir Hardie, followed by others with the slogan "Workers of the world unite", eased their way through the masses and headed towards the rallying point at the racehorse ground a few hundred yards up the road.

Also to receive a warm reception were the many banners of solidarity especially from the Welsh mining villages. But many of the locals were waiting to applaud the enthusiasm and defiance of the youth from Bearpark—which over the years has become a sort of tradition.

Moving arm in arm, in rows of eight, they skip from one side of the street to the other chanting, "We shall be back next year" and "Bearpark forever".

Sadly though this pit (one of the oldest in the area) is shortly to close because of

exhaustion.

The first speaker to address the rally was Neil Kinnock, a contender for the leadership of the Labour Party, who made the point that from 1883 onwards the working class people and the labour and trade union movement had gone from strength to strength.

Greater cheers greeted Tony Benn, who holds the record of being elected to address the Gala on no less than 11 occasions. He told the gathering that "we are celebrating a century of struggle".

Similar applause greeted Arthur Scargill, the president of the NUM, who launched an immediate attack upon the government and the National Coal Board who called for more pit closures, because of 'economic reasons'.

He warned the Durham miners that included in today's hit lists are plans to close two-thirds of all the pits in the North East, leaving only seven.

He called upon the mine workers to "grasp the nettle" and stand up and fight. He argued that a four day working week would automatically create 30,000 new jobs in the mining industry alone. Then turning towards Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock he demanded that future Labour governments implement true socialist policies instead of "trying to run a capitalist system better than the Tories!" To cheers he finished off by saying that he does not accept that the Tories are in for another five years. "Let's campaign to get a general election before this five years is over."

By Bob Harker  
(Gateshead East LPYS)

## MEDWAY HOSPITAL

**FRIDAY 8 July saw a very well supported 24 hour strike of catering staff, porters, electricians and laundry staff at the Medway Hospital, Gillingham, Kent.**

It was called by the hospital NUPE and COHSE branches to demand the reinstatement of a NUPE member sacked for allegedly 'stealing' some plastic bin liners.

Few scabs crossed the picket line, (which was for quite a while over fifty strong and was adorned with a Polish *Solidarnosc* poster) and most non-essential deliveries were turned away.

NUPE Branch Secretary Helen Manning explained that the sacking had aroused a lot of anger. This was

primarily because it had occurred after the hospital management chose to ignore the procedure previously agreed with the unions for dealing with theft allegations.

The sacking has also aroused anger because of the shabby way in which the accused woman was treated. Helen told me: "The police were called in before she had had the chance to answer the anonymous letter, her house was searched and she was locked up for three hours. They wouldn't have treated her like that if she'd been management."

The determination and solidarity displayed on the picket line were an inspiration to watch, as workers from all departments and from both NUPE and COHSE built on the links already forged during the 1982 pay dispute.

By David Turner  
(Gillingham LPYS)



The old Chopwell banner (above), showing Marx, Lenin and Keir Hardie. Below: Part of the Gala, showing Easington banner.



Photo: D Doran (Militant)

## BRITISH RAIL'S OMO DEBACLE

WITH THE decision of the National Union of Railwaymen not to hold any further talks with BR management on One Man Operation (OMO) it is worthwhile to look at the experience of the St Pancras-Bedford line.

OMO was eventually accepted on this line by the NUR, when it was still in control of right-winger Sid Weighell. A fanfare of self adulation from the BR management and the Tory press greeted this final agreement. Yet they have far less to say about the reality of the situation.

They blamed the NUR for the delay in its introduction. The fact was BR was not technically ready for their introduction, and even now the system is operating, the safety aspects are not 100%.

Some of the stations still do not have the TV necessary installed. And the units themselves are supposed to travel at 90 mph yet the power car must be restricted to 75 mph otherwise it is a rough ride.

At Moorgate the tunnel, built on a sharp bend, was an inch or so too narrow for the new trains, so they had to carve an inch off the brickwork. Even now there is only a couple of inches of safety space.

At St Pancras half the men have not yet been trained for OMO. They still get booked on these jobs and therefore get the extra £6.36. What happens is trained drivers are taken off other jobs or do many hours overtime—sometimes up to 15-20 hours a day.

This leads onto the safety aspect. Despite the agreement that guards would still join the OMO trains for a six month trial period, many have been put onto revenue collection training, so in effect trains are already being operated by one man. OMO drivers working for long hours, coupled with the planned implementation of the Serpell Report which would mean less safety checks on rolling stock, increases the possibility of accidents.

Indeed within a couple of weeks of operation two OMO trains had windows smashed by vandals. With no guards present this type of vandalism can increase as the driver does not know what is happening.

What must be realised, however, concerning pay and conditions relating to OMO for the union membership, is that the concessions given to guards by management at St Pancras won't be given so lightly throughout the country, should OMO go through nationally. BR management used these concessions to soften the blow and get a foot in the door of union acceptance of OMO. The whole point of the OMO exercise as far as management are concerned is to shed thousands of guards' jobs as part of their cut-backs.

By Andy Viner  
(ASLEF Kings Cross)

## Renolds under threat

**WORKERS at Renolds' Manchester plant are still faced with 500 redundancies, and Bradford with closure, following a meeting with management, which has been adjourned until August 11.**

A report recently released by the shop stewards national combine contained devastating criticisms of the company's poor management. The report urges trade unionists to distrust rescue plans for the company, suggested by two big business consultant firms, and to formulate their own "union plans for jobs".

This report outlines previous years of mismanagement. The only

country where the company's operations have been expanding is South Africa, undoubtedly because of the cheap labour in that country.

In an attempt to survive the company returns a high interest short-term bank loan, a poor financial strategy at the best of times. The report says, "Renolds operating profits over the past 5 years was £50 million. The interest on all these loans was £22½ million. That means that nearly 50% of the last five years' profits have been wiped out by bank and interest charges."

This has led to a gradual decline in investment in Renolds between 1978 and 1983, and little investment is

expected in the current year.

A shop stewards delegation, sent over from the Renolds plant in France last week discovered that despite a management denial to the contrary, the French plant is to receive orders transferred from Manchester. This move underlines the need for international solidarity by Renolds workers in different countries. It prevents management from moving jobs around to suit their profits and attempting to play off one section of workers against another.

By Theresa Carr and  
Steve Nuttall  
(Withington LPYS)



## TOWNSEND THORESEN Spread the strike says Felixstowe

ON MONDAY 18 July, 80 Felixstowe based seamen and women descended on the National Union of Seamen's headquarters in London to "ginger up" the union NEC and officials about support for their strike which had been made official the previous Tuesday.

Crews on Townsend Thoresen's service from Felixstowe to Zeebrugge in Belgium along with services from Cairnryan in Scotland to Larne in Northern Ireland struck on 9 July demanding a 5.4% pay settlement to run from July to January.

This would give the same pay rates and settlement dates as other NUS members covered by the National Maritime Board.

Workers lost parity when they accepted a six month pay freeze last year as an "alternative" when the bosses threatened redundancies. The employers have offered 2.5%, but feeling already the pressure of the strike in the holiday season, they are now talking of "arbitration" by ACAS.

The Felixstowe NUS Port Committee feel more could be done nationally to spread the strike starting with other Townsend Thoresen services. They also want clear action to ensure sympathetic support from French and Belgian unions, who could stop continental based firms increasing their sailings.

There will be a meeting of the National Port Committee on 22 July to report on progress.

PHOTOS: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)



NUS strikers aboard the Viscount Viking at Felixstowe. INSET: Henry Santamara, chairman Felixstowe Port Committee.

## WHAT MILITANT STANDS FOR

- ★ The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- ★ Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, public transport and other services.
- ★ A minimum wage of £100 a week, including for pensioners, the sick and disabled.
- ★ Opposition to anti-trade union and other legislation that restricts workers' democratic rights.
- ★ Opposition to all forms of discrimination against women, black and Asian workers and minority groups in society.
- ★ Massive cuts in arms spending, now running at £15bn a year.
- ★ Unilateral nuclear disarmament.
- ★ An end to the devastation of basic industries like coal, rail and steel.
- ★ Workers' control and management in the nationalised industries, run by boards to be made up of one third of each of representatives from: the unions in the industry; the TUC, representing all workers; the government.
- ★ Opposition to dictatorship of the national press by a handful of rich press barons. Printing facilities should be nationalised and access given to political parties except fascists on the basis of their electoral support.
- ★ Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80-85 per cent of the economy. This should be done through an Enabling Bill, with compensation based only on proven need.
- ★ A socialist plan of production, in which the enormous resources of the country are democratically planned for the benefit of the whole population.
- ★ Opposition to the capitalist Common Market. For a United Socialist States of Europe, as a step forward to a World Socialist Federation.



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### SCRAPHEAP

Continued from page one

20,000 university places lost.

Fears were increased not just by Tory cuts (they have spend 33% more on arms than education) but also by the leaked Tory "Think Tank" which proposed stopping grants for further education and replacing them with bank loans, a system already operating in the USA.

This is another way of preventing the small minority of working class kids who make it to higher education from getting university or polytechnic places. Which bank will loan people like us a few thousand to do a degree course when we can offer them no collateral, no security on the loan apart from a note from Thatcher, "I promise to pay the bearer on completion a DHSS giro"

A Central College student who had gone back to educa-

tion after raising three children told me how she had been refused a bank loan to buy central heating because she was a student and therefore a "bad risk". There was no certainty where she would be in two years.

Surely this would be the case for loans for degree courses as there is no certainty we'll get jobs and be able to repay our loans when graduate unemployment stands at 14.2%. And we have no rich Daddy to map out careers for us in a friend's company.

Some people at Central have worked 20 years before coming back for a fuller education. They've paid for it many times over. A larger percentage of workers' income goes on tax than the upper or upper middle class who use accountants to avoid payment. But we are the first to be stopped from improving our chances through education.

Another girl, Liz, was worried because she was doing a sociology degree.

"When the Tories start cutting courses that will be the first to go because it questions all the lies from the media and from our schools. It doesn't make the capitalist system look wonderful.

"All the 'arts' courses will be vulnerable, leaving just some scientific and technical courses where there's a bit better chance of a job at the end. If you're studying how to make a nuclear bomb you'll probably get a loan".

Liz is one of many who came back to education late and showed herself as capable as anyone. But although working class students don't have the financial advantages of more upper crust students, 90% of FE students get no financial aid and completely rely on friends and relation.

Earlier on working class children take many handicaps into their educational life, usually less parental encouragement and far less money to afford books. But workers have shown at FE colleges that these problems

can be overcome. They have uncovered a goldmine of talent.

The Tories, if they get their way, will let this talent go to waste. There are only a few places "at the top" under the capitalist system, mostly reserved for the children of the ruling class. There are a lot more places at the bottom of the pyramid and the Tories are determined we shall fill them.

Marxists are fighting for every person to be able to stretch themselves to their potential. Students at Central are fighting for education, like a job, as a right. One woman student said, "that Tory cow is not going to stop me".

But they won't be fighting alone. They will mobilise with the rest of our class to kick the Tories and the capitalists out. The bosses had better start packing their bags.

By Cheryl Varley (Liverpool Riverside LPYS)

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