

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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STRIKES DEFY TORY LAWS

Inside this week

Newham Eight Demonstration

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The state of the unions

Pages 8-9

By Bob Wade

The Tories received a stern warning this week that their anti-working class policies will not be tolerated, when thousands of workers took industrial action.

Right around the country the labour movement—from local government white collar workers to those in the heavy industries—moved onto the offensive.

While the press trumpeted the first major use of the Tebbit Bill, which intimidated a small group of journalists on the *Stockport Messenger* into ending secondary action, they remained silent over the fact that elsewhere the Tebbit Bill was trampled underfoot by mass pickets and secondary action. Victories were scored too where resolute trade union action beat the bosses back.

VICTORY

AFTER 23 weeks of strike action, engineering workers at N Greening in Warrington successfully fought off redundancies. As steward Len Blood said, "Just by the solidarity of the men we pushed the management back from their dictatorial position to score what for us is a tremendous victory."

VICTORY

"It's been a victory. What the management thought they could achieve in four weeks with return to work on their conditions, we made it in five weeks under our conditions."

So Convenor Rab Wilson described the mood after a mass meeting at Nigg Bay Highland Fabricators in Scotland endorsed a return to work, after a resolute struggle where the full use of mass pickets stopped bosses' attempts to break the strike with scabs.

These victories will inspire the many thousands of other workers who have stepped into action this week. Significantly, many of the disputes are unofficial, and such is the pent up anger of workers that most were sparked off by localised battles with management.

POEU

The battle of the Post Office Engineers against Tory plans to privatise British Telecom will continue, with the special conference on Sunday agreeing on industrial action. As one delegate, Keith Hardacre, told the meeting, "Our members said to us that they were not going to lie down and take the path of weakness. Better to die on the battlefield than anywhere else."

The wives and children of the strikers at Nigg Bay showed their support for the dispute.

Full reports of these disputes pages 14-15



Photo: Nicholas Georges (FL)

MINERS



Nearly 12,000 miners are out on strike in Scotland and Yorkshire. In the Barnsley area 10,000 miners are striking—furthering the dispute with secondary picketing—after management sacked a worker. In Midlothian, 1,200 miners are out at the Monktonhall colliery until they receive assurances that the pit will not be closed.

UNIONS

In an unofficial strike at the Esso refinery at Fawley near Southampton, 2,000 sub-contract workers have battled with police on mass pickets in a bid to win parity with other Esso workers. Over 500 are out at Chloride Power storage in Swinton, and at Massey Ferguson in Coventry two separate strikes are taking place, of shopfloor workers and staff.

The Tories are mistaken if they think the labour movement will calmly sit back and let all their rights and conditions be taken away. Similarly the trade union leaders should show the same tenacity as the strikers in fighting the Tories, instead of meekly joining Tebbit and Co's 'talks'. This week's action on the industrial front clearly shows the workers are prepared to fight back.

LOCAL GOV'T

Thousands of local government workers, mainly members of NALGO, are taking industrial action around the country in separate disputes. In Har-

tingey 2,500 workers are out after a worker's dismissal. In London boroughs such as Hackney, local council workers are preparing to fight health service cuts, and

throughout the country residential care workers are taking action. In Aldershot, NALGO members will stage a day strike to stop the selling off of Gas showrooms.

Lebanese crisis: Class policies only answer

LEBANON is a microcosm of all the contradictions and problems in the world, presenting a mountain of national and social conflicts which are insurmountable on the basis of capitalism.

The battles now taking place there are being fought over the living body of the Lebanese people and Palestinian refugees. Since the Israeli invasion last year, the majority of the 25,000 casualties have been civilian, in addition to the tens of thousands killed in the 1975-76 civil war.

Hundreds of thousands have been made homeless and for many families, especially Palestinians, the latest war has made them refugees, not for the first time, but in some cases for the fourth or fifth time in a single generation.

Behind the various warring militias stand the major Middle East regional powers, Syria and Israel, as well as the two world super powers, the USA and the USSR.

The Druze and other Moslem militias, as well as the PLO units now apparently re-introduced into Lebanon, are supported by Syria, which stands to gain by a permanent division of Lebanon that would confirm its own occupation of the North and East of the country.

Right-wing Phalange

But behind Syria there also stands the USSR, its major financial and military backer, which will use the crisis to enhance its own strategic position in the Middle-East by weakening the influence of the Imperialist governments.

The extreme right-wing Phalangist militia and the Christian-dominated Lebanese "national" army, with which it is associated, both represent the interests of the Maronite Christian bankers and capitalists in Lebanon. President Gemayel, whose family is associated with the Phalange, was installed by the Israeli government last year in an attempt to re-establish the Maronite Christian government which collapsed in the 1975-76 civil war.

Gemayel has no more authority and support among the majority of the population—mainly Moslems—than the previous Maronite government. Nevertheless, the Israelis hoped thus to establish a Lebanese state allied to Jerusalem, prepared to sign a peace agreement with it, to perhaps coax Syria out of the North and East, but above all, to prevent the return of any Palestinian militia units.

But as much as Israel has stood behind Gemayel and his artificial government, American Imperialism has stood behind Israel. The US has supported Israel militarily and economically for



Part of the London demonstration marking the anniversary of the massacre at the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps. Hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese were killed by Phalangists sent into the camps by the Israeli army. Photo: Denis Doran/Militant

decades, and it is only due to the 9 million dollars-worth of aid per day that Israel has such a crushing military superiority in the Middle East.

American Imperialism has supported the Israeli government, and that of Gemayel, in order to further its own strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. The two aircraft carriers, the battleship, and nine other US warships that have turned the coast off Beirut into something like a NATO naval base, are not there to protect the interests of the Lebanese or Palestinian population, but in the last analysis the world interests of US capitalism.

But the Imperialist powers, nevertheless, miscalculated.

Their introduction of a so-called "peace-keeping force", composed of units of the British, Italian, French and American armies, was only designed to keep Israel out of Beirut. But the Israeli government, under pressure from its own working class, has been forced to withdraw to positions further south, despite the opposition of the American government.

In the vacated area, especially in Chouf Mountains, the Lebanese government has been unable, despite the deployment of its US-trained "national army", to impose its authority, which remains in only about 10% of the land area of Lebanon. As a result of the presence of their troops, the armed forces of the US have been drawn into the war that has developed.

It is not ruled out, that in order to protect its own prestige and its troops on the ground, America could escalate its own intervention, leading to major military confrontation with Syria. This would have enormous

repercussions, not least within the USA itself.

Despite the war-weariness of the Israeli population, it is possible that Israel could also be drawn again into a wider conflict, if Syria were to become involved with the US fleet.

But on the other hand, none of the major states wants an all-out war.

Israel is now well entrenched in the south of Lebanon and seems likely to stay there as long as there is the present balance of

the Druze in the Chouf mountains, the Phalangists in their enclave around the Northern port of Jounieh and the "official Lebanese government" in charge of its own 10%—apart, that is, from those parts of West Beirut still in the hands of various smaller Moslem militias.

The whole situation seems on the face of it, an impossible tangle of sectarian and national conflicts, but the only policy that can show a way out, the only sword that

A united socialist Lebanon would guarantee full national, cultural and religious rights to all the nationalities within the state, something that has proved impossible on a capitalist basis.

forces, just as it has remained on the West Bank of Jordan, conquered in the 1967 war.

Syria is no less determined to stay in the North and East of Lebanon, which historically was a part of Syria before French imperialism, after World War I carved the artificial Christian state of Lebanon out of it.

Despite its present involvement, US Imperialism will be reluctant to be drawn into a major war, given the enormous implications and its pre-occupation with planning an intervention in Central America.

It is most likely, therefore, that these powers will attempt to establish some cease-fire agreement which glosses over, and therefore, in effect, accepts the complete Balkanisation of Lebanon. That would mean the acceptance of a "patchwork" state, leaving Syria and Israel in "their" areas,

leadership which would have based itself firmly on the common interests of all Lebanese and Palestinian workers and one implacably opposed to sectarianism, then the whole development of the civil war would have been different.

But the Lebanese left were incapable of dragging themselves out of the morass of sectarianism. The same lack of leadership was demonstrated by the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Lebanon.

Had it based itself on a socialist programme and perspective, the movement of the Palestinian masses could have merged with that of the Lebanese and on the basis of class politics it would have been possible to overthrow Lebanese capitalism.

But the PLO in 1975 had no socialist programme or perspective. They tried at first to stay out of the civil war. Abdel Jawad Saleh, then a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, commented to a journalist in *Le Monde* (17 November 1982) "We did everything possible to steer clear of the Lebanese Civil War. Many times Yasser Arafat tried to reach an understanding with Bashir Gemayel (the then leader of the Lebanese Phalange—Ed) even if it meant becoming alienated from the Lebanese Left, but all to no avail."

The PLO became involved in the civil war by accident rather than design, without any programme or perspective. Because it was not linked to the struggle of the mass of the Lebanese people, the PLO inevitably became alienated from large sections of even the Lebanese Moslem population, which made it all the easier for Israel to drive out

the PLO in the invasion last year.

Whereas opportunities have presented themselves for the transformation of society—in Jordan in 1970, in Lebanon in 1975—the policies of the leadership of the PLO have always avoided class politics, leading the Palestinian people from one disaster to another.

It is therefore the duty of socialists in Britain and internationally, to seek to build points of support for Marxist ideas within the Lebanese and Palestinian population, as well as in the Israeli workers movement and elsewhere in the Middle-East. Socialist policies, based upon a class standpoint, are the only way out way out for the mass of the Middle-East.

Marxists in Lebanon would have the perspective of a unified socialist state in which the basic economy, industries, including land and agriculture, were at the disposal of the mass of the population, and not in the hands of a tiny number of Christian or Moslem landlords and capitalists.

A united socialist Lebanon would guarantee full national, cultural and religious rights to all the nationalities within the state, something that has proved impossible on a capitalist basis.

The labour movement must fight on the basis of the common interests of all the national groups in the Middle East: Moslems, Jews, Christians, Druze etc.

Capitalism is incapable of providing any peace, stability or harmony in Lebanon. These can only be established when Lebanon takes its place with the other Arab nations and a socialist Israel, as part of a Middle-East Federation of Socialist States.

Scottish 'lefts' back ... While Healey's CLP

ON SATURDAY 10 September at the same time that 3,000 were rallying in London in support of *Militant*, the Scottish Executive Committee of the Labour Party met.

On the agenda was consideration of correspondence from Jim Mortimer, the General Secretary of the Party, instructing Labour Parties to ban *Militant*, and in anticipation the LPYS had submitted resolutions calling for the NEC's ban to be opposed. *Militant* supporters in Scotland were understandably confident, based on the fact that a year ago, the Scottish Executive had opposed the creation of the Register as "divisive" and, further, that at the Scottish Conference of the Labour Party in March 1983, on a card vote, a clear, unambiguous rejection of expulsions from the Party had been carried.

It is therefore perhaps more in sorrow than in anger that it has to be reported that the Scottish Executive by 26 votes to 2, decisively rejected the calls from the LPYS to oppose the NEC instruction to ban *Militant* and agreed to the implementation of the instruction. This decision obviously represents a departure from the previous stance taken by the SEC to defend free speech and debate in the Labour Movement.

Left policies

In recent years, the Scottish Executive has had a sound record in supporting left wing policies, but it has to be clearly said now that this decision will have the right wing in Scotland and on the NEC rejoicing. It is against the expressed wishes of the rank and file in the Labour Movement in Scotland at Constituency Party level, and the Executives of most of the

leading Trade Unions in Scotland, including the T&GWU, the NUM, ASLEF and NUPE, who gave clear support to the policies of the Scottish Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt, of opposition to bans, proscriptions, expulsions and for unity on Socialist Policies to defeat the Tories.

The Executive in reaching this decision reaffirmed its opposition to expulsions but when a right-winger asked whether "noting" the NEC's instruction meant agreeing to implement, the chairman ruled this was the case. In other words, all the SEC members clearly understood that they were opening the door to a witch-hunt in Scotland.

Shouted Down

In the debate, Frances Curran, one of the Scottish Young Socialists, rose to speak in opposition to the NEC's ruling. Frances sought to defend *Militant* by referring to the job that the LPYS members in Scotland, most of whom support *Militant*, had done for Labour during the election.

The efforts of the LPYS included 150,000 "Youth for Labour" leaflets distributed, 20 "Youth for Labour" rallies held, 25,000 "Youth for Labour" stickers sold and over 300 people recruited to the Party, probably the best record of activity in Britain.

This defence was too much for some of the Scottish Executive who were seemingly incensed that YS members had sold *Militant* during canvassing and Frances was **heckled and shouted down** to the extent that she had to stop speaking whilst the Chairman appealed for order. When Eddie Donaghie, the other YS delegate to the SEC appealed for Frances to be heard he

Militant ban

was told to "F... off" by a leading Executive member.

Reconsider

It is to be hoped that Labour Parties and Union Executives in Scotland will urge the SEC to reconsider this decision which has open-

ed the door to witch-hunting in Scotland at a time when it is more necessary than ever before to build a united Socialist opposition to the Tories.

In this respect the Scottish Executive should ponder the firm stand taken by the Executive of the London Labour Party. There were no hesitations on that body when Mortimer's purge letter was considered. It was rejected by 24 votes to nil.

By Militant Reporters

NEC boycotts Liverpool City

FOLLOWING the NEC decision to ban the sale of *Militant* at Labour Party meetings, it seems that the city of Liverpool has become the latest target of a boycott by Labour's right wing.

The issue arose when the last meeting of the NEC Finance and General Purposes Committee considered venues for the 1984 Local Government Conference. Having decided earlier in the year to move the conference away from Tory-controlled seaside resorts, enquiries were made in both Liverpool and Nottingham, and both were found to be suitable sites.

The Party's Local Government Officer cited the Tories' proposals to abolish the metropolitan county councils, such as Merseyside, as one of a number of reasons in favour of Liverpool. But despite her recommendation, and not-

withstanding the fact that the city of Liverpool had the best result for Labour in both the local and general elections this year, the right wing majority on the committee ensured that Nottingham was chosen to host the conference.

It appears that Labour's National Agent, David Hughes, had argued that Liverpool Labour Party was dominated by *Militant* supporters and that to hold the conference there would cause "possible political embarrassment" to the Labour Party.

This is in sharp contrast to the view recently expressed by Michael Foot. At the NEC's inquest, last week, in to Labour's election defeat, he congratulated the comrades in Liverpool, saying "All honour to the Liverpool Labour Party, they fought back and they fought well!"

DESPITE the holiday period and the consequent infrequency of Labour Party meetings, the recent NEC organisation sub-committee was presented with 29 resolutions against the witch-hunt, in particular opposing the NEC decision to ban sales of *Militant*. There was *not one* resolution in favour of the ban.

Just to take one example, a resolution from **Arundel CLP** expresses disgust "that the NEC at its last meeting, spent so much time discussing measures to try and stop the sales of *Militant*, that it had to postpone until September, the important item down for discussion on Labour's heavy defeat in the recent general election.

"In the meantime", the Arundel resolution goes on, echoing the views of quite a few of the other motions submitted, "we will have nothing to do with Stalinist methods of trying to stifle ideas with which we many not agree at any particular time."

Other resolutions made it plain that the CLP concerned would continue to allow party members to sell socialist newspapers, while some, including one from the **South West Regional Council of the Labour Party**, called for the reinstatement of the five expelled editorial board members.

Apart from those resolutions presented to the NEC, reports have reached *Militant* about other Constituency Labour Parties passing resolutions against the attempt to ban the paper.

One of the most upsetting resolutions, for the Right, was passed in Leeds. "At its September meeting", our correspondent writes, "attended by its MP Denis Healey, **East Leeds Labour Party GMC** declared total

opposes

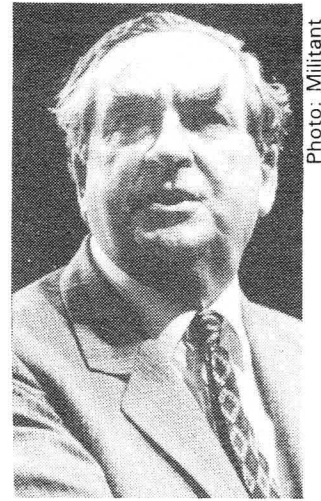


Photo: Militant

Denis Healey

opposition to the recent NEC letter calling for *Militant* sales to be banned at party meetings. A resolution expressing dismay at the letter and urging the NEC to turn instead to rebuilding Labour's strength was carried by a convincing 2 to 1 majority, after a good-humoured debate."

Those constituencies which have recently expressed opposition to the expulsion of the Editorial Board of *Militant*, demanded their re-instatement and/or opposed the NEC attempt to ban the paper and include the following:

Kettering, Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber, Liverpool (Riverside), Poole, Clydebank and Milagavie, Sheffield (Hallam), Brighton Labour Party, Ealing North, Arundel, Paisley South, Leith, North West Surrey, Harrogate, North East Derbyshire, Tottenham, Hull North, Woolwich and Eltham, Tunbridge Wells, Vauxhall, Westbury, Croydon North East, Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton, Deptford, Leeds East, Edinburgh West, Renfrew West and Inverclyde, Bridlington, Basingstoke, Chesterfield, Salford East. Regional Councils: London and South West.

By Militant Reporters



Greats From The Past...

GRAND PERFORMANCE DAVID. THEY'LL HAVE TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY NOW.

WHY WE ARE STANDING FOR THE NEC

MORE THAN ever there is a need to project the Labour Party as the only party that can reflect the hopes and aspirations of the majority in society. To do this we need not only a commitment and willingness from conference, but a National Executive prepared to fight to ensure that policy becomes a reality.

The defeat of Labour on June 9, was in part due to the fact that traditional Labour voters, having experienced 17 years of Labour in office since the war, with no fundamental gain, rejected ambiguously posed policies, half-heartedly campaigned-on, and spokesmen who opposed agreed conference policy contained in the manifesto.

Notable exceptions to the defeat were achieved where campaigns were waged with vigour and enthusiasm, posing the socialist alternative to ordinary working people. Despite witch-hunts within the party and the baying of the gutter press of Fleet Street, voicing the views of their rich backers, the



Terry Fields



Pat Wall

ideas of socialism and socialists were accepted by workers as the only politics with any relevance to their difficulties.

Certain parts of the country were the laboratory test for the ideas of socialism, and the

results speak volumes for the fact that, if Labour takes Clause IV out on to the streets, explaining just what that would mean to millions of decent people in society, the response would have ensured Labour's victory, despite the vitriolic campaign by the media.

The panic in the wake of the defeat, in the general election, by sections of the movement is taking the form of tearing up the manifesto and believing that some new formula must be found to win the electorate back to Labour. Nothing could be further from the reality of the needs of the British people.

We need more socialism, not less and with a bold campaigning spirit, discussing the issues on the estates, at factory gate meetings — anywhere where we can get an audience — the electorate will respond.

To ensure that the views of conference, in this direction, are reflected in policy we need an NEC committed to socialism and prepared to struggle for its achievement.

pounds, fivers, tenners, Every penny counts

WITH LESS than half of the £50,000 target so far collected, a massive drive by all our readers is needed over the next three weeks. We vitally need large donations, tenners and fivers, to ensure that the target is met

If we have the usual response to our appeals for cash there should be a dramatic flood of money coming in over the next few weeks. If we tap the growing support for Marxist ideas then achieving the target is possible.

Have you ever compared this page with the financial pages of the 'quality' press? You will see that despite the desperate state of industry many firms are still able to make record profits. Big business makes its money out of the increasing misery of the working class.

That misery, however, spurs workers into seeking an alternative. Your contributions can help us to explain the alternative of socialism to them.

While the financial pages are awash with billions of pounds none of it finds its way to us. Our cash comes from those with the least in society, those who have the least have most to gain by changing it. Their small donations are huge sacrifices and should prompt other readers to donate a similar

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 8 October
Eastern	1447		2400
East Midlands	976		2650
Humberside	470		1450
London East	1409		3100
London West	779		1950
London South	1258		2700
Manchester & Lancs	1635		3000
Merseyside	1210		3300
Northern	1325		3500
Scotland East	997		2000
Scotland West	772		2700
Southern	1957		3700
South West	639		2000
Wales East	413		2000
Wales West	1465		2300
West Midlands	1076		3150
Yorkshire	1370		3300
Others	4020		4800
Total received	23227		50000

TOTAL THIS WEEK: £1619

proportion of their income. They know that the fight for socialism is worth fighting for.

Those who made donations this week include A Godley, a single parent from Sevenoaks CLP, 50p; M Saxby, an unemployed school leaver in Tonbridge, 30p; Milan, a school student gave 18p (all his change); K Hollingsworth, unemployed, (Grimsby LPYS) 60p, and J Jamieson, unemployed, Newcastle £1.00.

As well as the many small amounts we receive we need our better paid readers to send in large donations. (Just £5 each from three thousand of our readers and £10 from a thousand would raise the necessary amount).

This week Laurence Arnell (Marden CLP) sent in £15. Tenners came from a Hackney councillor and

from D Staples (Gloucester LPYS). F and B Kidd from Tooting sent in £7.50. Fivers were sent in by P Tracey (Putney), S Harris (Sutton CLP), J Gregory (London FBU) and J Molyneux (Poole). The following members of Strathclyde NALGO contributed: Kenny McCombes £7.00, Liz McKelvie £6.00, Isobel Wilson £5.00, Margaret Hay £4.20. There are thousands of trade union branches where this example could be copied.

Among the many others who sent in contributions were J Bell (Beechdale CLP) £4.00, C Roberts, a FE student from Chester, £4.00, Sue Young (Bournemouth) £4.00, Ian (Brent) £3.50, Warren Taylor who paid £2.00 for the paper and Mavis Firth (Chapelton CLP) £1.00.

Also in this week was a substantial £313 raised at this year's TUC congress and a public meeting in Southampton addressed by Peter Taaffe raised an excellent £323.

It is essential that our Fighting Fund target is met by 9 October. Has your area organised a fund raising party for the end of the quarter? Remember to take a rattling tin to all paper sales and meetings. Ask first time readers of the paper for a donation. From small extras to substantial sums, every penny helps in the battle against the bosses.

By Nick Wrack

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.
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.



Selling Militant at last year's Labour Party conference. Use the publicity to make sure every worker sees what Militant really stands for.

ALTHOUGH MANY workers have watched the debates around the Labour leadership, the vast majority will await impatiently the decisions and resolutions from Labour Party Conference. All Militant supporters up and down the country are making special plans to get our message across that week.

Special attention will be paid to the appeals of our editorial board during the

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

ads

WOMEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

Southern Weekend School

24 & 25 Sept. Clockhouse Community Centre, Defiance Walk, Woolwich, London SE18

SPEAKERS:

Family:

Teresa McKay, Ipswich Women's Council

Women and the Colonial Revolution:

Speaker from SALEP

(Southern African Labour Education Project)

Positive Discrimination:

Jen Pickard, Newham North East Women's Council

Low Pay:

Margaret Crear, Rochdale Women's Council

The role of a Trade Union Activist:

Ann Silvester, National Executive, IRSF

Video: Sexual Harassment at work

School fee: £2 (at door). Crèche available. Snacks on sale.

Accommodation can be provided with local comrades.

If you need accommodation, please contact: Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

CLASSIFIED

VAUXHALL and Streatham LPYS. YTS—Youth Training Swindle Public Meeting. Wednesday 28 September, 7.30 Brixton Town Hall (Room 31), Acre Lane, SW2. Speakers: Stuart Holland MP Sam Brown (LPYS Reg Cttee). All Welcome!

MILITANT Tee-Shirts "Defend Militant—fight the Tories." As seen at the Wembley Rally. £2.50 each, or the following discounts for bulk orders.
2-10 10%
11-20 20%
21 and over 25%
All enquiries to: 206 Honeysuckle Road Southampton, SS1420.

WORKSHOP: Debate: Joe Ashton MP v Lynn Walsh (Militant Editorial Board) organised by Workshop Trades Council at Workshop Town Hall at 7.30 pm on Friday 23 September.

TEMPORARY accommodation for two people wanted in West End/Ealing Contact John McClelland 986 3828.

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.

JOHN ARCHER invites all who sympathised with and wish to commemorate the work of Mary Archer to come to her Memorial Meeting, on Saturday, September 24, in Room 152, County Hall, London, SE1 at 7.30. International speakers. Discussion. No charge for admission. Collection for memorial publishing 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.

SWANSEA MILITANT READERS' MEETING
Speakers Terry Fields MP Phil Lloyd (POEU Swansea) Dynevor School Swansea On Monday 26 September at 7.30 pm

BUILD FOR A MARXIST DAILY

AS REPORTED last week, promises of nearly £40,000 were handed in at the Wembley Conference for the special Building Fund being set up by Militant supporters. That flood of £50's, £100s, £200s, £500s and even £1,000s now needs to be matched by pledges from all parts of the country.

A detailed record of what is received will be given in future issues of Militant. Reprinted here are extracts from the special form distributed at the rally, in case you have not seen one. (More available now from Militant Offices).

Fill it in and send it in straight away, to give us that vote of confidence in the run-up to Labour's conference. If you haven't got enough money to make a substantial donation at the moment, think of what you could manage by the end of the year with an extra special effort. Make a pledge (maybe in more ways than one!) and then start saving!

"To start a Marxist daily paper we need cash—not the

£6.7 million estimated by McCarthy for the TUC but still enough to demand yet further sacrifices from readers and supporters in the movement. We need at least another 50 staff and a sizeable premises.

"By contributing to the Building Fund you can help ensure that a Marxist daily becomes a reality. With special once-off donations of £50s, £100s and even £1000s from readers—and potential

readers—the Building Fund will be aiming at a target of £150,000 by 1984.

"We hope that those pledging donations also appeal to their comrades, work-mates, friends, neighbours, and relatives to do the same. Get your Labour Party, trade union, LPYS branch or shop stewards' committee to make a donation to the Building Fund, too, using the form below."

I/WE DO PLEDGE A DONATION OF £ TO THE BUILDING FUND FOR A MARXIST DAILY.

I/We wish to see as soon as possible the appearance of a daily labour movement newspaper based on Marxism to combat the lies and distortions of the bosses' press and to end, once and for all, their vicious system.

Name

Organisation

Address

Return to: Building Fund, c/o Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Defend the Newham 8

THIS SATURDAY (24 September) thousands of young Asians, supported by local people, LPYS members and workers from the labour movement, will be demonstrating in East London in support of eight black youths—the Newham 8—who face trial for conspiracy on 24 October.

BOB LEE explains why:

London's East End has long been notorious as a breeding ground for gangs of fascist thugs. For the local black communities in the area, racial attacks have been a constant menace.

According to the Newham 8 Defence Campaign bulletin: "Our community is spat on in the streets, our houses burnt down, our windows smashed and our members assaulted. The Newham police refuse, ignore or are unable to protect us from this onslaught... As a result on many of the estates in Newham, families are imprisoned in their houses after dusk and many people are afraid to walk on

the streets."

In the autumn of last year the problem came to a head, following a series of violent attacks on Asian school children in Newham. On at least three separate occasions at the beginning of the school term, Asian children from Little Ilford School were attacked by gangs of white youths. As many as seventy youths, armed with iron bars and sticks took part in these attacks.

Yet, at no time did the police act decisively to protect the children. Quite correctly, therefore, the local community itself took the initiative to protect the children, by organising escorts for them to and from school.

Now eight of the young Asians who courageously went to the aid of those

defenceless school children are to face trial. Their only crime was to defend themselves and their community from racist attackers!

Political intimidation

It is vital that the labour movement sees this case for what it is; another blatant attempt by the authorities to cow and intimidate black workers, who today constitute one of the most militant sections of the working class. The history of the case clearly illustrates the political motives that lie behind the forthcoming trial.

Initially, on 24 September 1982, the eight youths were charged with a variety of offences ranging from

threatening behaviour to actual bodily harm. Yet, three months later the police added a political dimension to the case. They decided to charge them with conspiracy.

Fifteen months ago when police tried to use the same notorious conspiracy against 12 Asian youths in Bradford, the case was thrown out of court. Their victory seemed to establish the legal right of communities to defend themselves from attack.

Now however, with the Newham 8 case, the authorities are trying to turn the clock back and remove that right. Why else did the authorities decide, after three months, to invoke the conspiracy laws to bring further charges?

The whole labour movement must mobilise to oppose this political trial. The trial of the Bradford 12 represented an important victory in the courts—but that victory was only made possible by a massive public

campaign. The same holds true for the Newham 8 as well. Only by drawing together black and white workers in a united campaign of the labour movement and black organisations will it be possible to ensure a victory for the Newham 8, and guarantee the protection of black communities from attack.

**Newham 8
DEMONSTRATION
SATURDAY
24 SEPTEMBER
1 pm, Plashet Park
London E12
(Nearest tube: East Ham)
PICKET
SNARESBROOK COURT
MONDAY
24 OCTOBER**



Housing conditions in London's East End, where Asians in Whitechapel come bottom of the pile. Photo: Andrew Moore

Climb every mountain

"WANTED-WORKERS to build a new pathway to the top of Ben Nevis. Climb 1800 feet to work, then manhandle enormous boulders, level out hard stony ground and dig drains and culverts. No machinery provided, just a pick and shovel. Average wage £60 a week".

Manpower Services Commission never actually dared to put out this advertisement, but they are at present employing fourteen workers made redundant from aluminium smelter and paper factories in the neighbouring town of Fort William on these conditions to reconstruct a one hundred year old tourist path.

Their job is to rebuild up to the 2200 feet level where the old path is still in good order.

It should be remembered that the Community Programme is the prestige part of the MSC's job schemes with conditions and pay far better than the poverty wages of the Youth Training Schemes.

But next time the Tories tell you that their schemes can help get you to the top, you'll know what they mean.

Come to National Black Youth Rally

IT IS insufficient to simply make speeches calling on blacks to support Labour and the trade unions. The labour movement itself must take the lead by energetically campaigning to win not just the passive, but also the active support of black people.

And that is why LPYS branches all over the country are making a concerted drive to build support for the forthcoming "Black Youth in Britain Rally," on 22 October, at County Hall, London.

LPYS activity is primarily aimed at **Black and Asian workers** in industry and the public sector.

In the London area, there will be special drives to win support for the rally from black workers based at key industrial centres, such as Ford's in Dagenham and at Heathrow airport—which

between them employ more than fifteen thousand Asians and West Indians. LPYS branches in London have also drawn up plans to distribute leaflets at bus garages, railway stations, depots and hospitals.

Letters are being sent to **trade union branches and shop stewards committees** asking them to sponsor delegates to the rally, as well as to provide donations to help cover transport costs.

In **Yorkshire and Lancashire**, there are plans to make regular visits to textile mills, bakeries, and laundries to build support for the rally among those key sections of Asian workers.

In these areas LPYS branches have joined together with Asian youth organisations to build support for both the Newham 8 demonstration and Black Youth Rally. Schools, techs and FE colleges are being written to and leafleted.

In the **Midlands** there are plans for mass leaflets at car

plants where large numbers of blacks are employed.

Scores of **Black and Asian organisations** around the country are also being approached to send delegates and representatives to the rally. Indian Workers Associations have already been approached in Southall and Greenwich, London, Bradford and Birmingham. In Glasgow, LPYS representatives were recently invited to speak at the first meeting of a new IWA branch.

In Bristol Asian and West Indian students have already booked two mini buses for the rally.

In the weeks ahead the LPYS will be particularly active on the streets, especially in areas where Asians and West Indians form a large part of the community. There will be poster campaigns, mass leafletting, days of action as well as door to door canvassing.

By Colin de Freitas

LPYS give support

SEVENTY-FIVE people, many from Blackburn's Asian community, turned out on a rainy night last week to hear speakers on the situation in Newham.

A speaker from the Newham 8 Committee stressed that this case could not be taken in isolation. There had been continual attacks and racist abuse of blacks and Asians, in Newham. And the police refused to do anything, claiming it was only neighbourhood disputes.

Just that week there had been an horrific attack upon an Asian medical student in nearby Shoreditch. His spine had been fractured, his body slashed and the initials "NF" carved out of his skin. Yet the police said that they saw no reason to consider it a racial attack.

The community were quite right to try and defend themselves from similar attacks; self-defence was no offence. That was why the demonstration was so important. (see details this page)

Javed Iqbal put the

Newham 8 campaign into the wider context of the problems facing all working people. Unemployment, bad housing, poor working conditions and miserable wages affected both black and white. But all this hit the black and Asian communities hardest.

And in addition to this, blacks and Asians suffer from harassment from the Tories racist Nationality Act. Having been encouraged by the capitalists to come to Britain to do menial jobs, those same capitalists were trying to use them as scapegoats for their system now it's in recession. It's the same 'divide and rule' tactics that the bosses have always used.

In the discussion, £50 was raised to finance transport to the Newham 8 demo and a number of speakers stressed the importance of all working people, black, Asian and white, getting involved in the labour movement to fight the system that creates deprivation, poverty and racism.

By Rossina Harris
(Blackburn CLP)

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!

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

From the army to the dole...

By Dick Massey



First World War—joining up to "defend the country"



1920's and 30's—queuing up for a job.

WHEN YOU reach the poverty line you stand naked before the world.

When I was eleven years old, in 1920, we were at rock bottom. My father had been invalidated out of the army in 1916. His injury then lost him his occupation as a gardener. We were kicked out of our tied cottage and had to move to a squalid part of town.

The only source of relief

were the Board of Guardians. I went down with my mother for the interview. Everyone could hear what was being said. We were given a food ticket for 37½p.

To try and make ends meet I, as the eldest, got a job delivering papers. I had to meet the train at 6am, collect, sort and deliver my morning round, and report to the shop before going to school.

After school it was back again to sort the evening papers and deliver. All day Saturday, and Sunday mor-

ning. My weekly wage was 17½p.

Being one of the many "boys in need" I was granted a school breakfast. This consisted of a stale bread roll with a scraping of margarine and a cup of watery cocoa.

It was the custom for working class children to go bare foot in the summer in order to save footwear for the hard winter days.

We would stand there on our lines in the school yard bare foot, ragged-arsed, cold and hungry. On 'Empire Day' we would have to sing

all the old patriotic songs; "Land of Hope and Glory". We were told they must be sung with feeling. We had then to stand to attention whilst some well-fed, well-dressed, well-shod local dignitary expounded the glories of "our" great Empire upon which the sun never set.

He exhorted us to follow the example set by our fathers and older brothers to take up arms if necessary in defence of "our" glorious heritage.

Upon being dismissed, we who were about to inherit

the earth, would race from the school yard to take our place in the queue, begging bowls in hand, to await the arrival of the mobile soup kitchen that would provide us with the only hot meal of the day.

The early twenties saw the emergence of the ex-service men's bands. Carrying a board denoting the battles in which they had fought. They shuffled along in the gutter, eyes downcast begging for alms in "The land fit for heroes to live in".

This grim, grey town, a "Mugsborough" of the

north, exuded an air of hunger, poverty, despair and destitution. The pawnshops flourished as the queues for the dole and the Guardians lengthened. Men gathered at the street corners and discussed their plight but none asked the question "why".

But their blood and sacrifice for the ruling class was a postscript to Robert Tressell's famous book; for they were indeed, "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists."



Social Security workers on strike in Birmingham because of lack of staff to deal with claimants.

Tax Evasion Ignored

OVER TEN times the amount lost in social security fraud vanishes through tax evasion.

In 1977 it was estimated (official government figures) that between £5,000 million and £11,000 million of taxes was not paid into the state revenue. The figures for social security fraud in the same period were estimated to be in the region of £50 million.

It was around this time that the Lord Vestey scandal broke. Vestey (head of Dewhursts the butchers) was found to have paid only £10 in tax! Vestey is by no means the only representative of the ruling class to get away so lightly.

If the Tories were so concerned with saving public money it would obviously make more sense to undertake a drive on tax, VAT and other revenue fraud. However, since the beneficiaries of this kind of

fraud would probably be supporters of the Tories (electorally and financially) it would not be in the interests of Thatcher and co to undertake such a course of action.

So instead they hunt the small fry.

Yet it should be borne in mind that although £50 million disappeared in fraud, £340 million of social security benefits in 1977 were not claimed. Such under claiming occurs every year. The old, sick and unemployed are going without money they desperately need to maintain their meagre standard of living.

Both the main unions of social security workers, the SCPS and CPSSA, have made it clear to the Tories that any extra staff resources should be employed on benefit-take-up work and not on increased policing.

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

INTO THE S.S. JUNGLE

Having just separated from my husband I have had to sign on for Supplementary benefit. Before that my husband, who was unemployed, claimed social security for both of us.

From our weekly 'income' of £56.50, £19 went on council rent, £13 on food and £8 on electricity. This left us £16.50 a week between us to cover travel costs (25p each way into town) clothing and any leisure activities.

Many wives cannot get a fair share of the social security payments because the Giro is always made out to the man. One woman I know was given £2 a week by her husband.

As I had to find another place to live, I had to borrow a month's rent in advance plus money for household necessities like saucepans, cutlery and bedding. It was two weeks before the social security came to assess how much they would pay me (another two weeks during which I had to find rent money.)

As it was private rented accommodation they would only pay a maximum of £15 of the £20 weekly rent. For the backdated rent I would only get £10 a week.

Though they are committed to paying local authority rents in full, they argue that private landlords would just keep putting up their rents. In other words it's the tenant that loses out again.

In the supplementary benefit leaflet 'Lump sum payments for special needs' it says you can get a heating allowance if your rooms are large. My flat is in an old Victorian house with large

rooms but the SS visitor said they were 'normal' size, so no extra money.

She also asked whether bedding was included in a furnished flat. It was, but it was in shreds and totally unusable. As long as bedding was included with the flat I wasn't eligible for special needs payments.

One family I know with 5 children, moved to a furnished flat, where the beds were falling apart with rotting mattresses. The SS allowed £30 for one new bed.

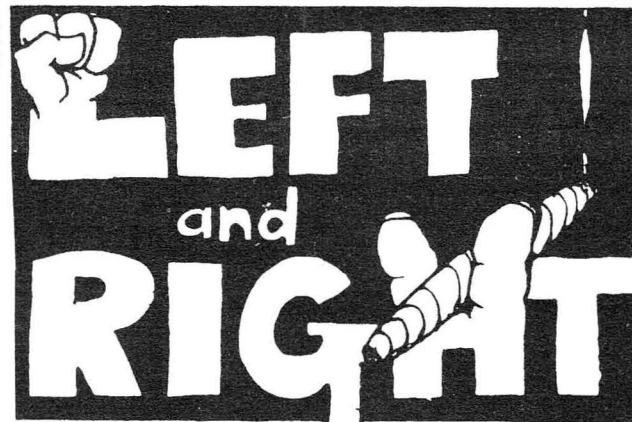
Now my assessment has come through, I get £41 a week: £20 for rent, £7 for food, £6 gas heating, £1 electricity, leaving £7 a week for other necessities.

The irony is that the girl in the flat above me is assistant manageress at a local cafe and brings home £35.70 a week and has to pay for all her own dental care and prescriptions which the unemployed get free. Another person in our Labour Party Young Socialists who works in a car sales room brings home £35 a week for a 42 hour week.

It's easy to see why people lose enthusiasm to look after their homes and maintain a decent diet. Many, like myself, are in debt, can't entertain friends, can't go on holiday, can't buy books and newspapers and can't save anything.

You find yourself staying in bed a bit longer to keep down the heating bills. At least when I'm out during the day, leafletting the dole queues, I know I'm not only fighting for socialism, but keeping my heating bills down.

By an LPYS member



Sign of the Times

The chairman of Britain's allotment holders complained last week that people were stealing food from allotments for their families. "It is not just petty pilfering," said the chairman, Edward Taylor. "People are banding together and organising thefts using wirecutters and other tools". The link with poverty is clear. The allotments chairman of one town, Bridgewater, Somerset, has pointed out; "Right from the time vegetable prices began to rise, every site in town has been pilfered".

Jumbo Jet Hypocrisy

Possibly the most hypocritical part of the Tories' response to the shooting down of the South Korean plane was their protest to the Russians that twelve British citizens had died. Only one of the twelve was actually resident in the UK. The other eleven were Chinese living in Hong Kong. And the Tories racist immigration laws prevent Chinese Hong Kong residents from coming to live in the UK.

Letter to Thatcher

'When I heard that you had appointed Mr. John Selwyn Gummer to the Chairmanship of the Tory Party, I thought you would practise what you preach and submit your nominee to a ballot of the whole Conservative Party membership. Why should such an important position as Chairman of the Tory Party be a non-elected time-server?

At a time when you are putting forward proposals for trade union reform which interfere with the constitutions of many of those organisations, you have treated the Tory Party to another dose of patronage. As we say up here in my constituency, "What's good enough for the goose should be good enough for the gander."

Of course there is another name for this operation of double standards—it is called hypocrisy. I look forward to hearing your explanation as to why Mr. Gummer's nomination was not subject to a secret ballot. Yours sincerely Dennis Skinner.

Sentenced to death

‘ I JOINED the Young Socialists in 1906. Two years later I was sentenced to death for action against English strike-breakers.

The background to this was the big strikes which had broken out during 1907-8; but the capitalists were better prepared than the workers. In 1906 there had been a shameful agreement between the trade union leaders and the bosses. Paragraph 23 of this agreement gave the capitalists all power over hiring and firing. Trade union activists could be fired at will.



Anton Nilson at the Militant Rally.

Many workers refused to sign the agreement, and went on strike: dockers, textile, agricultural, building workers; I was at that time a building worker. The employers brought in strike breakers from abroad; in the textile industry—German workers, in the docks—English workers etc.

Machine guns against stones

The army, government, Parliament, Church were all on the side of the employers. Conflicts and clashes occurred throughout Sweden.

In the winter of 1908 warships went on “The Stream” in Stockholm to protect English strike breakers. In Gothenburg the army intervened. In one northern town two warships fired on stone workers.

At the Young Socialists meetings we discussed the need for workers’ defence. The military fired with machine guns, but all the workers had

was stones.

At one meeting we talked about whether to join the rifle movement. The female comrades were opposed and at first I sympathised with them. But no decisions were taken.

In Malmo at that time there was a ship with eighty English strike breakers on board. One evening when 2,000 people were gathered on the quayside near the ship, an English scab opened fire on the crowd. We picked three bullets out of the rail wagon beside us.

After this, three of us Young Socialists stole 20 kilos of dynamite from a chalk quarry. Our idea was to use it against the military. But when the Englishman who had fired the shots was released, without any charges being brought against him, we changed our minds.

We now decided to use the dynamite against the English strike-breakers. Our intention was not to kill or injure but just to frighten them.

Dynamite only to frighten

The three of us carefully discussed where to place the dynamite. If we had put it on or inside the ship it would have resulted in deaths, and we did not want anyone killed with this dynamite.

So we decided to place it outside the ship. Unfortunately what we did not know was that the same evening there was a big party on deck. Two kilos of the dynamite exploded; one Englishman was killed, 21 others were wounded, 7 seriously.

The authorities’ reaction was immediate. King Gustav V came down and praised the strike breakers, and gave them money. We were captured by the police, together with all the other members of our Young Socialists.

Then came the trials. I and one other were sentenced to death, the third to life imprisonment. In the end all three of us received life sentences. I was to remain in jail until 1917.

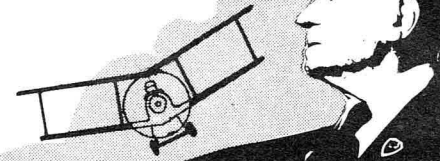
NEXT WEEK: Prison.

Born 96 years ago, ANTON NILSON’s political activities encompassed the Russian Revolution, the German Revolution 1919–20, and witnessing the rise of Stalinism. We begin this series about his political life with his experiences in Sweden before the First World War. Interview by JIM CHRYSTIE.



At Marx’s graveside.

Anton Nilson



Memoirs of a Revolutionary

Joining the Young Socialists

‘ I DID not come in touch with the Young Socialists until I went to Malmo in the summer of 1906. In the villages we did not see anything of the labour movement.

One day in Malmo I saw a young man with a pack of papers under his arm. I was told he was a socialist and the paper was *Brand* (Fire). He told me it was a workers’ paper. So I bought it, asked if they had any meetings and if I could join. I became a member in 1906.

The Young Socialists had broken with the Social Democratic Party in 1903. The Social Democratic leadership were just interested in Parliament. The Young Socialists were revolutionary.

At that time there was no vote for workers, no social services. The socialist movement was extremely necessary. In the countryside there was no organisation, no trade unions, no workers’ meetings.

By 1908 we had about 15–16,000 members in the Young Socialists. Our main slogan was for a General Strike.

There was an atmosphere of class confrontation in the country at that time. We knew that the employers were preparing to attack, and we wanted to come first. But the leadership of Social Democracy did not want that; they had their sights fixed exclusively upon Parliament.

We got a good response from workers. But the trade unions remained with Social Democracy.

We demanded a new trade union movement prepared to fight the capitalists. We said that the Social Democratic leadership were milking the unions for Parliamentarians.

In 1909 Sweden had the Big Strike. About 300,000 workers were out for three months. In the end it was split by the leadership of Lundquist.

The Social Democrats advocated a partial retreat from the strike. Some workers were to withdraw from the strike whilst others were to continue. Herman Lundquist acquired the title ‘Herman the Cleaver’.

In 1910, after the experiences of the Big Strike, the Syndicalist movement was formed. Although not a majority, it was a considerable section of the working-class.

In 1917 Social Democracy split again, under the impact of the Russian Revolution.

Political activity since 1905

‘ I FIRST became an activist through being a farmers’ son. I worked with the labourers, 16–18 hours a day; I got no pay. When you are living with the labourers, always in their homes, you become one of them, even if you are the farmer’s son.

My first political activity was the secession of Norway from Sweden

in 1905. A section of the Swedish ruling class wanted war. But the population was entirely against it.

We considered the Norwegians our brother peoples. We wore badges with a broken gun. Solidarity began to develop.

After months of hesitation the Swedish ruling-class accepted secession.

Cutting a fine head of profits

HAIRDRESSERS are prone to many health problems. For apprentices skin disorders such as dermatitis, from the water and shampoos, are common.

Many workers eventually leave the trade because of chemical allergies from direct contact with or breathing in fumes. One girl I used to work beside has developed asthma and has an attack whenever she

comes in contact with bleach protonators.

Back, leg and foot trouble are common. Constant pressure on the legs causes varicose veins. Few hairdressers last over the age of 45.

We aren’t unionised, so we have no weapon to fight the bosses. Our wages are among the lowest: the average is about £60; qualified workers earn as little as £45 a week.

I was recently made redundant from a shop in Glasgow with four others. One was a stylist who had

worked there for many years. She was sacked without any notice or redundancy pay.

Another was a single parent, working to support a young child. As a receptionist, she also did some book-keeping. She too was sacked without notice or redundancy pay.

Cheap Labour

An apprentice was put on her job for only £25 per week. Apprentices are there

to learn hairdressing, not how to be a receptionist.

Two apprentices were also sacked. They had finished the YOP scheme, a favourite source of cheap labour for shop owners. We were openly told it wasn’t “financially beneficial” to keep them on.

Shortly after that new juniors were taken on, one full-time on the YOP scheme plus Saturday juniors called in during the week when the owner needs them.

I too was sacked without notice. Employed one minute, a statistic of That-

cherism the next.

We were told we had to go because staff inefficiency and waste was cutting profits. But a small meeting

Real cost of a perm

amongst the staff uncovered some interesting facts.

The cost of a perm to the client is £20. The total product-cost of a perm is between £1.25–£2.00. Two or three heads can be done from one bottle of solution.

A tint retouch costs the client £11.00 with an extra

£4.00 on top to have her hair blow-dried. A cut as well brings the cost up to £19.00. A tube of tint costs £1.25 plus peroxide.

The prices charged at this shop are higher than average. So in effect the owner’s profits are higher than average.

Shop-owners complain about hairdressers working at home. Under present conditions it’s hardly surprising.

By Dawn Neale
(Kelvingrove LPYS,
Glasgow)



Photo: John Smith (IFL) II



Photo: Denis Doran/Militant

Len Murray. The TUC leaders are using the excuse of "weak talking to Tebbit."

The collapse of industry, the waves of redundancies, the fall in union membership and activity have led many, both on the left and the right, to conclude that the unions are a spent force. Brian Ingham argues to the contrary.

BEFORE THE 1980s, few people would have dared question the power of the organised labour movement. The memory of trade unions on the march in the 1970s was too fresh, too vivid.

Miners, engineers, dockers, railway workers—to name but a few—had all inflicted humiliating blows upon Edward Heath and his government.

More recently, in 1978–79, in the "Winter of Discontent" Ford workers, low paid public service manual workers, and lorry drivers all demonstrated again the enormous strength of organised labour.

On 15 January 1979, the London *Evening Standard* carried this report of an incident during the lorry drivers' strike. "The man from Charrington's hung around the strike committee's door as nervous as a school boy waiting outside the headmaster's study.

"He was there to obtain that magical piece of paper that would allow his firm to deliver fuel oil to a sugar company inside the heavily-picketed Tilbury docks

"As the company processes animal foods it should have been exempt from the attentions of the Transport and General Workers' Union. But it was for the London regional strike committee to decide.

"The man was ushered in. There was a muffled consultation. Then 10 minutes later he emerged Neville Chamberlain-style waving the vital dispensation.

"The court where the employers' appeals are being heard is a smokey back room in the TGWU district office in Tooley street, Bermondsey."

Workers' court

The wages slaves had become the masters! That picture was repeated through all major industrial areas during the lorry drivers' strike. It was also the recurring nightmare for the employing class throughout the 1970s.

Today, five years away from the lorry drivers' strike, according to some commentators in the capitalist press, the untameable has been tamed. The trade unions, they would have us believe, are no longer a force to be reckoned with.

Unfortunately, these ideas are not confined to Fleet Street. At this year's Trades Union Congress, the right wing union leaders all continually spoke in the same vein. Like ventriloquist's dummies dutifully taking words and ideas from the capitalists, they lectured Congress on the supposed "harsh new realities".

They say that workers are no longer prepared to struggle to defend their rights and conditions, the strength of the trades unions has been sapped; that unions are no longer capable of fighting back as in the past, even if this is what trade unionists wanted.

They claim that the working class is moving to the right and that the low vote for Labour in the last election is evidence of an irreversible transformation in outlook.

All this has been underpinned, according to the right-wing, by structural changes in the economy which have brought about an objective weakening in the working class and a subsequent strengthening of the capitalists through a decline in the in-

ABOVE: The health workers' dispute showed that the working class has not lost its sense of solidarity. BELOW: Telecommunications' workers prepare to use their enormous strength to save their industry.

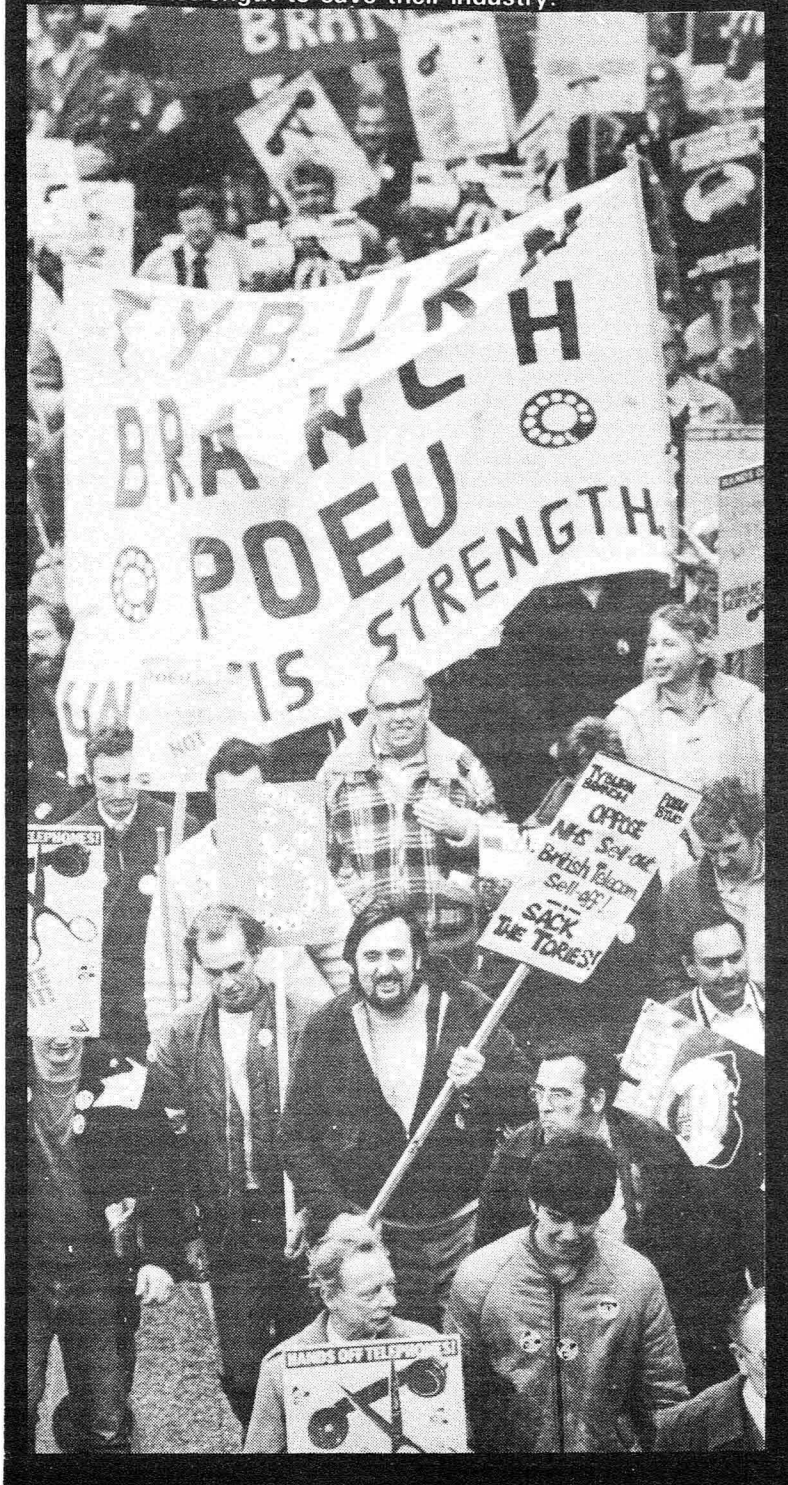


Photo: Militant

THE S THE

dustrial proletariat as a proportion of the total workforce, and a corresponding rise of white collar, service and distribution workers.

These arguments were used to justify the policy of talks with Tebbit rather than intransigent opposition to the Tories. They were also the excuse for starting in motion the process which, some of them hope, will lead to a breaking of the historic links binding together the Labour Party and the trade unions.

By compromising the independence of the trade unions, by meekly entering the chambers of the Tories for discussions, and by being prepared to distance themselves from the Labour Party, the right wing leaders are denying the very history of the British trade union movement where every single right, every serious concession we have gained, has come either directly through struggle or through the threat of struggle.

Structural changes in economy

The Labour Party came into being around the turn of the century when bitter experience, including savage attacks on the trade unions, brought home the need for working people to have alongside the unions, their own independent political voice. Throughout history the Tories and the bosses have always rewarded those who crawled in front of them with a contemptuous kick in the teeth.

Those who tell us to "look reality squarely in the face" are themselves blind to what is happening before their very eyes. And here the right wing jeremiahs are not alone. Many self-styled "intellectuals" on the left also bleat long and loud about moves

to the right in the working class and the way in which the strength of the trade unions has (according to them) been sapped.

These "realists" always only see the negative side of reality. All that is encouraging or positive is for them in total eclipse.

The trade union movement is far from finished. On the contrary, in some ways its potential strength is greater than ever. The present quiet, cautious, mood of the working class will not last. Those who have been singing funeral hymns to the trade unions will find that the trade unions have only been momentarily stunned, not mortally wounded.

Trade union membership has certainly fallen dramatically. At this year's TUC a new affiliated membership of 10,510,157 was announced. This figure was calculated last December, so by Congress this month, the true membership of TUC affiliated unions was probably nearer to ten millions. Almost 2.2million lower than the record figure at the end of the 1970s, and probably once again under 50% of the working population.

The membership decline has affected practically every union. Most suffered a fall of around 10% in membership figures, but for some the drop has been even more dramatic.

The Transport and General Workers' Union once had a membership of 2.2 million but has lost over 700,000 members, UCATT lost around 25%, and the AUEW at least 200,000. The public service giants, NUPE and NALGO, both until recently managed to withstand the decline but now these unions too

Trade union heart periods the in



Photo: Denis Doran/Militant



Terry Duffy, AUEW leader. Pessimism from the right wing.

... to justify

STATE OF UNIONS

have suffered at least slight falls.

There has also been a fall in the number of stewards and lay union representatives. It is estimated that the number of manual stewards in manufacturing industry was 130,000 in 1978, but only 80,000 today.

The number of workers organised in closed shops has declined as well. Research by the Department of Employment shows that membership of closed shops was down from a peak of 5.2 millions in 1978 to around 4.5 millions in 1982, a 13% drop.

These developments over the last few years should not be minimised; they have had serious repercussions

consciousness of the British working class than ever. The number of workers in closed shops has fallen but the new low is still no less than ¼ million higher than in 1964. The number of stewards in industry has cut back sharply but this fall is roughly proportional to the decline overall in the workplace.

On top of this, management have gone on the offensive in the recession to try to destroy the shop floor organisations built up in the past war years. To be a steward today means facing the threat of harassment and victimisation. In some companies this intimidation has had an effect and there is not a full take up of stewards positions.

Overall, under this assault, the number of full time officials in manufacturing industry has also fallen, in the last two years from 4,000 to around 2,000. But this process will backfire on management.

It was possible for some senior stewards in the past to become divorced to an extent from the pressures and problems of the shopfloor. Management's attacks are driving the stewards closer and closer to the workers they represent. Also throughout industry as older stewards step to one side through tiredness or fear, new younger stewards are taking their place, not scarred by the defeats and set-backs of recent years.

In the recession of the early 1920s the stewards' organisations were atomised. Today they are bloodied, but they are far from being broken. Neither is the overall strength of the unions crippled. Even a drop to just under 50% of the workforce organised still represents a far greater proportion than in the 1950s and 1960s

or most of the 1970s when around 45% were organised.

There have been attempts to set up tame no-strike unions among journalists, teachers and more recently railwaymen. But these scab unions have never taken off. The drop in the number of workers in the trade unions has only been marginal. Few have actually left the unions.

The smaller percentage in unions is more due to jobs being smashed in well organised areas while the newer jobs being created are more often than not in the harder-to-organise service and distribution industries.

There has certainly not been the march out of the unions which took place in the fearful atmosphere of the inter-war years. In the 1921-23 recession the proportion of workers unionised fell from 45% to 30%, to be driven down yet further in the depression years of 1930 to 1933 to 22%. By 1922 the engineering union, then the AEU, had lost a quarter of its 1920 membership!

The trade unions remain today the single most powerful force in British society. The developments in the economy have not weakened the unions. Marxists emphasise the importance of the industrial working class to the labour movement and the struggle for socialism. This is because of the long industrial and political traditions of the industrial proletariat, its social cohesion, gathered together often in thousands at the point of production, and above all because of its strategic position in the economy.

But though the proportion of industrial workers in the overall economy has changed, the power of the industrial working class remains. All the modern developments of capitalism have enhanced this power; the monopolisation of industry, the interdependence of one industry on

all others, specialisation and re-specialisation within industry.

Small groups of workers can effect the destinies of whole industrial empires if they strike. And one group of workers after another can affect not just companies but the entire economy. Lorry drivers, power workers, train drivers, miners, water workers, Post Office engineers and dockers to name but a few. If they move into action decisively, they can cripple the economy.

With the march of new technology, sometimes one white collar worker has replaced ten to fifteen, even a hundred blue collar workers. But these white collar staff are no less industrial workers. These developments simply concentrate the work and the potential economic power in fewer hands.

The industrial working class is the decisive layer of the proletariat. In the past, trade unionisation was almost exclusively concentrated among these workers. The capitalist class rested to some extent on white collar staff and the most oppressed and exploited layers in service industries and distribution.

Broadly-based

The march of the trade unions into these areas means therefore the objective weakening of the capitalist class. Its social resources are being whittled away, and trade unionism is more broadly based than ever.

A small temporary upturn in the economy is expected over the next year or so. As this develops, so the confidence of the working class will be rekindled and the unions will once again go on the offensive. The movement of Vauxhall workers is an anticipation of what will happen generally once the economy begins to revive.

But even without an upturn, there will be massive movements; sections of the working class are being driven further than they are prepared to tolerate. This pressure will provoke inevitable explosions.

The mood of the working class is not the one-sided downcast and gloomy attitude which is all the pessimists in the labour movement can see. Under the surface, the frustration, anger and bitterness of the working class is developing. One spark, one provocation by management could bring all this pent-up antagonism flooding to the surface.

Legislation.

The Tories have not been as intransigent and audacious as their propaganda would have us believe. Whenever they have faced determined opposition from a strong group, they have retreated, particularly when that opposition threatened to lead to a more general movement of the working class.

If the Tories believed the unions were emasculated there would be no need for new trade union legislation. But it is precisely the power of the unions that has driven them to introduce these laws.

But even though the capitalist class are forced by their crisis to introduce anti-union legislation, just like Frankenstein, they are afraid of the monster they are creating, terrified of the laws being applied and actually provoking a generalised movement of the working class.

Nevertheless at some stage these laws will be tested and the Tories and big business will have no option but to try to test the labour movement's power in all out confrontation.

All the soft talk of the union leaders searching for social harmony will be in vain. These leaders talk of "harsh new realities" but they ignore or simply fail to understand the hardest fact of all, that capitalism has entered an entirely different era. The

boom period of the 1950s to early 1970s has gone, leaving a period of upheaval and crisis in the capitalist world internationally.

British capitalism is in an especially weak position due to the utter inability of British employers to invest at rates anything like their competitors overseas. Small upturns will give way to more pronounced downturns in the economy. The capitalists will try over and over again to heap all of their problems on to the backs of the working class. Attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable interests of the workers and the capitalists are absolutely utopian.

All the cups of tea and biscuits at their chats with the Tories will explode in the faces of the union leaders. The material conditions for any lasting, meaningful collaboration with the capitalists have gone.

Rather than general peace between the classes, the prospect of localised general strikes and even an all out national general strike is inherent in the present situation.

The working class faces a generalised attack from the Tories and big business. Millions of workers are not prepared—at this stage—to take the path of action alone. But if the call came from the top, and an organised campaign launched for a generalised response to the Tories, there would be an earth-shattering movement of trade unionists.

Workers throughout industry lifted their heads last year and marched out on strike in support of the health workers. By giving a clear perspective and bold lead to the labour movement the union leaders could ensure the defeat not only of Tory legislation but of the Tories themselves.

Fighting organisations

Millions of workers who voted SDP, Liberal, even Conservative would be mobilised given such a lead. But the right wing leaders are in an impasse. They have no clear perspective themselves other than forlorn dreams of a return to the "good old days" of the post-war boom.

These leaders may be able to delay the resurgence of working class opposition by frustrating initiative and by their gloom and inertia. But if the lead does not come from above, then inevitably the movement will break out below. There is massive volatility industrially and politically. White collar and blue collar workers are looking for an answer to their problems.

Experience of Labour government has made many sceptical about the chances of a new Labour government bringing about a fundamental improvement in their conditions. So sections of the working class turned to the Tories in the last election, others to the Liberals and SDP.

Right wing leaders have taken Labour's low vote as the signal for breaking the ties between Labour and the unions. This manoeuvring will be in vain. Any illusions that the capitalist parties have anything to offer will be burnt away in the years ahead.

Despite the right wing leadership, workers will turn again and again to the traditional organisations to try and re-create them as fully fighting organisations able to beat off all attacks from big business on democratic rights, work conditions and living standards. They will also want to rebuild them to end for ever the mass unemployment, uncertainty and fear for the future and create a society free from exploitation.

The active layers in the labour and trade union movement should never lose heart because of the temporary difficult period through which we are passing. Instead our task should be to plan and prepare for the titanic battles likely in the very near future.

Belgian general strike: A shock to Tory coalition

At the time of writing (19 September) workers in Belgium are in the midst of a public sector general strike against government threats to their wages.

Despite a move by the government which saw a "Royal command" to vital workers to go back to work or face imprisonment, the strike has kept up its momentum.

The public sector unions are hopeful that many private sector employees will vote to join their stoppage.

The rapid development of the strike took the coalition government by surprise, and should be a warning to British Tory leaders on how quickly the mood of workers can alter, particularly when there is widespread talk in

By
Roger Shives

the press of an economic upswing.

The strike started on the railways, where workers in Charleroi were told of cuts in wages. Charleroi in the Walloon (French speaking) area has been heavily affected by mass unemployment. Throughout the country unemployment runs at 13.9% of the population, one of the highest rates in Europe, but the Walloon area, particular-

ly the old industrial coal mining region has been devastated.

This was the first major industrial area on the continent of Europe but is now in danger of becoming an industrial museum after massive cutbacks.

But the strike did not just stop in that area. By 14 September the whole Belgian rail system was at a standstill. Postal services were totally disrupted and postal workers joined the stoppage. They were later joined by other public service workers, including such unlikely groups as prison warders, whose strike led to a jail break by 37 prisoners!

The threatened cuts in wages were not just restricted to the rail industry, it was the first part of a government policy to block salary rises for two years, to cut fringe benefits and in-

crease workers' social security contributions. The coalition plan is to cut the budget deficit to 12% of the Gross National Product.

A few weeks before the strike, Prime Minister Wilfrid Martens asked the

One law for the rich

Belgian people for "sacrifice from the entire population". The Prime Minister was ill during the strike so it was left to his deputy Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb to confirm that this meant a cut of 8.3 billion francs (about £116 million) in the public service wages bill.

Workers could see clearly the "sacrifice" they were being asked to give, but where was the "sacrifice" from the rich end of society? The Liberal Party, the junior partner in the coalition



Prime Minister Martens

government, recently proposed a tax amnesty to encourage rich tax fiddlers to bring back money into Belgium for investment in industry.

They were prepared not to push any charges or take any punitive action against anybody who had spirited money out of the country, however illegally, for the rich pickings of foreign investment. The tax on these earnings could probably pay off most of the budget deficit by itself! Even the capitalist Social Christians, the main coalition party felt this was a bit provocative, but it has gone through.

The contrast between this concession and the wage cuts, the lowered benefits and tougher qualifications for unemployment benefit, has not been lost on the working class.

There have been other battles in Belgium. The threatened closure of steel giant Cockerill Sambreville prompted a union sit-in in the boardroom. In the South, the city of Liège went bankrupt and so did not pay public service wages, leading to amazing street battles with firemen turning their hoses on the police.

The government has now felt the power of the working class and their enormous anger. They had made slight concessions in their demands by the weekend but they still include real attacks on wages.

The Belgian capitalist class, the OECD, the International Monetary Fund and the US Chamber of Commerce have been singing in chorus that Belgium needs savage cutbacks to put it "back on the road to success." But the workers have given notice that they are not prepared to pay for this crisis of their bosses' system.

PORTUGAL Soares turns to IMF

WORKERS HOPING that the recent election of a Socialist Party-led coalition government in Portugal would reverse the offensive on the gains of the revolution of 1974/75 are being rapidly disillusioned.

The PS (Partido Socialista) have formed a coalition with the PSD (Social Democratic Party) a party of the right, and resisted calls for a coalition with the Portuguese Communist Party which would have given the left a majority in the Assembly of the Republic, Portugal's Parliament.

Mario Soares, the PS leader, a man already faced with splits in his own party, faces major difficulties in the economy and has turned to the IMF for support. As usual, the IMF proposed a package to make workers pay the cost of weathering the crisis.

The money lenders' strings

Industries nationalised in the revolutionary years of 1974/75 are to have subsidies removed and are to be forced to become profitable by cutting services and increasing prices. For example public transport prices are to rise by 30%.

Subsidies are also to be removed or lowered on food products and fertilizers. Bread is due to rise in price for the third time since the election earlier this year. The IMF imposed cuts in public spending will also have an effect on unemployment already at the same rate as that in Britain.

The new government has also turned its attention to the two major lasting gains of the revolution, the nationalisation of the banks and agrarian reform. Monopoly capitalism was well advanced in Portugal before 1974 with ownership



A peasant in the rural North of Portugal. The IMF and the Portuguese ruling class are pushing for an end to the agrarian reform measures started after the 1974 revolution.

of major banks and industries concentrated in the hands of six families.

Their nationalisation in 1975 followed a bank workers' occupation demanding public ownership and workers' control. A large section of the Portuguese economy came into public ownership. The present government is opening the way for its return by allowing private capital back into the banking sector.

Workers aid agrarian struggle

Agrarian reform began in 1975 when workers on large landed estates in Southern Portugal having suffered a regime of low wages and casual employment for years, occupied the large estates.

The Latifundists, the owners of huge farms up to 20,000 acres, had long been neglecting the land using their profit to invest in such



Mario Soares

things as speculative building in Lisbon. The workers occupied, set up co-operatives and collectives which have secured employment, housing and social facilities for their members.

Most collectives legally occupy land under legislation carried out under pressure of the workers during 1974/5. However, changes have been made in the law by other governments since then to

justify returning land to the previous owners.

Measures decided by the new PS/PSD government in late August involve a stepping up of the return of land to the old Latifundists. Many of the 460 surviving collectives will cease to exist or become economically unviable as part of their land is taken away.

Since 1976, 20,000 workers have been injured and two killed as both agricultural and industrial workers have defended co-operatives against the armed National Republican Guard who tried to return land to the old Latifundists. Industrial workers have stoutly aided their agrarian comrades in their attempts to preserve the co-operatives and stop the restoration of the Latifundist class, which formed the backbone of the old dictatorial regime.

With the reactionary measures of the Soares government, the stage is set for even more intensive battles in the near future.

By Bob Mannings

SRI LANKA: British labour movement protests

AT THE last General Management Committee meeting of East Lothian Labour Party, a resolution from Mussleburgh LPYS was passed, condemning the actions of the UNP government in Sri Lanka.

It demanded that 1. all bans on political parties be lifted; 2. all collaboration between British and Sri Lankan security forces be ended; and 3. that the state visit of JR Jayawardene be cancelled.

There was some political opposition from the right wing, based on two points; 1) that most people don't know what's been happening in Sri Lanka (i.e. they don't read the papers or watch the news) and 2) that the word

"demands" was incorrect, and should be replaced by "requests" or "wishes". This was after the repressive, brutal actions of JR's government had been outlined!

The truth is, of course, that the right wing felt that they had to oppose the resolution just because it was moved by a Militant supporter. Despite the "right-wing traditions" of East Lothian, the resolution still won a large majority of votes. Copies of the resolution will be sent to the NEC and the Sri Lankan High Commission.

By Peter Gillman
(East Lothian CLP personal capacity)

Militant PUBLICATION

LESSONS OF Spain



Leon Trotsky's pamphlet "The Lessons of Spain"

Available from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN Price 30p + 15p postage and packing.

BY LEON TROTSKY
A Militant Publication

France- From Elation to Austerity

THE NEXT congress of the French Socialist Party, at the end of October, will be the most important in its history.

For the first time, its programme, policy and leadership, has been put to a ruthless practical test.

The last congress, in October 1981, took place only a few months after the great election victory, when the Socialist-Communist coalition was carrying out a radical programme of social reform, and it seemed as if the party leadership was as good as its word.

The landslide election victory of 1981 was won on a campaign for a "fundamental socialist transformation".

In the party programme, Mitterrand had written: "Where there is property, there is power... The Socialist Party proposes to tear out of the hands of the monopolies the instrument of their power, transforming the means of large-scale production from the private sector to the public sector".

At the time of the Valence Congress, it seemed the government was moving in this direction. Five major monopolies were nationalised, along with 36 banks. A fifth week of paid holidays was introduced. The minimum wage was increased by 20%, and pensions, family and housing allowances, and other social-security payments were increased substantially. The 39-hour working week, new rights for workers, and an avalanche of civil rights reforms were put into effect.

At the the "Unity Congress" of Valence in 1981, enthusiasm for the initial reforms heightened the prestige of the leadership and softened the old divisions within the party.

This year's congress at Bourg-en-Bresse, takes place in entirely different circumstances.

Alarmed by the reforms, the French and international capitalist class gave an ultimatum to the new power. Basing themselves upon precisely that economic power of which Mitterrand had spoken, they were able to undermine the reforms, taking back with their right hand what they had been forced to give with the left.

By Philippe Roland
(Parti Socialiste,
Paris CFTD)

Prices and unemployment rose, investment and production fell.

The only way to put an end to the bosses' sabotage was by carrying out the party programme, introducing a democratic socialist plan of production. There was no other way out. **The government had to break with capitalism or else do its bidding. It chose the latter course.**

In June last year the government embarked on a full-blown austerity programme, beginning with a 3 month wage-freeze and attacks on workers' living standards on all fronts.

Unemployment benefit was cut, National insurance payments and taxes increased. Measures to make the health service "more efficient" by cutting the budget, reducing the number of beds, and charging an extra £2 a day to patients in hospital were introduced, borrowing from Thatcher's policy in Britain. Unemployment continues to rise, despite cooked-up figures. The government has set as its aim the reduction of consumption by £6,500 million this year.

In addition, a series of repressive laws directed against immigrant labour has been passed. In international policy, as Mitterrand declared on his recent African tour, there is "complete continuity" with the policy of his predecessor.

British workers may be interested to know, for example, that Mitterrand hoped for a Thatcher victory in June, fearing that a Labour government would take Britain out of the Common Market and interfere with Franco-American military strategy in Europe!

Socialist Party judgement on government

The forthcoming congress will be the first genuinely representative meeting of the Socialist Party to be able to judge the results of the policies of the Left Government. It will also serve to show the relative strengths of the various political tendencies within the Party.

These tendencies trace their origin to the foundation of the Socialist Party



ABOVE: French troops under a "Socialist" government intervene in Chad, just like previous right wing administrations.

Capitalist policies home and abroad...

BELOW: Jaques Delors, finance minister who introduced the austerity proposals, speaks to workers. Disillusion with the left government has led to some success for the racist far right National Front. Socialist Party members will be looking for a genuine socialist alternative.



itself in 1969. The new party came from the remnants of the old SFIO (*Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*), from various left-republican clubs and small parties, and certain parts of the PSU (*Parti Socialiste Unifié*). All of these groupings contained both right and left wing elements.

Now a new differentiation is taking place. The so-called "courants" A (Mitterrand), B (Mauroy) and the majority of courant C (Rocard) will probably present a common resolution to the congress supporting government policy. A section of the

"Rocardians", however will present a separate resolution, supporting the austerity programme, but insisting that it should be openly admitted that there is no alternative to counter-reform, even in the long term, and that the government should not pretend these measures are only for a temporary period.

On the left, the grouping known as CERES (*Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes*) will present an opposition resolution. CERES calls for an increase in workers' buying power, for the extension of industrial democracy, and

for negotiations at further reducing the working week.

Unfortunately, CERES offers no real solution to the economic crisis. The leaders of this tendency have learned nothing from the first period of this government and still peddle the idea that a policy of social reform, raising the living standards of the workers, would be welcomed by the capitalists, as the market for their goods would be increased.

"The present pleadings for investments" the draft resolution says, "can only find an echo if the capitalists improve their financial position and anticipate a sustained demand."

This idea was proved false during the first period of the present government. French capitalism is too weak to take advantage of an increased market. The small increase in demand resulting from the reforms was met by an increase in foreign imports. Investments fell by 8% during this period.

Bosses aim for cheap labour

The bosses, far from welcoming higher wage costs as an "incentive to invest", would fight these reforms tooth and nail, as they did from the very first day of Socialist-Communist Government. The strategy is to be more competitive on the international market on the basis of cheap labour. This is the essence of "Delors plan", as the austerity programme is known.

Undoubtedly, the CERES resolution will be supported by many PS members as

defending reform as opposed to counter-reform. But the weakness of the CERES position is precisely that **their policy of reflation has already been tried and failed.**

The resolution, for lack of any clear socialist policy, also advocates measures to block imports, believing that protectionism would somehow prevent economic decline, and speaking of national effort, bosses and workers together, to defend "Enterprise France" against foreign competition.

But France is already one of the most protectionist countries in the world, and this has solved nothing. Retaliatory measures have been taken against French capitalists. Blocking the channels of trade has only served to aggravate the problems.

The alarming foreign penetration of the French home market is not the cause of underinvestment but its consequence.

CERES do not recommend any further nationalisations. In the whole of their lengthy verbose resolution, the word Socialism does not appear at all. There is no attempt to link the struggle for reforms to the question of socialist transformation of society.

Whatever is the immediate result of the congress, French capitalism offers nothing but a steady erosion of the past gains of the labour movement.

The future struggles of the French workers against the bosses will give a powerful impulse to the transformation of the Socialist Party into a fighting organisation of the working class. Already the first signs of this process are there.

Will the left gain?

WILL the left-wing make any gains at this Congress?

The leadership is determined according to the votes cast for the resolution of each "Courant", so that a 33% vote for a particular tendency would give it one third of the 131 places on the *Comité Directeur*.

At the Nantes congress (1977) CERES held 27.3% of the vote. In 1981 they had around 20%.

In 1979, after the collapse of the Union of the Left, Mitterrand maintained his stand for unity with the Communist Party, whilst Rocard, his rival for the Presidential candidacy, wanted to break with the Communists in favour of a Centre-Socialist election strategy. The vote for both sides was approximately equal. CERES threw its support behind Mitterrand against Rocard and the Right.

In 1981, with no resolutions on which elections at congress could be based, the positions on the *Comité Directeur* were "negotiated" between the various groups, greatly at the expense of the Rocardian right-wing.

Now the tables are turned; not only is the question of the Presidential candidacy now out of the way, but with a sharp shift to the right in government policy, the political differences between Mitterrand and Rocard are now minimal.

This year, therefore, the battlelines will be drawn differently. The combined vote of the right wing groupings will be pitted against CERES and the left.

The Party ranks are growing increasingly critical of the government, but the shift in opinion in the party will only be reflected in the conference delegations to a limited extent, as delegates are elected at the Federal Conferences rather than at branch level.

Letters

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

Equality for women now?

Dear *Militant*,

As a reasonably active CPSA member myself, I was interested in Doreen Purves' article in *Militant* (2 September '83).

She raises many interesting and important points and I agree with most of them. As I am committed to anti-sexism and working against women's oppression, one or two of her remarks worry me.

Firstly, she says that "Other women do have problems that we've got to try and help them to overcome". Are these problems to do with the position of women in society? I believe so, and solutions must be sought both in the structure and practice of trades union at all levels and outside in wider society including the home.

To refer to those socialists and radicals who are trying to bring their desire for women's liberation into their daily lives and relationships as "trendy" is not helping to solve the problems that exist although I totally agree that "wonderful ideas about equality" are worthless unless backed up by real action and changes in behaviour.

Secondly, positive discrimination is intended to equalise the current and long-standing inequality that women face and is misunderstood if it's seen as "people making it easy for them". I support it and like the other things mentioned in Doreen Purves' welcome article, it is needed now.

Stu Cory
Bristol



John Golding—soon to leave Labour's NEC.

Fringe leadership from the right

Comrades,

The recent Labour Party NEC meeting degenerated into an organisational attack on free speech and debate within the party (on *Militant* supporters in particular) instead of attacking the Tories and their allies.

Right winger John Golding moved a resolution calling on the 'left' Labour magazine *New Socialist* NOT to stage a fringe meeting with the four contenders for the Labour leadership at this year's Trade Union Congress because (in his words) "trade union leaders wanted the congress to be about jobs, health service (cuts) and Tebbit's trade union laws". The right wing majority on the NEC carried the resolution.

Thanks, Terry

Comrades,

I just want to express how encouraged I felt after hearing Terry Fields, the Marxist MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, at a *Militant* readers' meeting at Wythenshawe. Terry spoke to a packed

house, condemning the petty witch-hunting mentality of the careerists and bureaucrats of the right.

He enthused every activist and sympathiser with his warm humour and tenacity.

Fraternally yours
Alex Warner
Stalybridge



Murals of workers in struggle in the Sardinian village of Orgosolo.

Orgosolo

Dear Comrades,

While on holiday in Italy this year, I visited the Sardinian mountains.

We ended up in a village called Orgosolo. We almost fell over when we saw that every wall in the village was covered in murals depicting the struggles of workers and peasants both in Italy and internationally.

One particular mural marks the 70th anniversary of the murder of 129 women in New York on the 8 March 1908, who died when the factory they were occupying was set on fire by the owner. (See postcard). Others were addressed to the theme of war—Charlie Chaplin appears in one, dressed as a

soldier, saying "Another war? No thanks", while another brings home the extent of the slaughter which took place in the First World War: soldiers killed on all fronts, 740,000.

When we got home, we scoured the guide books to find out more about Orgosolo (we couldn't speak the Sardinian dialect!) but much to our surprise there wasn't a single mention of the place (we couldn't think why!). So if, you go abroad, try getting off the beaten track—you might discover as we did that there's more to a country than what the guide books tell you to see!

Yours fraternally
A probationary civil servant.

Queen of our street

Dear Comrade,

Connie was born in the same year as the Queen Mother (1900). There the similarities end. The QM had a choice of three mansions to spend her birthday in August.

Connie has no choice. To save money Connie lives and sleeps in the living room. Her bedroom is too damp to sleep in. With no bathroom she has to use the kitchen to wash.

The outside toilet means in the winter Connie has to brave the elements every day which in the winter has caused blackouts due to the cold.

A widow for over 30 years, Connie lives on a basic widow's pension of £30.10, out of which up to £10 goes on electricity, £5 rent, £10 groceries and £1.50 home help. She enjoys reading and listening to the radio and visiting her great great nephews.

Connie joined the Labour Party in 1919 and helped in every election until ill health made her housebound in 1973. She has always been on the left of the party.

She is very worried about the state of the Labour Party, but as she has seen Ramsey MacDonald come and go she believes the party can survive SDP traitors. Connie deserves our admiration for her work in the past and her present commitment to socialism shown by her weekly donation to the fighting fund.

Barry Lewis
Thanet North CLP

Jobcentres

Dear Comrades,

With reference to Jerry Hill's letter (Issue 662) about Saturday morning opening of Jobcentres, CPSA members and LPYS comrades in Yorkshire, including myself, picketed Leeds and Bradford Jobcentres for the period of this "experiment".

It has since been admitted by management that at Leeds Jobcentre, for the whole of the 15 weeks or so in which it was open Saturday mornings, only one person was placed in a job—at an estimated cost of £10,000!

Contrast the supposed advantages of "increased services to jobseekers" to the real policy of Department of Employment management of closing thirteen Jobcentres nationally (mostly rural), reducing the number of staff in Unemployment Benefit Offices whilst dole figures increase to over four million (real, not "official" figures) which means longer dole queues on signing-on days, less time to deal with claims, and more possibility of error (through pressure of work) when dealing with claims.

Not only claimants, but CPSA members are reaching the limit as to the number of attacks they will take on their conditions of work. The Tories and Department of Employment management are sitting on a powder keg, especially in inner-city areas of London, Leeds, Liverpool, Glasgow, etc.

Yours fraternally
Dave Worrall
Leeds CPSA

Anarchist on the wrong track

Dear Comrades,

These are trying times and views like those expressed by Ian Lawes (*Militant* no 666) are an interesting diversion from life under Thatcher. I doubt if they serve any other useful purpose.

Like most anarchists, he begins with apparently radical rhetoric and ends up with an idiosyncratic form of reformism. In this case he justly criticises the lack of workers' control in nationalised industries and then proposes that trade unionists save up to buy their own industries! In fact a number of unions already have their funds invested in various industries but the amount of "workers' control" this brings out is minimal. The capitalist system is not evil because the individuals or institutions holding shares are "wicked" but because the firm which gives better wages and conditions to its workforce will

be less profitable (other things being equal) and will therefore fail.

In effect, Ian's proposal is that workers should participate in their own exploitation. A firm wholly owned by the trade union movement would be compelled to adopt the methods of capitalism or lose out to its capitalist rivals. It would be at the mercy of the banks and financial institutions. The alternative to bureaucratic nationalisation is to kick out the old school-tie brigade on the boards of management, open the books to the trade union movement and institute direct workers' management. The economy needs to be planned nationally (and ultimately internationally) and this will never be achieved by piecemeal attempts to buy out the capitalists.

Yours fraternally
Derek McMillan
East Grinstead

Animal rights

Dear Comrades,

I have been getting *Militant* for some time now and I see not one thing in "What we stand for", about animal rights.

I think that this is too important to be left out.

As a firm believer in the total freedom of animals, I can't understand why I can find no mention of this.

Militant should stand for the immediate ban on all forms of hunting, all forms of experiments, zoos and pet shops.

I'd be very interested to hear what other comrades think about this.

Yours fraternally
Wayne Adey
Hereford

Socialism in 'Royal' town

Dear Comrades,

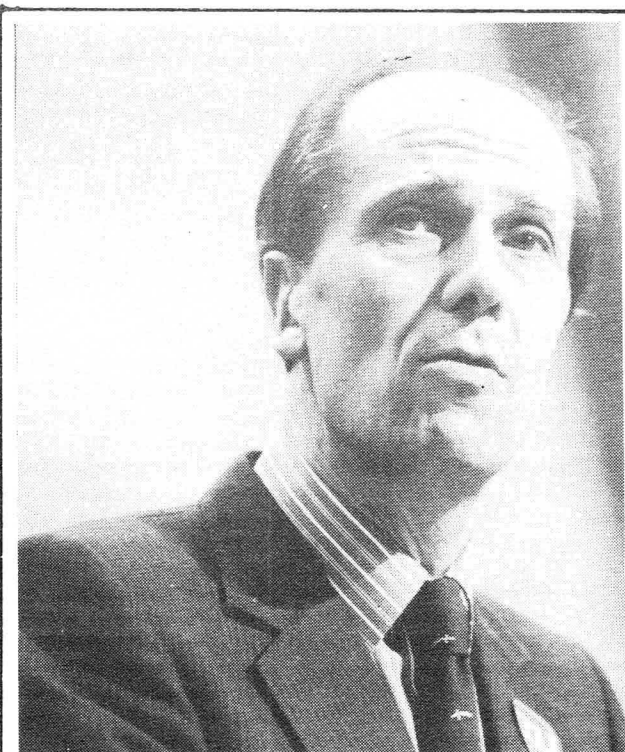
If you go to Tunbridge Wells, you'd see two different towns. One part is slums, the other is paradise.

The LPYS is working hard, and we are going to put out a bulletin. Support for *Militant* is growing fast.

We always do a paper sale in town on Saturdays and Wednesdays, and get a good response.

This shows that even in a place like (Royal) Tunbridge Wells there is a strong feeling for socialism.

Yours fraternally
Michael Parkes
Tunbridge Wells



Norman Tebbit—industrial action, not talks, will stop him.

TUC dotty

Dear Comrades,

The TUC decided by a two to one majority, to have discussions with Tebbit on his proposed anti-union legislation.

What chance do the workers have if their leaders are dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" of Tebbit's bill? History has shown that the only way to defeat attacks like this is to use the industrial muscle of the workers to hit the Tories where it hurts most—their bank balances.

In 1971 the Heath government tried a similar attack. The workers' action at that time caused jailed dockers to be released and eventually the downfall of the Tory government.

But the present leadership either don't care about the workers' welfare and are only concerned about their own positions (which may be a bit harsh on some of them) or they are too stupid to learn the lessons of history.

It is obvious that big industrial struggles lie ahead for our class. We need firm leaders, not mice at the head of these struggles and surely the message is getting home to workers by now.

Surely Trotsky said nothing more true than, "The crisis facing the working class is a crisis of leadership." The living proof is the majority faction on the TUC general council.

Yours fraternally
Gerry Chamber
Rutherglen Labour Party

Photo: Militant

Photo: Militant

The power of a shop stewards committee

AT A time when the passing of shop stewards' power is being widely proclaimed, *Militant* takes a look at the well-organised Austin Pickersgill shipyard in Sunderland. Wages are substantially better at A&P than other shipyards in Britain, the shop stewards' committee controls many aspects of the yard including overtime, health and safety, manning levels. Nobody is taken on who is known to have accepted voluntary redundancy. HEATHER RAWLING and RAY PHYSICK talk to TONY CARTY (in a personal capacity), chairman of the CONFED shop stewards' committee.

WE HAVE a 62-man Joint Shop Stewards' Committee which has a very loose structure. It is held together by the consent of the stewards accepting that every individual workgroup has got the power of veto.

It is the most important body in the yard and controls many areas of responsibility.

We have a Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) which consists of 18 shop stewards—eight boiler-makers, six ancillary and four outfitters. The JNC negotiates wages and conditions and overtime for all manual workers in the plant.

No bureaucracy

The JNC reports back after every meeting held with management to the shop stewards' committee and ultimately, if the JSSC deems it necessary, back to the members. We have a regular bulletin to keep our members informed, when necessary we call department and/or mass meetings.

On average, we have one joint negotiating committee per week and report back, usually on Friday morning to the CONFED meeting. This is the main meeting of the week starting at 8.00 pm.

We have several committees, like the bonus committee, pension committee, etc. Each committee reports back to the main shop stewards' committee to be endorsed, so that the stewards can inform the members what is going on. Subcommittees can be set up for certain individual problems.

We have tried to make sure that the stewards are always on the shop floor. I, as chairman, and the secretary spend about 80%, sometimes a full week on trade union work. The rest of the lads are all out on the shop floor and they all have jobs.

We had to guard against bureaucracy within the shop stewards' committee which was our experience when I first became a shop steward. There was a monitoring committee which consisted of four leading stewards from each of the yards (A/P

yards were separate). It tended to be very bureaucratic and controlled every specific issue. The stewards did not get to know what was going on. The best way to deal with such a problem was to spread the work load, give everybody some function, some decision to make.

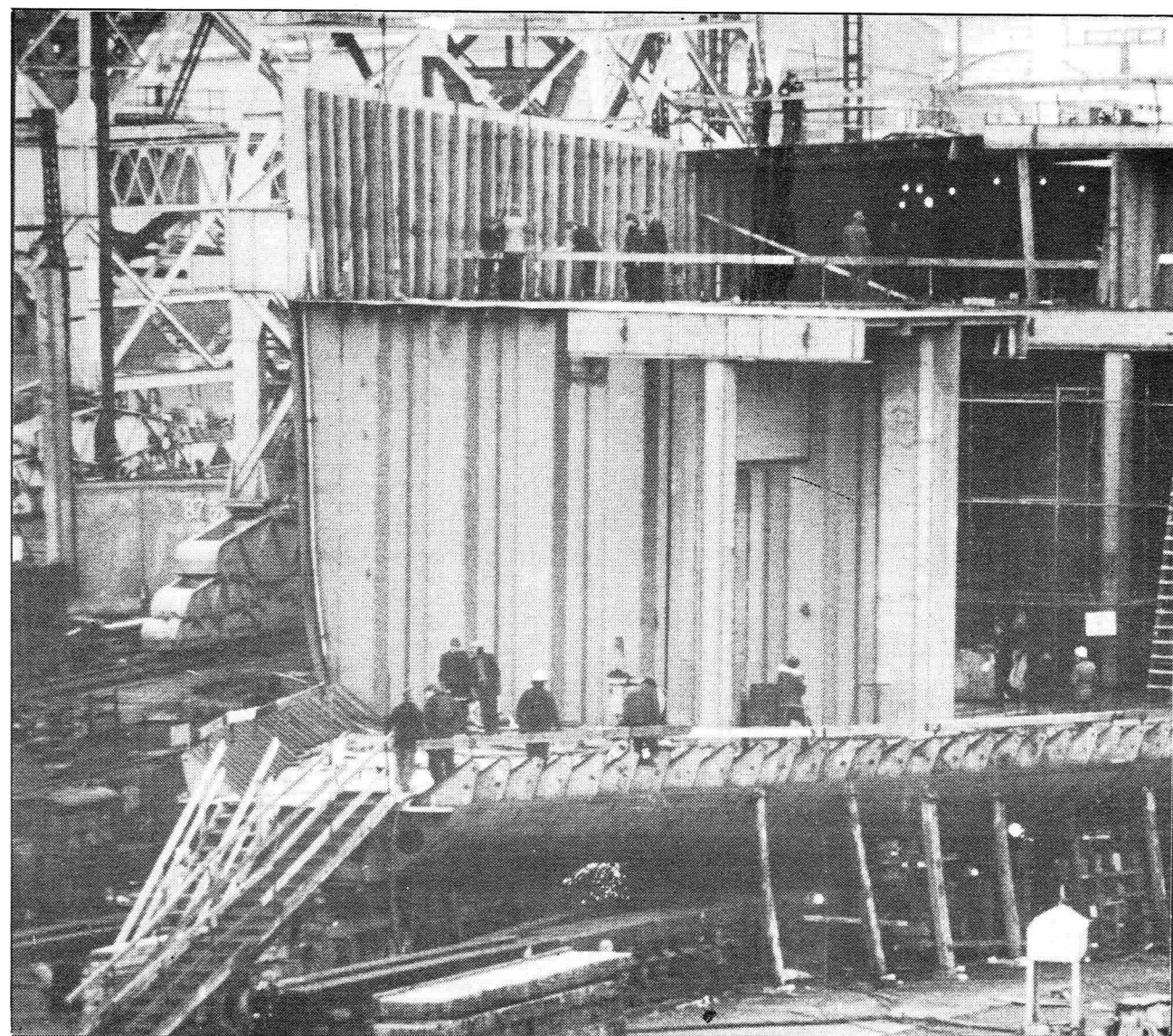
This works... I am on the Joint Negotiating Committee, there are enough stewards to be on the overtime committee and on the safety committee without me being there. There are other committees like the pension committee which is important. If you have 60 stewards you can spread the workload but if you have the conventional structure as in other yards, the convenor is in attendance at every meeting, this is wrong.

Sometimes you have so many meetings you have to say to yourself, "I've got to get out on the shop floor and show my face, show the lads that I am willing to work." For two reasons: (1) So the lads don't turn against you and (2) that the management cannot move in and divide and rule to isolate the shop stewards' committee from the shop floor.

Spread load

I believe in spreading the workload which means that it is not only Tony Carty, it's Peter Callaghan, Danny Morgan, all the shop stewards, they all should be active. They should be on the floor carrying out the JSSC decisions, I say to them, "get on that floor and argue it round and around, deliberately go and provoke an argument and argue with groups and individuals."

It's tough, I know its tough, we've had rough meetings arguing with the membership about the redundancies which could be a strike situation but that is the job. It's not just one man, its the whole shop stewards' committee.



Austin and Pickersgill shipyard, Sunderland.

Workers' control

AFTER EVERY launch the management try to stop the Welders' shop steward going onto the ship at the fitting out quay. They do it religiously. I have gone through that argument every time with management.

I say, "Well he is not only a shop steward, he is also a health and safety rep and he is allowed free access to the plant and all areas, under law. You can either have him on the float and while he is not doing his health and

safety job he can be doing some welding. But if you are not prepared to send him there he will be instructed to leave his place of employment where you put him and to go to that ship and stand there all day, because he is allowed to under law.

"Not only are we going to do that but you will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive for impeding the health and safety reps from carrying out their duties!" One time the

management said: "Ah! It's alright, I'll just say to the foreman that I want 22 welders on that ship, it is up to you to decide where you want your steward or safety reps, if you send them there, the foreman will give them a job..." So I thought, "Christ, I'm now deciding where people work, where stewards work, I'll remember that one."

Why does the company allow this? Because its organisation, they see the benefits of organisation. They see us controlling areas that they could never hope to control. They see us doing things to their advantage to get the ships built.

When they tried to organise the job and have a ship ready by X date they could not do it. They always had troubles either at the end of the ship or when the ship was about to launch, so we had to work all day Saturday, all day Sunday, all Monday night, working fantastic amounts of overtime. The organisation was terrible.

Involving youth

Apprentices are encouraged to attend their departmental meetings and mass meetings at which they have full voice and voting rights in matters that concern them. But we felt at times they were not participating as we would have wished. This was because in the Apprentice Training Module, no provision was made for the role of the trade unions in the industry and during their apprenticeship management deliberately orientated training towards a master/servant relationship.

So as an introduction to the plant's trade union and shop stewards' structure we called mass meetings of the apprentices and outlined the structures and answered questions. We asked them to elect two reps to sit on the boiler-makers' shop stewards' committee as observers with full speaking rights.

We are still developing this aspect. Although initially it appears to be successful with apprentices' problems being raised direct at the meetings, a lot more work needs to be done to ensure the trade union education of apprentices. In particular a part of the training module needs to be set aside for either in-plant education by the stewards or by the TUC educational service during the first year of the apprenticeship when they attend college for further education.

Shopfloor democracy

IT HAS always been a slogan of the left to have decisions at mass meetings. We have been holding mass meetings since 1969, in the majority of cases we have had split decisions. When you start having meetings of 3,000 however, it is difficult to find a good venue and be able to have two way communication with your members.

You have got to know the feeling, you have got to know what the lads want. Mass meetings do not do that, we organised mass meetings in big areas, in schools etc under cover the lads did not want to know. We even negotiated with the company a day's pay to have a mass meeting. Half were going as soon as they had recorded themselves in and others were shouting that they could not hear. The tannoy system was not good, it was totally frustrating for the shop stewards. They were not getting the point across although they were getting the decisions at the end of the day. Sometimes it was unanimous, sometimes it was 60/40. Back at the plant it was bloody hell—"I was at the back. I could not hear". "I wanted to ask a question and could not". It was totally unsatisfactory. So we decided to have smaller meetings based on

departments.

This dovetailed with giving the shop stewards more responsibilities. On the platform of the mass meeting, the chairman would be the only one that would usually speak.

The last mass meeting we had this was the way we did it. We had decent venues when the lads could be warm, sit down and ask questions. The shop

could have held the ballot straight after the departmental meetings, while it was hot because they were good meetings, but we said, "You have got a full day before you put X on the ballot paper. The ballot paper read, "I am against compulsory redundancies and I will support any action that the SNC recommends to defend the Blackpool agreement." The other option

ANYBODY that comes to our plant must be a trade unionist, we have got that agreement with management. If we get any sub-contractors we're straight on them for a union card, if they haven't got a card then they don't work there. Tebbit's plans will mainly effect small plants in this area because in big plants with good union organisation the management just don't want to know.

stewards addressing the meeting were instructed to put the collective view of the shop stewards committee.

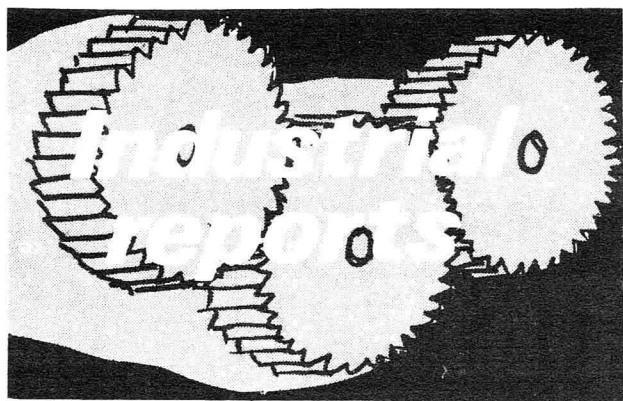
When we got the report-backs the lads were obviously satisfied, there was give and take and explanation. We then had a mass meeting followed by a ballot.

The most recent issue was compulsory redundancies. The SNC had sent us back to the yards to see what support could be got for industrial action. We told the lads "there's no pussy-footing, no daft overtime bans, no days off, you have got to make your minds up. We

was. "I am in favour of compulsory redundancy."

As the lads clocked in they were given a ballot paper. The ballot boxes were distributed around the yard, we gave them from half past seven until one o'clock. Six lads off the shop floor counted them up and the results were given out.

We were continually pointing out what was happening in other areas and explaining it would eventually happen to us. We lost a few votes because some did not believe us. The vote was 1,500 to 400, we got the decision we wanted.



The dispute at the Stockport Messenger. NGA pickets outside the newspaper offices. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Tebbit breathes again

THE FIRST major struggle over the Tebbit Bill has been narrowly avoided after journalists at the *Stockport Messenger* appear to have returned to normal working.

The ten members of the National Union of Journalists on the paper were refusing to pass copy to non-union printers, during a strike by their fellow trade unionists in the National Graphical Association for union recognition.

Management invoked Tebbit's 1982 Employment Act on the NUJ leadership. They were taken to court last week and found in contempt of the Act, for failing to instruct the NUJ members to discontinue this secondary action.

But while the NUJ leadership ordered them to continue the action and were prepared to risk the consequences—which would mean up to a £125,000 fine or imprisonment—the journalists themselves decided to return to normal working. As we go to press the journalists are still in talks with NUJ officials and there are reports that some of

them wish to continue the action.

However, in justifying the return to normal working, the NUJ chapel FOC at the *Messenger*, Simon Haworth said, "This dispute was too small to be the one to take on the Tories' legislation."

But this is exactly how the Tebbit Bill will work. The Tories in the present situation, would not be stupid enough to go charging into the likes of the NUM or the TGWU, imprisoning Scargill or Moss Evans. They fear the massive strike wave such action would provoke. It is precisely against localised disputes such as the *Stockport Messenger* that the Bill will be used for intimidating small bands of workers and the smaller, less powerful unions into submission. It is essential the TUC leadership initiates an immediate campaign amongst the rank and file of the movement to explain the implications of the Bill and prepare the membership for action.

By Bob Wade
(North London NUJ)

Massey Ferguson

TWO DISPUTES are taking place at the same time at Massey Ferguson in Coventry. One is of shop floor workers on Gang Five over a bonus scheme. The other is by the staff in ACTSS and APEX over a pay rise.

All official procedures were followed before just over 400 staff walked out and within three hours of being on the gates the dispute was made official. Now nothing moves in or out.

The management have 'generously' offered a pay rise of £1 but also want to introduce a "holiday on pensions" scheme which would mean instead of £4 currently being paid by workers to the pension scheme, they could keep it in the pay packet.

Dave Nellist MP went to the picket line to offer solidarity but management refused to let him into the mass meeting. He said he will look into the use of the pension funds.

Management have threatened

to get a court injunction to remove the pickets from the gates—well that's not strictly true; there are no gates because in a previous dispute they were welded together by strikers and management have since had to remove them!

One picket said, "Even if they do get an injunction we'll move three feet forward and carry on." Another worker said, "I've worked here 14 years and been a shop steward, but I've never seen the staff so determined. Management have talked about their problems for a long time now, but they can't keep pulling the wool over our eyes."

"The women are really determined. They've shown they really mean business, more so than us. Really it is up to management now, we could be back at work today if they'd sit round the table and talk."

By Anne Beales

Victory parade!

Greenings

AFTER 23 weeks on strike, the workers at N Greening Ltd, Warrington, have returned to work with a considerable victory under their belts.

Originally the management sent out redundancy cheques to 89 workers. The unions asked for these back, although at first some workers took the bait.

Lady at Lord John

THE DISPUTE at the Lady at Lord John store in Liverpool has ended in the manageress's reinstatement after weeks of picketing of the store by the TGWU and other trade unionists.

The manageress, Audrey White, was sacked after making complaints that her Area Manager had sexually harassed members of the staff. When Audrey was reinstated, she had to work with the Area Manager concerned and also the manageress who ran the store during the dispute.

Audrey complained to the union that she was being victimised. She also took her employers to an industrial tribunal with assistance from the Equal Opportunities Commission, claiming victimisation

Others stayed firm behind the industrial action.

Over the strike period a total of 66 workers accepted voluntary redundancy, leaving 23, one of which accepted redundancy in the twenty second week of the dispute, due to extreme personal problems.

The remaining 22 workers have been reinstated with their old jobs back. Also the original demands of the management, putting restrictions on wages, holidays and union practices have been withdrawn.

under the Sex Discrimination Act.

Last Friday an agreement was made between the company and the union, and the Area Manager and two other people involved in Audrey's claim of victimisation are to be removed.

The reinstatement of Audrey is a major victory for the union. Also 8 pickets who were arrested during the dispute—including an 18 year-old schoolgirl who was strip-searched by the police—had the case against them dismissed and costs awarded against the police, in another victory for the union.

However, to ensure Audrey is not 'picked off' at a later stage the situation at the store should be constantly monitored and the company regularly reminded of the strength of the union.

Ten days before the settlement of the strike all the workforce received their P45's, in a last minute attempt by the management to defeat the workers.

Just to show continuing solidarity, the Greenings workforce have now sent the caravan used in their dispute to the Chloride (see article)

workforce with a donation of £35. Also they have sent the Hindles workers £500, and Thorn-EMI £50.

It has been noted that throughout the media and press in general, the victory at Greenings has been kept very quiet and low-key.

By Martin Booth
(Tatton CLP)

Nigg Bay, Scotland

A MASS meeting of strikers at Nigg Bay Highland Fabricators overwhelmingly endorsed the decision to return to work and to negotiate with management on various aspects of their package.

Bitterness still exists despite this return to work. The slightest incident, according to Convenor Rab Wilson, could spark off a reaction amongst the workforce.

The management package will be discussed this week, and negotiations on key sections of the report are likely to be contentious. Workers will be charged from between £6 and £20 per week for access to a company run bus to take them to work. Not only will this reduce their take-home pay, but it will also be divisive for those who have cars, and other forms of transport.

Highland Fabricators are offering a 4.5 per cent wage increase, and although this might appear to represent an increase

to sections of the workforce, taken along side the bus fare increase, this will mean a probable £2 per week decrease. Rab Wilson, thought that if the men did not return to work to negotiate, they could have been forced back by the national officials and the possibility of negotiation on the package could also have lost.

"It's clear that the men are not confident in this management and their ability to get offers for us. It's true that they would look at low wage increases, but only if the management can guarantee 12 months of work. We have gone back with dignity, we did not want and did not let management get one over on us."

The battle at Nigg Bay is over temporarily. Rab Wilson added "we have been in a boxing match and we won, but there are still a few more rounds to go yet."

ESSO

THE STRIKE of 2,000 sub-contract workers at Esso's Fawley refinery near Southampton has now entered its third week.

The strike is over the workers' annual claim on pay, hours and conditions. Compared to workers directly employed by Esso the sub-contract workers earn between £40—£70 less for a basic week, they work a longer basic week, they have no pension scheme and a vastly inferior sick scheme. They are casual labour who are lucky to get 7 months work in a year spread over several periods. The contractors' response has been pathetic—only 5% increase on wages, and nothing at all on any of the other issues.

The workers voted overwhelmingly for strike action. Since that time, 24 hour picketing has been carried out. One of their problems has been the failure of the unions to make the strike official, which has been an excuse for some lorry drivers to break the picket lines.

On Monday 19 September a mass picket was held to counter this. Hundreds of pickets turned up, and after a fierce battle with the police, they succeeded in completely blocking the main gate.

On Tuesday, another mass picket numbering several hundred took place. The police made a big show of strength, but such was the determination of the pickets, a number of lorries were turned back, with two pickets arrested.

After the picket, a number of the workers went over to the TGWU offices in Southampton to lobby their officials to make the strike official. At first, the officials wouldn't see them. When they did, all the workers got were excuses and promises for the future. But the last few days have really increased the workers' determination. If it is kept up victory can be won.

By John Flatley
(Romsey and Waterside Labour Party)

Black Chloride

AN INDEFINITE strike over pay and related issues has been called by 550 workers at Chloride Power Storage in Swinton which produces miners' cap lamps, batteries etc. TGWU Convenor of the factory, JOHN SUMBERLAND, spoke to *Militant* about the dispute:

How did the strike start?
It's something that's built up over 3 or 4 years. All we've had are "self-financing" deals, trade-offs for productivity increases. This year the company announced a wage freeze throughout the combine and after negotiations only offered another productivity deal and dismissed all our claims.

They've offered us a productivity deal which they say has a maximum earning potential of £21 per week. But that implies a 63% rise in productivity—they admit there's only a possibility

of a 12% growth in the market, so that means 51% job losses, 280 jobs out of 553. They also propose to change the present system of a single rate across the site.

On top of that they say they'll put the cleaning out to private contract, cut the catering staff and import the miners' cap lamp battery from South Africa, ceasing production of it here. They say it's a matter of costing but even if we all worked for nothing it would still cost more to produce batteries here than in South Africa.

What are the workers' demands?

We're asking for a basic rate increase and a single rate system. We're even prepared to talk about a realistic productivity deal that doesn't revolve around job losses.

Has the management attempt to introduce different bonuses split the workforce?

At a mass meeting of over 500 only 22 voted against the motion calling for the single rate system and indefinite strike action.

Now we've established a 24 hour picket rota to prevent management moving new machinery in.

Do you need support?
Yes. It's important that we get out to other plants if we're to win the strike. To do that costs money so we're looking for financial support. What we hope is that we can persuade people to black anything produced by Chloride.

Please send all messages of support and donations to :-
T&G 6/153 Branch Dispute Fund,
c/o R. Butcher, (Branch Secretary), 8 Ethel Avenue, Pendlebury, Salford, Lancs.

By Steve Callan
(Salford East LPYS)

Workers' notebook

THE TORIES' plans for selling off public industries has nothing to do with making them "run more efficiently": it is to provide a windfall for the bosses. All the major candidates for privatisation are worth millions. The *Financial Times* (September 17) listed industries to be hived off and their approximate proceeds: British Telecom—£4,000m; BP—£500m; Britoil—£500m; British Gas (oil interests)—£400m; Wytch Farm Oil—£160m; Cable and Wireless—£200m; British Aerospace—£200m; British Nuclear Fuels—£300m; Jaguar—£100m; Naval Shipyards—£100; Royal Ordnance factories—£300m; Sealink—£100m; Unipart £40m.

THE ECONOMIC forecasts by seven leading Stockbrokers' firms do not tally with the optimistic rantings of the Tories and the Fleet Street press. The seven independent surveys all agree that in 1984 the British economy will have the slowest growth rate in the world. It is expected to be only half the 2½% growth this year. Apparently, according to the economists, Britain has been undergoing a consumer boom this year! But they all agree this minuscule fluctuation in the economy will have subsided by next year.

IN THE arsy-versy world of Tory government statistics, unemployment went down in

August. In reality it went up. The figures presented last month, after they had been massaged by Tebbit, stood at 3,009,000, a fall of 11,000. But that did not include 211,900 school leavers who cannot claim as yet; 161,400 men over 60; and a further 220,000 who would have been recorded under the old system. That would bring the figure to 3,791,936-330,000 more than the unemployed toll for August 1982. Even then that would only be the "official" figure.

WHILE WORKERS at the Crawfords United Biscuits factory in Liverpool, Broad Green face mass redundancies, the UB bosses are having a far from hard time of it. Their pre-tax profits are up 35%, from £25.6 million last year to £34.5 million this year.

POEU 'We're ready for battle'

Step up the action

THE POEU Conference on Sunday confirmed the decision taken at the POEU's June conference to fight the Tories. Attempts by some right wing branches to abandon the action and accept privatisation as inevitable were decisively rejected.

The mood of the conference was clear. Those speakers who lifted and inspired delegates with a prospect of victory by mobilising the strength of the union, were greeted with sustained applause and cheering.

The fight can be won but the mood of goodwill and willingness to back the NEC will not last indefinitely. National industrial action hitting the government and their paymasters in big business must be undertaken now.

The mass of members have never been involved in industrial action. Many members believe that selective action can move the government, but it may be necessary to go beyond this to defeat this Tory government. Only time will tell.

The levy must be reintroduced, suspension may follow strike action. A mighty war chest is necessary. Solidarity will not be found wanting from other POEU members but action must not be delayed.

Those members in the frontline in the first stages of this strategy must not feel isolated, left alone to fight a hard battle without support. A campaign of supportive

industrial action including area, regional and national protest stoppages, demonstrations and rallies must be implemented alongside selective industrial action.

With action in full swing the Tories' Fleet Street propaganda machine will reel in to action to try and isolate and intimidate the union.

The TUC must step in to ensure the utmost solidarity. At the recent TUC Conference a resolution moved by the POEU was passed. This instructed the TUC leaders to "introduce a co-ordinated campaign, including the co-ordination of industrial action so as to maximise the impact any such action will have in defence of public sector services and industries, their respective unions and memberships".

Preparation for local Public Sector Action Committees should now be underway.

Trades Councils should be prepared to organise support throughout the wider movement on a local basis.

An all-out strike cannot be ruled out. This government will be determined to maintain its facade of invulnerability. The POEU has the power to defeat the Tories. If the POEU leaders stand firm convinced of the justice of their fight, communicate this by their words and action to the members then a victory can be achieved against the Tories.

THE POEU at a Special Conference on Sunday confirmed by a two to one majority that industrial action will be taken against Tory plans to dismantle British Telecom.

The Conference demonstrated again that it understood that there can be no going back to the failed methods of persuasion. As the delegate from Swindon put it, "you can't negotiate with people who are not prepared to listen".

Keith Hardacre from Leeds summed up the feelings of grim determination of POEU members to fight to defend the jobs, conditions, and the industry from privatisation: "There are no easy roads left. Our enemies must know that we are serious. The lads will respond if a lead is given".

The POEU's recent successful proposition to the TUC, calling for joint action across the public sector against privatisation, was reinforced by a proposition calling for fighting alliances to be built at local level.

The Conference also passed, against the advice of the NEC, a motion which reversed existing policy in favour of splitting the Post Office and British Telecom. *Militant* supporter, Roy Wembourne pointed out how greater unity to fight the Tories could be achieved by such a move. It would pave the way for closer working with the Union of Communications Workers for the future establishment of a "single communications based industry".

The one sour note of the conference was an amendment passed critical of the NEC's decision not to nominate John Golding to the NEC of the Labour Party.

Those criticising the Executive said it was important to have a representative at the top level of the Labour Party to 'ensure a vigorous campaign' against privatisation.

The curtailed debate failed to bring out John Golding's record within the Labour Party. Many POEU activists feel that John Golding could have used his in-

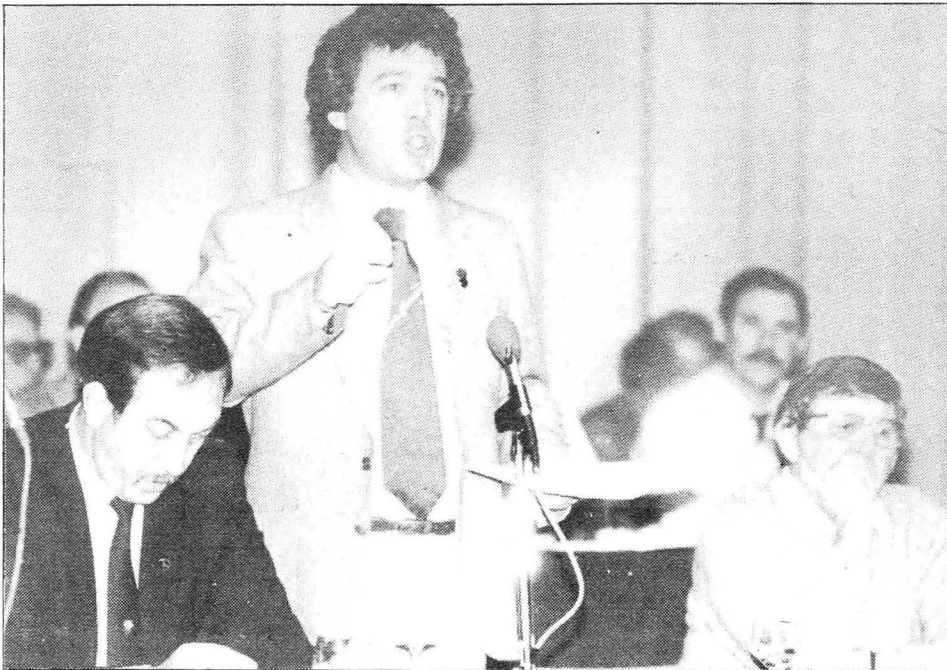
fluential position in the Labour Party to do more for the POEU campaign against privatisation. Rather it seems everytime you pick up a newspaper report featuring John Golding he is attacking the *Militant*, Tony Benn or the left in general.

Unfortunately the left NEC never explained the issue fully to the delegates at the conference, or the membership at large, and many members did not fully understand the removal of John Golding without an alternative candidate being nominated.

The result was academic as far as this year's Labour Party NEC elections are concerned. The pity is that this issue detracted from the important decisions on privatisation taken. What is clear however, is that POEU members are prepared to take on the Tories and fight privatisation.

By Colin O'Callaghan
(Delegate Overseas
Telegraph, POEU)

Photo: Militant



Phil Holt of the POEU executive puts the case against privatisation at the special conference at Wembley on Sunday.

In brief

WORKERS FACING redundancy at Huntley and Palmer in Huyton, Liverpool rejected attempts by management to buy them off with increased payments. The 930 workers unanimously decided to back a stewards' decision that rejected the £400 offered by management on top of redundancy pay. The owners, Nabisco's, have offered 400 jobs at the Jacobs plant in Aintree mainly for women workers, but this still leaves hundreds of workers redundant and means travel and shift problems for the workers who transferred. The stewards have no objection to alternative work but are not prepared to let anyone move until it has sorted out what will happen to the rest. Stewards at the Leicester plant, organised by the Bakers union, are also facing redundancy and their stewards agreed not to accept any labour or plant from the Huyton site.

MILITANT HAS over the years echoed the fears of railwaymen over the introduction of One Man Operation trains, which are driver only with no guard. BR management have sung the praises of OMO trains and criticised union opposition. Yet on the Bedford-St Pancras line—where BR have now had to withdraw the trains because of numerous technical difficulties—OMO trains proved unpopular with commuters as well. With no guard there's no guard's van either. So passenger coaches have had to double up as Royal Mail coaches. While commuters squeezed into overcrowded compartments, one carriage with its doors locked gave up all its seats to bags of mail. And if you were going on holiday with many suitcases, a mother with a pram, or wanted to take your bike on this line, hard luck.

THE FORMER NUR leader, right-winger Sid Weighell, has been pouring out his heart to that well known champion of trade unionism, the *Sunday Telegraph*. The September 11 issue gave a full double page spread to Mr Weighell's machinations about how the 'hard left' had destroyed British Rail and western civilisation as we know it etc—a sort of 'Mrs Dale's Diary meets the NUR'. One of the guilty men named by Mr Weighell was "A well known full time *Militant* organiser, who was not a railwayman, Martin Elvin..." Martin in fact worked for British Rail for 10 years as a train driver and was an active member of ASLEF, until he became a journalist for *Militant*. Indeed it could be said Martin was an ordinary working railwayman more recently than Mr Weighell.

WORKERS AT seven Gas showrooms in Aldershot are to take strike action on September 24 in protest at plans to close down five showrooms in the area. The one-day strike by the workers, members of NALGO, will be the first action against showroom closures since British Gas announced that a total of 200 showrooms were up for closure throughout the country.

Miners' strike

More than 10,000 miners have taken action in the Barnsley area after the dismissal of a miner from Dodsworth colliery over an alleged assault.

Such is the pent up anger of the miners in the area, that over the past two weeks the strike has spread to 10 pits.

Management said they would move the miner, George Marsh, to another pit, a formula agreed by the NUM Yorkshire area council, but the miners want Mr Marsh reinstated at the Dodsworth colliery. An NUM official told the *Guardian*

(September 20), "Feelings are running high. George Marsh was severely provoked."

Rightly ignoring the Tebbit Bill, miners from Dodsworth have picketed other pits in the Barnsley area to build support for Mr Marsh's reinstatement.

ONE AND a half thousand miners at the Monktonhall colliery in Midlothian have been on strike since last Wednesday. They were provoked by management who sent home the day shift when they came to work five minutes late because they had been attending a union pithead meeting.

This was the latest in a series

Barnsley, Monktonhall

of actions by management—the stopping of development, the demand for 300 voluntary redundancies—which suggest the NCB see no future in the pit. (see last week's *Militant*).

Further proof of the management's attitude was a statement on TV that Monktonhall miners were the laziest in Scotland, and the view McGregor, who was lobbied on a visit to Bilston Glen colliery, that the only way to keep the pit open was to return to work and increase production.

The men are now determined that they will not return to work until they have been given assurances that the pit will not be closed.

The news from the Scottish delegate conference of the

unanimous support for the recognition of the Monktonhall dispute as official, and for the Miners' executive to lead a widespread campaign for moral and financial support of British miners, was vigorously approved by a mass meeting of Monktonhall miners on 20 September.

A young member of the craft union SCEBTA, Tam Dury received great support for his call to escalate the dispute, including issuing a leaflet to go to all collieries in the Scottish area to explain the situation. The men are united and solid in the fight to save the pit and their jobs. Clearly speedy action is needed to spread the fight to save Monktonhall colliery.

By Pat Craven

NALGO fights back

DURING THE first week of industrial action residential workers in Strathclyde have continued pressure on the management.

The Strathclyde region has had to employ hundreds of temporary staff to cover for the over-time ban which is costing tens of thousands of pounds. Where temporary staff have not been available our members have immediately taken decisive action and walked out.

Every single childrens home has refused to accept admission and this action has dramatically disrupted the entire social work department.

A rally is planned for Thursday for all NALGO residential

workers and social workers stewards to discuss the industrial action and possible escalation, which could include lobbying of the Strathclyde Regional Council and disruptive action in relation to mail going into the regional headquarters building.

By Stuart Bates
(Strathclyde NALGO
Residential Dispute
Committee)

OVER 2,500 local government workers are out on strike in Haringey after agreed procedures were totally ignored by management in the dismissal of a worker.

Les Butler, was sacked

without warning as he neared the end of his probationary working period. People in his section immediately walked out and other departments soon followed. At a mass meeting of over 1,500 on Monday workers rejected an offer by the council for a committee to investigate the sacking of the workers, mainly members of NALGO, returned to work.

Fear of coming cuts has consolidated the strike amongst the council workforce. Workers have been further infuriated by the "Edwardes' style" tactics and comments of some Labour councillors, including some so-called left wingers. But the strike is solid with NUPE and most teachers' unions refusing to cross picket lines.

By Nick Wing
(Haringey NALGO)

NALGO Militant
30p No. 4

TORIES OFFER NO FUTURE

Journal of Militant Supporters in NALGO Order from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Tce, London E8 3PN. 30p + 10p incl p&p. No postage over 10 copies.

Bakers and the SDP

GENERAL SECRETARY of the Bakers' Union, Joe Marino, has issued a statement following press speculation that the union would be prepared for talks with the SDP:

Various stories have appeared in the national press, on radio and television concerning the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union and the Social Democratic Party's proposals on "Trade Union Reform".

I wish to make our Union's position clear. We are an affiliated Union to the Labour Party and have no intention whatsoever of deserting the Party or of loosening our ties with the Party. On the contrary we see the Labour Party as the political expression of our movement and want to see continuing closer ties between us.

At the TUC Congress last week I described talks with the Government as a "dialogue with the deaf." In my view talks with the SDP would be a "dialogue with the deaf". The so-called proposals from the SDP on "Trade Union Reform" are even worse than those put forward by the Government and, quite frankly, in some instances border on the ludicrous.

Our Union has fundamental disagreements with the SDP on a wide range of issues from incomes policy to defence, from the EEC to trade unions. There is no possibility at all of bridging those gaps.

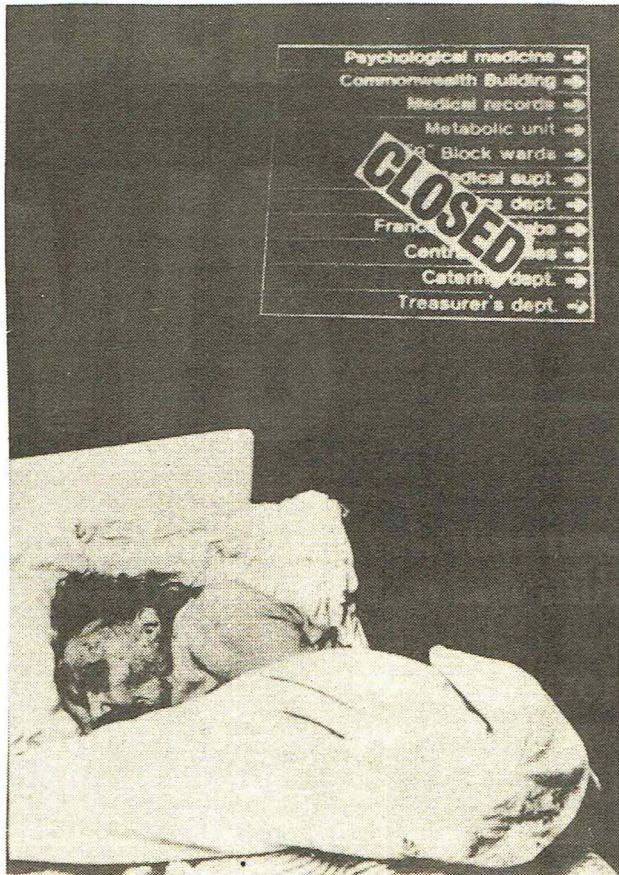
When the original "Gang of Four" deserted the Party we considered them traitors, as we did all those that followed them on that course. Nothing has happened since to make us change our minds.

HEALTH CUTS WILL KILL

When the Tories told the country during the election that the Health Service was safe with them they were lying, and knew it.

Before the election they secretly wrote to all health administrators asking them not to publish documents about proposed cuts as it could be "politically delicate".

This month, health authorities throughout England and Wales are having to face the Tories secret manifesto. In July they were ordered to draw up plans by the end of this month for a



Photomontage by Peter Kennard

By Jim Chrystie

The Tories' plan would result in:

● Hospital Closures.

In Hackney, the most deprived area in the whole country, four hospitals will close.

● Ward Closures.

At Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry a brand new assessment ward is kept empty; so it is used by the BBC to film *Angels*.

● Empty hospitals.

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore, for treatment of spinal injuries, has stood empty since April, because the health authority has no money to run it.

● Plans shelved.

Although 6 of Northern England's 16 districts have peri-natal death rates, 25% above the national average, plans to double the number of care cots for babies will now have to be abandoned.

● Cuts in family doctor service.

The Tories have asked the accountants—Binder Hamlyn—to report on how to cut back the cost of GPs. It is expected that they will call for a limitation on the number of tests made and the prescriptions given to patients.

● Fewer doctors and nurses.

Brent authority calculated that if they implemented cuts they would have to sack 10% of doctors.

It means worse treatment for—

● Major illnesses.

One in five people in Britain will die of cancer. Yet the country's main cancer hospital, Royal Marsden, still does not have a body scanner.

● Children.

In August Guy's Hospital had to turn away children suffering from serious brain, heart and kidney conditions. Cyril Chantler, the professor of their childrens department said, "we have had to close 20% of our beds because of a short-fall in the nursing budget." (Daily Telegraph 19 September 1983).

● Old.

The Regional Health Authority Treasurers have pointed out that the government's proposed half per cent "growth" in NHS funding over the next decade is really a terrible cut. It would not even keep pace with the treatment of elderly people.

● Mentally ill.

The government has issued a special document telling health authorities to sell off land around mental hospitals to private developers.

It will mean—

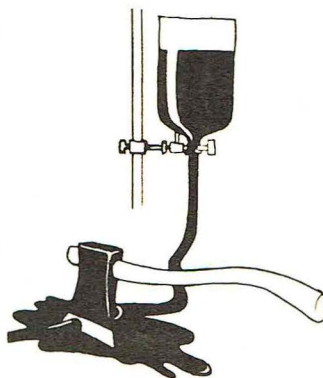
● More deaths.

Already the lack of kidney machines cost the lives of over 2,000 people every year. As the health union, NALGO, pointed out, this week, Tory cuts "mean nothing less than a cold-blooded death warrant on many patients and years of avoidable suffering for many thousands of others".

● Longer waiting lists.

There are already 70,000 fewer NHS hospital beds than there were 12 years ago.

But the Tories aim is not just malicious. They want to reduce the NHS to a safety-



net for unprofitable sections of health care, the very young, the very old and the mentally ill. This means that cuts would have to be made in surgery and acute services, which means that more and more people would be attracted by private health care.

Fifteen years ago only a handful of people were in private medical schemes. Now there are over 3½ million. The Tories are bleeding the health service for private profit.

In addition the Tories have instructed health authorities to put the £900m laundry service out to contract, which will mean more money for their business friends.

The Tories must be stopped now. They have no mandate to destroy the Health Service. Other authorities must follow the lead of Brent.

Action is needed now. Only the united action of the labour movement can defeat the Tories.

In the Northern region, the health union, NUPE, have proposed that if private firms come into a hospital to prepare their contract bids, there should be an immediate stoppage in that hospital and in all other hospitals in the region.

In different parts of the country there have been lobbies of health authorities, occupations and strikes. The joint shop stewards committees formed last year to fight for the NHS wage claim should be re-convened. Local Labour Parties must get into this fight. Public meetings must be held to explain the threat.

When Thatcher had an eye operation she went private. Only workers and their families have a vested interest in defending the National Health Service.

Militant

QE2 Refit Who is to blame?

THE DECISION by Cunard to get their luxury liner QE2 refitted in the West German Hapag Lloyd yard in Bremerhaven instead of in a British yard has angered shipyard workers.

The owners and British Shipbuilders claim the decision was made because British workers could not be relied on to complete the refit in time. But trade unionists point out that any decline in efficiency has been due to their employers' short sighted pursuit of quick profits over the years not to "laziness" from British workers.

Peter St. Clair a worker in ship repair yards on the Tyne told *Militant*, "British shipbuilders place only 44% of orders in British yards. Japan's never put an order outside their country, Italy give 98%, Belgium 97%, West Germany 82%, France 77%, Holland 74%, Denmark 73% of orders to home yards.

"But it's the management who've failed to keep up, not the workers. For a start, West German shipyard workers are far better paid than over here. The main problem in Britain is practically no investment. We can't compete on production time despite working overtime because we have

fewer men and outdated equipment.

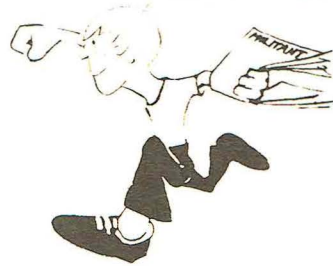
"In the yard where I work, the machinery is almost a hundred years old, this is in a private yard. It was so ancient-looking, it was used as a setting for a film on the childhood of the novelist Catherine Cookson, based in the '20s and '30s.

"They've made massive profits in the past but none of it has come back. I've worked in about every yard on the Tyne and it's the same for them all, those that were nationalised and those staying private. Investment in ship repair has been practically non-existent for almost a century."

Capitalist firms like Cunard love to appeal to "patriotism" to get their employees to up productivity but they use profit as the only judge when it comes to their own actions.

The rundown of shipbuilding is in reality an international capitalist problem. Workers in Germany have been fighting brave battles in Hamburg and Bremen to save threatened shipyards from closure. The enemies of ship building and repairs workers in Britain are not the German workers but the profit hungry capitalists worldwide.

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