

## Tories slash vital services .....

# LABOUR COUNCILS - NO RETREAT!

Thatcher's government have fired the first shots in a new round of war on vital services such as housing, education and social services. They are aiming at local authority finance.

Labour councils must fight the new "rate-capping" proposals which put councils in an invidious position (see page 5). If these arrangements are allowed to go through, councils will face the option of cutting services and jobs.

A *Militant* reporter spoke to DEREK HATTON a leading Labour councillor on Liverpool City Council, which Labour regained from the Liberals and Tories on a fighting programme three months ago. How does Liverpool intend to fight the Tories?

"We are inheriting a budget deficit which would mean just over a thousand to 1,200 people losing their jobs if we didn't fight. It would mean certain services would be absolutely decimated and that certain key schools would close.

"We've reversed all that; we've kept Croxeth comprehensive open, we've put a block on the 1,200 redundancies and we are also in line with our promise preparing to give a rent deduction of £2 a week.

"On top of that, we are also creating a further thousand jobs in street cleaning, house repairs, education and social services.

"The total package for all that will come to about £25 million. So we'll be £25 million overspent this year. We're arguing that we are not prepared to massively increase the rates to compensate for that even if we had a choice. Under the new "rate-capping" rules we wouldn't get a choice.

"So what we are saying to the government is that since 1979 you've taken £120 million off this City through lost rate support grant. We now want £25 million back. We think it's a perfectly modest request to ask for 20% of what they've taken off us since 1979. We want to satisfy the mandate on which we were elected.

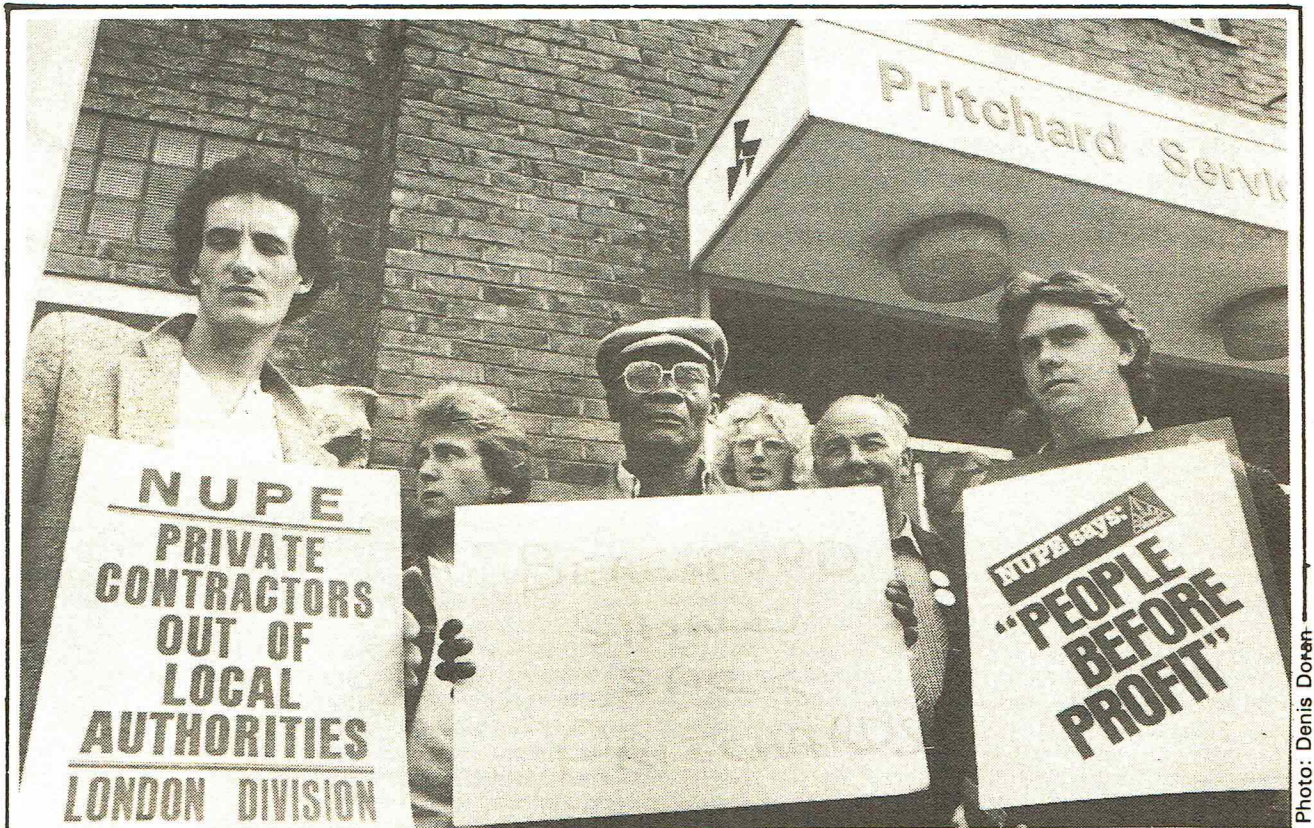
"Mobilising for this fight, we had a meeting with the local authority Joint Shop Stewards Committee who pledged full support and we are now calling a meeting in September of all shop stewards and worksite reps, which could number anything between 700 and a thousand."

### Full support for fightback from unions

"We'll be calling a meeting of them all in work time to discuss with them the implications of not carrying out Tory dictates, which would mean going into conflict over the £25 million. We will make the implications clear to the council workers and also to the people of Liverpool as we have done through the local papers and so on.

"We've said we are going to spend the money, and if the government don't give it to us then obviously we'll have a confrontation.

"It's important to make the point that we're not looking for a confrontation for confrontation's sake, but certainly if they try to take away these essential services we've now pledged to provide then obviously that battle will be inevitable."



Striking NUPE members employed by Pritchard's the private contractors used by Wandsworth council. Labour councils and unions must fight all Tory threats to jobs and services.

# Militant Rally

"MARXISM IN OUR TIME— SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR LABOUR"



Wembley Conference  
Centre, London  
SATURDAY 10  
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### Speakers

Ted Grant (Political Editor, *Militant*)  
Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*)  
Anton Nilson (Former Red Army pilot,  
1918-20)  
Terry Fields, M.P.  
Dave Nellist, M.P.

(Film  
"Battle for Algiers")

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Photo: A. Ward (Report II)

Last year's Labour Conference applauds the Party commitment to nuclear disarmament.

# Left sets agenda

By Militant Reporter

**THE RECENT activities of the right wing of Labour's NEC, preferring to ban the sale of *Militant* rather than discussing the general election result shows how out of touch they are with the wishes of the party membership.**

The gulf that exists is borne out by this year's annual conference resolutions. There is no confusion, no fudging in the majority of the resolutions commitment to radical socialist policies.

The resolutions indicate a willingness to discuss the party's failure to win the general election. This is highlighted by the sheer number of resolutions on that subject, 60 in all.

A complete section is given over to the discussion on "witch-hunts", no resolution whatsoever offers support to the NEC's actions in expelling the five members of the Editorial Board. Five of the resolutions call for their immediate reinstatement. In a section entitled "pressure groups" ten resolutions call for the preservation of the party as a "broad church" and with continued freedom of discussion. Understandably the bulk of the resolutions are concerned with the party's administration and organisation.

Serious criticisms are made of how the party failed to get its message across to working people and the role of leading figures in the party on the question of policy. Many of the resolutions, however, simply criticise various points of the party's administration and only a few actually point out the link between organisation and political demands.

Significant in this category is the resolution from Liverpool Garston. Garston rejects the claim that the Labour Party manifesto was "too radical", seen in the context of the crisis in the economy, and points out the need to explain this to the electorate. It goes on to highlight the role of the

press, the lack of clarity of programme, the effect of the witch-hunt and the role of the right wing leadership.

Conference may discuss the issue of MP's salaries with the call for them to donate 20% of their Parliamentary salary to the party, along with the total income from newspaper articles, interviews, TV appearances, etc. These resolutions are posed as part of the need for a campaigning strategy to win the support of working people. In total over 160 resolutions, with 15 specifically on women's representation, are about the state of the party.

The policy section clearly underlines where the party membership stand on the manifesto issues. The defence of jobs and services in the public sector is high on the agenda. It is clear that many GMCs have learnt the lessons of the Clay Cross struggle and the need for a national campaign coordinated through the NEC and the trade unions.

Predominant in the policy section is the issue of youth unemployment and Youth Training Schemes. Recognition of the campaigning importance of the youth in the party is posed in several resolutions.

The National Committee of the LPYS are applauded for their work on YOPS and in the YTS campaigns. Conference is asked to support the call for the youth section to be directly involved in the propaganda broadcasts and leaflets, with the LPYS playing more than a secondary role in such matters within the party, rather than as some would have it, no role whatsoever!

The importance of disarmament, opposition to Cruise and Pershing missiles, the call for job alternatives in the arms industries and the struggle for peace and socialism will again be a major discussion at conference.

# Labour leadership-right threaten split

**THE RIGHT wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party are attempting to panic delegations to conference, particularly those in the trade unions, into voting for what they regard as "a safe and responsible leadership".**

Last week the pages of the serious papers of big business were full of information about a future split in the Labour Party. The articles contained detailed reports from "reliable sources" about a breakaway move by 40 or 50 right wing MP's who are considering forming a separate organisation called the "Democratic Labour Party". They are also considering divisive measures such as forming an electoral pact with the SDP/Liberal Alliance, or simply voting as a group on their own in Parliament whilst formally remaining Labour MPs.

In addition statements by Dennis Healey and others, hinting they will not seek election to the shadow cabinet if the left-wing make gains at the Conference, shows how the right-wing think. If they cannot rule the party, they are prepared to ruin it.

Unity to fight the Tories is of little importance to these individuals. They are only concerned with cynically retaining control of the party. Comments by Giles Rad-

By David Churchley

ice MP, Chairman of the "Manifesto Group", shows exactly where their loyalty lies. "...I have nothing against Michael Meacher personally but if by some misfortune he were elected Deputy Leader it would be electorally disastrous for the Party." (*Times* 5.8.83). Never mind the unity, feel the knife going in. The words, the actions, and the manoeuvring are identical to those used before and during the general election.

## Rule or Ruin

Disloyalty is not the sole property of the right-wing of the PLP. David Warburton, National Officer of the General and Municipal Workers Union, and Editorial organiser of 'Forward Labour' the right-wing broadsheet, "...the election of Mr Meacher as Deputy Leader would be an unmitigated disaster for the

party and all the posturings by either Kinnock or Hattersley enthusiasts will only aid the cause of those whose performances in recent years brought us defeat on June the 9th." (*S. Telegraph*, 7 August).

The Tories would clearly welcome a split. With spiralling unemployment, little sign of an economic recovery and the prospect of industrial action by key groups of workers, the bosses want the Labour Party to be in disarray. The last attempt to totally fragment the party, with the formation of the SDP, did not succeed.

The right-wing of the Party however face a difficult choice. If they leave and do not join the SDP they will find themselves in the political wilderness. The lost seats of Bill Rogers, Ben Ford, and almost all the previous SDP MPs stares them in the face.

The setting up of a so-called Democratic Labour Party would not offer automatic success. A similar move took place in Australia after a split in the labour movement, with the result that the breakaway party has completely collapsed.

If this group decide to go and join their renegade friends in the SDP they may

not succeed. If they choose to stay in the Labour Party then no one will be under any illusions.

This would not be out of loyalty to the party or the people who have put them there, but simply out of self interest. They will leave when they think that they can best serve their own careers, whatever disruption they cause.

The prospect of a leftward moving Labour Party committed to radical changes scares the bosses. They realise the depths of the crisis that their system faces.

## Tories want safety valve

The fact that Marxist Labour MP's are already having an effect demands the building of a safety valve. Despite a Tory victory at the general election dissatisfaction at the Tories still exists in many parts of the country and in other areas is just below the surface.

It is therefore vital that campaigns are vigorously conducted now within the unions to explain the importance of supporting those candidates who fully stand by the socialist policies of the party. Branch meetings must be organised to discuss and vote on the policies of the candidates both for the leadership and the NEC.

Socialists have nothing to fear from democracy, we have welcomed all the recent democratic gains made in the Labour Party. But too many union bureaucrats try and cast their votes without regards to their members.

The membership should be fully involved in how the unions vote. The right wing's claim that they stand for democracy is a joke. They stand for back-door manoeuvring.

They have lost the battle of ideas in the Party, they can only rely on threats and manoeuvres in a vain attempt at retaining their control. They will not succeed.

# Support Grows for Militant Rally

ONCE AGAIN the right wing prove themselves to be the best "Recruiting Sergeants" for *Militant's* ideas.

Following their recent decision to ban the *Militant* from Labour Party meetings hundreds of places are being booked at the *Militant* Rally. We know of at least 50 coaches that are already booked, carrying people from all over the country to demand the reinstatement of the five expelled members of the Editorial Board, support for Terry Fields MP and Pat Wall for the NEC, but above

all: "Socialist policies for Labour" to defeat the Tories.

Without doubt the quality of this event will surpass by far anything organised previously. In addition to the speakers (see front page) displays are being arranged on the "History of the *Militant*", on the "Life of Marx", the "Russian Revolution" and also on the early life of one of the speakers, Anton Nilsson.

Two films will be shown in the lunch break; one on Marx's life and the other on

Lenin and the Russian Revolution. In the early evening a film based on the Algerian Revolution of the early 1960s will be shown—the 'Battle for Algiers'.

This event is a must for all our supporters and sympathisers in the Labour Party and the trade unions, so don't be disappointed. Book now—contact your local seller for tickets or write to us direct, making cheques payable to 'Militant Rally'. Make sure you're there!

# TWO WEEKS TO S. WALES CAMP

SATURDAY 27—MONDAY 29 AUGUST.

Combine political education with holiday. Sunny weather guaranteed. Only £10. Write to 181, Hanover St, Swansea or phone Swansea 466631 (day) or Swansea 463623 (evening). Cheques made payable to Swansea Summer Camp.

## LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE GREETINGS

Show that your Labour Party, trade union branch, LPYS, Women's Section supports socialism, not witch-hunts. Advertise in *Militant's* Labour Party Conference issue.

3cms (15 words) . . . . . £4  
6cms (25 words) . . . . . £6  
1/16 page . . . . . £10  
1/8 page . . . . . £20  
1/4 page . . . . . £40

Make cheques payable to *Militant* and send to Circulation Department, *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN by Tuesday 20 September.

# BEST LPYS



# CAMP EVER!

Photos: Mick Carroll.

Combining politics with social activities. (Below) Pushba, an Indian trade union leader, (Left) part of the well-organised crèche (Above) Glasgow LPYS members perform the "Welly Song"!

By Nick Toms

The biggest and most enjoyable political education event in the British Labour movement. That is the only way to describe this year's LPYS summer camp attended by about 600 young socialists.

A wide range of issues were discussed at the camp to prepare the LPYS for the coming battles against the Tories. A meeting on 'India' was addressed by comrade Pushba, an Indian trade union leader, Steve Morgan (LPYS NEC rep elect) and a speaker from the Newham 8 Defence Campaign.

Pushba spoke about a strike of a quarter of a million textile workers in Bombay which has been going on since January 1982 and a strike of 45 million in Southern India, showing the growing crisis of Indian capitalism. Major debates also took place on Ireland with Clive Soley MP speaking and on 'Which way for Labour' with Denzil Davies MP, Eric Deakins MP and Laurence Coates (LPYS rep on NEC).

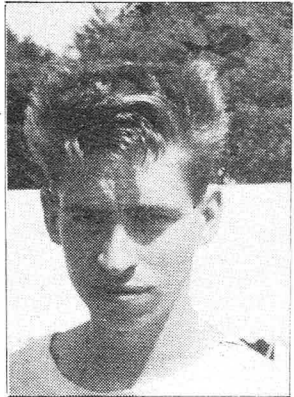
## Debates Discussions Socials

Deciding which sessions to attend every morning and afternoon was difficult to say the least. Throughout the week attendances at the different meetings and seminars were well up on previous years reflecting the interest in theory and discussion ranged from 'The history of Red Clydeside' with one of the original 'Red Clydesiders' Harry McShane speaking, to 'The Middle East'.

All this political discussion was intermingled with football and cricket competitions, the now famous quiz (won by the Millwall Militants), film shows, discos and two very entertaining club nights.

This year's camp was not just about education and enjoyment. It also laid the basis for next year's LPYS campaigning work. At a meeting against privatisation, a new LPYS Young Workers' Charter was launched, in draft form, to provide the basis for a major campaign into the workplaces to build a mass young socialist movement. It was announced that the first step in this campaign would be a Young Workers Conference to be held in Manchester on 10 December called by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign.

Many people were at their first summer camp, including some international visitors from Germany, the USA and Sweden. All will now be taking back the tremendous mood of confidence and determination at the camp.

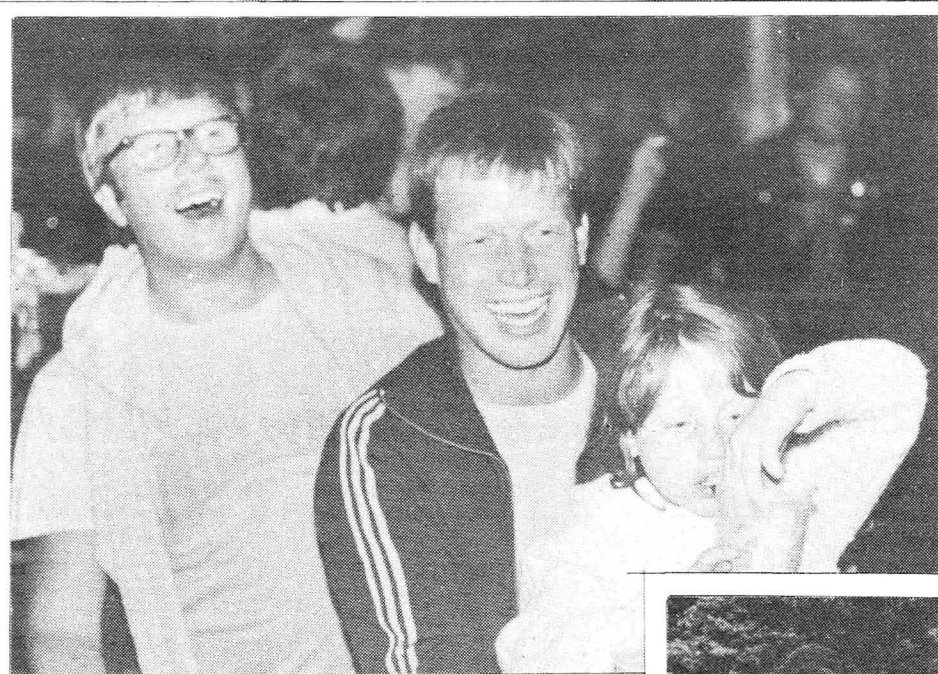
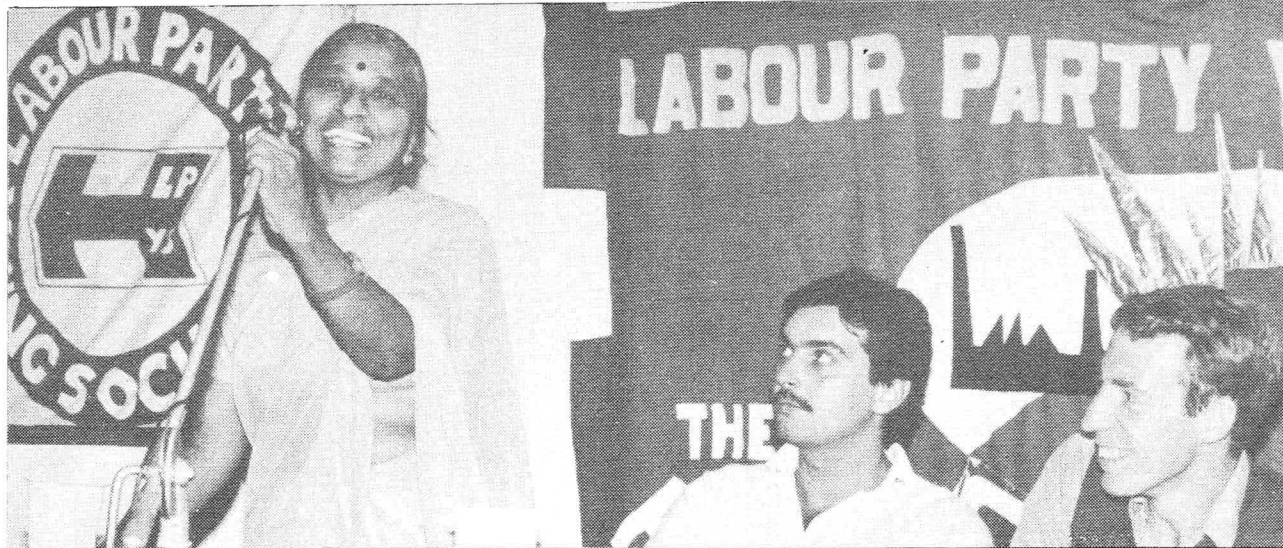


SHAUN DAKIN—Hackney South LPYS.

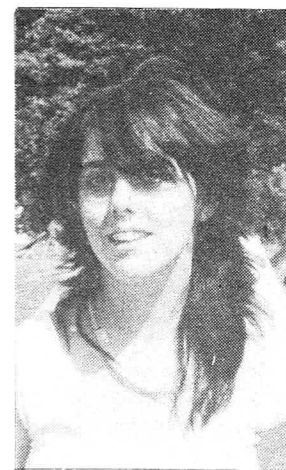
Shaun (22) has been a member of the LPYS for six months and was brought up with politics. His dad advised him to join the LPYS because he considers them, along with *Militant* the most active and fighting part of the Labour Party:

"You learn more about politics at LPYS Summer Camp in a week than you would normally in a year. You learn how to put the arguments for socialism in a clear way. The camp is not just fun but good politically as well.

"I enjoyed the International Rally best. It's very important to know what is going on in the world. It's great speaking to international comrades."



(Right) Enjoyment for all ages at club night (Below Left) Guest appearance of one M. Thatcher at LPYS version of Parliament. (Below right) Channel 4 film interviews for last Monday's *Ear to the Ground*.



PAULA STAUNTON—Liverpool Broadgreen LPYS.

Paula joined during the election campaign and is unemployed:

"I came to summer camp for a holiday and to educate myself politically. It's great that the camp can combine the two things. The atmosphere is good too. There are common ideas between a lot of people.

"You can be sitting beside someone you don't even know and talk to them because you'll be sure to get a good response. Although I thought the food prices were a bit too high, I enjoyed the camp as a holiday and a political education."

Interviews by John Hird



**Terry Fields MP and the hanging vote  
—reader's apology**

Dear Editor,  
May I now offer my full apology to comrade Fields, after reading his reply to my letter (*Militant* issue 662). I hope you will print this and also the fact that I apologise for being rude to the paper, by accusing it of being dishonest when it is not. I now know it is an honest paper and that there are now two honest MPs in the House of

Commons who will not be silenced, and have given proof of that in their maiden speeches in the Commons.

You all now have my full support, and as proof of that I enclose £5 towards getting our daily paper.

Yours fraternally  
GT Barker  
Sec Bridlington  
NUPE Branch

**'Capitalist' schools**

Dear Comrades,  
I am writing to highlight the almost total domination held by capitalist ideas in schools. I have been ridiculed, ignored, taunted and rebuked for being a Socialist and openly expressing opposition to capitalism. I have been told by my head of year that I should 'grow out of' my socialist ideas, and he assured me that I would change my mind.

The capitalist idea of worshipping the power of money also holds in the lessons. An exercise was conducted in a second-year class in which the pupil was cast as the managing director of a capitalist firm making a foray into a Third World country.

Among the considerations was paying as little wages as possible to the workforce, so as to make the maximum possible profit. Of course, all this was without regard to community benefit or the good of the people. Oh no, all that mattered was the degree to which capitalist ex-

ploitation could be carried. However, there was an oasis for a term. A temporary geography teacher noticed my socialist inclinations, and being of the same persuasions himself, proposed a discussion, and I am very grateful to him for giving me many new ideas and theories to ruminate over.

I hope this letter inspires other students to take action against capitalist domination in school teaching.

Yours in comradeship  
Paul Mitton (Jnr)  
Windsor Berks

**Labour and the  
Self-employed**

Dear Comrades,  
Leith Constituency has recently been considering the NEC's criteria for accepting new members into the party. A new member must belong to a "bonafide trade union affiliated to the TUC" if eligible to do so.

When we asked for further guidance on who was eligible or not we were told that those applicants who

**Letters**  
VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO  
MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

**Tory blind spot on  
health**

Dear Militant,  
Here is a story which I hope speaks for itself—*Sun* 2 August on Mrs Thatcher's eye trouble.

"Any injury to the retina is a serious and a potential threat to the sight". "Mrs Thatcher's physician Dr John Henderson says she is absolutely heroic and completely unfussed."

"The injury may force Mrs Thatcher to cancel her holiday in Switzerland".

There is no question of delay in the necessary treatment. Now compare that to an old lady who lives a few doors away from me. She has no relatives, just herself and her cat. In June it was decided she needed laser treatment for detached retinas, and was given Oc-

tober at the earliest for her first appointment under the NHS.

This would have been too late. With her savings she was able to receive private treatment in the same hospital in July. A holiday in Switzerland? No, she's quite happy to walk to the shops for herself and her cat. Previously she fell over in the street as her eye condition worsened. Absolutely heroic and completely unfussed she is.

Yours sincerely  
R.A Scothern  
Nottingham

**Lucky Thatcher**

Dear Comrades,  
So, Margaret Thatcher's eye has been causing her problems. I bet she didn't have to wait her turn at the local

were "unemployed, non-employed or self employed" were not eligible to join a trade union and should be accepted into the party "unless there was any evidence of anti-trade union feeling."

Leith Constituency would argue that there are very few cases where self employed people could not find a bonafide trade union to take them.

We would urge all bran-

ches and constituencies to insist that all prospective Labour Party members in work, self employed or not, should make a strenuous effort to join a suitable trade union—thus giving support to the trade union movement at a time when it is under threat.

Yours, in comradeship  
Lesley Campbell  
Press Officer  
Leith Labour Party

**Hard times**

Dear Comrades,  
Sometimes you have to feel sorry for the rich, what with the *Financial Times*, workers' strike it must have been difficult to keep track of the profits rolling in. Now it seems even *The Times* has

overworked casualty department. I bet she went private.

I bet she didn't have to scrape together £1.50 for a taxi out of her £25.00 a week unemployment benefit to get her to hospital in the middle of the night. I bet she didn't have to walk home after treatment, with her husband guiding her like a blind person because she couldn't afford the taxi fare home.

This has happened to me twice in the last month, caused by a cut in the iris of my left eye.

Thatcher couldn't survive for two weeks on unemployment benefit. I wish her government could have the same fate.

Comradely  
Heather Rawling  
Leicester

**Abortion reply**

Dear Militant,

The article on abortion by Gill Porter of Peckham LPYS speaks of a woman's right to choose. She then goes on to blame the capitalist system for the "intolerable pressure of pregnancy" bringing about the desire for an abortion. Surely, this is not a woman choosing, but her circumstances pressuring her

caught the Fleet Street disease and gone down market.

Consider this recent letter to that paper, "I have read the *Times* for 52 years. I have read it when it invited Hitler to take over the Sudetenland. I have read it when it was known as the London edition of *Pravda*. But I had never thought to read it when it devoted a whole page to a character called Mick Jagger (July 25) and failed to print the Stock Exchange prices—and this when the *Financial Times* was out of action".

Times are hard indeed! Next thing you know it'll stop printing distortions about the *Militant* and allow us to answer their lies!

Still, there's always the *Daily Telegraph*!  
Yours fraternally  
Frank White  
Glasgow Central LPYS

choice. It is not a free choice at all.

Gill looks forward to a society where the pressures of a capitalist system will be removed, and the conditions provided "that allow a woman to keep her child if she wishes". If it would be considered wrong in such a society to have an abortion, why should it be considered right in today's society? Taking a life, whether born or unborn, will surely always be wrong.

May I say that I am also opposed to hanging, nuclear and conventional weapons and all war, and can hardly be classed as a right-wing reactionary! I am motivated by a desire to protect, not merely life, but the quality of it.

Yours in Peace,  
Mrs AE Farmer  
Woodford Green

**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**

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

**CLASSIFIED**

LOST: one set of black steel banner poles, in brown sack. Belongs to UCW members. Only one other set of these poles exists. Information please to: John Johnson, c/o Militant, or Maggie Harbour, 061-431 9544 x22

**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 Creear, 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 Creear, 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.

**Bank on Militant**

BARCLAYS BANK announced pretax profits of £262 million in the first six months of 1983. Not surprising when you consider that out of £868 million profit for the electricity industry this year £536 million went in interest to the banks!

Not that there will be any rebates for consumers—the Board are even considering putting up the price soon! They are also planning 5,000 redundancies.

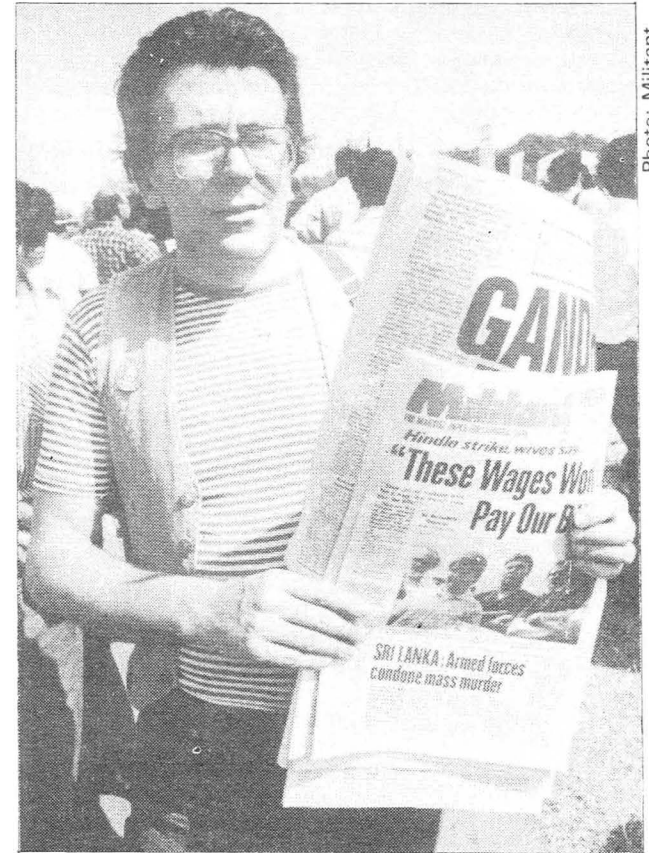
The sooner we end this crazy system and have workers' control of what they produce the better. The donations sent to us each week are a testament to the sacrifice and commitment of workers to get rid of the Tories and fight for socialism.

There was no readers' meeting at this year's Labour Party Young Socialists' Summer Camp due to the Labour Party NEC's decision to ban *Militant*, but supporters at the camp handed in many personal donations, and areas clubbed together beforehand to make contributions; supporters from Eastern region handed in over £300. So thanks to all those who made contributions and a special thanks to all those unemployed comrades who donated £5 which helped us to raise in all a magnificent £1,300.

**TOTAL  
THIS WEEK  
£2,460**

Thanks to all our supporters who made donations this week. To mention just a few:— A Reekie (unemployed Strathclyde) 50p—a real sacrifice from someone on the dole, Bob Black (POEU Bristol) £1 for a paper, J Warwick (NUPE Nottingham) £1 for a paper, David Cornwell (Chorley LPYS) £1, Mrs Mclean (Uxbridge) £1, student (Swansea) £1.60, Sita Spillar (Ipswich) £3, Mrs Boulton (Bristol) £5 to help us build for a daily *Militant*, Kay Fernandez (Stepney UCW) £6, and J Boocock (Coventry SE CLP) £10. Thanks to all the supporters who donated at the public meeting in Manchester which raised over £500 (see last week's *Militant*).

A letter received this week clearly shows how we raise our money. Catherine Weare, Coventry wrote: "We have made our own collecting tins and collected £1.64 on the last Parade sale. One woman came up to me and bought a paper. After asking the price she was asked if she would like to make a donation to the fighting fund. She was surprised at this and I thought she was



Selling the paper on the recent Sri Lanka Demonstration.

not going to give any money, but she replied 'I expected that straight away!' and left me with a one pound coin..."

If every area followed this great example we would definitely reach our target. So start now by making your own collecting tins and approaching your sales for donations of £1 for the paper.

We must reach our target this quarter. It's vital if we are to go forward and launch

any campaign against the Tories. Help us NOW by guaranteeing that your area will start fund raising this week. Appeal to all supporters who buy the paper and we will raise the money and reach the target. But we do need your help.

Unfortunately it's not possible to print the chart this week, it will re-appear in next week's paper.

By Kath White

Photo: Militant

# Tories plan to shackle councils

By Jeremy Birch

Workers protest against council cuts in Liverpool when it was under control of the Liberals and Tories last year.



**NOT CONTENT** with setting savagely low spending targets for local councils with penalties for "overspending", now the Tories are giving themselves powers to prevent councils increasing the rates beyond what the government believes is "reasonable".

Many Labour councils only increased the rates so dramatically because they could see no alternative if services were to be maintained, while government grants were continually slashed.

In reality all these rate increases did was to put still more of the burden of maintaining local facilities on to the ordinary householders. However the government is now blocking off even this escape route for councils.

Under its latest proposals, due to become law in January 1984, the Tories will pick out each year up to twenty of the biggest overspenders, and limit their rates. If that does not sufficiently hold down total local government spending, further action will be taken to cap the rates of all councils.

Initially these measures will virtually be restricted just to big conurbations under Labour control. Yet these are the areas of greatest need. These Labour councils need to spend far more to begin to tackle the highest unemployment, the worst housing and the desperate conditions of the inner-cities.

It is not just the level of spending that concerns the Tories, however. It is who has to pay them. Their capitalist backers are complaining about the rates levied on business premises. So rating of empty industrial and commercial properties will be ended. This means ordinary people will have to pay a larger proportion of the total rate bill.

And now local authorities will have a statutory duty to consult local businessmen before setting their rates. There is no obligation to consult local government trade unions, tenants' associations or community groups whose jobs and standard of life will be threaten-

ed by rate-capping and cuts.

This latest attack will not apply until the financial year beginning April 1985. So for next year starting in April 1984, the Tories have laid down tough spending limits. Those mainly Tory councils who have met the previous limits will be allowed a 3% increase. But the overspenders will be forced to cut by 6%.

The GLC will have to cut back by 35%, not including inflation. This would mean a 40% fares increase, a £5 per week rent increase, a halt to recruitment and the scrapping of free transport for the elderly.

Labour authorities are being put in an impossible position. But unfortunately there is no clear lead coming from the top of the party. At the Fabian Society's recent televised leadership debate, Peter Shore and Neil Kinnock categorically refuted the idea of Labour authorities resisting the government's onslaught. Only Eric Heffer urged the party to defend Labour councillors who are prepared to challenge the Tories.

Labour councils have to stand and fight a campaign of defiance, refusing to implement Tory cuts. They would, however, have to win the support of the council workers and the trade union movement locally. The threat of strike action would have to be used as soon as any attempt was made to remove the councillors from office.

A co-ordinated campaign of confrontation by all Labour councils, or even a battle started by a limited number like Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester or the GLC, which would draw in other authorities, could force the Tories back.

## The cost of cuts

**MORE CUTS** in public transport will mean more misery for the working people, not just the passengers but workers in those industries.

Already for example, drivers on Manchester buses are forced to work a 60 hour week to bring their wages up to a decent level.

Strain is beginning to show on young and old drivers alike. There has been an increase in nervous diseases and heart attacks, and an increasing proportion of divorces due to the long and unsociable hours worked.

One week can start on a Monday and Tuesday with early shifts, meaning drivers having to get up at 2 or 3 am, returning home in the afternoons, then Wednesday and Thursday a split shift which means leaving home about 5 am and returning at 8pm, finished with a late shift on Saturday starting at 4pm and finishing around midnight.

Added to this is the strain of being in charge of a bus, collecting fares, trying to drive to schedules which in many cases originate from 1945 (designed when there were drivers and conductors), and contending with roads that once again through public spending cut-backs are falling apart, and all the friction these factors lead to between passengers and 'late' buses.

By John O'Mara  
(TGWU 6/654, personal capacity)

# NHS double standards

THE Princess of Wales paid a visit to Cleethorpes recently to open a new multi-million pound hospital, much needed in the area.

Police were drafted in from all over the county for extra security, a marquee was hired for the week for the opening ceremony, and all out-patient clinics and theatre lists were cancelled. The only units working normally were casualty and physiotherapy, the latter probably only because Lady Di visited this department.

The press, of course, presented a picture of a magnificent hospital being magnanimously opened by royalty, providing new facilities and resources for the town. However, reality is quite different and many staff kept away from the ceremony, such was the resentment at the cost and organisation of the event.

Since moving to the new hospital, staff have felt the pressures of increasing workloads coupled with understaffing.

By a Nalco Shop steward  
(Cleethorpes)

Out of the eight operating theatres, four remain unused and at least one ward remains unopened due to lack of funds. The Tory's latest round of cuts have resulted in a quarter of a million pound loss to the local authority budget.

With increasing patient demand, the staff in all sectors are feeling the strain.

Theatre staff are being called out during the night to emergency cases after finishing a shift, then coming back on duty the next day. Out-patient clinic staff are forced to work till eight at night and then told to take time off in lieu, leaving shortages for the daytime staff, making the staff problem snowball.

With these conditions resentment grew in the build up to the royal visit. A menu for the event, for Lady Di and 400 guests, was put up on the notice board and showed how they would be

eating lobster, salmon, gateaux, wine etc. No expense was spared on the floral arrangements.

The total cost of the visit was said to be £45,000. Ye two weeks before, a request for £800 to transfer a patient to another town for special treatment was refused. Indeed, during the health workers dispute last year, the staff were attacked after claims from management that their action would disrupt clinic and theatre lists and cost the health service money.

Workers will also remember that lorries carrying supplies were turned away by police on the day of the visit, yet when the picket lines were there last year the situation was entirely different!

This day of double standards will not be forgotten by the health workers, and they will fight the Tories' attempts to shackle our unions with no strike clauses in their efforts to introduce cuts, redundancies and privatisation.



Striking NUPE workers employed by Pritchards picket the company's headquarters in central London. Pritchards took over Wandsworth council work after the Tory council privatised the service. Already the company have notched up £46,000 in fines for failing to fulfill their contract—an example of how privatisation just doesn't work. The NUPE members are on strike after Pritchards introduced a vicious piece-work scheme instead of weekly wages.

Photo: Militant

## Council flats sell-off

**THE TORY** controlled Medway District council has decided to sell off the Morden Court and Queen Court tower blocks in Rochester to private developers. Not to the tenants though—they are to be forcibly re-housed.

Every member of the 180 affected families are now asking: "Where will we go?" No answer has been given to a Labour councillor's question of where they will be re-housed. The housing manager, Mr Sands, has said that tenants "need have no fears." He and his department have issued plenty of soothing statements about accepting full re-housing responsibilities, of "endeavouring to find (the tenants) accommodation wherever they want". But not one definite answer has been given.

The Medway housing problem is as acute as

everywhere else in Tory Britain. Whilst the council housing waiting list stands at over 2,400, the Tories envisage building only 50 new units a year for rent—mainly for the old and disabled—yet already build 300 houses a year for sale. Such are Tory priorities.

Their plans must be vigorously fought. With a block of flats in Chatham also ear-marked for sale to private development sharks, and with two other tower blocks facing demolition due to years of neglect, the housing list will be lengthened, council housing stock reduced and thousands of families left with no prospect of a decent home.

The two Labour councillors representing the tenants in Rochester called a successful open-air meeting outside the flats. The anger of the people was obvious. The majority do not want to

move despite the superficially attractive carrot of £500 disturbance money plus moving expenses.

People don't want to stay because their flats are palaces, far from it. Very little has been done by the council to maintain and repair the flats—until recently that is, with cosmetic repairs no doubt carried out to make the blocks more attractive to the developers. People want to stay because there is just nowhere else to go.

Labour councillors are considering taking the matter to the Ombudsman. But whilst every effort should be made to investigate the legal basis of the council's move, the only real force that can make the Tories back down is the organised strength of the tenants—some of whom have said they will resist eviction—and the local labour movement.

# SRI LANKA

# Roots of repression

I have raised this subject for three reasons.

First, British imperialism's historic responsibility for racism in Sri Lanka; secondly, both British and American imperialism are supporting the United National Party government to secure Sri Lanka as a strategic base in the Indian ocean; and thirdly, the labour movement in Britain has a responsibility to support the struggles of workers in all countries against capitalism in the West and Stalinism in the East.

Historically, one of British imperialism's main tactics to maintain control over the colonies was to divide and rule. Tory and Liberal governments alike sponsored divisions in the colonies to avert the development of anti-imperialist movements.

That often took the form of using a minority racial or religious group to staff the security forces and the colonial administration, and to act as small traders. The tactic was used in Ireland, Cyprus, East Africa and throughout the Indian empire including Sri Lanka.

British imperialism consolidated its control in Sri Lanka in 1825 by the defeat of the Kingdom of Kandy. The people of Sri Lanka did not request to join the empire. They had no choice. Military force decided the issue.

Having established its rule by force of arms, British imperialism set about exploiting the island. Plantations were soon established and, from the 1840s, Tamils from South India were imported as cheap labour. The imperial rulers relied on the Ceylon Tamils, who had previously settled in the islands, for administration. That developed communal tensions between the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamils, which representatives of the developing Sinhalese bourgeoisie later deepened and exploited...

Tamil workers were brought in by the British to work on the tea estates. Of those 1,200,000 Indian Tamils, 975,000 were officially declared stateless in 1964. Since then, agreement with India has meant that 600,000 were to be repatriated to India over 15 years while the rest were to remain in Sri Lanka as full citizens.

The result has been anomalies, such as those in one district where there are 275,000 Tamils of whom only 22,000 are entitled to vote.

## Slave labour

There are well over 1 million of the exploited, imported cheap labour Tamils who worked on the plantations, whom *New Society* says might be described as water buffalo or wild elephants...

The life of a plantation worker in today's Sri Lanka is described in the article through one family. It can only "get through" until the twenty-second of each month with a meagre diet of rotis, coconut scrapings, rice and dal.

The worker may have eggs once a week, and meat perhaps once a month...

At the end of the month the situation is bad. As rations dwindle to zero, with only cups of tea for an empty stomach and nothing of value for the pawn shop, many of the workers, especially the women, starve.

It is the women's life of work on the plantations that is the cruelest. They work from the time that they wake until the time they go to sleep. They go thirsty and make the sacrifices.

They are often bullied and beaten into the bargain. Their deficiency diseases and physical sufferings are therefore the most serious. More than half of them are said to be clinically malnourished.

There are high stillbirth and infant mortality rates—perhaps more than 150 per 1,000 births—but in the last few years no official statistics have been published. The women earn about 60 per cent of the men's wages, for exactly the same work and output.

The present president of Sri Lanka, JR Jayewardene, began his activities as a self-

On these two pages we print extracts from Dave Nellist's speech to Parliament, 25 July, and quotes which show the Tory government's response.

appointed defender of the Sinhalese Buddhists. As early as May 1944, JR moved on the State Council, which existed as a form of limited self rule, that the Sinhala language be made the medium of instruction in all schools and a compulsory subject in all public examinations.

## JR's racist record

It was after independence in the mid-1950s that the inter communal violence began to develop seriously. JR himself did nothing to lower the tension. On the contrary, the Sri Lankan *Tribune* of 30 August 1957 reported JR as saying:

"The time has come for the whole Sinhalese race...to fight without quarter to save their birthright. I will lead the disobedience campaign".

In 1970 a Popular Front government was elected in Sri Lanka. Despite the popular support that they had at first, they were unable to solve the problems facing Sri Lanka because of its (the government's) heterogeneous class composition and inadequate programme.

The disillusionment caused by the Popular Front government—in particular the failure of the old workers' parties, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka—resulted in a sweeping victory for JR and his United National Party in 1977.

JR's victory was immediately followed by communal rioting. More than 200 died, and 10,000 Tamils were forced to move away from Tamil areas.

Ostensibly appealing for calm, JR spoke to the nation on 28 July 1977 saying:

"It is our duty to safeguard the Buddha Sasana. We will not spare any effort to protect, and further the cause of Sasana...The

**"The Hon. Gentleman referred to the dictatorship in Sri Lanka. There is no dictatorship there. There is a thriving democracy, which has a serious problem with its minority."**

**—Ray Whitney, Tory Foreign Office Minister, 25 July.**

UNP Government intends...establishing a just society based on the teachings of Buddha."

Despite the sugary words of that appeal, it was a direct encouragement to the Buddhist Sinhala racists to attack the Hindu Tamils, as well as being an affront to the Hindu, Christian and Moslem minorities.

Despite changing the island's name to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, UNP government strategy has been to make

**SRI LANKA**  
**Repression of Tamils growing**

Photo: Militant

22 December 1982.

We of the Nava Sama Samaja Party will campaign at national and international levels to explain the plight of the Tamil-speaking people. We will also explain that the working class in this country, the oppressed Tamil nation, and all oppressed sections in the South should combine their struggles to overthrow the UNP government. Unless the UNP is overthrown, the oppression of the Tamil-speaking people in particular, will, if not escalate further, at least continue for the foreseeable future.

**By Vasudeva Nanayakkara**  
(Leader, Nava Sama Samaja Party)

I visited Jaffna today to ascertain the situation that prevails here, particularly after the arrest of some members of the clergy including Rev. Fathers Singarayar and Sinmarasa and Jaffna University lecturers Mr and Mrs Nithiyandandan, all of whom are in the custody of the army.

In the city of Jaffna I noticed protest satyagraha (sit-down) campaigns being carried on in different places. I understand that a series of such campaigns have been spontaneously carried on over the last few days in several parts of the Jaffna District, involving over 50,000 people irrespective of racial and religious differences.

The UNP government's oppression of the Tamil speaking people has now taken a different dimension.

I met and spoke to people from different walks of life. Almost all of them are of the opinion that ever since the UNP government came into power, the Tamil speaking people have been subjected to the worst kind of oppression and humiliation. Further, they also fear that there might be a holocaust after the so-called referendum on

The army was used during the state of emergency in 1980 to repress the people. Oppression is escalating again.

The above article, which appeared in *Militant*, 21 January, 1983, was written by the leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, now in hiding from the police.

the country attractive to foreign capitalist investors. Jayewardene's own slogan—as quoted in the *Financial Times* of 27 August 1980—is "Let robber barons come."

That necessitated severely weakening the Sri Lankan trade unions. The new government began quickly to introduce anti-trade union measures.

The *Financial Times* estimated that 10,000 workers had lost their jobs and that there had been punitive transfers of 15,000 teachers after the UNP election victory. That came from a report on 31 May 1978. On top of that the *Financial Times* reported on 31 May 1980 that the UNP had "let loose its youth movement to beat up Marxist opponents in the universities and to disrupt trade union agitation."

Understandably, those measures met mounting resistance from the trade unions, and in 1980 a serious confrontation occurred. During a protest on 5 June 1980 a gang of UNP supporters, led by two UNP Members of Parliament, attacked a picket line, killing D.D Somapala, a leader of the Government Workers Trade Union Federation. That resulted in a big strike movement four days

than 60,000 workers—mainly from the public sector.

The UNP government's victory allowed them to continue the policies that they had begun in 1977. They were based on savage cuts in benefits, especially food and transport subsidies. In a country where the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* reports that wages are lower than in India, and which has suffered from continual inflation of up to 40 per cent a year since 1977, those cuts had a terrible effect...

While aid pushed up the growth rate for a while, so Sri Lanka must face the problem of having to repay the loans. Already between 1981 and 1982 interest payments rose from 25 to 33 per cent of government spending. At present the Sri Lankan government imports twice as much as it exports.

## Capitalism only offers more austerity

That cannot last forever. The only capitalist solution that the UNP can produce is yet more austerity programmes. Knowing that this will provoke popular opposition, the Sri Lankan Government are continuing to introduce more repressive measures and seeking British help to train their security services.

Like many governments, the Sri Lankan Government have sought to justify their actions by pointing to the increase in terrorism, particularly in the Tamil areas.

I wish to make it clear that, as a Marxist, I do not support the policy or tactics of individual terrorism. Neither individuals nor even a mass of guerillas can replace the working class in the struggle against oppression.

Only a mass movement, of which we have seen many heroic examples in Sri Lanka, can establish a workers' democracy and begin to create a socialist society which uses all the country's resources to create a just and equal society. Terrorism usually serves to disorientate the masses and provide governments with the excuse to introduce repressive laws.

If we examine the record of the Sri Lankan authorities in recent years, we see that it is

later when Somapala was buried.

During the following weeks the government began to sack workers who had been involved in both protests—a tactic which provoked the development of a general strike in early July. The general strike rapidly gathered support. Tragically, a section of the trade union leaders, while publicly supporting the strike, did not in practice mobilise their membership. That resulted in the defeat of the general strike and the sacking of more



Dave Nellist (centre, first row) on Sri Lankan protest demonstration leaving Hyde Park, 30 July.

## Nellist's questions ...

When the Minister replies, will he deal with three points? Will he arrange for publication of lists showing the wages that British firms pay to Sri Lankan workers? Will he end the collaboration between British and Sri Lankan security forces? Will he cancel the state visit by JR Jayewardene in October?

## Tories' answer ...

I am happy to reply to the specific questions that the hon. Gentleman put to me. He spoke about the wages of some companies in Sri Lanka and I suggest that he should invite his friends there, if he has any, to ask the democratically constitutionally elected Government of Sri Lanka to take whatever action may seem appropriate for their own people.

I confirm to the hon. Gentleman that we collaborate with the police force of Sri Lanka, as we do with the police forces of many other Commonwealth countries. We are proud of that...

The hon. Gentleman then asked if we would cancel the state visit of President Jayewardene. I am pleased to tell him that we shall certainly not cancel the visit. President Jayewardene will be an honoured and most welcome guest. His visit will give us an opportunity to discuss with him the problems of his country, and if there are ways we can help, we shall certainly do so.

Those are the ways of democracy. They are not the ways of Marxism. They are the ways we offer, the ways to a peaceful, prosperous and free Sri Lanka.

—Ray Whitney (Tory Foreign Office Minister)

not easy to decide who the real terrorists are. Furthermore, the record raises the question of what control this Parliament has over the international activities of the British security services.

If we look at the predominantly Tamil district of Sri Lanka, we can see the real turning point took place in the period between May and June 1981. The *Financial Times*, which is not an anti-UNP journal, after the

events, reported:

"The police and army personnel—mainly comprising Sinhalese officers—have for the first time abandoned their neutrality. In some cases, they led attacks on Tamil communities. It is officially admitted that they went 'on the rampage' in the Tamil capital of Jaffna in June."

In Jaffna, in May and June 1981, eight Tamils were murdered, including the private

clerk of one of the Tamil Opposition Members of Parliament, and 11 Tamil Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, were arrested on the day of the district development council elections...

Since then, there has been mounting opposition in Tamil areas to the UNP government and growing demands for self-rule. Tragically, due to the defeats that the opponents to the UNP rule have suffered, many Tamil youths have turned to guerilla activities as a solution to the increasing racist attacks on them by the security forces.

### Tamil abstentions

Last year, JR held an early presidential election to secure re-election before the economic bubble burst. He secured re-election because some sections of the population were still enjoying the fruits of economic growth, the main Opposition party's lack of credibility and the abstention of many Tamil voters.

Having won the election the President held a referendum on whether general elections should be postponed until 1989, and he was left with a two thirds majority in Parliament. Amid many accusations of intimidation, a low turnout and impersonation, including even that of JR's main opponent in the presidential election, the UNP won the referendum.

With that majority the UNP is moving against all opposition in all parts of the island. Early in June, after the Supreme Court had given an Opposition leader compensation for illegal arrest, detention and degrading treatment, thugs attacked the homes of the three Supreme Court judges concerned. No arrests were made, but the thugs arrived and departed on state-owned buses...

*The Guardian* on 6 July states: "Sri Lanka has been under almost continuous emergency rule since the early 1970s. But since the referendum of December 22, 1982, which extended the life of the Sri Lankan 'long parliament' to August 4, 1989—an unprecedented 12-year session—the concentration of powers in the hands of President Jayewardene has created a situation in which the army's authority is clearly growing and democratic safeguards in Parliament, the courts and the press are becoming more fragile."

Confessions are admissible in evidence,

despite being obtained by suspending a person from a beam with both hands tied, with a bagful of burnt chilli tubers tied over the head, chilli powders smeared all over the person, including the genitals, iron bar in the rectum, thin metal rod down the penis and lying on a bench being beaten on back and soles of feet, with chillies stuck up the nose.

Contrast that with an election address of 17 September 1982 from Jayewardene when he promised:

"An important contribution we have made was the enactment of a democratic Constitution that guarantees that the people of this country can live without fear and harassment, to conduct their affairs in accordance with the laws of the country and their fundamental rights."

What is the future for working people and peasants in a country where such promises are made during an election campaign but where the reality is torture, murder, beatings, disappearances, rampage, burnings, lootings and a tremendous decline in any decent democratic rights?...

Sri Lanka does not face such problems alone: they face the entire underdeveloped world. In the past year, we have seen communal clashes in many countries, such as those in Assam, in India, and the expulsion from Nigeria of the so-called foreigners, to give just two examples. In many of the underdeveloped countries, the ex-colonial countries, we are witnessing the crisis of capitalism pushing these countries back towards barbarism.

What can we do? The only alternative to that barbarism is socialism. Only through the working class and its allies democratically planning the use of society's resources, can the economy be developed to meet the needs of the people, not the profiteers or the international bankers.

### Need for planned economy

On the basis of a planned, democratically-controlled economy, freed from the disruption of the capitalist business cycle, it would be possible to begin raising the living standards, the cultural level and all aspects of life for ordinary working people. Capitalism has partially unified the world through the exploitation of ex-colonial countries for raw materials, interlinked with the forced importation of finished and semi-finished goods...

To complete the task that capitalism has partially developed of interlinking the world's economies, requires international solidarity of working people to free countries such as Sri Lanka, from the domination of the banks. A joint approach by workers is needed in the industrialised West and the ex-colonial countries to develop industry to provide for workers' needs, not multinationals' profits.

Such a policy is a million light years away from what is falsely portrayed as socialism in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, where the democratic rights—the freedoms of speech, of assembly and of the right to belong to a trade union—are all denied. Those countries are not socialist. They are run by a bureaucratic elite who compare more with the freemasons than with a genuine socialist party...

### Working-class traditions

The way forward is to support the glorious traditions of the Sri Lankan working class in its fight for independence and decent living standards. The working people in that country must be united.

I stand four square behind the rights of minorities to self-determination. They must have that right. But I believe that the future lies in co-operation and in bringing together people of all castes, creeds, colours and religions. Only then can the working class and its allies go forward in the development of socialism.

My message to British workers is that we owe a debt and responsibility to working people internationally. We must extend the hand of solidarity in their time of need and link our organisations with those of the working class in Sri Lanka. We must break the bonds of capitalism and imperialism that jointly tie us down and work together for a society throughout the Asian subcontinent, Europe and the world in which the division by caste, poverty and class disappears.

From those elements can be created a society, based on the fair and equal distribution of wealth, that can lift its head a foot higher. It must not be based, as at present, on greed and the squandering of wealth by multinational companies and international banks.

# NORTHERN IRELAND

In August 1969 the British Labour government sent the first consignment of troops onto the streets of Northern Ireland.

Many people, even in the labour movement then hoped that this would mean an end to the growing bloodshed caused by the attempted pogrom spearheaded by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) against the Catholic population.

Shortly afterwards the Provisional IRA started a campaign of individual terrorism against the presence of the Army.

At the time *Militant* warned that neither the Army of British capitalism nor the sectarian blind alley of terrorism would solve any of the problems of Northern Ireland. Fourteen bloody years have shown the correctness of our analysis.

The armed forces have been unable in their own words, to do more than keep Northern Ireland at an "acceptable level of violence". That "acceptable level" has meant well over 2,000 killed since 1969. They have been unable to defeat the

By Roger Shrivies

paramilitary sectarian groups and have themselves been responsible for a large proportion of the fatalities.

The Provisional IRA campaign has failed to break out of the circle of violence. Their sectarian politics make it impossible for them to build a working class based movement which alone would be capable of preventing repression by the armed forces. Their methods have in fact given the military and police authorities the "justification" for harsher measures. The capitalist state has developed a massive apparatus in Northern Ireland which could be a great danger to the working class both in Ireland and Britain.

Repression has not solved any of the basic problems of Northern Ireland. It has not halted terrorist attacks, and capitalism in its present deep crisis has not the means to

overcome the poverty and deprivation that lie at the root of the sectarian violence which periodically erupts.

The working class in Northern Ireland have shown their will to unite on many occasions in the past four years; in strikes such as the health dispute and in demonstrations against the Tories' destruction of jobs and prospects. You can bet that legislation passed and precedents set in the "fight against terror" will not lie idle in the bosses' fight against the workers' movement.

Tragically the sectarian tactics of the Provisionals only reinforces the division and suspicions within the working class. Protests against repression are confined at present to the ranks of the Republicans and Catholic population.

The labour movement must point out the class implications of the legislation. Most important of all, this class unity of Protestant and Catholic workers must be given a real direction by the formation of a Labour Party, based on the trade unions, which could fight for an end to the exploitation, poverty and violence which threatens all workers in Northern Ireland.



Photo: Derek Spiers (IFL)

Repression cannot stop violence in Northern Ireland. And the blind alley sectarian methods of the Provisional IRA cannot end repression. A united working class is the only force which can break the vicious circle.

## Army no solution to violence

LAST WEEK an 18 year old farm labourer, Martin Malone, was shot dead at point blank range on an Armagh housing estate.

An argument and a scuffle broke out when members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) approached people on the mainly Catholic estate and demanded names and addresses. At least ten people say they saw a UDR soldier shoot Malone and there are allegations that another person was assaulted by a soldier as he tried to get to a telephone to summon medical help.

Eye witnesses claim that the whole patrol disappeared very suddenly and that the police did not visit the scene of the shooting for four hours, or tell Martin Malone's relatives for several hours after his death.

The RUC has questioned some part time soldiers but the patrol is still available for duty with no suspensions.

Martin Malone was the fourth person in the last eighteen months to be shot dead by the "security forces" in the Armagh area. Tony Harker was shot dead

by the UDR during a robbery at a garage. Seamus Grew and Roderick Carroll, two unarmed members of the so-called "Irish National Liberation Army" were shot dead by the Royal Ulster Constabulary last December just half a mile from the Malone shooting. Disciplinary action is rarely taken against members of the Army or police.

Over a decade of Provisional IRA activity has not put an end to this. Their campaign has in fact given precisely the excuse the military and the police needed to perfect their tactics and equipment for use both in Ireland and Britain. Plastic bullets are now stocked by 15 police forces in England and Wales for use in "crowd control". Studies show that their use in Northern Ireland has been deadly. Far from being a "non-lethal" alternative to real bullets, they cause severe damage to the skull and brain and are estimated to kill one person for every 4,000 rounds fired. Four children between 11 and 15 were killed by plastic bullets in the year to April 1982, the first year of heavy use after the previous rubber bullets were discontinued.



The Labour and Trade Union Group and the Young Socialists in Northern Ireland have been to the forefront in fighting for class unity.

Photo: Militant

## "The urge to confide"

THE FAILURE so far to build a class based labour movement opposition to repression has allowed brutal methods of interrogation to be perfected in Northern Ireland. Each year around 2,000 suspects are questioned in the notorious barracks of Castlereagh and Gough. The Bennett Report in 1979

showed the appalling police brutality in Castlereagh, where two thousand people were charged between 1976 and 1979 on the basis of information and "confessions" obtained by methods akin to torture.

After the uproar of the Bennett Report, tactics were changed to use slightly more

subtle psychological methods of obtaining what Lord Diplock, the originator of Northern Ireland's non-jury judicial system, called the "urge to confide". Confessions are now obtained through interrogations in cells which are whitewashed to aid sensory deprivation, and alternating interrogators

to find the best way of breaking down a detainee's resistance. In the circumstances of Northern Ireland such a confession and a "trial" with a judge but no jury can be the basis for conviction on terrorist charges.

## Conviction by informer

THE NEW interrogation methods (see below left) are linked with the increased use of what the press call "supergrasses" and the RUC call "converted terrorists". In last week's trial at Belfast Crown Court four alleged members of the Provisional IRA were sentenced to life imprisonment on the word of one "supergrass" Christopher Black. Altogether 31 people were sentenced for different offences on the same man's evidence.

In Britain the Department of Public Prosecutions warn against cases fought on the uncorroborated evidence of informers, and two supergrasses, one from the Republican INLA and one from the Loyalist UVF have later retracted their evidence. Yet the judge in the recent case, Northern Ireland Attorney General Basil Kelly, accepted Black's evidence on the grounds that he was "one of the best witnesses I have ever heard". But even he admitted the dangers of

relying on evidence from a "dangerous and ruthless terrorist".

The 117 day juryless trial under the Emergency Provisions Act depended totally on Black. But pressure on these informers is great. As one loyalist "supergrass" put it "My usefulness to the police would be measured by the number of men I put away".

Workers would react with horror to some of the crimes allegedly committed, but the labour movement cannot sanction this unchecked growth of the power of the state. According to *The Guardian*, before this trial 232 people were held in prison on the evidence of 14 supergrasses. Only 25 had been sentenced and many had been awaiting trial for over a year. "Justice" grinds extremely slowly in Northern Ireland; so holding "suspects" on remand in prison becomes a backdoor form of internment.

## Terrorism: excuse for repression

THE OUTCRY over the dreadful Birmingham pub bombing in the autumn of 1974 allowed the British government to pass the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. The Home Office disclosed recently that over 5,600 people have been held for questioning in Britain under this Act, which allows for detention for days without charge. Of these, only 104 have been charged with terrorist offences and a

mere 86 found guilty, while only 226 of those detained were convicted of offences under other legislation.

The Act has been used to harass trades unionists. Exclusion orders have been made against 340 "undesirable" detainees to send them back to Northern Ireland. And who could be more undesirable to the capitalist class than someone fighting for the working class?



# WORKING CLASS WIVES

**“WORKING Class Wives”** is the recently re-published report of a social survey of married working-class women in the 1930s—their housing, their health and how they managed on their low incomes.

Not what you might expect to be a gripping read—but I couldn't put it down. And it is brilliantly illustrated by Edith Tudor Hart's photographs.

When it first came out in 1939, *Labour Woman's* review criticised it because, “The conclusions didn't go to the root of women's problems” and because the middle-class author sometimes had a rather patronising style: “This woman's attitude sometimes gets on your nerves.” I agree.

But because most of the time, she lets the women speak for themselves, the book is a real insight into the everyday struggles of working-class women, to survive and to fight back. There are hardly any books about the lives of women at home in the 1930s. In fact, you want to know more about each woman she quotes. What happens next? How did she deal with this or that problem?

Most of the women suffered from chronic ill-health, especially anaemia and gynaecological problems, but couldn't afford to pay a doctor or to buy expensive food, and rarely had access to birth control.

Doctors were in any case not often well trained in gynaecology and hardly ever at all in birth control. Midwives reported having to exercise enormous tact to get doctors to wash their hands when attending a childbirth (in the 1930s!). The women themselves said that doctors were always telling them not to have more children, but not how to do it. And, “Mrs W R was advised rest, but she has ten in her family and

**VIVIEN SEAL** (Manchester Labour Women's Council) reviews *Working Class Wives* by Margery Spring Rice, published by Virago (available from World Socialist Books at £3.30 inc p&p)

30s 6d housekeeping money.”

A midwife arrived at a childbirth to find the woman “lying on a bed without any bedclothes on it at all, and covered by her husband's coat. There was no water in the house.” A woman from Rotherham who consulted her doctor about severe back pain was told: “All women get backache around 40, so why worry.”

The women's day would usually begin at 6.30 (4.00 if husbands or sons were miners or bakers). They would then do at least 12 hours hard manual labour, mostly standing up.

For example, washing up was a major task as the women would often have to go down two or three flights of stairs for water and again to empty it away. It would probably have to be heated on an open fire while looking after a baby and a toddler at the same time.

**“Mrs MacN of Glasgow lives in one room and kitchen. She says it has no drawbacks. Her husband is an unemployed carter.**

**“She is 37 and has had 14 pregnancies... Porridge and milk and vegetable soups are regular items of diet...”**

Washing was even worse. Imagine washing and drying bedclothes for a family of eight or ten, in time for the same night, and in one or two rooms. Rest was often possible only when sitting down to breast feed or do the mending.

And yet many of the women in the book, especially those whose children were



Miners' wives, South Wales, 1927.

older, also would have fought to build the Labour Party, work tirelessly in elections and campaign with the Women's Labour League on prices, housing and health. The Labour women's organisation was an active, campaigning body in the 1930s, with nearly 200,000, mostly working-class, members.

Labour women were responsible, for example, for agitation directed against the Ministry of Health on the

maternal mortality rate. It was four times that for coal miners, and showed no signs of declining, even though infant mortality had more than halved since 1900. The National Health Insurance scheme only covered workers, not their dependants. Few married women worked, but in any case medical treatment relating to childbirth was excluded.

Labour women also campaigned for the state to provide birth control: from 1924

when the women's conference passed the first resolution, almost continually until 1974 when the NHS finally provided free contraception to all those who wanted it.

The publisher's blurb says: “This book seems to emerge from the Dark Ages; yet the lives recorded here are those of women in the 1930s”. This is what the Tories and bosses have in store for us today. They want us to go back to these

conditions.

In fact many working-class families are already, once more, scrimping and scraping to barely exist. But working-class women are moving into action again, as countless recent strikes and campaigns have shown. This book will make you angry at what our mothers and grandmothers had to put up with, angry at what Thatcher wants for us, and absolutely determined to fight for socialism.

## Support TUC Women's Day of Action

**THE TUC have called for a Women's Day of Action for 29 October.**

In the past the bureaucratic leadership of many unions have only paid lip-service to involving women. Union members and regional TUCs must now use the Day of Action to take up the issues that affect women workers, and campaign to involve them actively in their union.

Resolutions must be sent from union branches to Regional TUCs to organise action for the month leading up to October 29 and for an extensive campaign of leafletting workplaces where there are many women workers.

This campaign must not be in any abstract fashion, whereby issues affecting women are posed as being separate from other struggles of the labour movement. In-

stead it must show that factors such as unemployment affect the labour movement as a whole.

We must also campaign against the obstacles placed in the way of women becoming involved in their union. Despite the fact that over one third of the total trade union membership is made up of women, they are severely under-represented in the union leadership, both at branch and at national level.

This reflects the social pressures on women, their extra responsibilities, and their less permanent position of employment. It is vitally important that unions go out of their way to encourage women to participate in union activities, and try to ensure that women take their share of leading positions.

Labour Party Women's Sections and YS branches must get involved in the Women's Day of Action,

picking out local factories, hospitals, and areas of work with a high proportion of non or poorly organised women. Leaflets and public meetings must be organised, with the emphasis on “A Woman's Place is in Her Union”.

The Tory government has made it quite clear that it has nothing to offer women workers. The government's declared aim is to force women out of paid work back into the home.

The October campaign must be discussed and organised throughout the labour movement, by both female and male workers, as an essential part of the fight to change the trade unions into organisations for the transformation of society.

By Gill Porter  
(Peckham LPYS)



### £1 million to repair one home

Are you one of the million or more homeless or are you living in substandard housing? Well another person has joined your ranks.

The poor old Lord Mayor of London Sir Anthony Jolliffe has been forced out of his residence, the Mansion House. It appears that the old place has got a little run-down. So the City Corporation has stepped in with £1,000,000 or so to improve the place, as we can't have the poor Lord Mayor living in sub-standard accommodation.

So while building work goes on, the Lord Mayor is slumming it in the Mercer Hall, another City of London Mansion.

You see, under capitalism, while no money can be found for new housing or improvements for workers, millions can be found for home improvements for the rich.

### Korean Wages or Face Sack

*Militant* has often said that big business wants to turn Britain into a low-wage, high profit economy. The workforce at Adamson Containers in Manchester know at first hand what that means.

After losing an order to a lower tender from Korea, Adamson's boss told them that they would have to work for Korean wages to win the order back, or face short time, and even the dole.

This would mean wages of £30 a week. Workers were naturally furious at this crude blackmail. Worse, the order is being placed by Freightliners, a subsidiary of nationalised British Rail, who in the 'free' world of capitalist competition prefer, of course, the cheaper product of a non-union, repressive police-state.

### Cauli Folly

Another example of the crazy waste of resources under capitalism has come to light. While cauliflowers sold in the shops for over 30p last year, over 8,000 tonnes were ploughed into the ground. This is all part of the EEC's elaborate method of controlling food prices, i.e. keeping them high.

The EEC intervenes to buy up produce and limit supply when prices look like falling. But perishables cannot be stored. While people all over the world are crying out for food, capitalism dictates that vast quantities be destroyed.

Photo: John Smith (IFL).



A meeting of staff and supporters to decide on action at the occupied Thornton View hospital, Bradford.

## Hospital closure

WORKERS have occupied the Thornton View hospital in Yorkshire in a bid to save the building from closure.

As two of the occupying staff, Hazel Ward (NUPE) and Betty Elie (COHSE) told local radio: "We are prepared to stay till the next general election."

On July 28 the Regional Health Authority decided to close Thornton View along with Shipley hospital, as part of the Tory package of cuts for the health service in the Yorkshire region.

Opposition from the workforce and the local labour movement has been swift. Thornton View staff lobbied the RHA meeting and then crowded into the hospital boardroom where the meeting was taking place. They questioned the leader of the RHA for one and a half hours on the issue. He eventually agreed to put the staff's position to the rest of the RHA members but said he could not guarantee a long stay of execution.

A Co-ordinating Committee against the two closures has been formed, and last Friday (5 August) workers occupied the Thornton View hospital in the evening where they will stay until the hospital is reopened.

Support and donations are greatly needed. Send to Occupation committee, c/o Alex Corina, Thornton View hospital, Thornton View Road, Clayton, Bradford.

By Steve Wilkinson  
(Chairman, Co-ordinating  
Committee Against  
Closures)

## Kent social workers' strike

NALGO members in Kent Social Services walked out last week following the sacking of a social worker for his refusal to break union policy.

John Kirkpatrick, a union steward, was instructed by his management to place a child in one of the county homes which have been in official dispute with Kent County Council (KCC) for the last two months over wages and gradings.

Since last year NALGO has been negotiating with KCC over the new policy affecting children's homes. KCC implemented the policy in April by closing down homes, moving workers around the county changing job descriptions without any review of the workers' training needs, grades or adequate increase in pay.

The main grievance is that management have not been prepared to pay for enough

staff to run these homes under the new conditions. As one woman from a home in Ashford told me; "I've been on duty now for 24 hours, the person who should be on at 4 pm has had to go sick, so that means I'll be on until tomorrow morning—at this rate my own kids will have to go into care!"

### Management use tactic of moral blackmail

Just as in the nurses' dispute, residential workers are not only poorly paid and subjected to stressful working conditions, but management try to break union solidarity by using emotional blackmail and reminding workers of their duty to the children. They don't need reminding—it has taken

# BREL-DEFEND THE WORKSHOPS

THE FIGHT is on to save the British Rail Engineering Limited workshops threatened with closure.

NUR members from Main works and regional shops along with engineering workers met together to discuss the campaign to save the threatened workshops at Horwich, Temple Mills and Shildon.

This was the first joint conference for many years to meet together on the same platform. It was also very heartening to see leaders from the train drivers' union ASLEF present.

Opposing views were expressed as to what form of action should be taken to avert the closures. Many delegates called for outright strike action, others were content to endorse the guidelines proposed by the Joint Co-ordinating Committee, which were;

- ★ All BREL members under threat of closure to ignore redundancy notices.

- ★ All BREL members to black any work diverted as part of the BREL closures.

- ★ All BREL members to prevent the transfer of documentation, stores or other equipment connected with diverted work.

- ★ No further discussion to take place at works level on rationalisation, voluntary redundancy or redeployment proposals.

A few delegates were prepared to disregard any form of action whatsoever. Their attitude seemed to be "we are all right Jack, the closures won't affect us."

It is to these sections we must address ourselves, it must be made clear to the rank and file that the closures won't stop at Horwich and Shildon. Their works and others will also succumb to the threat of rationalisation.

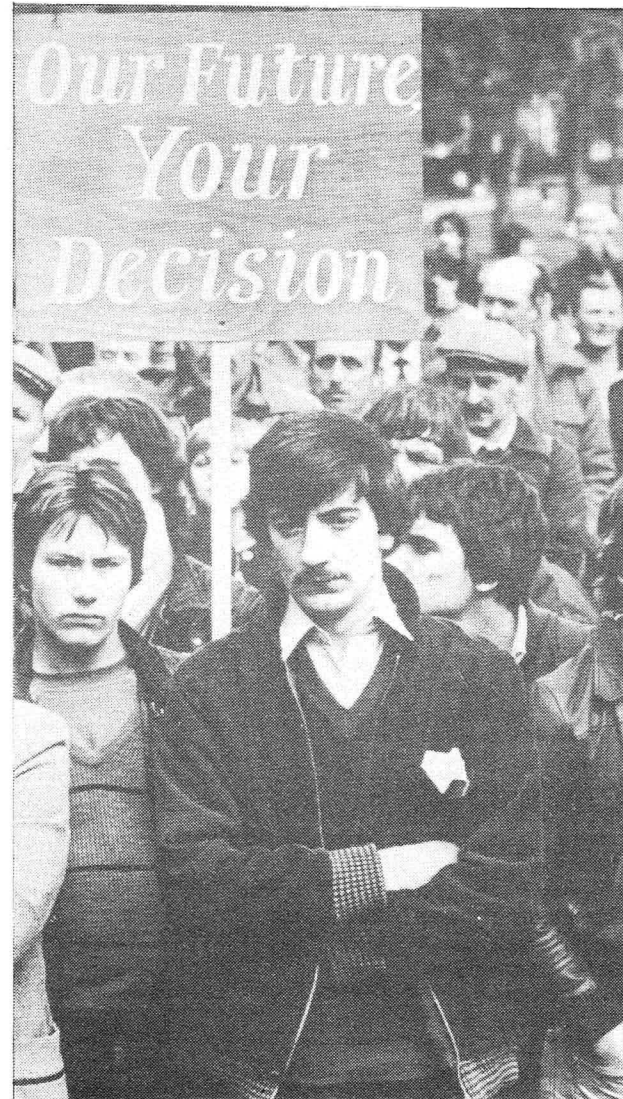
Criticism cannot be levelled at the workforce as a whole. The great portion of blame lies with the leader-

By Dave Evans  
(Chairman)  
and Danny Bermingham  
(Secretary)  
(Edge Hill Works  
Committee)

ship of the unions concerned, especially the past leadership of Sid Weighell of the NUR. Over the years they have consistently failed to give any constructive lead and their failure to anticipate the present situation coupled with their failure to educate their members on how to fight back, has led to the rank and file apathy we are witnessing today.

A stirring item of news to come out at this conference was that the workers at Horwich, by their refusal to sign a declaration not to black any work, have had the offer of a 12 week ex gratia payment withdrawn by management. That is sacrifice indeed for men about to lose their livelihoods.

At the end of the day it was decided that the guidelines proposed should be adhered to on the proviso that if any man was disciplined for working to these guidelines by management, strike action would be automatic.



Workers demonstrate against the closure of the BREL workshop at Swindon last year. Photo: Militant

## One man trains withdrawn

BRITISH RAIL management have now begun to withdraw the One Man Operated '317' trains from the Bedford-St Pancras line.

As Militant pointed out in its article on July 22, despite claims of BR management that the introduction of this new train was due to opposition by the National Union of Railwaymen, BR was not in fact technically ready to

run the new trains.

Some of the stations do not have the TV systems necessary installed, at Moorgate the tunnel is too narrow, and the train speeds have to be restricted. It is believed up to 46 of the trains are to be withdrawn, and replaced by standard type trains with guards.

The Tory press took their cue from BR management to

blame the unions. They gave massive coverage to tales of "luddite" NUR tactics, showing photos of the new trains growing weeds in the sidings. Now the truth has come out the press of course remains silent, with only a small report of the real situation making page three of *The Guardian* (August 5).

## Press branch

THE TUC have intervened in the decision of members of the EETPU Press branch—which covers Fleet Street electricians—who were attempting to join the print union SOGAT'82.

A TUC meeting attended by Len Murray, the joint SOGAT secretaries Owen O'Brien and Bill Keys, the EETPU leaders and the Press branch secretary, concluded that all those SOGAT '82 cards given to ex-Press branch members were invalid—therefore there was "no such body as the Electrical/electronic press branch SOGAT'82."

It is therefore hoped that all those ex-Press branch members whose resignation has not been accepted by the EETPU are still recognised as full members. While the response of some ex-Press members is not as yet clear, the only hope can be for a full return to unity of the Press branch which given the circumstances would be the best result for all.

● A mistake appeared in the article on this dispute in *Militant's* report (issue 662). Where it reads "Express branch", it should read "ex-Press branch."



Print workers, members of the NUJ and NGA, picket the offices of the Latin American Newsletters. The staff were locked-out and the company moved to France rather than implement new technology agreements. The pickets have pointed out the irony of how Latin American Newsletters defend union rights in South America. Photo: Militant.

By NALGO stewards  
(Kent Social Services)

## Gas— up for grabs

IN THE wake of the Tory attempts to privatise British Telecom, they have now turned their greedy eyes towards British Gas.

Their interest in British Gas shows the hypocrisy of the Tories when it comes to nationalised industries. For years the have moaned how nationalised industries were a fetter on the economy, sucked up tax-payers' money, had restricted practices etc. Now they cynically by-pass this former propaganda and look to hiving off profitable areas of the public sector industries such as British Telecom and now British Gas.

British Gas certainly has made massive profits. While its official pre-tax profits are put at £663 million, it is believed the real figure is more like £1,500 million (the figures are thought to be kept low to avoid accusations of profiteering).

The Tories want to strip these public assets, paid for by years of ordinary tax-payers' money, to line the pockets of the bosses' class they represent. They are particularly directing their profit-hungry eyes towards the industry's control over the oil fields.

The Tories will claim that this sell-off is necessary to improve the industry's "efficiency". Nothing could be further from the truth. Given the gas industry's massive profits, how much more "efficient" do the Tories want the industry economically?

Handed over to the bosses, as has been seen in other sectors, the Tories would concentrate their efforts on the profitable sectors at the cost of the non-profitable ones, such as rural areas which would suffer.

Tens of thousands of redundancies would follow with the Tories' much loved rationalisation plans to cut costs even further—and less staff can hardly lead to greater efficiency. Also, this industry in particular depends on massive investment; private industry's appalling record of lack of investment would not doubt inflict itself on this industry.

However, the Tories' plans can be beaten. In 1981 the Tories raised the idea of selling off the gas showrooms, which sparked off united opposition from the unions involved.

It is this united action that will make the Tories back off again. In 1981, alongside the union action, the Corporation's bosses also expressed their opposition to privatisation which was a factor in the Tories giving way. Yet now management opposition has crumbled away; it is only the workforce who can be relied on to defend the industry from privatisation.

It is the spirit of 1981 that will again stop the Tory plans and stop the industry's slide towards privatisation, hiving off and mass redundancies while the consumer suffers.

# Total victory at Michelin!

**Michelin workers at Stoke-on-Trent have scored a great victory over management attempts to impose new shift systems on the production workforce.**

On Monday I had the delightful opportunity to attend the mass meeting where TGWU official John Miller gave the news of management's climb down, and the total victory of the four week dispute was announced. There was jubilation at the success of this united strike action.

The strike began when Michelin management attempted to introduce a new four set shift system, which basically would have meant working three weekends in four with the loss of overtime payments on normal

By Sue Wilkie  
(Stoke-on-Trent Central LPYS)

weekend overtime rates.

As the pickets put it, "first they couldn't survive unless we did a four day week, then it was a three day week. Now they say they can't survive unless we do a seven day week!"

With no strike for years, traditionally Michelin workers were conservative in their outlook. But this has changed: "Three or four years ago we'd just have worked the new set shifts but

we've had enough now. This is the stone that broke the dog's back.

Even with rising mass unemployment in the area, with the Potteries closing all around them, the workers said they would have rather got the sack than take any more attacks on their conditions.

Throughout the dispute every effort was made to spread the strike. The numbers on strike grew as more shops came out and joined the production workers. The engineers staged a 24-hour strike and only returned as they were installing new machinery which would secure the future of the plant.

Other plants in the area came out on 24-hour strikes, as they knew that if Michelin

succeeded with the new continental-style shift system, their company would try on the same. Michelin goods were blacked by the dockers.

Telegrams of support came from Michelin plants in the Netherlands, and letters from the French Michelin workers' union instructing its drivers not to cross the picket lines were proudly posted to the gates. Also messages of support from local residents were displayed, saying they wanted their Sundays free from the noise and rubber smells that the new shifts would entail.

Management tactics of sacking 1,200 strikers only lifted support for the strike and by its close 2,000 were out. As one worker said,

"They'd kept telling us we were lucky to have a job, but since when does working mean you lose all your rights?"

In the face of united and growing action management backed down, withdrawing the four set shifts—and moving workers off the four set shifts that were already operating—and have agreed to no victimisation. This dramatic victory has served as a warning on other bosses in the area not to tamper with workers' conditions. Stoke workers now have new confidence to take on the bosses, and other companies in the area, such as ICI etc, will now hesitate before they think of taking the path that the Michelin management trod.



The predominately Asian workforce at Britain's Ltd toy factory in East London have come out on strike against enforced long hours. The 200 workers, members of the TGWU, walked out after management refused to reduce at 50-hour week. Instead they offered 13p an hour extra instead.  
Photo: Stefano Gagnoni (IFL)

## Organise and beat the bosses

A STRIKE at Littlehampton ended in victory recently for five members of the TGWU 1/874 Branch.

The action over pay, and parity with the parent company works in Wales, took place at RPS Steels, who are stockholders and shearers.

Some months ago, some of the workers in the firm approached the local TGWU about joining the union.

Eventually the workers decided enough was enough and a meeting was arranged between a member of the management and the District Organiser of the union, Ian Kelly. Apparently the company accountant was sent to meet the union, and said he was "just there to listen" and could take no action.

When the members heard this they decided to strike, After the meeting the members got organised and picketed the factory, turning

away deliveries. They were promised solidarity action from lorry drivers and by the next day the firm made an offer of 10p extra an hour and an increase to 1¼ hourly rates for overtime, with a further increase on rates of pay in November.

The members rejected this, and a day later were made a further offer of 15p an hour, 1½ times hourly rates for overtime, and a reduction from 40 to 39 hours a week with a substantial further rise in pay in November. This was accepted and the men returned to work.

In an interview with *Militant* John Harrod, shop steward said there were only six people on the shop-floor as it was a small factory, and five of them were in the union. However, the worker who was not in the union fully supported the action, and the walkout and stoppage was 100%. Asked what lessons he thought they had learned he said they now realised the importance of unions and sticking together, and that unions aren't as weak as Tory papers would like you to believe.

By Stan Natrass

## Solidarity can stop Schweppes closure

THE VAST majority of Schweppes workers at Aintree, Liverpool voted to back their stewards in the battle to save the plant.

The Schweppes' closure is a similar story to many others in Merseyside. In 1981, 114 redundancies were made, and in 1982 there were 150 volunteers for redundancy. The carrot for this was an investment programme of £3.5 million to "secure the future of the plant". When the company had 80% of the volunteers they withdrew the investment, and are now demanding total closure.

Firm links have been established with other Schweppes plants. East Kilbride are refusing to accept any transfer of work. Distribution workers are threatened with a 75% cut in numbers by 1989, so their support is there.

In an attempt to split the Aintree workers, Schweppes are creating the illusion that jobs are there for the taking in other plants. However, stewards at the Moreton plant on Merseyside have said they are already having to fight cut backs. At the plants in Scotland or the south there is no guarantee of a secure future.

T&GWU convenor, Tony Hayes, condemns management's spurious reasons for the closure. He revealed that ten outside contractors are employed by Schweppes to manufacture certain drinks, so obviously there are full order books.

Once again Merseyside workers are being asked to pay for inefficient management. However, determined industrial action can stop these bosses and save the plant.

## Project Mercury —turn on the pressure

IT IS expected that in the next few days, the POEU Industrial Action Strategy Committee will instigate the first stage of a national action to black circuits used by the Project Mercury consortium: Barclays Bank, Cable & Wireless, and British Petroleum.

This significant step means that the union is now moving onto the offensive in its action to save jobs, the industry and the union itself.

The union is building a potential fund of £1½ million to finance the action. The relatively few members needed to take action against the big business parasites demonstrates the enormous strength and power of the union.

Despite Thatcher's posturing as an Iron Maiden, her puppet masters in the City and financial institutions are weak and vulnerable to selective action by the union.

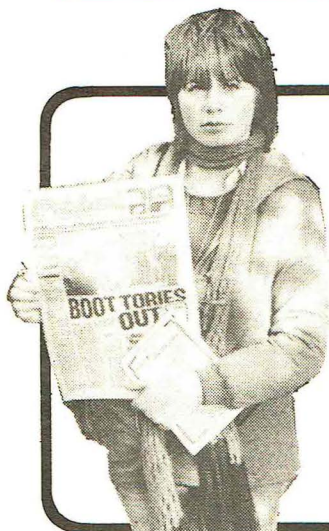
The danger that this poses however, is that the members on strike can soon feel isolated, particularly when the Tories turn on their propaganda machine, the press and media, pouring out daily doses of lies and distortions.

It is essential, therefore, that branches are instructed to hold mass meetings to discuss what forms of supportive action can be taken; such as stoppages, demonstrations and rallies.

The union must now be put on a war footing. All the resources of the union must be directed into winning the battle against Mercury. Plans for further action to defeat privatisation should now be well advanced, and linked to the action against Mercury, which is seen as one and the same battle to defeat the Tories' proposals.

By Roy Wembourne  
(Railway and Mech.  
POEU, personal capacity)

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- ★ 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.
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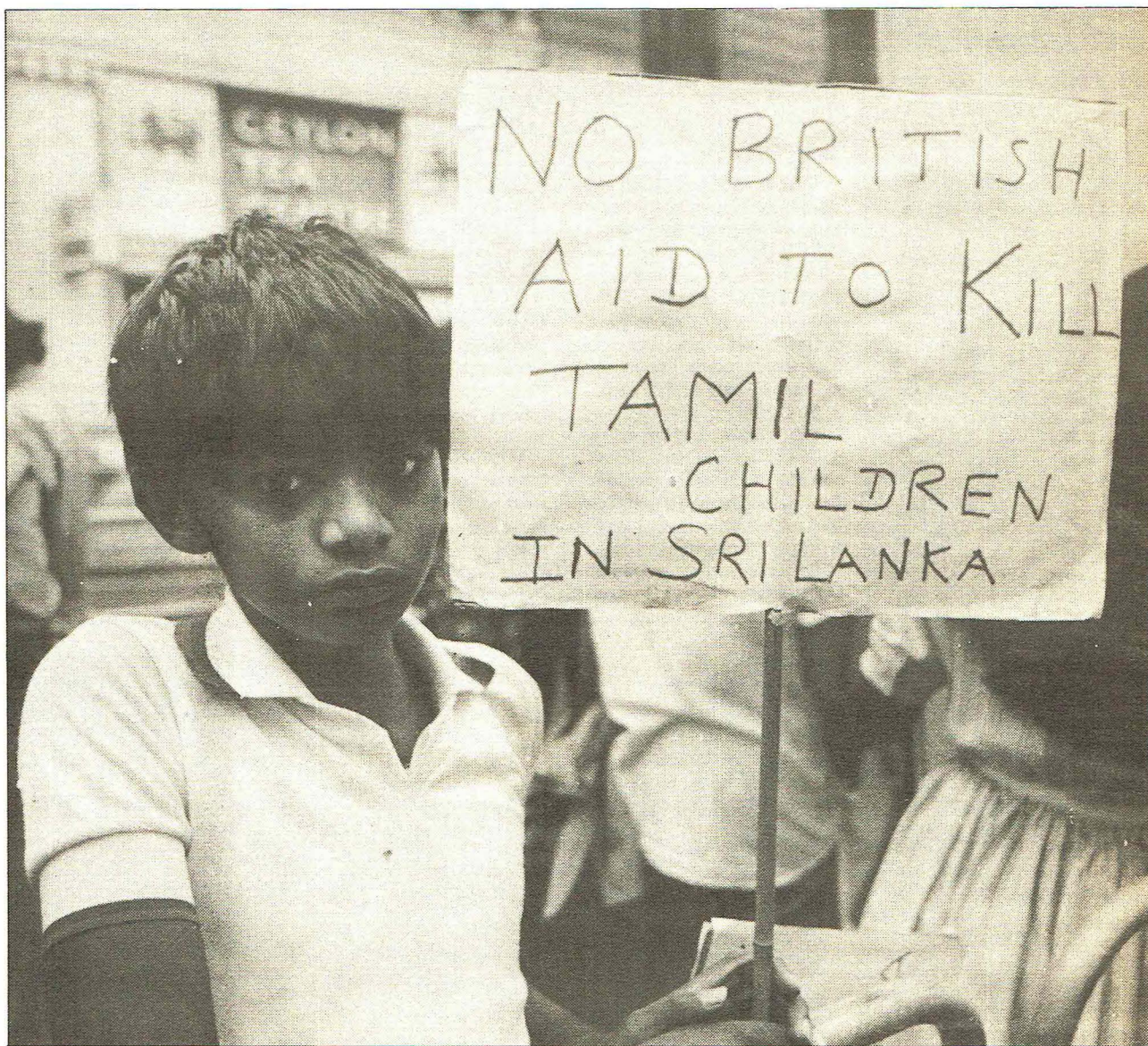
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# SRI LANKA

## Government heads for dictatorship



A recent London demonstration showed the fears that the Thatcher government might give Jayawardene's regime aid in training the repressive "security forces".

Photo: D Doran

### The barbarous attacks on the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka have sickened workers throughout the world.

The concern about the atrocities and the Jayawardene government's attacks on political rights was shown at a London meeting of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) last Friday.

At short notice, in the August holiday period, well over 300 turned out to hear speakers from the Sri Lankan and British labour movements and collected £400 for the NSSP. Hundreds of LPYS members, unable to attend as they were at LPYS Summer Camp, had already collected £1,600.

The NSSP had been banned in Sri Lanka. JR Jayawardene's government which had encouraged the anti-Tamil massacre, now uses the emergency to blame left-wing groups for the outrages and to try to still the voice of opposition to his dictatorial rule.

A leading member of the NSSP vividly brought home the effects government policies were having on the already poverty stricken masses of Sri Lanka.

Jayawardene's plans to "open up" the economy were leading to an overall

### See also article p6-7

loss of jobs and creating a huge number of pavement petty traders. Tamil workers and the majority Sinhalese workers had been fighting together until recently against the UNP government. But the culmination of the fight, the 1980 general strike had been defeated due to the lack of leadership of the mass workers' organisations.

Jayawardene had introduced penalties against Tamils in many areas of Sri Lankan life and his Sinhalese chauvinist tactics had had a disastrous effect in the context of a decline in working class struggle. He had encouraged the troops, plus the urban unorganised poor, who had previously acted with the workers, to turn on the Tamils. They used electoral registers to locate Tamil property and organise a deadly pogrom. There had been no violence in the factories, banks or offices where Tamil and Sinhalese worked together as normal.

The NSSP speaker said his party supported the Tamils' right to self determination and called on all Tamil fighters to join in a united

class struggle against Jayawardene and the system which maintained communal violence.

Other speakers were Terry Fields MP who outlined the hypocrisy of the Tory MPs with Sri Lankan business connections, and Bob Labi of the London Labour Party's executive who showed how the world crisis of capitalism was stirring up racial conflicts in the so called "third world" as in Nigeria and Assam this year.

### Thousands of refugees

On the day of the London meeting, the Sri Lankan parliament passed, by 150 votes to 0, a law to proscribe any party advocating the separatist cause. The government aim to deprive such oppositionists of civil rights for seven years. The main capitalist opposition, the Sri Lankan Freedom Party wanted in fact to make such an act treasonable! The Communist Party's one MP Sarath Muttetuwegama abstained in protest that 3 members of the CP's political bureau and the general secretary of his party had been arrested. Workers and Tamils would expect better support than that.

Tens of thousands of Tamils fled to the Jaffna area and an estimated 64,000

are camped around Colombo and other cities. Around 100,000 workers have been thrown out of work with £55 millions worth of damage to industry. The government is taking major shareholdings in industries damaged in the riots, but not from any socialist reasons. Tamils fear it is a backdoor method of depriving Tamils of their property.

Jayawardene has now admitted that soldiers and police "sometimes" encouraged the pogroms, but has also blamed the left parties (which have been banned), left "conspirators" in the Army, the USSR, the Vatican and Amnesty International for the riots! Two International Red Cross workers have been expelled for asking to visit political prisoners and see refugee camps.

But the government's responsibility for encouraging the attacks is crystal clear. The removal of democratic rights make government attacks on the whole working class and peasantry more feasible.

The best defence of the Tamil population and Sri Lanka's workers is the support of the working class worldwide. Protests against the atrocities and the suppression of democratic rights should be sent to the Sri Lankan High Commission 13 Hyde Park Gardens, London W2 2LU.