

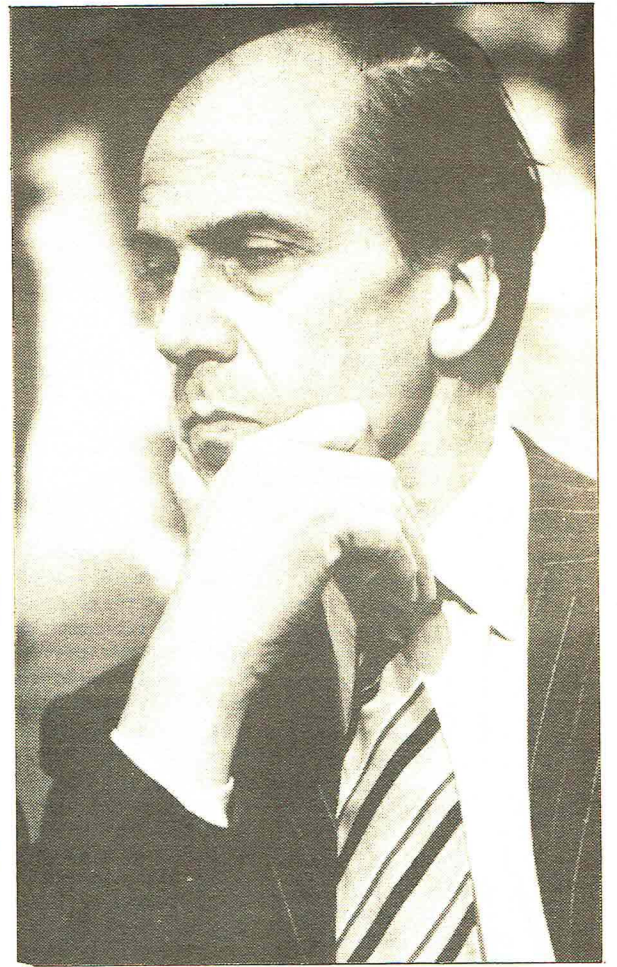
Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

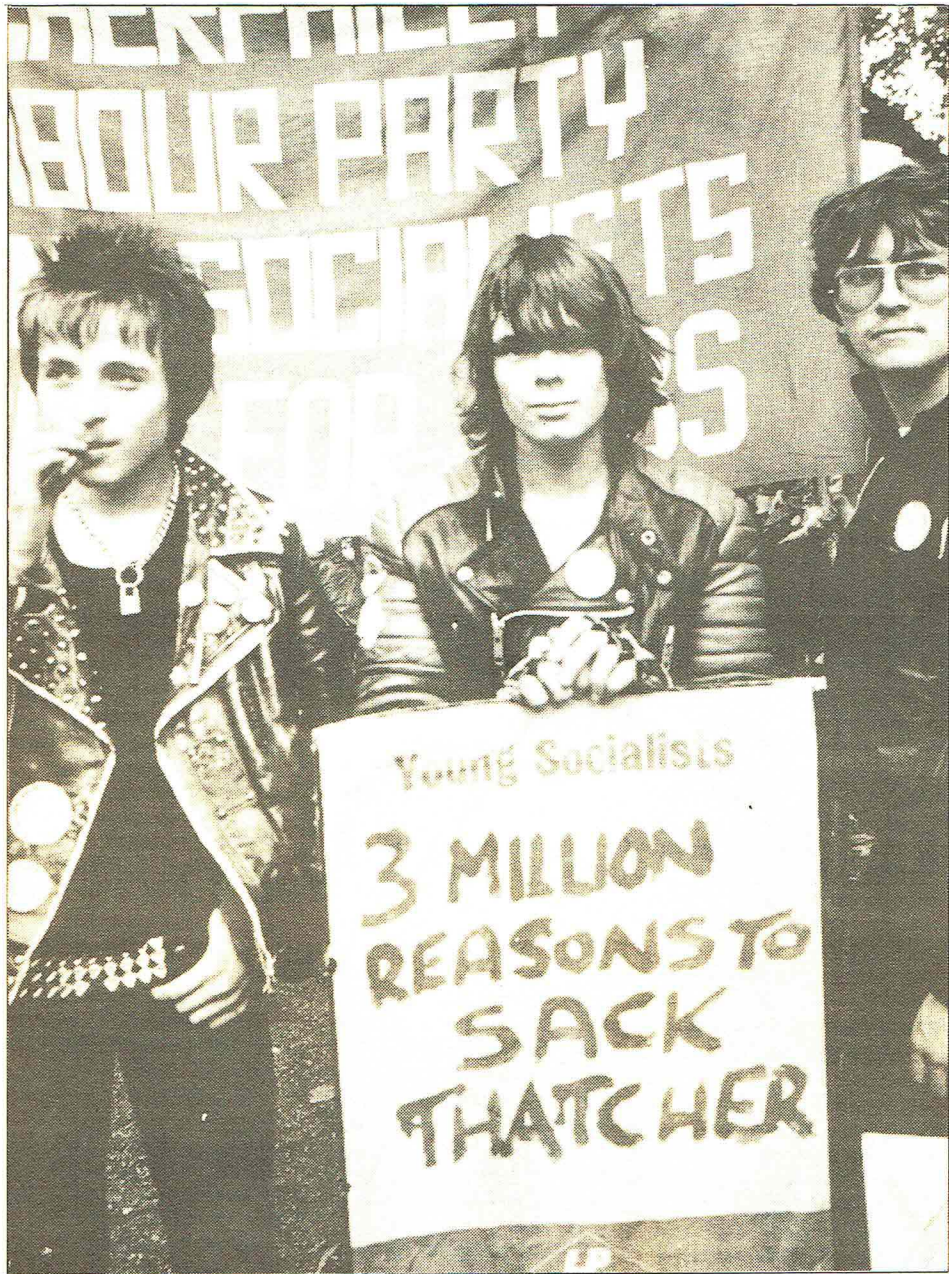
ISSUE 665
2 September 1983

20p

Youth Wages:



RIGHT: Tebbit.
LEFT: His intended victims young workers and unemployed, show they won't tolerate Tory attacks.
Photos: Militant



Tories Turn the Screw

Militant Rally

"MARXISM IN OUR TIME— SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR LABOUR"



Wembley Conference Centre, London
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Dave Nellist, M.P.
Frances Curran (LPYS NC, Scotland)

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(Cheques payable to "Militant Rally")

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Rush to: 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

SEVEN MILLION people went hungry at one time or another this year. At present, three million people can't afford proper heating. Half a million children do not get three meals a day.

These facts are not describing some forlorn third world country. This is industrial Britain 1983. These findings by a recent MORI poll graphically expose the cost of Tory monetarism.

Yet with this rampant poverty staring them in the face, the Tories are coolly preparing another turn of the screw. Now the three quarters of a million youth on the dole and living at home are for the chopping block.

By

Bob Wade

As it is unemployed 16 and 17 year olds only get a miserly £15.50 a week, with a 'rise' to just over £20 with £3.10 towards their parents' costs when they are 18. From November these payments will be cut by up to £7 or £8 a week. Eighteen year olds

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

TUC - GOVERNMENT TALKS...

THE KEY issue facing this year's Trade Union Congress will be the debate over whether or not the TUC should enter into talks with the Tory government, something which also questions the relationship between the TUC and Labour Party.

The right wing leaders of the TUC are promoting the myth that, in effect, the Labour Party link is no longer of great value and that "modern trade unionism" demands that the TUC try to get the best out of the situation—ie accept the Tory Government rather than campaign against it.

The resolution on the agenda which has attracted the most attention in this regard has been that from the Civil and Public Servants Association. "Accepting that the Trade Union movement has historically required a major political arm to achieve its objectives", it states, "Congress realises that it may not be able to rely on helpful political developments to ensure the successful expansion of Trade Unions and the restoration of their influence." In other words, Labour being out of office, the unions must cooperate with the Tories.

The same resolution calls for a statement of "the principles of modern Trade Unionism" (perhaps a theoretical justification for cooperation with the Tories?) and "a strategy document which outlines the steps required for the Trade Union movement to prosper in the current anti-Trade Union environment", including "recommendations as to how Trade Unions should deal with this government."

The same sentiments were outlined by Len Murray, general secretary of the TUC, in a recent interview with the *Guardian* (August 26). "It is vital", he said, "that the unions and Government find whether there is any common ground between them...The TUC is simply investigating whether a dialogue can be established between us, the CBI and the Government to discover if this can be done by modifying their points in a doctrinal field".

Relentless

As if to underpin the new "thaw" in the relations between the TUC General Council and the Tory Government, even in advance of any Congress decision, Len Murray also pretends that the recent TUC-Government talks actually made some impression on the Tories. The Chancellor, he said, had been "cautiously positive" about certain suggestions made by the TUC and there were signs from the Government of "bits of blossom on the tree but there were no signs of any fruit yet."

The trade union leaders who are now campaigning for TUC-Government cooperation are fooling themselves, and, what is even worse, fooling millions of trade union members, if they imagine for one moment that they can substantially alter the policies of the Thatcher Cabinet to the benefit of working people.

The fragrant blossoms of the Tories' election campaign are already blowing away, if Len Murray has not already noticed, and are giving way to the bitter, maggoty fruit of Tory policies—more cuts, higher unemployment and increasing inflation.

The only serious economic strategy that the Tories can offer is one that cuts the living standards of workers, by unemployment, by cutting real wages and by cutting the 'social wage'. The Tebbit policy towards youth and the low paid represents a conscious and relentless drive to use unemployment and the poorest organised sections of workers to drag down the general level of wages and working conditions throughout the economy.

Neither for the Tories is it a "doctrinal" issue. They are compelled by the logic of the capitalist system to push the burden of economic crisis onto the shoulders of workers. Moreover, the latest economic survey of the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry, only serves to underline the chronic state of British capitalism.

The CBI expects unemployment to rise from 3.1 million this autumn, to 3.2 million next year, not including school-leavers, most of whom will be either on the dole or dragooned into one of Tebbit's cheap-labour schemes. Inflation will be going up again next year while the balance of payments, despite North Sea oil, will deteriorate. Investment in Britain will stagnate, while billions of pounds are salted away abroad.

The economic 'upswing' this year, therefore, while it may have an effect in certain important industries, and will in the long run produce no fundamental change in the state of collapse of the British economy.

Yet the biggest single obstacle that lies in the way of the Tories' attempts to cut living standards is the Trade Union movement. That is the reason for the Tories' attempts to tie the hands of the trades unions by legal means and, since it serves the same purpose, entangle the trade unions in a fictional "dialogue".

The CPSA resolution refers to "the successful expansion of Trade Unions" and the unions "prospering". But the whole direction of Tory policy is precisely designed to do the opposite.

The total membership of the trade unions has fallen from 12.2 million in 1979 to 10.5 million today, showing a fall of just less than half a million per year. This is not accounted for only by unemployment figures. Whereas in 1978, 52.6 per cent of workers in jobs were organised, today the figure stands at 50.6 per cent.

The main factor in the decline of trade union organisation has been the decline in jobs in manufacturing and in basic industries, all of which have been traditionally well organised. Jobs that have been 'created' by the Tories in the last four years have been largely in the service sector where trade union organisation has traditionally been weakest and in 'job creation' and similar youth schemes which are consciously designed to undercut trade union conditions



GET A MOVE ON MURRAY JACKANORY STARTS IN FIVE MINUTES

Asking the devil to renounce sin...

and rates of pay.

The Tories, unlike the TUC leaders, are not unhappy at this turn of events. On the contrary, they are rubbing their hands with delight!

The CPSA motion, therefore, misses the point entirely. If the trade union movement were to begin a campaign to organise the

TUC to run away from their responsibilities to their own members.

How many trade union members voted for a wage cut? How many CPSA members voted to lose their jobs? How many NHS workers voted for more cuts in the service? How many miners voted to lose 65,000 jobs from their industry?

Militant

EDITORIAL

worst-paid sections of workers—a most pressing need at the present time—it will only do it in the teeth of the most bitter opposition of the Tory Government. Trade union "expansion" and "prosperity" are incompatible with cooperation with Toryism.

There isn't the slightest chance that the TUC leadership can alter the fundamental direction of the Tory Government's economic policy. To ask Tebbit, Thatcher, Lawson, and Co. not to attack the living standards of working people is like asking the devil to renounce sin. The CPSA resolution makes reference to opinion polls showing that only 38% of trade unionists voted Labour. But the Tories fraudulent mandate—achieved by Saatchi and Saatchi and the biggest Fleet Street lying campaign ever—cannot be used by the

If the trade union leadership need a 'mandate', they should begin by looking at the wages and conditions of their own members eroded over the last few years.

One third of the adult workforce—some six or seven million—are paid wages below the Council of Europe minimum of £90 a week. Whereas in 1979, one in ten workers were classified as 'low paid', according to the Low Pay Unit, the figure for 1983 is one in seven.

These are the 'polls' the CPSA should point to. Here is the job that the trade union movement must tackle—and one that must mean facing up to the Tory Government.

In the face of the continuing onslaught of the Tories, the TUC have the responsibility to their members to resist. That means campaigning among the trade union rank and file explain-

ing the full implications of Tory policy, and it means using the full industrial might of the trade unions to resist the measures the Tories try to impose, including anti-trade union laws.

It must mean also a recognition of the fact that the trade unions have an unavoidably political role to play, in a situation where the government's whole strategy is orientated to doing them down. The link with the Labour Party must be strengthened, not broken.

The very creation of the Labour Party as the political arm of the trade union movement demonstrated the necessity of campaigning on the political as well as the industrial plane. Those trade union right-wingers who openly eschew a TUC "political" stance in reality are merely surrendering to the political stance of Toryism.

Political Role

The "helpful political developments" mentioned in the CPSA resolution, will not fall unaided from the skies, much less from the hands of the Tories. They have to be worked for and campaigned for by the trade unions in conjunction with the Labour Party.

The trade unions must face up to their political role precisely because the economic crisis which has buffeted them and their members has only a political solution. The provision of secure jobs, adequate ser-

vices and a decent living standard are impossible on a capitalist basis.

It is the historic task of the trade unions and the Labour Party—a task all the more urgent as the economic crisis presses in on workers from all sides—to fight for an alternative, for the socialist transformation of society. Socialist objectives have historically been enshrined in the constitutions of most major unions, as well as in Clause IV part 4 of the Labour Party rules.

The shift towards white collar jobs and trade unions has not made any fundamental difference to the position faced by workers—all workers equally are facing the insecurity and uncertainty of Toryism. Socialist policies are more necessary now than ever before.

On thing is certain: whatever may be the position of the trade union tops, the rank and file of the movement cannot afford to meekly accept the dictates of Tory economics. The call that comes out from this year's TUC conference must be: NO CO-OPERATION WITH THE TORY GOVERNMENT.

There must be a massive and determined campaign by the TUC and the Labour Party to fight off the attacks of the Tories, to bring down the government at the earliest possible date, and to restore a Labour government as much committed to policies in the interests of ordinary working people as the Tories have been committed to the interests of the rich.

The truth behind Bradford Labour expulsions

WHEN Bradford North Labour Party decided to expel twelve members who had backed Ben Ford against the official Labour candidate in the general election, the popular press screamed it was a "witch-hunt".

But what are the facts? All of those expelled admitted to either signing Ford's nomination form, or acting as his counting agents, or actively supporting him, or all three. This is in clear violation of the party's constitution, clause 16, section 3, concerning the rules for Constituency Labour Parties.

BEN FORD, the renegade former Labour MP who stood against Pat Wall, Labour's official candidate at the last election, is still a member of the Labour Party. But hopefully not for long. It's come to light that Ford is a member of Leeds North West CLP, which came as a surprise to many members of the party who

could not recall him attending their meetings.

At its meeting on 8 August, Leeds North West LPYS carried a motion calling for Ford's expulsion. It is to be hoped that this will be carried out without delay, for it was Ford's intervention which resulted in the Tories winning Bradford North at the election.

Of nine Ford supporters in one ward, six were lapsed members. The fact that they were not actually members did not stop them turning up at the ward meeting after the election. This meeting had to be abandoned when there were threats of physical violence.

The executive of Bradford North took control but their meeting to hear the case for

expulsions was again broken up. Amidst threats of violence against party officials, the police were called in.

The following evening the meeting was reconvened, in the presence of the Regional Labour Party Organiser. He too was threatened with violence. But this time, due to effective stewarding the meeting was completed.

The Executive recom-

mended that twelve people be expelled from the party, and two be allowed to remain. A special General Management Committee was organised and all twelve were invited to state their case.

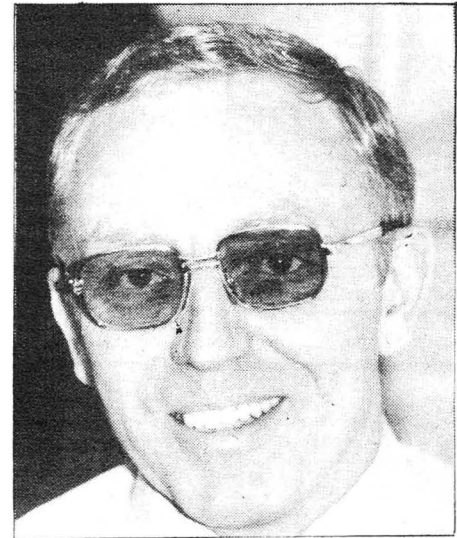
Only six turned up. But the rooms that had been booked were locked, so it was decided to move to a room above a pub. The six then refused to attend, although Ford's own inaugural meeting had been held in a pub.

Again there were threats against members of the GMC. But this did not stop the meeting, and by a majority of 29 to 1, the GMC voted for expulsions.

By a *Militant* Reporter



PAT WALL



TERRY FIELDS

Disability group formed

A NEW labour movement organisation for the disabled has recently been formed. Launching the new group, called the Socialist Disability Group, Labour's spokesman for the disabled, Alf Morris MP, stated that there was: "a crying need for this new body."

Cathy Wilson, Labour's candidate for the Isle of Wight at the election was amongst those voted onto

the National Steering Group. Membership is open to able bodied and disabled people over the age of 15.

Enquiries, applications for membership, and copies of the group's aims and constitution can be obtained from: Michael Barratt, Secretary, Socialist Disability Action Group, 2 Tenterden Road, Tottenham, London N17 8BE.

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.

MARXISTS STAND FOR NEC

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

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

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

They explain why they are standing:

“For our party, and for working people as a whole, this year's Labour Party conference and the executive it elects will play a crucial role.

As in the days of Labour's early pioneers, we believe that the urgent task facing us today is to turn our movement outwards. A campaign, the like of which the party has never seen before, must be launched immediately, to defend the interests of working people and to explain our socialist policies.

A 35-hour week with no loss of pay; a national minimum wage; a massive scheme of house-building and other useful public works; unilateral nuclear disarmament—these must be the demands of such a campaign.

Above all, we must campaign for the implementation of our party's socialist clause; 'clause four'. If the next Labour government is not to be bullied and black-mailed by bankers and industrialists into abandoning its programme—as has happened in the past—then the power and influence of these parasites must be ended.

The next Labour government must translate 'clause four' into reality. The nationalisation of the economy's "commanding heights" must be the cornerstone of our economic policy.

Those who have argued this case consistently, those who have argued for socialism to be put firmly back on the agenda, have now become the target of a witch-hunt in the party.

The bitter experiences of Labour's election defeat has shattered completely the lie that expulsions would win the party "millions of votes". In fact, the opposite has proved to be true. The attack on the supporters of *Militant* served only to divide our movement at precisely the time when a united struggle was most needed.

We are confident, however, that the message at this year's conference will be that the constituency and trade union rank and file want **more** socialism, not **less**. Let's insure that along with decisions for radical socialist policies, this year's conference elects an NEC which truly reflects the wishes and aspirations of the party.

Fresh witch-hunt rejected

LABOUR'S right-wing chose to make their latest attack upon Marxist ideas at the end of July, when most Labour Parties and trade union branches take a one month break from meetings.

But it has not stopped those organisations which do meet from voicing their opposition to the new censorship proposals.

The POEU through its Political Committee, recently agreed to send a letter to the NEC of the Labour Party calling upon them to cease witch-hunting activities against the *Militant*. A letter had been received from Jim Mortimer, the LP General Secretary, informing the POEU of the LP's NEC's decision to ban the sale of the paper etc.

It is believed that John Golding, NEC right-winger and POEU-sponsored MP, moved that the letter be noted but this was rejected.

The committee instead decided to inform the LP NEC that they considered their decision autocratic, divisive, impractical, against the best democratic traditions of the LP and called upon the LP NEC to revoke the witch-hunt against the *Militant*.

In his remaining few months on the current LP



February 1983—Neil Kinnock walks past Labour Party members protesting against witch-hunts and the expulsions of the five *Militant* Editorial Board members. Photo: Militant

NEC before the October LP conference, POEU members look forward to seeing John Golding comply with the unequivocal statement from his union's political decision making body.

Hammersmith Labour Party by an overwhelming majority condemned the right-wing's recommendation to withdraw all facilities from *Militant* as "a blatant political gag" and asserted its refusal to operate any such ban.

This party, which includes in its ranks, 'expelled' *Militant* Editorial Board member Keith Dickinson, reaffirmed its opposition to the Labour

Party's National Executive's majority continuing witch-hunts against *Militant* supporters and other rank and file members.

Rochdale CLP has also voted, by a 2 to 1 margin, not to implement the new censorship ban, to oppose the witch-hunt and called for the re-instatement of the five 'expelled' *Militant* Editorial Board members.

At its last meeting **Arun-**del CLP supported with only one against a motion from the transport workers' branch expressing its "disgust that at its last meeting the NEC spent so much time discussing

measures to try and stop the sales of *Militant* that it had to postpone discussion on Labour's heavy defeat in the recent general election."

At its August meeting **Poole** passed by an overwhelming majority a resolution which stated, in part:

"We deplore the use of the register to conduct a witch-hunt against the views of a socialist newspaper, and demand that the NEC dedicate its efforts to a serious discussion of the General Election defeat, and to conducting the fight against the Tories and Alliance."

Bring us back on target

DESPITE THE four million unemployed some people find it easy to earn a living. Henry Kissinger, former American Secretary of State, commands £17,000 for one lecture. John McEnroe, tennis ace, "earns" £700 a minute!

Royalty are slightly more expensive. They earn £47 a second for a TV commercial. So in 1 minute they get DOUBLE what it takes a YOPster to earn in a year!

Now we don't expect any money from Royalty. We've got no rich backers—just you the readers.

You can help us by donating some of your time to *Militant*. An hour's pay, a day's pay or even a week's pay. We are halfway through the quarter—but still far behind the 50% target. We MUST reach our target within the next few weeks. The growing sacrifice of our comrades at a time of continued hardship is a testament to their determination to fight the Tories.

Thanks to all the organisations that sent us money this week; Bonnyrigg Labour Party Young Socialists raised £50 from a Disco, £27 was raised by a Brighton Labour Party ward Barbeque, £25 Bermondsey LPYS, £10 Liverpool Labour Group, £15.30 from workers at Torness Construction Site, Edinburgh, £3 NUPE Shop Stewards Committee Macclesfield, £3 USDW

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 8 October
Eastern	998		2400
East Midlands	423		2650
Humberside	195		1450
London East	838		3100
London West	439		1950
London South	744		2700
Manchester & Lancs	952		3000
Merseyside	632		3300
Northern	773		3500
Scotland East	616		2000
Scotland West	365		2700
Southern	887		3700
South West	308		2000
Wales East	144		2000
Wales West	143		2300
West Midlands	471		3150
Yorkshire	602		3300
Others	2183		4800
Total received	11,712		50000

TOTAL SINCE LAST ISSUE: £3482

workers Dundee, AUEW Local Authority workers Mossley Hill £3, £3 Stockton LPYS, and 50p from workers on strike at Scheppe Walton.

Many individuals sent us donations; P. Smith unemployed Bristol 50p, Steve Keene unemployed Isle of Sheppey 60p, D & M Cockerill both unemployed from Sheffield £1.60. Several £'s for the paper; Ruth Crowther Leeds, T. McDonough Chester GMWU, K. Evans Cardiff N CLP, Alex Warner Stalybridge, Catherine Davies NUS Grimsby, Charlie from Portsmouth donated at a Labour Party Youth School, R. Longmore East Kilbride LPYS, P. Sullivan USDW Coventry, Hazel Armstrong, house-

wife from Walsall, and Peter Hobbs TGWU Isle of Wight £1.20. Mary King and Julie Dixon both from Bermondsey LPYS gave £2 each as did Kay Fernandez UCW Stepney. Over £2 came in from Anthony Hold unemployed Keighley, £4 was raised by the "Socialist Kids from Fame", £4.50 M Keating Sidcup, £4.50 Mrs White Barking, £5 Laurence Arnall Marden LP, £5 Kevin Platt, landlord 'Dog and Partridge' Oldham, £15 P. Crack Bristol E CLP, £22 G. Salkedi India and Tony Kox Dundee donated £40 from his redundancy pay.

There are all sorts of fund raising events you can hold to raise money. East Kilbride raised £50 from a Jumble Sale. Have you organised one for your area yet? How

about a sponsored event; stop smoking or go on a sponsored diet like a supporter from Stepney who has so far raised £9.

How many areas have got a social organised for the end of the quarter? Now is the time to organise one. They are always good fund raisers.

But do not forget it is the regular donations that we rely on most. So make sure each of your paper sales has been asked for a regular donation to *Militant*. Every regular 10p each week collected makes all the difference. We cannot fail to go forward if every supporter makes an effort this week to ask all our readers.

By Kath White

For a daily workers' paper

ON 18 AUGUST Len Murray appeared on Channel 4 explaining the need for a labour movement newspaper. The task of building the workers' press is vital today. In the 1920s the German Socialist Party had 160 daily papers, we believe it is more than possible for the British workers to build a daily paper in the next period.

How is it to be done? To quote from the first issue of *Militant*:

"It is only the rank and file of the labour movement who can defeat or change the leadership if it does not carry out the measures which are necessary for the movement to survive. We need to educate and be educated. In the beginning ours can only be a monthly voice, but within that confine we will endeavour to deal with the main problems that face the movement.

"Our aim is to be the Marxist voice of the Young Socialists and the militants in the labour movement. The sacrifice and collection of money among militant workers and Young Socialists has made possible the production of the paper.

"It is your paper. Write for it, sell it, criticise it to make it a better paper, send reports to it, collect money for it.



Photo: M. Carroll

Over £350 was collected for the *Militant* at the S.Wales Summer Camp last weekend.

Make it the mass journal of militant labour and socialist youth."

At present we are hampered in our progress by wholesalers who refuse to allow our paper to be sold in their shops because "they can't make sufficient profit"! Many trade union leaders refuse to advertise in our paper, and will not even allow us to advertise in their union journals! Now the right wing on the Labour party NEC is so scared of the effect of our ideas that they have written to all CLPs to try and stop party activists from selling or reading our

paper!

Despite all these attacks we continue to increase our sales and work to building a daily. How ironic that on the one hand the leaders of the movement call for a labour movement daily and on the other they attack, or refuse to defend our paper!

We are confident that a daily paper can be built but only by the active support and assistance of working people in every sphere of the labour movement.

We are therefore, calling on you to help build our paper. The sooner we raise the necessary cash and sufficiently increase the number

of sellers and papers sold we will commence to produce a daily paper.

Can you help us find an extra reader, become a seller of our paper at your LP, TU branch etc? Will you become a regular contributor to our paper through letters and donations? Raise the issue of a workers' daily at your meeting and discuss how you are going to build it? For more details about how you can help build our paper contact: *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986 3828.

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

EDINBURGH: On Monday 5 September at 7.30pm. Speakers Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board) Dave Nellist MP at Edinburgh Trades Council Picardy Place Edinburgh.

CAMBRIDGE: Tuesday 13 September at 8 pm 'The Way Forward for Labour'. At Community Centre and school Fulbourn Old Drift Cherry Hinton.

SOUTHAMPTON: "The Fight Against the Tories" St. Matthews Church Hall, St. Mary's Road, Southampton on Monday 12 September.

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VACANT FLAT Forest Gate, London E7. 1 double room £30 pw, 1 single room £15 pw + damage deposit + 1 months rent in advance. Contact Jane or Mark 01-552 3204.

FOURTH PERSON to share house Hendon area, own room, £21 pw. Phone Tom, 959-7138.

PRINTED SWEATSHIRTS and Tee-shirts: "Turn Left: Militant for Workers Unity and Socialism"

T-shirts—white, black, yellow £3.25 each.

Sweatshirts—sky, grey, dark green, navy and black £6.50 each.

All with red motif.

Sizes (for both)
small—32"—34"
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Costs include postage and packing. All proceeds to the Fighting Fund. Send size and colour preference with cheques and postal orders to: R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn Lancashire. BB2 5RN.

RE-ADVERTISEMENT
AMBULANT male, disabled comrade, requires nurse for holiday. Medical attention need: minimal. Contact Iain Campbell, Carlisle (0228) 21068.

Will the girl who phoned Iain in Carlisle on Sunday 7 August, please phone again. Developments since that time mean he now has need of a nurse from 1-7 October. Other inquiries welcome.

MILITANT Tee Shirts, "Defend Militant Fight the Tories!" £2.50 each or generous discounts on bulk orders. All enquiries phone Southampton 788965.

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Any single tape £1.50
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Rally speakers Dave £1.50
Nellist MP & Ted Grant.

Orders with cheques to K. Skethaway, 51 Baret Rd, Walkergate, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE6 4RT. Allow 28 days for delivery. Proceeds to Fighting Fund.

FLAT AVAILABLE sharing with comrade. £12 per week. Four miles outside the Polytechnic of Wales. Brychan Davies, 20, Davies Street, Porth, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan. Phone 0656 63502.

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS 1-DAY RALLY ON

BLACK YOUTH IN BRITAIN 1983

SATURDAY
22ND
OCTOBER
1983
COUNTY HALL
LONDON
SE1.
STARTS 10am.

- ★ FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE TORIES!
- ★ WORKERS UNITY AND SOCIALISM!

P&P LPTS NC, 150 Walworth Rd., London SE17

Above leaflets available from A Bevan, Labour Party Youth Officer, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

WOMEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Southern Weekend School
Saturday and Sunday 24 and 25 September, London

Sessions on: The Family, Women and the Colonial Revolution, Positive Discrimination, Role of a Trade Union Activist, Low Pay and the Minimum Wage. Details of venue and speakers will appear in later issues.

Give your answer to the witch-hunt Come to the rally!

THATCHER'S hysterical call at the last election was to drive out Marxism. She issued a challenge at the Tory election rally held at the Wembley Conference Centre: "who else could organise an event like this?"

By Rob Sewell

Well, on Saturday 10 September, four months after the election, *Militant* will pack out the Wembley Centre in its first National Rally.

Over 3,000 youth, trade unionists and Labour Party members will attend the event organised to oppose the witch-hunt, to campaign for the re-instatement of the expelled editorial board, and prepare the way for a daily Marxist paper.

The witch-hunt was launched against the *Militant* as early as 1975 as a means of stopping the leftward swing of the Labour Party. The right wing who have been defeated politically, unleashed this McCarthyite campaign out of desperation to expel the *Militant*, block the constitutional reforms and ditch the left policies. It was these antics that contributed to the victory of the Tories in June.

As far as *Militant* is concerned the expulsions, bans and proscriptions, which

have been bureaucratically imposed, are a scandalous attack on Labour's democratic rights and traditions. Yet they have rebounded in the face of the right wing. With every attack, sales are boosted. With every lie thrown at us, our support grows.

The relevance of Marxism today

With the victory of Thatcher, the labour movement must learn the lessons of the electoral defeat the prepare for the industrial battles with the Tories that lie ahead. Such is the speed of events in Britain and internationally, the need for a daily Marxist paper for the movement has become completely evident. The National Rally must be a spring-board in attaining this end in a relatively short space of time.

In the year of the Centenary of Marx's death, the rally

will explain the relevance of Marxism today in Britain. Internationalism and the history of the workers' movement are also major themes that will be taken up.

The speakers from the *Militant* Editorial Board will be Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe. From the Parliamentary front, both Terry Fields MP and Dave Nellist MP will address the rally.

Internationalist flavour

To supply the internationalist flavour will be a Marxist veteran, Anton Nilson from Sweden, who has had an astonishingly rich experience in the international labour movement. Anton recalls meeting Lenin: "He came in his sports cap without body guards or anything. I heard him speak in Red Square in Moscow in 1919, when I had just come from the Kolumna district in the south.

"There were over one million people there. There were many platforms. He spoke for about twelve minutes from each platform and went himself through the masses to the next one".

One of our older readers, Dudley Edwards, wrote to us recently about the rally:

It is with great pleasure and interest that I read the announcement that An-

ton Nilson will speak at the rally.

As one who has met him on several occasions at meetings in Sweden, I know that his appearance in London will be a memorable one for those attending the rally.

To meet him is to know that he is a comrade that symbolises the fighting spirit of the working class throughout the world.

I remember how, after attending a rally, he came for a cup of coffee with a number of other comrades and for two hours he related stories of the great revolutionary struggles he had been involved in. His participation in the Russian revolution of 1917, his work amongst the peasant peoples of Eastern Russia and his involvement in the German revolution of 1918-1919. Today he is approaching his 100th birthday and he personifies every one of those years as someone committed to the ending of the capitalist system.

From Dudley Edwards (48 years a member of the AUEW, 30 years Labour Party member)

Displays have also been organised on the "History of *Militant*", the "life of Karl Marx", as well as "Lenin and Trotsky". Archive film will also be shown during the lunch break.

In the early evening an



Above, Anton Nilson today and below, Anton pictured when he flew for the Red Army airforce during the Russian Revolution of 1917.



award-winning feature film, *The Battle for Algiers* will be shown, which depicts the Algerian liberation struggle against French colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s. It has not gone on general release despite being made in 1965.

With already over seventy coaches booked throughout the country, this first *Militant* Rally is poised to become the paper's biggest success to date. So make sure you're not left out! There's still time to book.

Prepare for LPYS campaigns

REPORTS AT the last Labour Party Young Socialists National Committee meeting indicate that the LPYS continues to grow after our biggest and most successful summer camp ever.

In the Shire counties of the south new LPYS branches have been established. Typical of these is **Warminster** in the West country, who held a demonstration last Saturday on the issues of disarmament and unemployment.

Another LPYS branch is being set up in **Cinderford**, in Gloucestershire. The YS there are organising a demonstration and rock concert in the town on September 27.

Every burst of growth of the LPYS in urban areas is always preceded by a flourish of new branches in the countryside. However, growth doesn't come automatically. LPYS branches must be seen to be out on the streets, in the youth clubs or on the knocker.

For instance in **Walsall** a group of young people have got together to set up the Walsall Youth Council to campaign on the problems facing youth. The local LPYS have got involved and have organised a joint public



The Labour Party Young Socialists campaigning on the streets to kick the Tories out. Photo: Militant

meeting on September 21.

In Wales, LPYS branches are joining forces to march with the local Labour Party in **Caerphilly** against unemployment on September 24.

Young workers are becoming more political. In **Scotland** day schools for young workers organised by the CPSA and TGWU have included a debate between the LPYS and the Young Con-

servatives on the Tabbitt bill.

Nationally the LPYS National Committee are calling on all branches to build for three main events this year. Firstly there is the **Young Workers Assembly** organised by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign to be held in Manchester on **December 10**.

A trade union letter and leaflet are being produced to advertise this event and will

be available to branches free in the next few weeks.

The second important national event being organised is the second annual **Black Youth Conference**. This will be on **October 2** at County Hall, London. Leaflets, posters and letters to unions and youth clubs advertising the event are now available free.

In the build up to the black youth conference the

LPYS National Committee is calling for a national mobilisation of every LPYS branch in support of the **Newham 8** national demonstration on **September 24** in Newham, East London. Speakers will include Dave Nellist, MP. LPYS branches should contact black and Asian organisations to organise joint coaches to this event.

Last but by no means least

the LPYS National Committee is asking all branches to turn out for the **Chile Solidarity demonstration**. This important demonstration will mark the 10th anniversary of the military coup led by the brutal general Pinochet, which saw 50,000 trade union activists being tortured and murdered and the impoverishment of the Chilean people. Besides being the tenth anniversary of the coup, this demonstration has special significance with Reagan's latest designs on Central and South America. LPYS members should make a strenuous effort to get to the demonstration in London on **Sunday September 11**. Accommodation is being organised for the Saturday night for those LPYS branches who may come down a day early.

By Willie Griffin

**OUT NOW!
September Issue**

SOCIALIST YOUTH

Features on:

- ★ YTS
- ★ *Madness* Interview
- ★ Labour leadership election

Reviews • TV • Reviews • Books

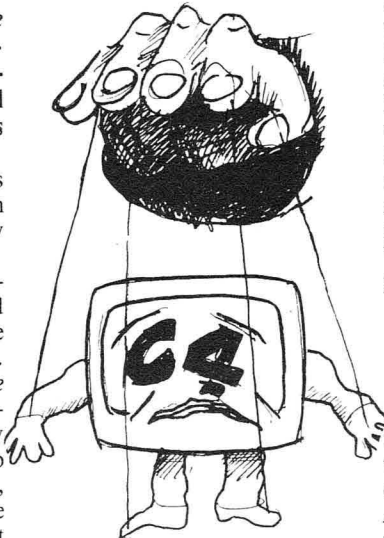
There is no alternative

CHANNEL FOUR'S *Friday Night Alternative* current affairs programme made a refreshing change from the usual diet of anti-labour reports served up by the tele.

Many of its programmes gave a 'left' point of view on current issues. Yet it is now to be scrapped.

Similar Channel Four programmes, *Broadside* and *State of the Nation* have already been trodden on. Now the *Friday Alternative* is for the chop. The programme's journalists say they were ordered to do more 'right-wing' stories, they were forced to change scripts at the last moment and have been censored again and again.

The *Friday Night Alternative* National Union of Journalists chapel said of the decision, "The Channel Four Board say it's because



it's amateurish. We say it's because we've upset too many important people on sensitive issues.

"It's no coincidence that the decision to scrap us was

announced just days after we were openly criticised in an Independent Broadcasting Authority report for our Falklands programme, which went out in January. In it we showed how TV news allowed itself to be manipulated by the government during the Falklands War. That upset a lot of 'top people'.

"We've been spiked"

"There were other stories they didn't like. In fact, when we tried to repeat some of them for a *Best of Friday Alternative* programme we were made to take them out by Channel Four; one was about media coverage of Arthur Scargill and the other about the Falklands again. Basically we've been spiked—and it stinks.

"We suspect the reason

lies with the IBA. From the very beginning we have maintained that their notions of 'due impartiality' and 'balance' only serve to reinforce an Establishment consensus that is clearly at odds with popular opinion in the politically fragmented Britain of the '80s."

Despite Channel Four's claim, the programme was popular—it regularly added over 200,000 viewers to the audience it inherited from ITN's *Channel Four News* on Friday nights.

The Tories and the bosses always declare themselves champions of a 'free press'. Yet when one small section of the media dared criticise the established order, they are stamped on.

By Bob Wade

Ireland for beginners - no place to start

ACTIVISTS IN the British labour movement badly need a book that explains Ireland's long and troubled history. Numerous publications have tried to satisfy this need.

Ireland for Beginners by Phil Evans and Eileen Pollock, like its predecessors, has failed in this task.

It completely underestimates the role played by labour in Irish history. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the section dealing with the stormy years 1917-1922.

The War of Independence is described simply as a guerilla struggle met by state repression and unionist reaction. It doesn't even mention that the driving force behind that movement was provided by the small farmers, the landless peasantry and, above all, by the working class. Land seizures, soviets and general strikes were the order of the day as "the men of poverty" took up the issues of jobs, pay and repression.

Sectarianism rekindled

But it was the failure of the Irish labour leadership to take up the politically explosive national question and link it quite firmly to the demand for socialist change, that allowed this tremendous tide of revolution to ebb and turn. This gave British imperialism an opportunity to rekindle sectarianism and impose partition with hardly a protest from Southern capital.

This attempt by Irish workers to carry through the socialist transformation of society is lightly dismissed, sandwiched by Evans and Pollock between the political manoeuvres of petit-bourgeois nationalists.

Having briefly surveyed Irish history since 1169, Evans and Pollock draw one

astounding conclusion. They point to Southern Ireland as a haven of religious toleration! Yet the Southern capitalist class is in complete accordance with the conservative teachings of the Catholic church. Thus the constitution 'recognises' that a woman's place is in the home. Divorce is forbidden. Contraception is not freely available. The church and SPUC are now attempting to ensure that abortion is never made available in Ireland.

The only way the Southern state is 'non-sectarian' is that these measures impose equal hardships on all workers, Protestant and Catholic!

Ireland for Beginners concludes that British troops should be withdrawn from Northern Ireland, and they raise, quite separately, the demand for a socialist party, "run by workers in the factories and on the streets".

Yet these two questions are inextricably linked. What class or social force is going to drive British imperialism from Ireland? This book ignores this question. British imperialism is unlikely to withdraw of its own accord, knowing that the uncertainty and fear such an action would cause would provoke wide-scale sectarianism threatening the "stability" of both Britain and Ireland.

It is only the Irish working class, organised politically and industrially, as well as in a trade union defence force to defend its own class interests, that can drive imperialism from Ireland and defeat sectarianism.

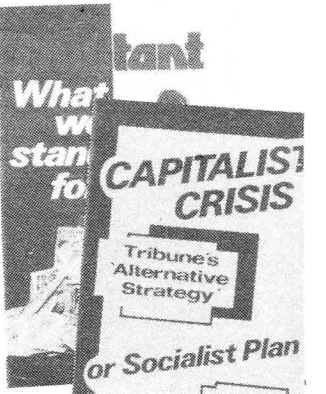
Ireland for Beginners is similar to histories written by capitalist academics in that it fails to analyse the class history of Ireland. Despite its attempted witty-cartoon style it does not 'begin' to understand the class forces in Irish society.

By Eileen Herron
(Dublin South Labour Youth)

Big book deal

MANY WORKERS when they first join the Labour Party or become involved with the trade union movement, instinctively look to the left for a lead. However, they may not be clear on the political differences between the two main groups on the left within most Labour Parties, the *Tribune* group and *Militant* supporters.

In a special offer from World Socialist Books, two *Militant* pamphlets are available for only a pound. *What we Stand For* describes the irreversible crisis faced by British capitalism and *Militant's* socialist solution. In the second pamphlet, *Tribune's Alternative Economic Strategy—Capitalist crisis or Socialist Plan*, Andrew Glyn explains the fundamen-

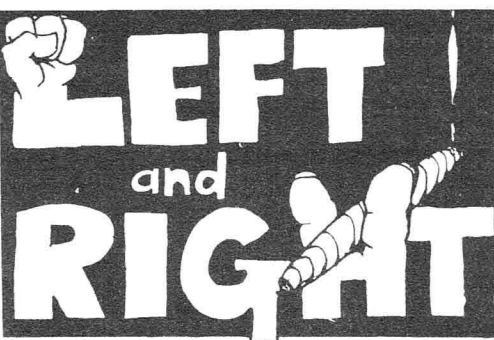


tal differences between the Marxism of *Militant* and the 'solutions' offered by *Tribune*.

What we Stand For and *Tribune's Alternative Economic Strategy*—price £1 (including p&p) from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



London's Notting Hill Carnival 28/29 August. Tens of thousands of young people turned out to enjoy the sunshine and carnival atmosphere. Photo: Denis Doran/Militant



Alliance—no cash in Coventry

Breaking the mould of British politics can be an expensive business. The enormous wave of popular support for the Alliance we kept hearing about didn't help Bill Talbot, the unsuccessful SDP/Liberal Alliance candidate for Coventry North West in the general election. To cover his expenses he had to put £1,160 of his own money towards the £1,400 bill. Still, a self-employed computer and technology consultant, he could afford it and said he had no regrets at all. He has already applied to join the new list of Liberal parliamentary hopefuls.

It's easy to see why the Alliance had money problems in Coventry. The accounts of Marjorie Lyle, who stood for the SDP in Coventry South West,

disclose—"Collections at meetings—40p". Her agent commented, "We didn't do too well on those".

Three-hour career

We are always told that redundancies happen because the workers involved have "priced themselves out of work", "don't produce enough" etc, etc. This must have mystified seventeen year old Graham Hodgson, who found a job—his first—with an insurance company. Three hours after starting work on his first day, he was made redundant.

The managing director of the company, Stevenage Insurance Brokers, said that a takeover deal had fallen through and they were closing his office. Graham got his career in Tory Britain off to a flying start with a week's wages for redundancy money.

Redundancy party

Fairfield Conservative Club in Liverpool is clearly confident about the future "success" of their party's economic policy. In a leaflet describing forthcoming attractions at the club, it advertises rooms available for such happy events as weddings, birthdays, retirements and... redundancies. Tory ministers, responsible for so much industrial devastation on Merseyside, will no doubt applaud such initiative and private enterprise.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM reviews

A Miner's Life

by DAVID DOUGLASS and JOEL KRIEGER

IN RECENT times the Coal Board and the media have tried to mislead the public into believing that today's miners work in an up to date industry with good working conditions.

This book by David Douglass and Joel Krieger dispels that myth and outlines the brutal nature of present day working conditions underground, the stress and tension caused between workmates as a result of the bonus scheme, the "state of permanent aggression" once underground and the miners' relationship with officials and management.

There is also an interesting chapter on the period of militancy between 1969 and 1974.

However at £4.50 for just over 100 pages it is an expensive paperback.

Harassing the unemployed

The Tories' driving down of youth dole payments is not a new development, but the latest in a long series of attacks on the unemployed.

For over a year the Tories have been using new methods of fraud investigation into the DHSS. Since that time many innocent claimants have learnt to fear the term "Specialist Claims Control".

When the method was first announced, Tory ministers claimed it would deter "scroungers" from applying for benefit. They promised that genuine claimants had nothing to fear from the increased fraud drive. However, experience has shown the practice to be very different.

Specialist Claims Control consists of a team of fraud investigators descending on a local DHSS office. They choose a certain category to investigate, and all claimants in this category are looked at. There does not even have to be suspicion or evidence of fraud for the investigations.

The categories of claimants are in-themselves controversial. Top of the list are one parent families ("they must have a man supporting them") and skilled unemployed ("they must be working on the side"). In other words the ruling class have created a stereotyped "scrounger". The Tories have deliberately chosen sections of claimants who can easily be harassed off the books.

Both the SCPS and CPSA (the two main unions in the DHSS) are totally opposed to these new fraud squads. They firmly believe the traditional methods of fraud investigation are adequate. But it is in the methods employed by SCC teams where the most concern is expressed.

In evidence to the government the two unions highlighted the worst examples of these methods.

Example no. 1: A claimant was visited in her house without warning. She was told that it was known that

By Tony Church
(CPSA, Leicestershire
DHSS, personal capacity)

she was living with the father of her youngest son. In fact she had not seen the father since she was pregnant. She was told to find other ways of getting money into the house and that benefit was being withdrawn. She was told to arrange another appointment if she "wanted to tell the truth".

She sought advice and then phoned back to arrange an appointment. She informed them that she had taken advice. They never bothered to keep the appointment and benefit was later restored in full.

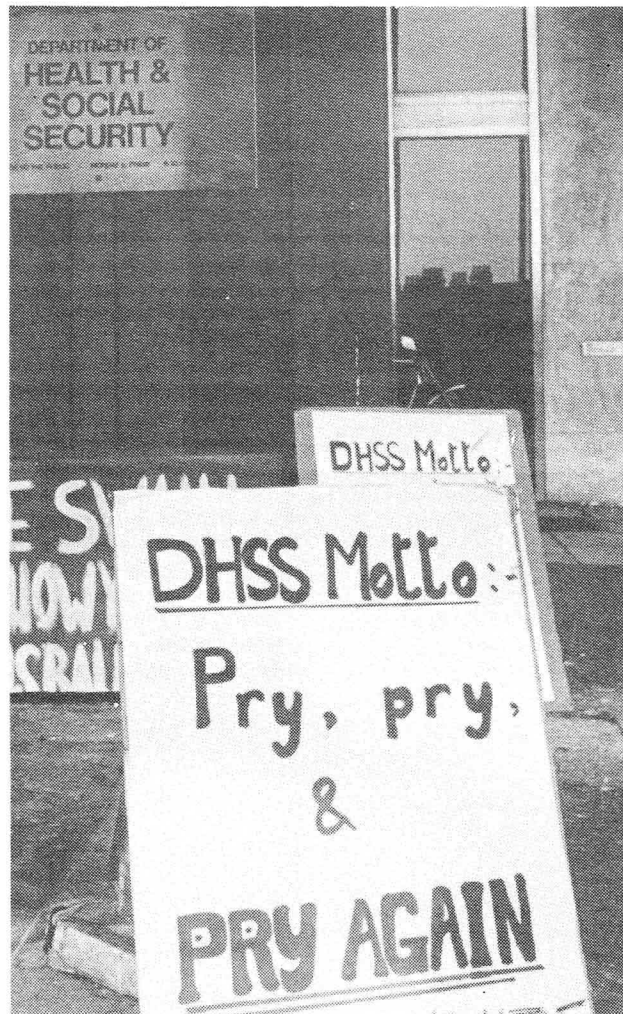
Example no. 2: Claimant suspected of co-habiting visited by SCC. A number of personal questions were put to her regarding her sex life, eg "what is a young girl like you living alone for?" and "don't you want a sex life?" No fraud was proved and the claimant continued to receive benefit.

Example no. 3: A man was visited and accused of getting a bag of free potatoes without declaring it. His benefit was stopped for one week, and then reinstated as soon as representatives intervened.

The Tories claim that SCC has seen an increase in benefit savings. However, as the unions state, the department have not been able to provide information about the number of cases examined by SCC teams nor about the manner in which benefit was stopped. It is therefore not possible to determine whether benefit savings would have been achieved without SCC involvement.

SCC has to be seen for what it is—a political attack on some of the poorest sections of the working class.

The ruling class, having created the crisis, are now attacking the victims of that crisis.



Scenes from the dole queues, with placards that were made by unemployed to greet SCC teams when they arrived at a DHSS office in North London. Photos: Militant

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

FRAUD IS defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "The use of false representation to gain unjust advantage". Yet the Secretary of State for DHSS is spending some £4 million a year on the specialist anti-fraud teams who employ exactly those methods of false representation in order to scare claimants into withdrawing their claim for benefit.

The government's own figures show their real priorities for the unemployed.

A total of £33.6 million is spent on fraud investigations with a total of 2,300 officers. Contrast this with the £714,000 spent on advertising benefits, at a time when unclaimed benefits stand at £400 million a year.

One such team of fraud investigators are working in Nottingham. When it was announced, the local Unemployed Workers Group leafletted the dole queue informing people of their rights if approached by these people.

The investigators were finally greeted by the unemployed who leafletted outside the office alongside CPSA members and social workers (NALGO) protesting at their arrival.

Claimants should note that:—

- ★ The fraud squads have no right of entry into your home without your permission.
- ★ You have the right to remain silent if approached by one of these officers.
- ★ You are entitled to an interview from a regular DHSS officer if there is a query about your claim.
- ★ If you agree to be questioned you have the right to the presence of an independent witness, or a solicitor.
- ★ The fraud squad cannot demand your payment book unless this is requested in writing by the local office that deals with your claim, signed by the manager.
- ★ As an unemployed person you have a right to free legal aid.

By Steve Bewick
(NUPE)

Life as a dole statistic

HOMELESSNESS, poverty and unemployment are probably the most demoralising aspects of capitalist society.

These have always existed at some level, but today they are hitting ordinary people with an increased ferocity, and with another Tory government in power, the situation will get worse still.

My own case gives an indication of the misery that is going on. At the time of writing, I'm sitting in the one room I live in, I've got the gas stove on for heat.

The furniture is old and full of mould, the bed is loaded with filth that I don't care to think about, and is falling apart. The room is so small that the fleas get claustrophobia.

I've been unemployed now for three years, and I've more or less accepted that it will be a permanent feature under this rotten system.

The worse thing is lack of money. If you're on your own you can't afford somewhere decent to live, can't eat properly, can't go out and occupy yourself to get away from your bedsit.

Prone to illness

As a result you pick up all the colds, bugs, depressions and anything else that's in fashion. And now that the prescription charges have gone up most people can't even afford to be healthy.

The depressing thing about unemployment is the bureaucracy—the DHSS.

The giros are more reliable now, but the DHSS keep hounding you to find cheaper (and inevitably worse) accommodation.

They either just cut your money down, or they call you in to give you a pile of rubbish about costs, jobs etc. that must of come from *Alice in Wonderland*.

They refuse to realise that the landlords will try to milk as much as they can out of the misery of others.

I feel sorry for the DHSS staff who sit behind the screens and have to give out the trash handed to them by the government.

I've screamed and shouted at them a few times through sheer frustration, but then I realise that they don't run the system, they'd probably find other jobs if they could. No wonder some of them get cynical having to deal with

the misery of capitalism, a bit like the police really.

Another aspect of unemployment is the anger it creates. When you go through the shopping centres you see all those people spending loads of money—or at least it seems that way when you've got nothing.

Called a scrounger

You see all the gear in the shops you could do with but you have to be content with dreaming about it. No wonder there were riots a couple of years back. Most people just think they were race riots, but they were poverty riots, unemployment riots, homelessness riots, they were demoralised angry and confused riots.

Demoralisation and

apathy inevitably set in. You've got nothing to get up for, so why get up?

You start going to your interviews only to be told that you're useless and not needed. When you see two hundred people after the same job, you don't stand a chance.

Then you get clueless idiots telling you to travel the world or join the Army, and others calling you a scrounger and lazy. Open the papers and they accuse you of wasting the taxpayers money.

Sometimes I feel like throwing a brick through a shop window, nicking all the stuff, selling it, and getting stoned for weeks so I don't have to think about the dole and the filthy bedsit. But where would that get me? I can't change anything on my own.

When you look at society you realise that it's governed by the capitalists' quest for higher profits. It's on the telly all the time; the Tories won't build hospitals, schools, nurseries etc because the profits of the bosses in the private sector will suffer.

Thousands of workers are made redundant because they didn't make enough profit for the boss who owned their factory. People like me are kept on the dole to terrorise those in work into accepting a cheap pay deal. All this just to protect the profits of a few.

It is experience that has taught me that socialism isn't just a nice idea, but an absolute necessity.

By Gary Hollando

After eighteen months of boycotting all talks with the Tory government, the TUC General Council have pre-empted the congress and have re-opened their "dialogue with the deaf".

With the backing of the General Council, it is now also likely that the congress will pass a composite supporting the decision to talk to Tebbit.

Yet it is clear, at a time when the Tories are about to introduce their third round of anti-trade union legislation, that all the eloquent speeches and pleas of the trade union leaders will fall on deaf ears.

Some of the General Council members have argued that the TUC must now accept the "verdict" of the general election, implying, if not explicitly stating, that they have to take into account the fact that "many trade union members have voted Tory". But the Tories cannot claim a mandate for the policies they are clearly preparing to introduce.

The whole basis of their multi-million election campaign, ably supported by all the anti-Labour Fleet Street press, was to hide the real purpose and content of their policies—cuts in the welfare state, the health and education services, increased unemployment, the forced reduction of living standards and the restrictions on the trade unions to forestall any fight-back. No one in British Leyland ever lied to get a job as much as Tory Cabinet ministers did during the election.

Fight legislation

It is a complete fallacy to argue, as some TUC leaders have done, that they can "reason" with the Tories. Minor points could be conceded by Tebbit but the involvement of the TUC in talks will make no fundamental difference to the Tories' determination to cut living standards and restrict trade union rights.

Worse still, after seeming to "negotiate" with the Tories, the TUC leaders will themselves be compromised and will inevitably bear some of the responsibility for the policies of the Tories, especially those relating to the trade unions. After sitting around the table with Thatcher and Tebbit, the General Council would find it more difficult to summon the rank and file of the trade unions to opposing the Tory measures.

If there has to be a dialogue, it must be between the leadership of the trade unions and the rank and file, going over the implications and preparing to fight the policies and measures of the government.

The Tories are demanding, for example, a cut of 6,000–8,000 more jobs from the NHS by April 1984. The resolution on the agenda calling on the General Council "to organise a broadly-based campaign to defend our health service" must be supported and turned into a concrete reality.

The TUC must similarly

By Peter
Jarvis

determine to defend jobs in other services and in industry. In mining, the Tories are demanding 65,000 jobs. The British Rail Board want to shed a further 17,000 jobs.

Talks pointless

The main task for congress is not to dream about "reasoned talks" with the Tories, but to thrash out and formulate a programme, and to prepare for the future battles that are inevitable.

The pointlessness of the talks with Norman Tebbit has been made obvious even in the few meetings of the last two weeks. At the first meeting TUC leaders pleaded with him to increase the miserly sum paid to school leavers on training schemes to £26.65 from £25. He answered no!

A few days later came a further indication of the uselessness of talking with the Tories: it became known that unemployed youth living with their parents were to have their dole money cut to only £17. The poverty wages and exploitative conditions of the YTS schemes should be fought with the power of the unions and not by grovelling at the feet of Tebbit.

The resolution placed before congress by the National Graphical Association should be supported because it instructs "the General Council to reconsider its support for these government policies in relation to the Manpower Services Commission and its continued involvement in the Youth Training Scheme".

In June 330,000 were on 'job' creation schemes. Yet there is a shortage of skilled workers and the number of apprentices continues to decline. These schemes were only introduced to give the appearance of reducing unemployment—by reducing the numbers on the monthly 'register', but at the same time to try and take the pressure off the growing anger and frustration of youth, evident in the riots in the summer of 1981.

Wages Councils

But the introduction of cheap-labour schemes for youth also have a more general purpose—to undermine the wages and conditions of young people as a step towards undermining the conditions and wages of all workers. The pressure to reduce the already low 'Wages Council' rates—and even to do away with the Wages Council minimum wages altogether—are part of the same strategy to reduce adult wages.

The Tories are already on the point of literally starving young people into low-paid, dead-end jobs, unprotected

by trade union rights, and health and safety legislation: if they are allowed to get away with it, they will do the same with other workers, using the four million unemployed as the battering ram.

The TUC must be prepared to campaign against unemployment with the trade union rank and file, but also by organising the mass of the unemployed, under the banner of the

coming year must be a campaign against the anti-trade union legislation of Tebbit, being a further attempt to prevent the trade unions from defending the conditions of their members. The TUC must fight the legislation in the spirit of the resolution from UCATT that calls on the General Council "to co-ordinate the campaign with industrial action where appropriate, in

the unions. But the press barons are the most "unrepresentative minority" in the country and they would distort, lie and blur the issues in order to influence postal ballots.

The Tories, like hard-headed businessmen, have never promoted genuine trade union democracy and in this case it is clear that they want to make it easier for the right wing to retain control of the trade unions.

Postal ballots

The bosses' propaganda is always apparent in the mass circulation newspapers, describing right wing leaders as "moderates" and "sensible", while the more militant leaders fighting for their members' interests are "extremists". Some even go as far as publishing lists of so-called moderates, urging, naturally, a vote for the "moderate" slate.

Postal ballots also isolate the individual workers from the shop-floor discussion where the real issues are based, and make it easier to divide workers when they are separated.

Militant has consistently fought for the regular election of all trade union officials but that should mean, not interference by the state, but ballots taking place on the shop-floor where discussion and debate can take place on the merits and policies of individual candidates. It would be better still if the officials would submit themselves yearly to a democratic, representative annual conference.

What the Tories are really afraid of is a situation where the mass of active trade union members—familiar with the issues and prepared to fight for the union—extend their own control over union leaderships and officers. Recent developments in the NUR and POEU have shown that even despite the support of the media, the right-wing "favourites" can still be

defeated by the leftward moving rank and file.

Sidney Weighell, so long the darling of the media, showed how there is a possibility of a sudden turn in events. He seemed so secure in his position and had enormous praise heaped upon him by both the newspapers and television for his "moderation" in the difficulties faced by the British Rail Board.

He mis-cast his union's votes at last year's Labour Party conference, and when an outcry followed, he resigned, no doubt hoping that at a special recalled conference delegates would refuse to accept his resignation, thus strengthening his position. To the astonishment of the media, and certainly Sidney Weighell, his resignation was confirmed.

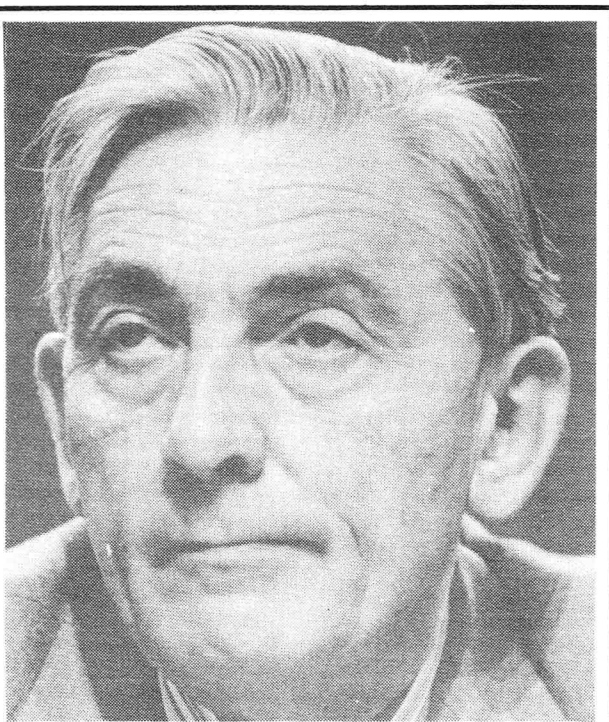
To compound his own defeat, his favourite to replace him as general secretary failed, and the NUR membership elected the left candidate, Jimmy Knapp. Subsequently, at this year's NUR conference, the new political climate resulted in the rejection of many of the policies that Weighell pursued in the labour movement, including issues like incomes policy and nuclear armaments.

In the course of one year one of the unions which was the main anchor of the right wing has now swung towards the left. This process, showing a leftward move, could be repeated in the rank and file of other unions and it is against this process that the Tories feel they must act.

Capitalist crisis

But the congress must also address itself to the economic and political issues facing workers. Any lack of leadership on the part of the TUC tops or any half-hearted policies will only sap the confidence of workers, faced with falling standards and mass unemployment.

British capitalism is facing an enormous crisis, in effect



Len Murray, TUC General Secretary.

Photo: Militant

labour movement. The proposal before congress, from the National Union of Journalists "to create a committee for the unemployed" with a special "TUC membership card", must be given wholehearted support.

The potential for mobilising the unemployed and YTS workers into the ranks of the labour movement was shown by the rally and lobby of Parliament organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists last year, when 3,500 YOP workers attended.

A key element in the strategy of the TUC in the

defence of our rights".

Those aspects of the legislation that introduce compulsory secret ballots before strikes and for the election of trade union leaders are not designed, despite all the Tories' talk about "democracy", to further the interests of the union rank and file, but to reduce the effectiveness of shop-floor solidarity and to open the flood-gates to press influence in the labour movement.

The Tories have claimed that their measures are needed to stop "unrepresentative minorities" taking power in





Waterworkers lobby leading NUPE official Ron Keating during this winter's dispute. The TUC must support all workers' struggles against the Tories.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

an irreversible decline: the only recourse open to the ruling class is the slashing of the living standards built up over many years.

All the recent economic indicators show a weak and anaemic "boom" developing in the British economy—but not even enough to stop the inexorable rise in unemployment. A few sections of industry are showing bigger order books and rising output, but only 12% of the firms surveyed by the CBI expect to take on more workers in the next four months while 37% expect to sack more.

If these prospects and the implications of the Tories' disastrous policies were clearly explained, the unemployed, especially the youth, alongside the organised workers could be a solid foundation on which to build an offensive against the Tories, around socialist policies that would deal with unemployment, low pay and the economy.

Leadership failed

If this potential had been tapped during the election, the Labour Party would not have suffered its humiliating defeat. During that election campaign the Labour Party leadership, dominated by the old right wing, completely failed to convince workers of the viability of their policies to deal with mass unemployment and economic crisis.

There were factors, like the Falklands War, which were used by the Tories to enhance the position and prestige of Thatcher as a "great leader"—in international affairs, so also in economics, the Tories claimed. But the overriding factor that led to Labour's defeat was the failure of the Labour leadership itself.

Workers remembered the disappointments of past Labour governments, especially 1974-79, including four years of Social Contract—in reality an in-

comes policy—public expenditure cuts, and the "winter of discontent". The failed and discredited policies of the right wing hung like a massive albatross around the neck of the party.

That was all the more true when Labour's election campaign came to reflect, not the policies hammered out at recent Labour Party conferences—it was clear most of Labour's leadership disagreed with those policies anyway—but the same policies of old: incomes restraint, devaluations, borrowing and implied sacrifices.

Workers would have responded at the polls if there had been a real alternative presented to them, if the Labour Party had campaigned for bold socialist change. Socialist policies based on the nationalisation under workers' control and management of the big monopolies, and the introduction of a democratic plan of production, could be the basis for a reduction in the working week, the overcoming of unemployment and the introduction of a national minimum wage.

The victories of socialist candidates, fighting on the basis of these kind of policies in Coventry South East and Liverpool Broadgreen, show what potential would exist for a Labour Party that campaigned on a socialist programme.

Political issues

But rather than accept the lessons of Labour's defeat the right wing labour and trade union leaders have argued for a separation of industrial issues from politics. But in reality, it is impossible to separate "trade union issues" from political issues.

In this period of economic crisis, it is all the more necessary for the trade union movement to pursue the aims and interests of their members in the political sphere. Day-in and day-out

the Tories are making "industrial" issues "political". It would be sheer folly and blindness for the trade unions to turn their back on the Labour Party precisely when greater political involvement was necessary.

The desire on the part of the Tories for "non-party" trade unions is expressed in their proposals to force the unions to ballot their members on whether they should continue to affiliate to the Labour Party, and to replace "contracting out" with "contracting in". It would, they hope, starve the Labour party of funds, since the trade unions contributed £2.4 million of Labour's total income last year.

Each ballot on affiliation, of course, would be accompanied by a massive media campaign against Labour, perhaps using some of our "moderate" union leaders to lend a hand. It is vital, however, that the trade unions retain an effective political voice even in relation to "industrial" issues.

Unfortunately, the right wing in the Labour Party

echo similar sentiments to the Tories—"if only we did not depend on the funds of the trade unions". These right wingers, whose policies from 1974-79 alienated perhaps millions of workers, are the same people who now want to purge socialists from the Labour Party.

Yet, if they showed an ounce of the same determination that they now show in condemning their own party rank and file, in supporting trade unionists involved in battle, many inactive and sceptical trade union members would rally to join the Labour Party. It will be despite, not because of the actions of Labour's right wing, that trade unions will inevitably become more active in the affairs of the Labour Party and will soon demand action on their behalf by their representatives in Parliament.

But the proposed Tebbit laws would not be the first attempt by the Tories to introduce anti-trade union legislation. When they first tried during the 1970-1974 Heath government, the laws

proved powerless to stop the dockers, miners and railway workers, who refused to abide by them. The laws remained on the statute books, until repealed by the Labour government, but they were a dead letter in reality.

Even now little use has been made of previous rounds of legislation, except to intimidate weaker sections of workers, because if the Tories attempted to use them widely they would again be faced with the mighty opposition of the trade unions.

If the TUC put forward an open and bold strategy to fight the Tories, including co-operation with the Labour Party in hammering out a socialist programme, there could be no question of the Tories reducing the living standards of workers, or carrying through restrictions in democratic rights.

Enormous potential support

The trade union movement has enormous potential support. It is potentially the greatest force in society. Yet, despite their failures in the past, the Tories are faced with the iron necessity, because of the economic crisis, of lowering working class living standards... and the trade union movement is the major obstacle to their achieving this.

The power of the trade unions remains intact. The health workers' dispute last year showed how even a previously low paid and poorly organised section could and would be willing to fight.

The September "day of action" received enthusiastic support from all sections of the movement. It was the biggest demonstration of trade union strength since the 1926 general strike.

Millions took part in some form of action. 150,000 marched in London and every other major town in England, Scotland and Wales had their

demonstrations.

In Derry, in Northern Ireland, 7,000 marched. Undoubtedly the sympathy of the nation was behind the health workers. The potential power was there for all to see.

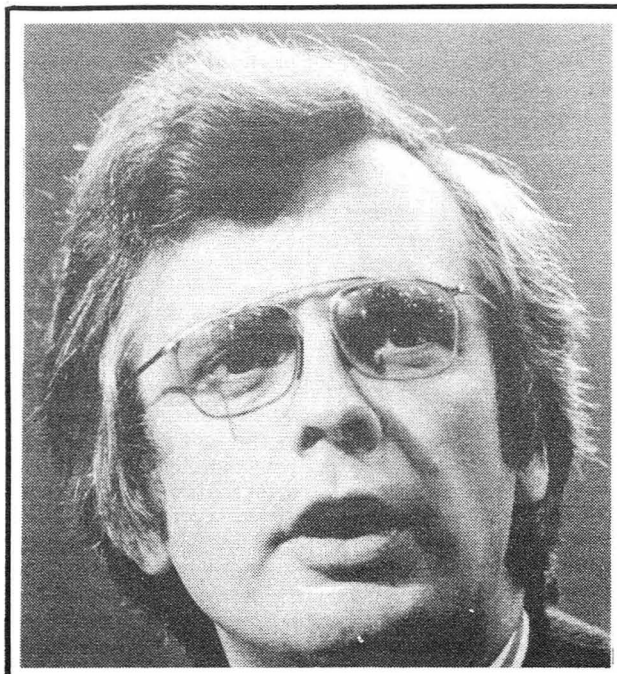
Industrial battalions

The TUC must live up to the tasks. The rule change that took the power from congress to elect the General Council annually must be reversed and due weight given to the industrial sections. In the developing battles, in defence of living standards and against anti-trade union legislation, it will be with the industrial battalions that the real power lies.

Preparations for the fight against the Tories should begin. Support must be given to all groups of workers engaged in struggle, whether for better conditions or those fighting for jobs. Help must go to all those involved in the battle against privatisation in the NHS, local authorities and public industries like BT. The POEU struggle against the "piratisation" of British Telecom must receive full backing by all sections of the TUC.

The TUC must not fade into the background or, worse still, allow itself to become enmeshed in talks with the Tories, squeaking disapproval occasionally, but otherwise acquiescing to all the vicious anti-working class policies Thatcher and Co dream up.

The TUC must roar out its opposition. It must become the champion of all workers, low-paid, unorganised women, youth and also the unemployed. Above all, the TUC must be prepared to mobilise its enormous strength to beat back the attacks of the Tories and prepare the way, together with the Labour Party, for the restoration of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.



Alistair Graham, CPSA General Secretary. Photo: Militant

LEBANON - International troops provide no peace

More than a dozen nations have units of their regular armed forces in Lebanon, including the French, Italian British and American forces in greater Beirut, the United Nations forces in the south, and the massive Syrian and Israeli armies, respectively in the north-east and the south.

But despite presence of all these armies, Lebanese and Israeli capitalism, backed by the imperialist powers, have proved incapable of providing any stability in Lebanon, as is evident by the new civil war which is developing around Beirut. As we go to press, it has been reported that as many as 50 have been killed in 24 hours, representing the heaviest fighting for a year.

The Moslems of West Beirut and the Druze of the Chouf mountains to the south have not been prepared to allow the Lebanese army to assume control of their areas. The Lebanese Moslems see the official Lebanese army of President Amin Gemayel as no more than an extension of the extreme right-wing Phalangist militia to which the Gemayel family have always been connected.

Gemayel has never had any basis of support among the Moslems, whose fears of his Phalange power base were horribly confirmed by the massacre of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps, perpetrated by the Phalange, but with the connivance of at least a number of Israeli army officers.

Since Sabra and Chatilla there has been no reduction in the power or authority of the Phalange militia. Despite the findings of the Kahane commission of enquiry in Israel, which blamed the massacre on the Phalange, and despite other so-called "enquiries" in Lebanon, no one in the Phalange has been brought to justice.

Re-armed

The close military contacts between the Israeli army and the Phalange militia have not been reduced in the slightest since the massacre. Phalangist militiamen have openly collaborated with the predominantly-Christian Lebanese army and when the

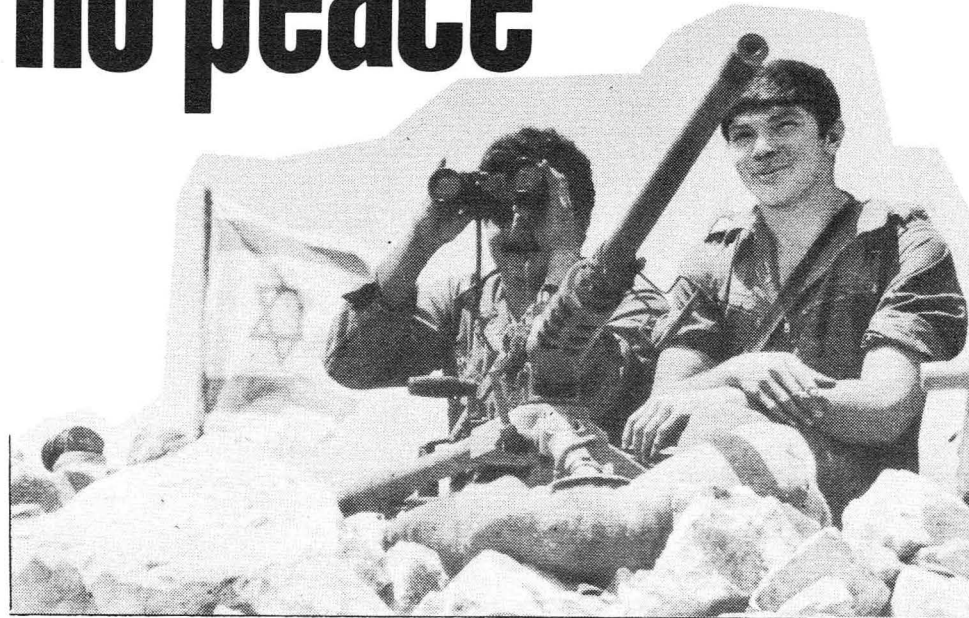
By John Pickard

Israeli defence minister, Arens, paid a visit to Lebanon recently, it was noted the Lebanese army he inspected, but a guard of honour formed by the unofficial Phalange militia, an action that prompted a 36 hour "strike" by the Lebanese Prime Minister, himself a Moslem.

Since the Israeli invasion, the Druze areas and the Moslem area of West Beirut have been re-armed. The populations in these areas quite correctly understand that the multi-nation peace-keeping force would be unable to protect them and they have not been prepared to allow themselves to be disarmed by the Phalangist/Lebanese army.

As we go to press, Beirut is witnessing the heaviest fighting for about a year, and it is not ruled out that the fighting could involve the Syrian and Israeli armies in open conflict. Palestinian units in the Bekaa Valley, controlled by Syria, have been split by open conflicts between the supporters and opponents of Yasser Arafat, but they also could be drawn willy-nilly into a new civil war around Beirut and in the north.

New fighting, on a smaller scale geographically, but no less bloody and intense than the war of 1975/76, would reinforce a *de facto* division of Lebanon. That would mean an almost permanent occupation of Lebanon in the north and east by Syria, in the south by Israel, in West Beirut by Moslem and International "peace-keeping" forces with the "official" Lebanese government only in control of a small area to the north and east of Beirut.



Israeli troops in permanent occupation in south Lebanon.

Begin resignation—a symptom of crisis in Israel

PARADOXICALLY, the Israeli government, although it represents the strongest military power in the Lebanon, is in the most difficult position. There is much less pressure on the Syrian regime to withdraw its own occupying forces from the north and east of Lebanon, areas, which historically were part of Syria before French imperialism carved out the artificial state of Lebanon from its League of Nations "mandate" after 1918.

Syria has proved a big stumbling block against the much-vaunted United States' initiatives in Lebanon. The Syrian government has refused to withdraw and inevitably so—why, the Syrians calculate, should they damage their own military-strategic position whilst getting nothing in return, and in fact leaving behind a Lebanon half-occupied by Israeli forces or

the surrogates of Israel?

In Israel, on the other hand, there is growing pressure for a withdrawal, at least to a defensive line further to the south in Lebanon. The United States' government has opposed a *partial* Israeli withdrawal on the grounds that it would not constitute a "comprehensive" agreement.

Partial withdrawal

Israel has only postponed its withdrawal under pressure from Reagan, because of the new outbreak of fighting in Beirut, and because of the crisis of the Israeli premiership, but there is no doubt that there will be a withdrawal in the coming days or weeks.

Moreover, there is every indication that the Israeli occupation further south will be permanent.

Yet even this creates enormous problems. It will take a massive toll in terms of the Israeli economic and political crisis.

Despite the personal reasons surrounding the resignation of Menachem Begin, the overwhelming factors are undoubtedly political and social. Everywhere Begin goes in Israel now he is dogged by demonstrators.

Outside his home in Jerusalem there is a permanent vigil maintained by demonstrators against the invasion and war in Lebanon. The demonstrators have a permanent placard erected, showing the numbers of Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon, now up to 518.

When the war began more than a year ago it was presented by Begin and defence minister Sharon—as a war to provide "peace in Galilee". But the more it became clear that it was the

intention of Sharon and Begin to drive the Israeli army north all the way to Beirut, the more the casualties mounted, both Lebanese and Israeli, the more unpopular became the war.

In a development completely unprecedented in Israeli history, a massive peace movement developed, even during the course of the war itself. A demonstration of a third of a million took place in Tel Aviv. Even as the war was being fought, soldiers attended demonstrations against it. Newspapers, pamphlets and leaflets circulated among the soldiers themselves, and not infrequently, soldiers, including leading officers, refused to take their units any further north.

The opposition against the war was only increased by the revelations of the Sabra and Chatilla massacres, including the connivance of leading Israeli officers. The war in Lebanon, therefore, and the continued occupation, has been a source of enormous discontent and opposition to the Israeli government.

Any permanent occupation of southern Lebanon will prove to be a big drain on the meagre financial resources of the Israeli economy. Quite apart from the economic factors, reserve duty in the Israeli armed forces is highly unpopular, yet many young Israelis have no alternative but to go to their units when called, and join the occupation force in Lebanon, with all the attendant risks of death and injury.

In addition to Lebanon, the Israeli cabinet has been wracked by economic crisis. Inflation in Israel is 150% and the burden of economic crisis is falling increasingly upon the shoulders of ordinary workers.

On the occupied West Bank, the Israeli authorities have steamed ahead with projects to expand Jewish settlements. But even with 35,000 settlers on the West Bank there are still 750,000 Arabs—and the Zionist government of Begin has a reactionary expansionist policy towards the West Bank, stifling the development of the Arab economy, their education, health and social infrastructure.

The Begin government has built up an enormous accumulation of anger and bitterness among these three-quarters of a million Arabs, anger that explodes from time to time in demonstrations and protest strikes. It is almost inevitable that at some future date the mass of the population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, will be involved in a massive and popular movement, against the occupation by Israel.

West Bank

In every area of policy—Lebanon, the West Bank, the economy—the Begin government has only built up enormous intractable problems. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the frail 70-year old Begin is unwilling or unable to face up to the enormous problems which have been created by policies he fervently supports.

Unfortunately, the Labour leader, Peres, seems less inclined to present a dynamic, radical alternative to Begin than he is to manoeuvre between and among Begin's own coalition partners. It has been reported that Peres has opened up discussions with minor coalition parties like the religious parties, in an attempt to cobble together a new coalition dominated by the Labour Party.

Internationalism

But if such a coalition were to be created, it would be based on making concessions to the minor parties, which would leave the new Labour government not very much different in policy to the out-going Likud coalition, and it would provide no basis whatsoever for any solution of the problems faced by Israeli workers, much less Palestinian or Lebanese. The workers in Israel need new ideas, not the discredited ideas of the past shot through with watered-down Beginism.

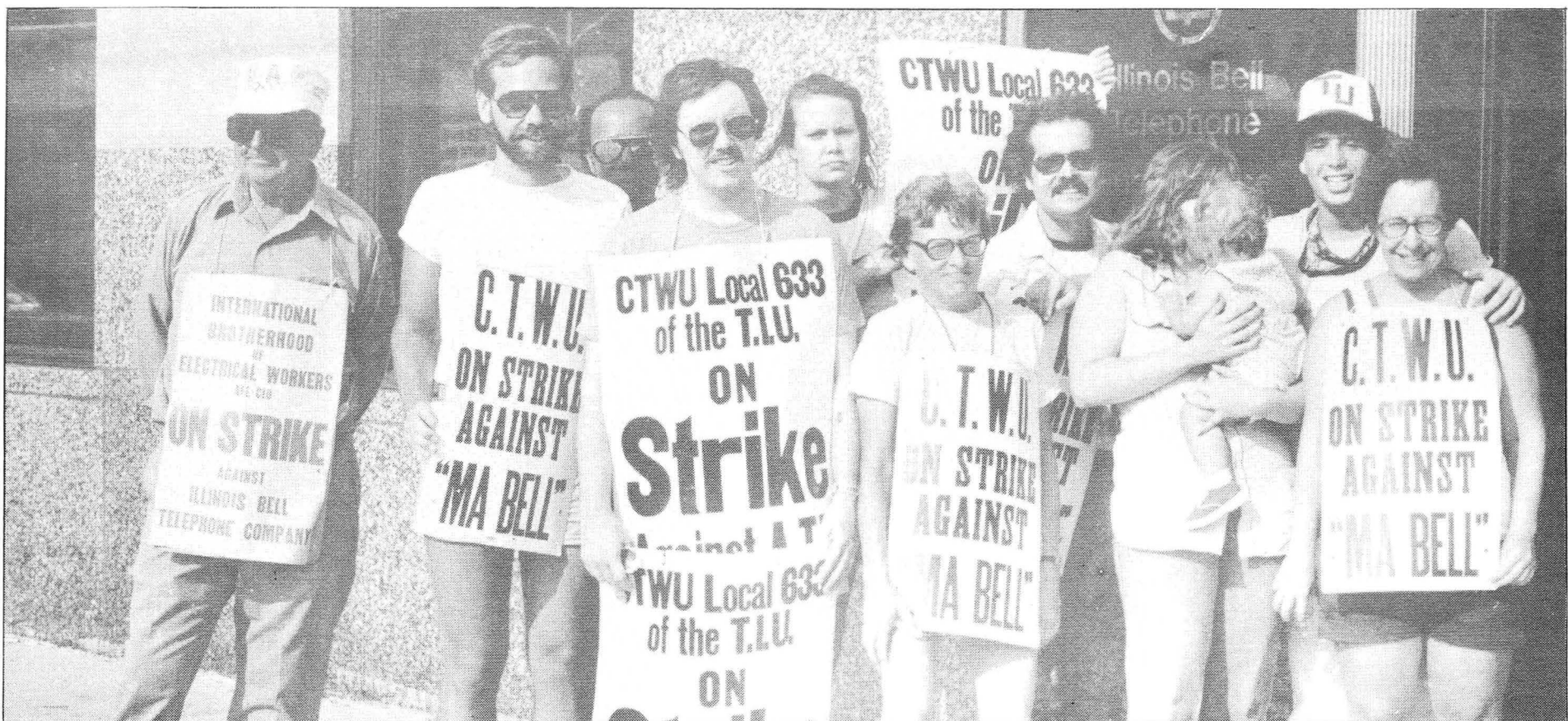
The only force in the long run that can put its stamp on developments in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon is the workers' movement. That must mean in Israel, there has to be a struggle inside the organisations of the working class for the ideas of Marxism, for the ideas of workers' internationalism and solidarity.

Only these ideas, based upon the common interests of all workers, upon a genuine struggle for socialist change to the benefit of the whole population, can provide any way out of the morass of the Middle East.

There is no way that the fate of the Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese workers could be separated one from another. A Socialist Federation of the Middle East could provide the basis of genuine peace, stability and development, but on a capitalist basis there is absolutely no way out for the mass of the workers, be they Jewish, Palestinian or Lebanese.



Druze militia control the mountains to the south of Beirut.



Communication Workers of America members picket a Bell Telephone office in the North Side of Chicago.

700,000 WORKERS IN US STRIKE

Hidden from British workers by a wall of press silence, an enormous strike unfolded in the USA in the last three weeks, involving nearly 700,000 workers in the telephone industry. STEVE EDWARDS sends us this report of the background to the strike, and interviews with some of the pickets outside the Bell Telephone office in the North Side of Chicago.

Mike Lombardi, office Steward and editor of his local's monthly paper:

"The strike by American and Canadian telephone workers is the first fully-honoured national strike at Bell Telephone since 1968. All the unions involved are out: local unions like my own, the Commercial Telephone Workers Union, which is affiliated with the Telecommunications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

"We have very solid support. I would estimate not more than 5% are going in nationally and our office is 99% out. The company is acting very foolishly.

"They are the biggest corporation in the world, and they're crying poor in the face of the third successive year of record profits. We're talking billions of dollars. Last year's profit was \$7½ billion, but they want us to negotiate givebacks".

Striker Linda Adler:

"What they'd like to do is to get rid of all the people who have given 4, 28, 13 years, whatever, to Bell Telephone and the company wants to put them out and hire kids off the street for a dollar an hour or something."

The Reagan administration and their big business backers are pushing for a new sub-minimum "youth wage", below even the existing Federal standard of \$3.35 an hour. Many workers such as farm labourers and waitresses never have been covered by minimum wage laws.

Companies like McDonalds Hamburgers have fought for years against paying their (almost all young and part-time) employees below minimum wage on the ridiculous grounds that they are "teaching" their young workers "job skills". Now this big business government wants to put all of the working-class youth of America outside the protection of the minimum wage laws which the labour movement has fought for since the turn of the century.

"Most of us here are making \$11.50 an

hour. We've fought for that. We can't let them take it away."

Mike Lombardi again:

"Most of the people you see here are Service Representatives. We're the people you call when you need something done"

"We have to take an average of 90 calls per shift. Each call is supposed to take a maximum of 4 minutes and 30 seconds, and you're only allowed a 2% margin of error. That means only 2% of what you tell the public can be anything other than exactly right, and we are the primary interface with the public: no matter what's wrong, or what you want to know, we're the first people you talk to.

"We have an enormous number of supervisors—Illinois Bell has 31,000 employees and 9,000 of them are supervisory—and at anytime a supervisor can listen in without your knowledge.

"People get very abusive and you have to take it without answering back. One time I got into a whole lot of trouble for using the word "vituperative"—the supervisor thought it was some kind of obscenity!"

"The union's demands were very reasonable. But the company wants givebacks. They want complete freedom to redefine job categories.

"For example, they want to redefine most of the IBEW members as "technical service assistants" instead of electricians, which would mean a 40% cut in pay. They refuse to even discuss the question of job security.

"Automation has meant that thousands of jobs have been lost over the years—mostly through retirement and so on, admittedly, but they're still jobs lost—and now they want to fire and hire or rehire as they please with no retraining for people whose jobs are automated out. And they want us to start paying part of our medical care as well. Well, you just don't give up what you've already got."

Beginning on August 6, 100,000 downed tools at the Bell Telephone company, a subsidiary of the giant American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) monopoly.

They were joined by the 525,000 members of the Communication Workers of America which has members in Bells and Western Electric, the main manufacturing subsidiary of AT&T.

Another 38,500 workers, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) came out a week later.

The excuse that Bell gives for "crying poor" in this dispute is that the parent company, American Telephone and Telegraph, is "divesting" itself of the Bell Telephone subsidiaries (including Western Electric which manufactures the equipment).

This is the result of an agreement reached with Federal anti-trust attorneys following around ten years of legal battles. An agreement negotiated, that is, with an administration which has so far given in to practically every demand of big business.

No change in ownership will be involved. Anyone holding a given number of shares in AT&T will keep them but also automatically own the same number of shares in each of the "divested" companies.

These were the original businesses on which AT&T's empire were founded, but now that their capital-intensive plant is getting old and their prices are regulated by law, AT&T wants to be free to pursue more profitable enterprises.

Without breaking the federal anti-trust laws, (laws originally created by pressure from farmers, small businessmen and workers during the late-nineteenth century, but which have almost never been used as intended), the corporation can only compete with, say, computer communications companies such as IBM or Xerox if it first divests itself of the 'phone service.

So having minted billions out of the telephone monopoly AT&T now means to stand back with seemingly folded arms while Bell management alternatively beg and bully telephone workers to give up the results of years of struggle—to say nothing of truly astronomic productivi-

ty—in order to save the newly divested Bell settlement which both AT&T and Bell will use to their advantage.

Up until now, Bell Telephone has been, for all its faults, a highly efficient telephone service which has provided workers with the cheapest and best system in the world; now all this will be run down in favour of services which will only benefit big business. So the strike, which was precipitated by the ending of the last three year contract on August 6th just "happens" to coincide with the legal breakup of AT&T.

Unfortunately, despite this "coincidence", despite the enormously significant circumstance that this will be last nationally-negotiated contract, despite the fact that employers wasted the union's time during the whole of the preceding three month negotiating period by coming back repeatedly with the same unacceptable proposals, and despite every other major contract negotiation over the past period, no matter what industry, being accompanied by employers' demands for givebacks, the union leadership completely failed to anticipate a strike or prepare their membership for one.

Far from revitalising the industry, the breakup will merely serve to cut it off from its investment capital. The answer is not to allow AT&T's billionaire owners and directors to do business as usual regardless of the cost in jobs and workers' living standards, but must be to take the corporation and its subsidiaries away from them entirely, by nationalising them and placing them under workers' control and management.

If it is not done, the national telephone network will go the way of the telegram

and railway systems. That is, it will gradually disintegrate until it is left with only the most profitable routes or in this case, lines.

The strike at present has remarkable popular support: workers and even many middle-class Americans have few illusions about the "benevolent" nature of the giant corporations. The strikers have a good case: communications workers are statistically (in terms of dollars of revenue generated per man-hour) reckoned to be the most productive in the United States.

But the strike is being run by a national leadership which seems to be tragically out of touch with the membership. My first question at two different picket lines in the same area was: "Do you think you'll be out for long?" The first answers were, respectively: "We didn't know any more about this than you do. You'll be better off reading the newspapers. That's how we found out we were on strike"; and "This isn't really very well organised. To tell you the truth, I'm not really sure what the union's demands are.

"The company was only offering a 3½% raise over the next three years, but this isn't about money: the union was only asking for twice that, 7% over the life of the contract. It's about jobs, job classification and job security. And retraining, and after that benefits; the money comes a long way after that".

Readers of *Militant* are urged to send messages of support to:

The Telephone Flash, 188 W. Randolph St, Room 726, Chicago 60601, attention Michael T. Lombardi, Editor.

STOP PRESS

An agreement was reached, and the strike ended, on 29 August after the three unions involved accepted an improved three-year national settlement. Full details of the settlement are not yet available, but the *Financial Times* reports that wages will rise by an average 16.5% over three years. The employers also dropped demands that part of the workers' health insurance costs be transferred to the unions. Union members still have until October 8 to ratify their contracts.



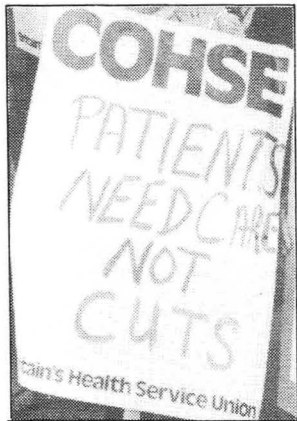
Health—contempt for working people

Dear *Militant*,

Recently all the papers and the television were full of reports of Mrs Thatcher and her eye. We've seen endless descriptions of the up-to-date technology and private facilities lavished on one of the ruling class.

This is all in massive contrast to what happened to my father, a year ago, when the retina of one of his eyes became detached. The eye specialist told him the best he could do was rest, not lift any heavy weights for six weeks and hope it mended itself. Of course this was an NHS hospital which didn't own a laser.

It just shows the contempt the bosses hold for the health and welfare of ordinary working people. The NHS is



The Tories push private medicine while dismantling the NHS.

starved of funds, equipment and facilities while people with money can get treated immediately through the private sector.

Yours fraternally
Simon Mott
Tottenham LPYS

Hazardous chemicals

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to read Theresa McKay's article, "Death Trap Farms" (*Militant* issue 658), particularly regarding the use of hazardous chemicals.

One morning recently I was driving along the busy A127 road, the main route from London to Basildon and Southend. Quite suddenly as the curve of the road opened up the view across some fields I saw a helicopter. It was just a few feet above the ground, spraying chemicals onto the fields, and it appeared to be heading straight for me—and not very far away at that! It was quite a shock, to say the least and I was so startled that I let my car swerve quite violently.

Fortunately at that moment there was no traffic on the other lane of the dual carriageway, but being attacked by low flying helicopters was the last thing I was expecting and it was momentarily very frightening.

When the helicopter was no more than forty or fifty feet away the spraying stopped and it climbed rapidly, but at that stage it was so close that I could clearly see the pilot's features, and a few seconds later some fine mist from the spray settled on the windscreen. I don't doubt that some of it found its way into the car via the ventilation system. The worst of it is that I have no idea of what spray was being used or how toxic it was.

Agricultural use of chemicals has increased many times over in the last couple of decades. This use is virtually uncontrolled and some of the worst offenders are the growing number of farms owned by large City of London companies, where agriculture is reduced to a perusal of the balance sheet and the demand is for greater and greater yields—often involving extensive chemical use—all in the name of profits.

Yours comradely
Angela Anderson
Westcliff on Sea

Money fears in the dentist's chair

Dear Comrades,

At a recent visit to the dentist I lay stiffly in the chair filled with nervous apprehension. What was I afraid of? Not the clinical atmosphere, the dentists jargon or indeed his equipment.

I was having my teeth checked and was terrified of needing treatment because of the cost. Being forced to live on an income well below the poverty line even shopping for food leaves me feeling desperate.

I was informed that I needed a cap. Under the NHS there were two alternatives. A yellow cap, £26, or gold costing £56. I was told that although the gold cap looked better, yellow would be OK, so long as I didn't smile! After hearing the price I felt I wouldn't feel like smiling for the next six months anyway.

I also needed two fillings making the lowest cost possible £36.

I think the true nature of our society is reflected in the way profits are made out of even the most basic of human needs.

Your fraternally
Elaine Kavanagh
Southampton LPYS

Michelin, Stoke

Dear Editor,

Last week's article on the Michelin victory at Stoke commented that the action had meant.

"...moving workers off the four set shifts that were already operating."

I was mistaken. The department, DCP, was and still is working four set shifts. However the strike meant negotiations are to open. There is a meeting this week to discuss the ceasing of it.

As one picket said, "Some people take the word "Militant" up wrong, to me Militant just means telling the truth."

Yours comradely
Sue Wilkie
Stoke Central LPYS

Why the monarchy must go

Dear Comrades,

I am writing in reply to Mark Liddard's letter (*Militant* 5 August) on the monarchy.

Although I acknowledge that the monarchy does still retain much popular support, that support is largely superficial and indifferent, and reflects an attitude that most people see no reason for abolishing it. Furthermore, the grounds for this support among most people is that the royal family are impartial and are above politics.

The facts however are different. In 1968 when a Labour MP introduced a private member's bill to abolish the patronage system (Lords, Barons, MBEs etc) the Queen personally instructed Harold Wilson to ensure the bill's demise.

After the February 1974 election, when Labour, on a left wing programme emerged the largest party without an overall majority, the Queen waited two days to see if the Tories and Liberals could patch up a coalition to prevent Labour forming a government, before Harold



Thatcher and the Queen—both defenders of capitalism.

Wilson was summoned to form a government.

In 1975 the Queen instructed the governor general of Australia to sack that country's Labour government. Therefore, far from the abolition of the monarchy representing a step towards dictatorship, its retention poses the danger of a perfectly constitutional form of dictatorship.

Yours fraternally
Clive Walder
Brighton LPYS

Dear Comrades,

It is important for all *Militant* readers and supporters to understand the reasons why the Monarchy and the House of Lords must be abolished, despite their present popularity with great sections of the working classes.

Firstly, the reigning Monarch has the power to dissolve Parliament at any time and create a government of his or her choice, (not the people's) thus

preventing an elected socialist government from carrying out a true socialist programme.

If, supposing the leaders of the working classes resisted the dissolution of Parliament, the forces of the capitalist state would intervene with catastrophic consequences for all workers actively involved within the trade union and labour movement.

Secondly, the unelected and unrepresentative House of Lords has no place in a democratic society. Its members consist of a motley bunch of 'has beens', rich businessmen defending capitalist oppression and a few Labour careerists, all doing their utmost to thwart and sabotage any socialist programme.

The way forward is not to alter policies in order to gain short-term popularity and thus pervert socialism, as many countries have already done, with dire long-term repercussions, but to explain each individual policy in greater depth, and logically refute Tory media inspired fears.

Yours Glenn Adams
Leicester

Battered wives—roots in the nature of marriage and the family

Dear Comrades,

I shared the disappointment of the *Militant* reviewer who recently wrote about Erin Pizzey's book on battered wives, at the analysis that wife battering is largely provoked by the woman herself who craves after violence.

As someone who suffered degrading physical and mental violence from my first husband for a number of years, I would refute that I, or any other woman, could deliberately desire this treatment. Only Marxism can explain why this phenomenon is widespread in our society. Our social conditions breed people who are unstable, prone to alcoholism and

cruelty towards people weaker than themselves.

The nature of marriage and the family in our society provides an ideal arena for wife and child battering. Because most women are dependent economically on their husbands, particularly if they have small children, it is virtually impossible for them to leave the marital home.

Because of the housing crisis, it is impossible to obtain alternative housing. This is why battered wives' homes have been established in many parts of the country. Even more disgraceful is the fact that many of these homes are run on a voluntary basis with absolutely no support from local authorities.

The authorities are not supportive towards women who find themselves in this predicament. The police are usually very reluctant to intervene in what they call a "domestic dispute" which under normal circumstances would be termed assault.

Women should not be led down the blind alley of feminism, blaming men for all their problems. Many of their problems would be solved immediately, just by implementing some of the socialist demands called for by *Militant*: the 35 hour week, the minimum wage, the crash house, schools and hospitals building programme, the provision of nurseries for all under-fives.

Yours comradely
A *Militant* Reader

Touring exhibition of *Militant* photos?

Dear Comrades,

I think the quality of the photographs in the *Militant* is very high, particularly those by *Militant* photographers, no doubt the quality of the image is better on a photographic print than on the newspaper. So maybe it might be an idea to have an exhibition of the best photographs, with some big displays in large type of some of the articles they covered. It could be a good way of attracting attention to what the paper does. The cost of the exercise could be covered by selling prints either mounted on card or framed behind glass. If the idea was tried and proved successful, the exhibition could be tried in other venues out of London, and the photographs sold to raise money for the fighting fund.

Yours fraternally
Richard Finnigan
Deptford LPYS

DHSS—staff under pressure

Dear *Militant*,

What kind of "welfare state" do we live in? When I started as a clerical officer in the DHSS in South London twelve months ago, I admit I was under the illusion that the work would provide a beneficial, efficient service to the public as well as a steady wage for me.

Practical experience of the job is worlds apart from the official image of the DHSS! Chronic staff shortages and the constant rapid increase in unemployment mean that junior staff are powerless to deal quickly, let alone adequately with claimants' 'basic requirements'. Day in, day out the few clerical staff are used as a battering ram against the anger and frustration of claimants towards a totally inadequate service that leaves them badly housed, ill-fed and humiliated. Every day fights, sometimes racist, break out between angry, desperate claimants in my office. Staff have been abused and threatened with knives, hammers and guns.

Management nurture the attitude that we are incapable and we are reminded indirectly of impending job cuts. Those employees who demonstrate an anti-claimant, anti-trade union attitude are favoured by the upper echelons of management at a time when promotion prospects are bleak.

So many of us nowadays have been unemployed ourselves, our brothers, sisters, parents, friends are unemployed. We are all in the same sinking boat together. The DHSS, like Britain under the Tories in miniature is a boiling pot with the lid on. Workers, trade unionists, the unemployed alike will take revenge—the pot will sooner or later explode in the face of the Tories.

Yours fraternally
Louise Churcher
Bermondsey LPYS
and CPSA

Cowley—MP's view

Dear Editor,

The sacking of 13 left-wing Cowley workers is sheer McCarthyism, a gut reaction of management during a growing period of crisis for the capitalist system. Obviously it must be condemned, with Labour MPs demanding that all of these activists be given their jobs back.

But there is a lesson to be learnt here. Much of the

blame, after all, lies with the official leadership who supported witch-hunts against *Militant* and individuals like Peter Tatchell—which, in turn, divided the labour movement and led to a return of the Tories at the General Election.

Yes, unity is strength—but with 'friends' like that, who needs enemies? The working class don't.

Sincerely
Ron Brown MP Leith

Banks only for the rich

Dear Comrades,

Some time ago we opened a bank account with the Co-operative Bank. Having to live on a working class wage with a family to support, we were just able to keep the account in credit.

Occasionally an overdraft may have occurred by a cheque being presented mid-week and we then covered this by paying in our wages on Friday. Nothing grave considering that there are people with thousands of

pounds owing in loans and overdrafts.

But today, the bank manager, or rather one of his clerks, as the manager was too busy to see me, asked me to close our account as he didn't like the way it was run. In other words, we are not profitable to them because we have no money to leave lying in an account.

And worse yet to come—they even had the cheek to charge us for closing the account!

Yours
Peggy Elliott
Nottingham

WOMEN - One third of TUC

ALMOST A third of the TUC membership is made up of women—about three and a half million.

By Gill Porter
(Peckham LPYS)

Women workers have been the major source in the growth of union membership over the past ten years or so.

Between 1968-78 female membership of NUPE more than trebled, doubled in NALGO, increased four times in COHSE and seven times in ASTMS.

This growth though, has now been abated by job losses in every area of work, with women's jobs being lost to a greater extent especially in the public sector.

Women's issues have been taken up for more during this period by the unions and the TUC, with increased pressure coming from women activists. With this pressure, the TUC threw its weight behind the campaign to advance women's rights at work, resulting in, for example, the Equal Opportunities Act

and Sex Discrimination Act.

This boosted the confidence of women workers considerably, but the Acts have proved to be something of a 'dead letter'. Women have still not achieved equal pay and promotion prospects have not improved greatly.

When it comes to getting a job, women are still discriminated against—the bosses are still using the same excuses—that 'women with children are unreliable' etc. The only way that these Acts can become operable is if they are organised by the unions, with control over hiring and firing, regardless of race or sex.

Women's activity in the unions must be encouraged, but at present union meetings are often inaccessible to them—for instance, in the AUEW, some people have to travel 20-30 miles to get to a union meeting. These are usually held during the evenings, when most women will be looking after children, making meals etc.

Those who go to meetings will have the problems of organising babysitters, getting to the meeting by public transport (often unreliable and expensive) then having to leave early to relieve the babysitter. All these obstacles are placed in the way of women getting involved in their branch, but they could

be easily rectified if the unions followed their own and TUC conference policies.

For instance, branch meetings should be held at workplace level, and they can be held during working hours so that everyone is able to get to them without unnecessary effort, with no loss of pay.

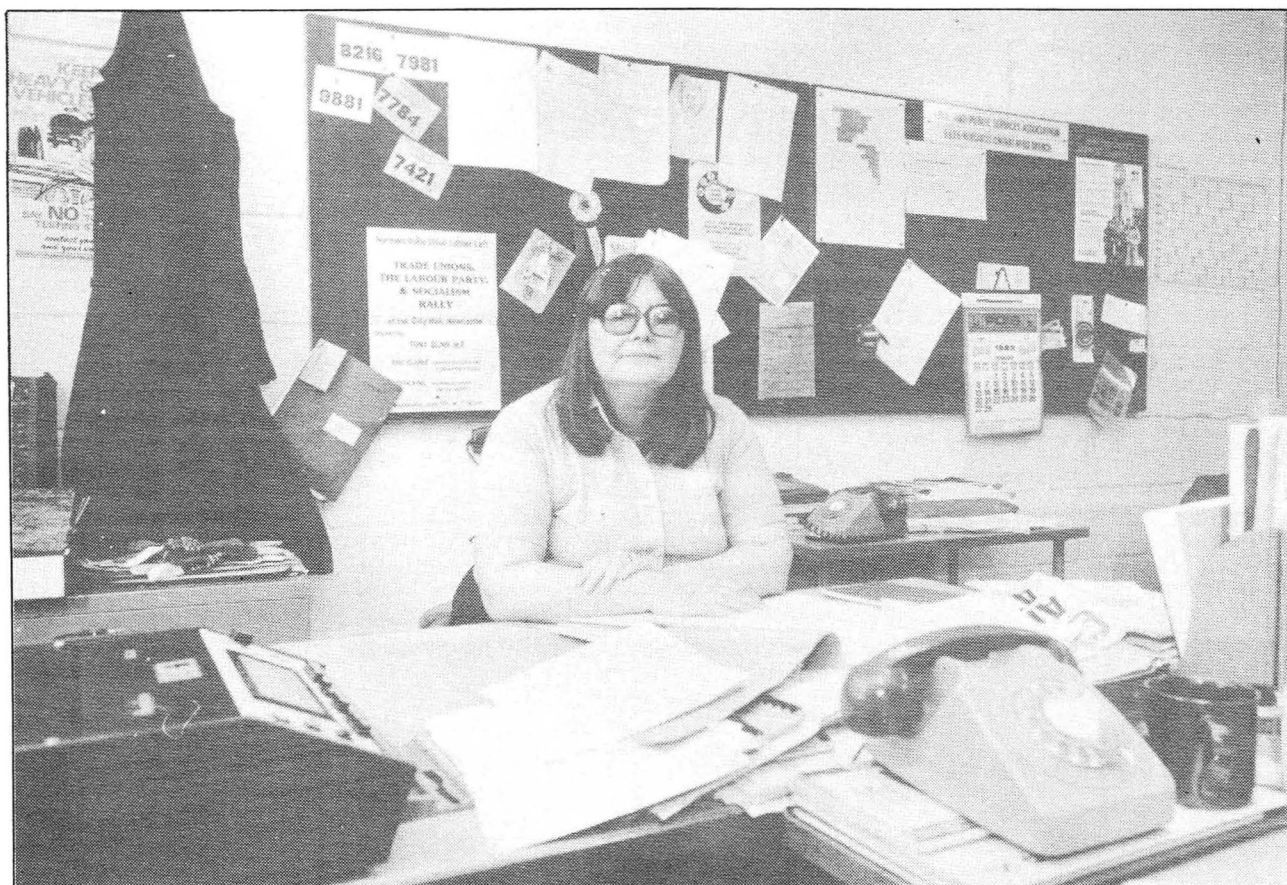
Where that can't be done, good childcare facilities must be provided by the union at all levels. Either a crèche or money for a babysitter should be provided. These are just a few steps that must be taken by branches if the unions are sincere about their belief in equality for women.

Unions should hold regular shop stewards courses to be aimed towards (but not exclusively for) women stewards, also for women wanting to become stewards.

Nationally, committees should be set up to ensure that the discussions and decisions made at conferences and branches are not just talked about, but acted upon.

This year's TUC must support and campaign for these demands in their areas, and build for the Women's Day of Action on October 29th, getting their members involved with the demonstrations and meetings that should be organised.

Overall this must lead to getting women, previously unorganised, into the unions. The only way that the Tories' attacks on the working class can be defeated is by uniting male and female workers, to fight for democracy and equality in their unions and their political wing, the Labour Party, to build for a Labour Government elected on socialist policies.



Doreen Purves—conditions of work at her DHSS office in Gateshead prompted her to get involved in her union

Reluctant to get involved?

DOREEN PURVES an activist in the civil service union, CPSA, talks about her experience and some of the problems facing women trade unionists.

I FIRST got involved in the union many years ago as a school-leaver. I attended meetings, but didn't get very deeply involved, although I always had that underlying interest.

I left the civil service to have a family and returned when my children were five and four years old respectively. I found myself becoming involved with the union because of conditions in the area I worked in.

I have worked at every level within the branch, from room representative, area representative, organiser and finally I became branch chairman, and DHSS Section Executive Committee member which involves a certain amount of travelling down to London and being involved with various sub-

committees.

I was very reluctant to get involved though, because I always felt if you get involved in your union you should be able to devote yourself 100% to it, and that time I felt I couldn't really because of my family commitments.

But it was a bit like dipping your feet in water. I put one in, two in, and gradually found myself 'knee deep'. I eventually found myself representative for Hebburn building which had about 500 members.

Division of labour

I wouldn't say I was an active member of the labour movement by then by any means. My husband is trade union minded and I discussed with him what I was doing. He's always been a per-

son who did his share of the chores and that sort of thing, and with me working he was quite used to a division of labour at home with the children.

Before I took anything on I used to discuss it with him, not in the sense of asking his permission but saying: "Well, I've been approached to become local representative. It may mean me staying a bit later at work at night and that sort of thing, how do you feel about it?"

My husband's not a trendy with wonderful ideas about equality. He's a shipyard worker from a typical Geordie family. He reckoned that it wasn't his kind of ability to take on that kind of job and encouraged me. He was one of the silent majority.

Eventually it came to the point where I was asked to

work full-time for the union—become the organiser as a full-time thing. And that was the big crunch decision.

Support at home

I did realise it would involve more and more of my spare time, that I was going to call on my husband more and more to do things at home. We did have a good discussion and he was absolutely all for it, if that was what I wanted.

So I've been lucky in that I've had a very good level of support at home which a lot of women don't have. But nevertheless there's been moments when I've felt guilty.

Times when I go to a meeting and I've known I've

got a washing machine full of washing at home—when I know the kids are going to come in and start doing their own tea and this sort of thing, and I do try to discuss with the kids as much as possible—what I'm doing and why I'm doing it.

I think they're quite proud in their own ways of what I'm doing. But it still doesn't stop me occasionally feeling twinges when I'm faced with the choice between going to the school open day or something and an important meeting.

Meetings in work time

I realise that I'm one of the fortunate few and that other women do have problems that we've got to try and help them to overcome.

In my particular branch we've already taken some steps. A lot of branches within CPSA meet after working hours with a half-past-six or seven o'clock start.

We negotiated with management for all meetings to start and finish within working times.

With women becoming activists it's a little more difficult. You're called upon sometimes to stay in later. But we try not to pressurise people too much and be understanding.

CPSA does organise crèche facilities at its conference but unfortunately, as yet, it doesn't seem to do anything about union schools.

My own ideas on this are instead of having residential schools we could have more local-based schools where you could go home rather than having to stay overnight.

I think women with school-age children are often forgotten. It's O.K. taking a four or five year-old to a crèche but what do you do with twelve year-olds who maybe you can't leave at home because they've nobody to look after them, but they're not crèche age?

When I first got involved with the union I felt inadequate—uncertain of my own knowledge. I was a bit unwilling to speak to people, be they male or female union

activists, because I thought they knew more than me and they'd be sort of looking down their noses.

It wasn't a case of me being afraid to discuss with a man because he was a man—it was a case of the superior knowledge inhibiting me and I think education is the answer. Get people together and increase their knowledge and shyness drops away. You're more prepared to go out and speak.

Without a terribly conscious effort on our part we're finding that women are starting to get more involved, particularly as a result of the pay campaign that we had.

We're now finding that where we once had a branch committee which was male dominated the women are now beginning to move forward and gradually the balance is being worked out.

We have over 70% female membership so I suppose the ideal thing would be to have 70% of the branch committee women. Nevertheless we've got sufficient activists for the women's voice to be heard and get things moving.

I'm totally opposed to positive discrimination. The best form of confidence is to be elected to a position, no matter how humble, knowing you've got it by your own efforts, it's not because you're a token woman or a token black, a token disabled person or whatever. I think that does matter a lot to women.

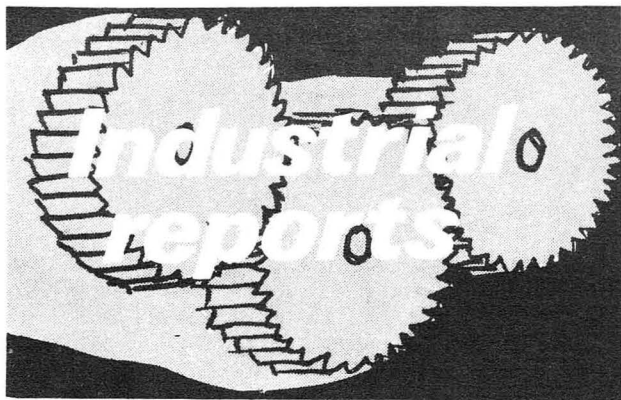
Start at grass roots

The activists I've spoken to reflect this. If they stand for something they want to get the position on their merits rather than people making the path easy for them.

When you talk about reserved seats at national level all you'll get is reserved seats filled by women who are already activists. It will do nothing for members at grass roots level.

And I think that's where you've got to aim. Start at the bottom. Help and encourage women get real confidence in themselves. Get women interested and active and the rest follows.

Photo: D Doran



IRSF: Stop staff cuts

IN 1982 the Bray Report, designed to reduce staffing in the Inland Revenue, recommended that most files holding information on allowances due to PAYE workers could be scrapped.

Despite the implications for IRSF members' jobs, our union decided that co-operation was the best course. It was "convinced" that the pilot study would prove the idea couldn't work.

It rapidly became clear to members involved in the pilot study that jobs would be lost and the onus to ensure the correct amount of tax was being deducted would fall on people paying PAYE.

Workers in other offices also found difficulty in sorting out the true tax position when people changed jobs. There was no file containing proper records to transfer to the new area.

The office concerned moved a resolution to black the work (again) which finally reached the 1983 Annual Conference for debate. The Executive Committee, however, favoured a resolution that called for an extension of the pilot study!

It is now extremely likely that the scrapping of PAYE files will take place nationally from 31 October this year.

It is vital that the leaderships of trade unions drop their tactic of co-operation with pilot schemes designed to cut staffing. An instruction should be given now to black this scheme nationally to safeguard jobs as a warning-shot against the plans for massive staff reductions that are imminent if the computerisation of PAYE files is implemented.

By an IRSF member

Rough justice!

SIX HALIFAX health workers charged with obstruction on the picket line during last year's dispute have been conditionally discharged.

They were found guilty despite evidence given in court last year which established that less than 24 hours before the arrests management had agreed that pickets could check all incoming stores.

At last year's hearing we heard that management had then withdrawn from this agreement, with police arriving simultaneously to arrest pickets for obstruction!

On this basis, with mass pressure from the local labour movement, the prosecution case

was thrown out.

The police, however, appealed to a higher court in London, which found against the pickets and ordered the local magistrates to reverse his decision.

The eventual sentence was relatively light. But police collaboration with health service management in harassing Halifax health workers—using photographers to take 'mugshots' of workers in dispute—is forcing workers to draw their own conclusions about the forces of 'law and order'.

By Pete Watson
(Bradford Trades Council)

Workers' notebook

EVIDENCE OF Britain's low wage rates and labour costs comes from a recent German survey of 17 industrialised countries reported in *LRD Fact Service* Vol 45, no 30. In 1982 Britain was eleventh in the wages league table and thirteenth in labour costs. The latter were 64% higher in the US, 50% in West Germany and 20% in France and Italy. So much for the tall Tory tale that British workers are pricing themselves out of jobs.

THE OTHER Tory story that took a beating in the past week was the one about Britain being in a boom. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research predicted in its August economic review that output will not continue to grow after the first quarter of next year. Contrary to Tory predictions they reckon next year's average output will only be 1% above 1982. Significantly, they see only a slight rise in investment taking place because of the spare

capacity which exists. Inflation is expected to be up to 7% by the end of 1984. Though the CBI's monthly survey of 1,500 companies sides with the government's 2% figure for growth in output next year and sees inflation slightly lower at 6% they are in agreement with NIESR's gloomy assessment of the trend in growth.

THE IMPACT of recession on the labour movement is clear from a survey of union membership agreements by Prof. John Gennard (now of Strathclyde University). Membership of closed shops was down from a peak of at least 5.2 million in 1978 to about 4.5 million in 1982, he calculates. His figures give an idea of the trend: "Of well over 2,000 formal closed shop agreements recorded during our research, 33% were concluded in 1978, only 5% in 1979 and 2% in the first half of 1980".

What future for Miners?



IAN ISAACS, Secretary St John's Lodge, South Wales, recently elected to the South Wales NUM Area Executive, talks to PETER JARVIS

Peter Jarvis: MacGregor will soon be taking up his post as chairman of the NCB. How do you see future developments?

Ian: The Tories hope he will be able to do to the mines what he did to the steel industry.

In order to break even by 1985, on the basis of the government's criteria, it will mean the closure of 70 pits—70,000 job losses. MacGregor is probably under the illusion that the NUM is a spent force, that he can pick off the miners pit by pit, area by area. But he will be met with a determined struggle by the NUM. We have learnt the lessons of the last national ballot and no longer believe the lies of the NCB.

The massive show of strength at the Durham Miners' Gala shows that the miners will not stand to one side and be decimated, we will be faced with no alternative but to fight.

Do you still see a future for coal?

We still hold to the agreement *Plan for Coal* that estimated by the year 2000 there would be a need to produce 200 million tonnes. 115 m tonnes could be used in producing synthetic natural gas. This could replace North Sea Gas and would create jobs in the 21 gasification plants that would be opened up and down the country.

There are other uses, for example building new coal-fired electricity stations. This would account for another 75 million tonnes. It is also a crime that industry never took up the government's offer of £40 million for the conversion to fuelled combustion.

The Tories have made a great fuss about the £120 million "loss" by the NCB. This is a gross distortion of the state of the industry. The value of the 54 million tonnes of total stockpiles is at least £1,700 million. With this much potential to

embark on a nuclear programme is economic and social insanity.

The South Wales coalfield, it is reported, is responsible for 75% of the NCB national losses. The five million tonnes of coal stockpiled is valued at £150 million. The Aberthaw Power Station purchased 750 million tonnes of non-registered coal (from private sources) worth over £20 million. This would have made an enormous difference to profits.

How do you see the threat to privatise areas of the industry?

The mines were nationalised for those working in them and for the benefit of the people. Public ownership was necessary to help to revitalise the country's economy. Private ownership had bled the mines dry.

Privatisation would be like returning to the 1930s. Massive pit closures would take place. Private buyers would only be interested in the Selbys, (new super-pits) which have had millions of tax payers' money invested, and would make super-profits.

What can be done to defeat these threats; what role should the Triple Alliance play?

The government's plans to destroy the NUM and de-nationalise parts of the industry will unite the NUM membership behind the campaign being launched by the NEC. The campaign must reach every member so a co-ordinated plan can be prepared to fight against pit closures.

Since the elections of Jimmy Knapp as general secretary of the NUR, the Triple Alliance between miners, rail and steel workers has been regenerated at national level and will take shape on a regional basis. This is a step forward but we need rank and file involvement. This would develop the unity that is necessary to defeat further attacks against the rail, steel and coal industries. The recent announcement of 17,000 NUR jobs to go on top of the 7,000 already gone is a real indication of the need for a fighting Triple Alliance.

The re-election of the Tory government was a blow for the NUM who were awaiting the return of a Labour government that would help expand the mining industry. We may now be forced into taking industrial action against the Tories to save our jobs and the industry itself.

United Glass

CASTLEFORD saw a black Friday on 15 July. 590 workers at United Glass were told that the factory was to close and production be moved to the company's other plants in Alloa and Harlow.

The news came after a similar announcement at nearby Rockware Glass eleven days earlier of 345 jobs going.

The company claim the redundancies are because of the 20% drop in demand for glass containers since 1979. This period, however, has also seen a 50% job reduction in the industry.

Dave Jeffreys ASTMS Divisional Officer explained: "In 1978 Rockware and United Glass both put in bids for the third largest glass company, Redfearn Glass but were overruled by the Monopolies Commission. There then followed a price cutting war with Rockware and United Glass trying to force Redfearn out of business.

Seeing a potential fight on their hands the company have announced a four-week "reconsideration period". The workforce are under no illusions as to what this means and are busy rallying opposition to the closures.

A march and rally has been organised by Castleford Trades Council for Saturday 24 September. Meet at United Glass car park at 10.00 am. For details and messages of support: The Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, United Glass Containers, Albion Street, Castleford.

By Adrian O'Malley
(Wakefield LPYS)

Norwich hospitals

IN EARLY August Norwich health service unions were suddenly given documents calling for hospital ward closures at the St Andrews and Hellesdon hospitals.

On 11th August the two sides met formally to discuss the documents. The meeting ended "abruptly" when it became clear that the union side were completely opposed to management's plans.

The closure of the wards, one at each hospital, is needed management claim, to ensure the opening of a new geriatric ward on the 8th floor at the Norfolk Norwich Hospital.

The running costs of the new ward will be in the region of £280,000 per year. The Regional Health Authority is to budget a total of £115,000 towards the cost, leaving the Norwich Health Authority to cough up the rest. Management have therefore called for closures as the only way to meet the total budget figure.

Linked to this is the threaten-

ed compulsory transfer of staff with the strong possibility of redundancies for those who will not go.

NUPE reps report that Norwich Health Authority have also released a further document outlining the proposed "privatization" of the laundry services at the Hellesdon Hospital.

NUPE calls for the opening of the new ward with a full staff complement, funded by the Tory government. The two wards should remain open with staff numbers increased. NUPE totally opposes any moves to privatize the laundry services.

NUPE is also trying to obtain joint meetings with all unions concerned, thus giving the maximum unity of forces against the health authorities' Tory-engineered plans.

By Stephen Page
(Branch & District Secretary, NUPE, Norwich)

Pritchards: Settlement but more to come

WHEN MANAGEMENT told striking Pritchards' workers that there was no ceiling on the amount they could earn on the piece rate schemes they got the plain answer "Never mind the ceiling, we want a floor!" And this is just what the workers have won after four weeks on strike.

Pritchards are private contractors who obtained the gardening contract from Wandsworth council, even though they confessed they knew nothing about gardening. They put in such a low tender that they were eventually forced to try and cut wages and lengthen working hours to make the contract profitable.

They bought cheap second-hand machinery and provided no protective clothing. Some of the workers had no contracts of employment and the firm did not recognise their right to belong to a union.

One worker said, "At the beginning, the turn-over of employees was enormous. Six lads were sacked on the spot when a weeding job turned out not to be profitable. At least, I think that's what happened, at that time we weren't really organised together. We just went in, got in the van and went off with our own gangs, not even really knowing who was in the other gangs, let alone what was happening to them."

Union members

Now they are union members who meet together regularly to protect each others' interests.

As the strike progressed, Wandsworth's Conservative council was reluctantly forced to admit that Pritchards were running up enormous fines for failing to carry out the contract. When this news broke, Pritchards' share prices began to fall, pressuring management to bring the strike to an end.

Terms have now been accepted by both sides. This is not the end of the story though.

Pritchards have not recognised NUPE. The wages paid by Pritchards are still less than the money received by the gardeners when they worked directly for the council.

The men are convinced that even at their present wage levels, the contract cannot be run profitably, so management may have to attack the pay and conditions of the workers again or may give up the contract. The same battles might then have to be fought with a new contractor.

The Wandsworth street cleaners are also Pritchards' men. Although they are better paid than the gardeners, they have no contracts or right to negotiate with management and they are undoubtedly going to draw conclusions from the gardeners' victory.

The message needs to be spread quickly. Pritchards, it is rumoured, are tendering for cleaning and catering contracts in Wandsworth hospitals.

By a Militant Reporter

IRSF 1983 NATIONAL BROAD LEFT MEETING

Saturday 10 September
Leeds YMCA 11 am to 5 pm
Open to all IRSF members

EMI workers: 'Our turn now'

WORKERS AT the Thorn EMI factory in Padiham, Lancs, backed almost unanimously a call for strike action last week against management's derisory pay offer.

In spite of dramatic improvements in the plant's trading position over the past few months, the final offer was less than half last year's rise.

The strike, involving over 700 engineering workers,

mostly members of the AUEW, began on Wednesday and has been supported by a round the clock picket, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The dispute takes place against a background of new orders and steady recruitment of labour over the past year. Improvement has been seen in the sales and production targets of the main products which include water heaters, gas fires, cooker hoods and tumble dryers.

Every attempt was made to achieve a negotiated settlement and all our arguments were advanced to the full, only to come up against a brick wall. Most workers are convinced that management have brought the strike upon themselves and many who have been reluctant to consider industrial action in the past are fully behind the action.

They have worked loyally through a difficult period, in-

cluding 18 months' short time working, and have seen wages trail behind factories elsewhere in the Burnley District and in the Thorn group as a whole. They feel fully entitled to their share of the increased profits. It has become clear that industrial action is the only way to achieve this.

Jason Hunter
(AUEW Shop Steward,
Thorn EMI) personal
capacity

NALGO: Local authorities under pressure

NALGO MEMBERS in Kent Social Services last Tuesday resolved to continue strike action until John Kirkpatrick has been reinstated.

John's appeal against dismissal was turned down at last Thursday's hearing. This didn't surprise anyone; his dismissal is seen as a move towards direct confrontation with the union.

All other social services' departments in the county are to ballot their members to support the strike. The Kent computer department passed a motion last Wednesday to levy £1 per member per month to support the action.

The strike also involves NUPE members who have refused to cross picket lines. We thank NUPE members for their action of solidarity.

It is important that council employees up and down the county note what is happening in Kent. We are sure this is just the beginning of a long struggle with the re-elected Tory government encouraging local authorities to be ruthless in organising

their budgets and bashing the unions.

NALGO workers in Lochaber, Scotland, have recently returned to work after a seven-week strike aimed at reinstatement of three workers faced with compulsory redundancy. Their action was successful and the redundancy notices were withdrawn.

In Bradford NALGO Home Care Assistants have been refusing new admission to their homes since 8 August over adequate grading for care assistants who have been given additional duties and responsibilities as a result of reorganisation of the homes in May 1981.

This dispute in Kent does not just concern social services and is not just for us to fight. It is relevant to all local authority workers, we have to unite and defend our rights as individuals and trade union members.

Please support the action by sending your donations to NALGO Branch Office, Springfield, Maidstone, Kent.

By NALGO shop stewards

A MIDDLE AGED local black woman stood in the doorway of Gough Brothers Wine Merchants in Brixton and with the words "Class solidarity sisters" forbade any local residents to trade there.

Gough Brothers, owned by Scottish and Newcastle Breweries have 156 retail outlets in London and the Home Counties and one depot at Mitcham. There are 850 staff who a few years back were non-unionised.

The workers have tried to improve their working conditions by forming a T&GWU branch. Management have responded with intimidation; activists have been sacked.

Bosses ordered sacking

This year four union activists have been sacked on a variety of trumped up charges. The workers were not in a strong enough position to fight back. Then last week came the straw which broke the camel's back.

Flo Flynn, a 50 year old employee who had just joined the union was accused of theft by the head office management staff during their visit to the Acre Lane Brixton branch. The police were called in, took Flo to Brixton police station and subjected her to a humiliating search and questioning.

At 10.30 pm Flo was released, innocent as far as the police were concerned but not according to Gough's Head Office. They ordered the local manager to dismiss Flo but he would not do so, so senior management overrode him and she was

Class solidarity sisters!



Picket of Gough Bros, Acre Lane, Brixton

dismissed.

Flo is a well-known local person and the staff who had previously been sacked and local people who knew her decided enough is enough.

A picket line was established across the shop doorway. Deliveries were stopped and customers asked not to cross, the response was terrific. The picket lines have become a focal point for the local community. The union branch concerned (1/897 T&GWU) on 28 August

unanimously agreed its terms: Flo Flynn must be reinstated; an agreed disputes procedure; reconsideration of all employees dismissed or who resigned within the last six months; written security of tenure for all employees in company flats.

The T&GWU is now bound to fight for the four demands with all means at its disposal. The pickets have temporarily been withdrawn on the basis of a management promise that no further supplies will be

delivered, but are ready to continue the struggle. The branch resolution enables a strike to be called if management continues to be intransigent.

Please send messages of support and information on union struggle in small shops, to the writer of this article, c/o the Militant Office. I will pass them on.

Rachel Webb
(NALGO and
Streatham CLP)

In brief

A NEW mood is appearing in the car industry. Vauxhall workers at Ellesmere Port walked out *en masse* as news came through that the employers were sticking to a 5% pay offer despite strong opposition from union negotiators.

There were sporadic walk-outs of up to an hour by several hundred at the Luton factory. The attempt to force the company's hands is now taking the form of a call for a blockade on imports of Vauxhall/Opel cars from Europe. In the first five months of this year 48% of Vauxhall's sales were of imported cars.

IT HAS been announced that the Caterpillar tractors factory at Birtley, Co Durham, will be closed with the loss of 1,000 jobs. This closure will have a devastating effect on an area already hit by unemployment. Full report next week.

ALL THE signs are that unions at Fords are preparing a hefty claim. The demand is likely to be for a flat rate increase fixed shortly before negotiations start in late September and a reduced working week for Ford's 48,000 hourly-paid employees. The Vauxhall claim (for 15,000 manual

workers) is for a £25-a-week rise, a reduced working week, longer holidays and improved sickness and pension schemes.

THE NCB have used the offer of alternative work to head-off opposition to the closure of Cardowan Colliery in Scotland. Workers there have voted against strike action to save the pit. It looks possible that miners in South Wales may also have given up on the possibility of saving the threatened Brynlliw Colliery. Lynemouth Colliery in Northumberland is heading the same way. Six pits have been closed by the NCB since the start of the year but there have been no compulsory redundancies.

BIRMINGHAM CITY Council is trying to undermine NALGO's organisation among its employees. They are withdrawing facilities for contributions to be deducted at source. NALGO regional organiser, Sid Platt, says the employers' claim that the dispute is about NALGO's attempts to victimise people for not obeying union instructions during last year's strike, is a lie.

Arrests at Britains

MORE THAN 200 workers at Britain's Toy factory have been forced to strike for an hour off their 46¾ hour week. Clashes with the police and arrests have taken place on the picket line.

For £78 gross these workers are expected to work a 10½ hour day with two ten-minute breaks and half an hour for lunch. It's called 'overtime' but it's compulsory.

The workers originally went for a three-hour cut in their working week, without loss of pay. They suggested a shift system plus extra staff to increase productivity while cutting hours.

Management refused: it would cost too much they said. The claim was reduced to one hour but management are unmoved. They refuse to disclose their profits however.

In 1970, before the factory was unionised, Britains in Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow, London, worked a 60-hour week. Every reduction so far has meant a corresponding increase in productivity and loss of pay. Machine targets have been upped, making them increasingly difficult.

Britains say they increase pay in line with inflation, so why complain? But as shop steward Mr Ali points out, "the com-

pany directors earn about £100,000. The workers don't share in the profits, they're only for the directors.

"The company has no problems, its order books are full, and nobody has ever been made redundant while every other company has been going bankrupt.

"This is the first all-out strike in the company's history", Ali pointed out

"We are very co-operative with the company, and they have taken advantage of our softness".

The workers at Britains are in a strong position. Drivers are mainly not crossing picket lines, and exports are blocked at the docks.

So far, there's been good support from local unions and the local Labour Party and LPYS, with collections and support on the picket line.

These workers can win, but the support must be maintained. The picket is now 24 hours, seven days a week. Please support the picket line, and send donations and messages of support to: Britains Ltd, Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Broad House, 205 Fore Street, Edmon-ton, London E18.

Cowboys at Crouch

A long-simmering dispute on a Crouch building site in South London (see Militant 658) boiled over on Thursday August 11.

John and Gary Churrton were attacked with a hod by an employee of the building sub-contractor White Brickwork Ltd.

John's skull was fractured, Gary had to have ten stitches in his head.

The dispute started just after last Christmas when the existing brickwork contractor, Trident, pulled out, leaving John Jones and the Churrton brothers jobless. Crouch refused to employ them direct.

A long struggle ensued, complicated by UCATT's refusal nationally to make the dispute official, whilst London Region backed it. The three lads picketed the site in Orchard Way, Shirley. It virtually stopped work as a result, and they then moved their attentions to another Crouch site in Underhill Rd, Dulwich in June.

Crouch immediately came to an agreement with UCATT regional organiser Alan Tatum but once the picket was lifted they boycotted further meetings. The picket was put back on but was then broken by a gang of heavies.

The turning point came with pressure from Southwark

Council. This dispute was raised on the Council by myself and Brian Kelly. It was found that Crouch were in breach of their agreement with the Council in employing men on 714 I certificates. They immediately apologised and agreed to employ the three lads.

They were taken on direct by Crouch and it was agreed that UCATT could organise the workers there. But despite having three brickworkers on their books they also brought in the sub-contractor White Brickwork Ltd, of 7 Kirkham Close, Owlsmoor, Camberley, Surrey. Initially there was no trouble but White's employees were vocal in their anti-union views.

On the 11 August a meeting with Alan Tatum speaking was abandoned in the face of open hostility and abuse. Just after the meeting finished one of White's men attacked the Churrton brothers with a hod. He left the site immediately and management say they know nothing about him. UCATT's legal department are pursuing the matter.

Nine months on and the lads are still fighting for their rights.

By John Bryan
(Southwark Councillor
and UCATT)

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"This is a family firm and I am a workers' boss. I work among them and laugh and sing with them," claimed Mr Saccamando, owner of the Carousel Wafer Factory Glasgow.

— local shop keepers display posters in support.

It is vital that workers in the West of Scotland join the picket line and demonstrate their support outside the Carousel Wafer company in Garpocher Road, in Shet-

tleston and that workers in other parts of the country raise support in their union branches and workplaces.

Donations and messages of support to Carol Rogers, 47 Cethelton Terrace, Parkhead, Glasgow.

Ten young workers who are currently on strike and have been sacked for seeking trade union recognition tell an entirely different story.

By Militant Reporter

In contrast to the gaiety and laughter of Mr Saccamando's fairytale factory, they describe a Dickensian sweatshop where the lives and limbs of young workers are endangered by unguarded machinery; where standards of safety and hygiene are flagrantly ignored and where the bosses' 'family' of workers slave 40 hours a week for the princely sum of £37 take home pay.

Nineteen year old Jocelyn Feeney and Marie MacIntyre, aged 18, told us the conditions they were forced to work under.

"During the winter we would be working in temperatures so cold that we had to wrap plastic bags around our arms and legs in order to keep ourselves warm. At one stage it got so cold that the pipes froze over and so did the toilet. The bosses solution was to present us with a bucket and two bottles of disinfectant!"

"On the other hand in the height of the summer the heat becomes unbearable. Although there is a ventilation system in the factory, the only time it is switched on is when the health and

safety inspectors come to visit. As soon as they are out of the door off go the fans."

Even the Manpower Services Commission were forced to cancel YOPs schemes after one young girl had her fingers sliced off in a machine.

The ten full time workers all between 17 and 20 joined the T&GWU. Mr Saccamando's response was less than enthusiastic. "I'd burn the factory down before I'd recognise a union!" he said.

On July 27th, after taking strike action, the ten young workers were sacked, and he replaced the workforce with part time scab labour, drawn from the ranks of the desperate and impoverished unemployed. So ensued a ferocious struggle which is becoming more intense with every day that passes.

The courage and determination of the young workers has aroused a massive wave of support from the labour and trade union movement of Clydeside. The local community is whole heartedly behind the Carousel workers

PHOTO: Andrew Wiard (Report)



Pickets at Nigg

SEVEN HUNDRED pickets, backed by their families, achieved a stunning victory for trade unionism this week at Highlands Fabricators Oil Platform Yard at Nigg, Easter Ross, in the Scottish Highlands. Management were forced to concede that they only got a handful of workers into the yard.

All 2,000 workers had been sacked for eleven days earlier, after a strike over the withdrawal of certain provisions to make conditions more tolerable for welders in the summer heat.

The company then offered

to re-employ only 1,600 workers, on terms which would undermine many of the working conditions negotiated over the years.

In particular, from November 1, they were going to withdraw free bus travel. This would mean a loss of between £6.50 and £20 per week.

The workers decided that they would only accept reinstatement of all 2,000 workers on the previously negotiated terms. Management claimed, however, that enough workers signed on to enable them to re-open the

yard last Monday.

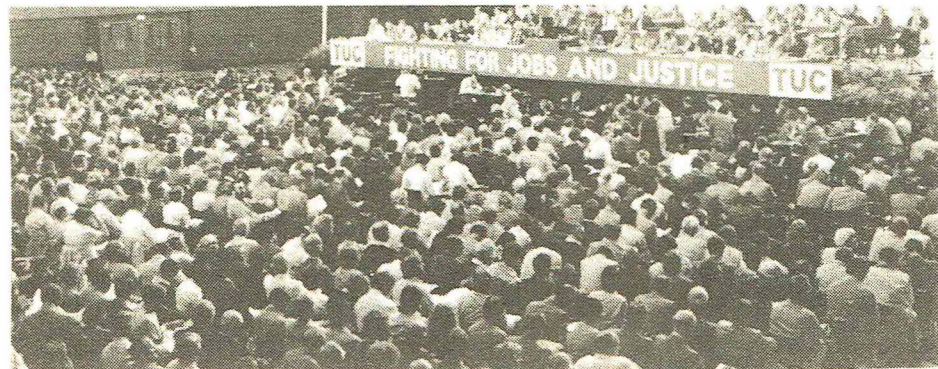
At 8 o'clock, six pickets manned the gate as busses approached. Then 300 yards up the road, 700 workers surged forward and blocked the way. Police were able to form a corridor to let the cars of staff workers through, but all ten busses turned back. The vast majority of those reporting for work were persuaded to stay out, to the cheers of their comrades.

On Tuesday, the action was repeated with even fewer workers going in. In the nearby town of Alness,

workers wives and children formed a barrier across the road to stop the heading for Nigg. Some of the women lay down in front of the busses.

Highland Fabricators, owned jointly by Brown and Root and Wimpey, were hoping to use the fear of unemployment to intimidate workers into accepting fewer jobs and worse conditions.

They have been given emphatic reply. These workers are showing the way to fight back—they deserve the full backing of the whole labour movement.



TUC conference 1982. The trade unions must defend youth wages.

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE ONE

will be left with less than £17.

Unemployed youth will be forced to rely even more on their parents, who are already facing falling living standards and mass unemployment. Thatcher and the Tories claim to be all for the family. Yet, in real terms, their latest plans will mean more family rows, more divided homes, more youth frustration and more poverty.

The Tories' sickening ex-

cuse is that youth are lazy and don't bother to get a job or go to college when they can go on the dole. Thatcher summed up the Tories' bigoted views of youth who are forced onto the dole: "They like it and they have a lot on money in their pocket...!"

But the Tories don't seriously believe that masses of youth have suddenly been infected with 'lazyitis' since 1979. The Tories' reactionary cutbacks neatly coincide with their plans to introduce the new Youth

Training Schemes— industrial conscription on the slave labour wage of £25 a week. The Tories think their dole cuts will make YTS more 'attractive' to youth.

The Tories want to use cheap youth labour and mass unemployment to terrorise workers into accepting lower wages and erode working conditions. This will allow greater profits for the bosses as they attempt to claw their way out of the capitalist crisis.

The Tories' plans must be

stopped. As the TUC meets this week it must urgently take up the issue of youth unemployment and the YTS schemes. It must launch a campaign of unionisation of youth on the government schemes, to win trade union rates of pay and conditions for YTS workers. This in turn will help defend the established rights won by the trade union movement.

Above all, the trade union movement must link up with the Labour Party and unite around socialist policies to defend the unemployed and the masses who face increasing poverty.

Thatcher has been allowed four years of unrelenting attacks on the labour movement. Thatcher, Tebbit and Co have proved they will not listen to reason or logic—greater profit for the wealthy few at the head of society is their goal.

The trade union and labour movement, despite the Tories' propaganda, is still immensely powerful. It is this that can stop the Tories in their tracks.

TUC MILITANT MEETING

Wednesday 7 September Claremont Hotel Promenade, Blackpool. Speakers: Terry Fields MP, Brian Ingham (Militant Industrial Correspondent), Chair Bill Boyle (CPSA delegate personal capacity), speaker from Sri Lanka and a speaker from the Hindles Strike Committee (AUEW members on strike for 20 weeks).

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