

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

Inside:

1924

First Labour
government
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Tories blind to..

TORY CONTEMPT for working people has plumbed new depths. A Tory MP has been experimenting with life on the dole. Unfortunately unlike most workers, his stint lasted only one week.

Tory MP Matthew Parris spent the week in Scotswood, Newcastle living on Supplementary Benefit of £26.80 on behalf of the TV programme *World in Action* who filmed his activity.

After one week on the dole, Parris could not manage. He ended up in debt, had to scrounge drinks in a pub, ran out of gas and electricity and was forced to walk the streets in the evening.

He saw little chance of getting work. When he went to a Job Centre with an ex merchant seaman, they could offer only one job part time at £30 a week. But after a week he can return to Westminster to tell of his suffering and return to his usual life.

DOLE DESPAIR

By Dave Cotterill

There can be no doubt the Tories live in a completely different world, in fact they might as well live on a different planet. Parris, a member of Thatcher's private office, was educated at public school and Cambridge University.

How can this upper class twit understand what it is

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

- ★ More than half of all men who attempt suicide are unemployed, according to *New Society*.
- ★ People out of work for more than a year are 19 times more likely to kill themselves.
- ★ 40% of people up before English courts are unemployed.
- ★ The children of the unemployed are physically smaller than average, and they are more likely to suffer child abuse, ill health and suffer reading problems at school.
- ★ Families are "unable to afford trips to pub, cinema, relations or friends, and unable even to phone them".

Workers back Liverpool council

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Daily Mirror apologises

THE *Daily Mirror* carried a disgraceful report on its front page on January 11, alleging that supporters of *Militant* had been expelled from Blackburn Labour Party on the grounds of illegal activity and following allegations of the misuse of Party funds.

After legal representation had been made, the *Daily Mirror* has now apologised, publishing the following retraction last Saturday, January 21.

"Our front page report of January 11 stated that six members of the Blackburn Labour Party—Simon Bush, Peter Harris, Rosina Harris, Des Mulcahy, Mary Orange and Kay Wright—had been expelled for misusing party funds and that the party had acted on a report about illegal activities.

"We now accept that the expulsions, which were by majorities ranging from 54-28 in the case of

Rosina Harris down to 42-40 against Mary Orange (not 2-1 as our report stated), were on a resolution alleging that clause 2 of the Labour Party Constitution had been breached. There were no allegations of illegal or dishonest behaviour. We are happy to correct our previous report and unreservedly apologise for any embarrassment and distress caused".



Local authority union members were very well represented on the highly successful 24 January London demonstration.

Photo: Mark Pinder

Thousands march to save jobs and services

THE MASS demonstration on 24 January to save the Greater London Council and the other metropolitan counties was a big success. Over 30,000 turned out, not only workers for the GLC and ILEA who were determined to maintain their jobs.

Significantly there were large groups of workers from the

London boroughs and delegations from other metropolitan counties together with students and school students.

In a rally after the march, GLC leader Ken Livingstone pointed out that in the same way the labour movement supported Liverpool council, they had come to save the GLC. The

biggest applause went to Labour MP Frank Dobson who called for the council to defy the government even if the GLC were defeated in Parliament and to Rodney Bickerstaffe NUPE general secretary who called for defiance of bad laws. The GLC, the unions and the Labour Par-

ty must build on this foundation, a campaign based firmly on the labour movement to stop the Tories' plans.

As part of this campaign the Labour Party Young Socialists held a very successful meeting of school students to discuss co-ordinating plans to stop attacks on London's schools.

How to get rid of Thatcher

Build Militant

DO YOU sincerely want to get rid of the Tories and their system? Then help us in our fight for a daily Marxist paper!

We still need £100,000 in cash to reach our target, so we appeal to all our many supporters who have pledged to redeem to send in their cash now.

If the money carries on coming in as it has recently, we should have no problem. £4,000 has arrived in the last two days. If just the current pledges are redeemed, we'll reach over 70% of the target, so the 100% bullseye is possible, thanks to you.

If you want us to move into new premises and get one step nearer a daily Marxist paper, follow the shining example of domestic workers at All Saints Hospital in Medway, Kent.

They are low paid workers who have been on strike against privatisation; they have already made huge sacrifices for our future. But they were so impressed with the help given by *Militant*

Continued on back page

Militant

No road to peace from Stockholm

WORKERS LOOKING to the newly opened conference in Stockholm on European Security and perhaps hoping for some moves towards genuine 'peace' between the super powers will be sadly disappointed.

The meeting between the United States and Russian Foreign Ministers, Shultz and Gromyko, attracted a great deal of attention and comment in the press. But the questions of war or peace are not decided by ministers or diplomats, but by social forces: the class struggle and the contradictions within society, nationally and internationally.

The basic cause of conflict between the United States and USSR lies in the fact that these super powers are based on fundamentally antagonistic social systems.

The Reagan administration represents the interests of US capitalism in its rapacious drive to secure markets and exploit raw materials and cheap labour on a global scale. Diplomatic and military policy abroad is thus based upon the needs of US imperialism to maintain its profits and prestige on the world arena.

Andropov, on the other hand, represents the interests of the Russian, and to a lesser extent the Eastern European, Stalinist bureaucracies which maintain their privileges and position through totalitarian military-police regimes, but which are nonetheless based upon planned, state-owned economies, effectively 'out of bounds' to the clutches of capitalism. Without playing the same role as the imperialist powers in exploiting the economies of smaller states, nevertheless the Russian bureaucracy still, seeks to bolster its own world strategic position, militarily and diplomatically, the better to secure its position at home.

Weapons stock-pile

It has been this fundamental antagonism which has overshadowed all other international questions, especially since the Second World War. This has been the basis of the arms race and the stock-piling of vast quantities of nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons.

In a sense, both the capitalist class in the West and the bureaucracy in the East lean upon each other: each using the apparent threat of war and 'aggression' from the other side to cow their own working class and to justify their domestic policies.

In the recent period economic necessity has forced these protagonists to make an effort, or appear to make an effort, to reduce the huge burden of arms expenditure.

In contrast to the 25 years before 1975, the years after have seen an organic economic crisis in world capitalism. Short periods of weak recovery now alternate with deeper and more serious periods of recession. The

long post war boom has decisively ended, ushering in a period of economic instability, uncertainty and... class struggle.

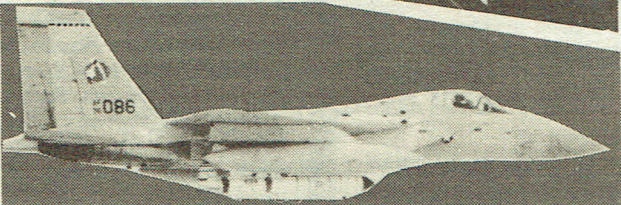
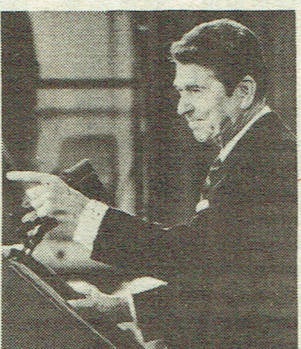
In Eastern Europe also the slow-down in economic growth in the 1970s, due to the absence of workers' democracy in increasingly modern economies, has created an increased threat of workers' opposition, pushing the bureaucracy to seek economic relief by arms reduction agreements.

The talks in Stockholm, therefore, are a reflection of the joint fear of the capitalist class in the West and of the bureaucracy in the East of the possible arousal of their own working classes. At the

Even as the Stockholm talks began, the super powers were testing out new weapons. The USA last week tested an aircraft launched anti-satellite missile; at the same time the USSR tested a new warhead vehicle.

Workers are justified in their concern about the questions of war and peace. It may not be in the interests of the superpowers to go to war on a global scale at the present time, but it would be wrong to ignore such a possibility under certain circumstances in the future.

If, after a period of social upheavals, the working class failed to change society and the organisations of the labour movement were



Andropov (top left) and Reagan (top right) represent fundamentally antagonistic social systems. Even as their diplomats met in Stockholm new weapons were being tested like the anti-satellite missile carried by the aircraft (above).

same time, each side continues to use the public "negotiations" to shift the blame for international tensions and conflict to the other side.

But despite all the years of so-called "arms agreements", talks, and conferences—of which the Conference on European Security is only the latest variant—the fundamental contradictions between the USSR and the USA remain, compelling a relentless drive for new weapons and arms technology. These Stockholm talks, expected to last two or three years and involve up to two hundred diplomats from 35 nations, will make no more fundamental difference to the arms race than have past talks or agreements.

The first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) limited the number of missiles each side was allowed to possess, but after it was signed there followed a multiplication of warheads per missile. The SALT II agreement, which has not been ratified by the US Senate, limited warheads to numbers well above those already stockpiled ie allowing hundreds more to be produced. Moreover it left out altogether the question of intermediate range nuclear weapons which are now the subject of such intense research and development programmes.

These kind of agreements, therefore, have not made much of a dent in the race for newer and better arms.

crushed in the West, that could mean the coming to power of a military dictator even in countries like the USA, bringing a real possibility of nuclear war.

The question of peace, therefore, is not an issue that can be divorced from the class system and the social contradictions that create wars.

Science and technology

No amount of appeals to the "better judgement" or "reason" of the Reagans or Andropovs will have any effect. The technology and scientific capacity for war cannot be "banned" as long as science and technology are at the behest of the capitalist class and the bureaucracies.

Socialists must argue and struggle for peace: but that can only mean a struggle for the transformation of society, for the social revolution in the West and political revolution in the East, and for a World Federation of Socialist States.

The Stockholm talks are a spectacular exercise in hypocrisy, rhetoric, mutual fear and distrust, liberally mixed with the joint fear of the working classes of East and West. Workers must look elsewhere, to their own class organisations, and the class struggle in which they are daily involved, for the only genuine road to European and world peace.



Applause for speakers at 19 November mass demonstration.

Photo: Paul Traynor

Workers back Liverpool council

council

By Josie Aitman

OVER 300 Liverpool Labour Party members and Trade Unionists recently met to discuss the next stage of the campaign to defend the City Council from Tory attacks.

At the meeting, called by Liverpool District Labour Party, the deputy leader of the council, Derek Hatton, stated:

"We are now faced with one of the most important periods for the whole labour movement and the backing of the movement is needed as never before if we are to win the present battle. We have to build from the magnificent demonstration held on 19 November through Liverpool, with support not just from the thousands of local Authority workers, but all the industrial movement."

The Labour Group on the City Council is faced with three options if it is to fulfill its election manifesto of creating 1,000 jobs, expanding public services and building Council houses. The first option is to increase the rates by over 200%—which would mean a massive wage cut for

thousands of families. The second option would mean 5,000 Local Authority workers being made redundant.

The third option—which is the only option as far as Liverpool Labour Party is concerned is to organise a campaign with the full backing of the labour and trade union movement in Liverpool and nationally; to stand firm against Tory cuts; and to call for the restoration of cuts, jobs, and services.

The Labour Party in Liverpool is a united party, as proved by the unanimous vote taken at the meeting of councillors, as well as Labour Party members for this third option—the plan of action.

As one City councillor stated: "I've been waiting for this moment for years—a time to get off our knees and fight". He also gave warning to any Labour Councillors

who backed down that they would be political lepers in Liverpool.

The meeting launched an intensive campaign over the next few months. Public meetings have been planned in every area of the City to explain the stand that the Labour Council is taking. A shop steward rally is also planned to mobilise support for the Labour Council. A series of factory meetings will be held 27 February to be followed by a mass lobby of Parliament on 22 March.

An indication of the support from local authority workers was given at the meeting by a number of stewards and convenors. They see the campaign as one of defending their jobs as well as public services against the onslaught of Thatcher's policies. They know only too well that here in Liverpool in the last 10 years, 90,000 jobs have been lost—and 5,000 of these were in the Local Authority when the Tory/Liberal alliance controlled the City Council.

Our Council is one of the few employers creating jobs. This must be defended, now.



Peter Heathfield. Photo: A. Wiard (Report)

Kinnock honours 'son of Militant'

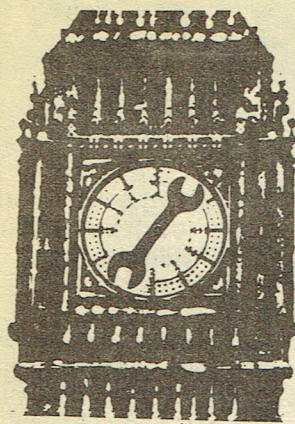
By a Militant Reporter

THE TROUBLE with Militant 'moles' is that they come in all shapes and sizes. Now Neil Kinnock must have thought he was on safe ground when he decided to give away the prizes in a Labour Weekly competition for the best drawings from children about the health service. Unfortunately for him, second prize has been won by seven-and-a-half year old Daniel Walsh, son of Militant Deputy Editor and expelled member of the Labour Party, Lynn Walsh.

Daniel's drawing of a child being X-rayed whilst outside a long queue forms, won him a £30 second prize. When his mother asked what he would like from the prize, Daniel said: "A Big Track, a Spirograph and my dad back in the Labour Party". With ideas like that, it won't be long 'till young master Walsh is summoned before his party leader again.

New miners' leader

DESPITE THE narrow margin, the electoral victory of Peter Heathfield as the new General Secretary of the miners' union, strengthens the hand of the left-wing national leadership. Heathfield got 51.2% of the vote, 74,186 votes, compared to 48.8% for his leading opponent. Both the two main elected posts of the miners' union are now left-wing.



Out of Order

THE TORIES are still peddling the myth that if young workers accept lower wages, they have more chance of getting a job. Back in December when I challenged them over YTS pay, the Under Secretary of State for Employment, Alan Clark, told me "It is perfectly natural that youngsters who have just left school should command less pay."

He was backed up by Tory MP Nicholas Budgen who, in question form, called on him to "warmly commend the wise young people who have accepted lower relative wages to price themselves into work. When will the government repeal the minimum wage legislation, which so cruelly caused unemployment?"

Young workers will be surprised to learn that they are 'wise' to accept low wages. When did they ever have any choice? Where is this brave new world of opportunities and an expanding economy the Tories keep referring to? Everyone knows—and the Tories keep reminding us—that the real value of wages has plummeted.

But this has not provided more jobs. Not only has unemployment rocketed but thousands of companies have gone bust. In 1979, the first year of the Tory government, company liquidations for that year stood at 4,537 while bankruptcies were 3,214. By 1982 these figures had risen to 12,067 and 5,365 respectively. These of course were mainly small scale firms, and you can bet they didn't pay their employees exorbitant wages.

By Dave Nellist MP

Fury as council closes playground

IN ASTONISHING scenes following the decision to close two adventure playgrounds, I saw children hit and people thrown down stairs as police waded in SPG—style last Thursday to clear Bracknell Town Hall.

The Tory Council had called in the police to deal with a peaceful protest about the proposed closure of the Easthampstead and Eastlodge playgrounds.

Even one Tory councillor (who voted to close the playgrounds) said the Chairman of the Council "behav-

ed like a fascist" when he called in the police.

The Council meeting earlier in the evening had been extremely angry, as Bracknell witnessed its biggest council lobby ever when 200 children, parents and teachers turned up to protest.

Secret Meeting

We were angry that three days before, at a secret meeting, the Tories had suddenly decided to close the two playgrounds. There had been no consultation with parents, unions, staff or management whatsoever.

Staff were dismissed with one week's notice.

The playgrounds which have been running for 10 years are a great success. Hundreds of children, between the ages of 5 and 16 use them. There are no other facilities for kids or teenagers in the area. They are properly supervised, providing darts, snooker, an adventure playground and a play area.

They were established when Labour controlled the Council, and the Tories resent their success. The Tories want to knock them all down and just put in swings at a cost of £30,000.

Immediately we heard of

the Council's decision, parents, children and staff organised a petition. In under three days we had 2,500 signatures.

Telephones cut off

The Tory Council responded in an astonishing fashion. Our petition gave the playground's telephone numbers. When staff came in the next day they found that phones had been cut off! British Telecomms say they were told to do so by the Council—and this was before the full Council meeting on Thursday.

What would have happened if a child had been hurt at one of the centres and staff wanted to contact an ambulance or their parents? But the Tories don't care. They are engaged in vindictive action against working class kids.

Both playgrounds are now occupied. We are not going to accept the Tory's decision. We are going to fight to keep them open.

By Val Pearce

(Chairperson, Easthampstead Play Area Management Committee)



Occupation at Sandal Hall nursery.

Photo: Sue Ayton

Wakefield Nursery fights on

LEADERS OF Wakefield's right wing Labour council suffered a setback last week in their battle to close the Sandal Hall day nursery. They had sent a court summons against Councillor Heinitz and a parent who supported a sit-in at the nursery.

However at the court ten other councillors and parents, and four students who live at Sandal Hall also came forward as co-defendants. The court action had to be

postponed.

Obviously this is just a lull rather than a victory. For us in the LPYS the council's decision to close the nursery, and turn the site over to private developers as part of a £4,500,000 cuts programme is intolerable. We are fighting on.

By Sue Ayton
(Wakefield LPYS)

Occupied to save youth club

THE RED Star club in Highfields, Leicester, has been occupied by local youth.

The county council wants to close the club down while renovation goes on. But most members believe they will not be allowed back. They fear the building will be sold off or given to someone else.

Promises broken

30 people are staying in overnight during the week with up to 90 at the weekends. The club is used by around 200 people, and offers various sports—football, tennis, dominoes and a room used by Asian

women for sewing.

Following the riots of 1981, the county council said they would provide opportunities for young people. They are now reneging on this promise.

The unemployment situation has only worsened since 1981. More and more young people have not had proper jobs since they left school.

The club at least gives youth something to do, and stops them hanging around town.

Two of the occupiers, Rashpal and Terry, told Militant: "We will stay indefinitely. We are a hardened breed; ghetto people. We will not give up easily."

By Shaun Moore
and Gary Freeman

Welsh Hospitals under threat

CATASTROPHIC CUTS are being considered by South Glamorgan Health Authority. In anticipation of a reduction in government grants this year they are proposing to close hospitals and clinics.

The plans have been drawn up secretly by hospital administrators, but were leaked to the South Wales press. They include a proposal to close the children's Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital in Ely, Cardiff.

The health bureaucrats also proposed to stop all holidays for the mentally ill and handicapped, and to close the human milk bank at St Davids Hospital in Cardiff, the largest milk bank in

Britain. The Health Authorities are now trying to make out that these are 'only ideas'.

However the Welsh Office has insisted that the Health authorities draw up plans for cuts of up to 3 per cent. This would mean in particular the slashing of resources for Wales' most modern hospital in Heath, Cardiff. At least one medical ward and operating theatre would be closed, and with other savings the cuts would be £1.3 million.

Other proposals include the closure of Glan Ely Hospital, and the closure of wards at Redwood Hospital and Whitchurch Psychiatric Hospital. General cuts are

proposed for Cardiff Royal Infirmary, and weekend closure of a ward at the Orthopaedic Hospital, in Rhydafar. Only the cancer hospital at Velindre in Cardiff is 'spared', but recently attempts were made to stop bone marrow transplants for leukaemia patients in Heath Hospital.

The Welsh Office will announce the overall cut in health spending later this month. This shows the real truth behind Tory claims that the Health Service is 'safe'. Massive resistance can be expected from the health unions.

By Frank Cuthbert
(Caerphilly CLP)

Police help fascists stop meeting

Fascists attacked and broke up a labour movement meeting in Grays, Essex, on 12 January. The meeting, titled 'Has Britain got a role to play in Ireland', was a debate between labour movement speakers and held as part of the local Labour council's 'Irish week'.

Leo McDaid, editor of *Socialist Youth*, was to speak on behalf of the LPYS giving a Marxist viewpoint, rejecting the sectarian views of some of the speakers present, and pointing out that only a united working class in Northern Ireland, united

around a class programme, was capable of defeating capitalism.

However, just before the meeting began a mob of National Front thugs besieged the meeting hall, threatening people who turned up for the debate.

When the police eventually arrived, they said the NF would have to be let in as there were empty seats in the hall. The police have no right to do this: at a public meeting of this kind (not during an election) the meeting's chairman has the legal right to decide who can

and cannot attend.

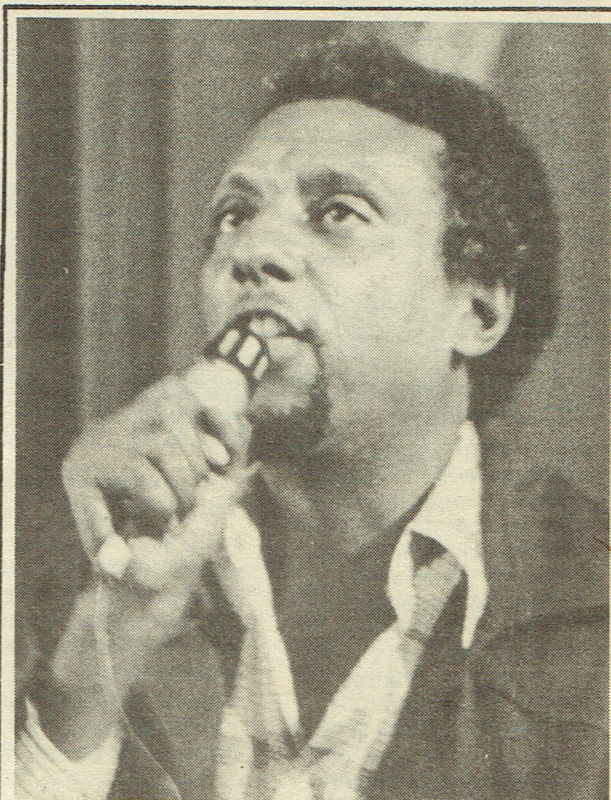
Incredibly the Communist Party speaker actually suggested the NF should be let in and even have a speaker! Fortunately the organisers rejected this 'advice' and refused to let the NF in. The police promptly closed the meeting.

Although the police held the NF back while people left the hall as a group, some fascists broke through and attacked the group. John McKay, LPYS National Committee member, received facial injuries. The NF were eventually escorted by

police to the rail station and sent back home to East London.

This debate will be organised again. This time, through strength of numbers, the meeting must be adequately defended against fascist attack—the labour movement will not tolerate fascist hoodlums interfering with its democratic process and must defend the right of sections of the labour movement to argue its case.

By Barry Stearne
(Grays LPYS)



Ture speaking at Newham 8 demo.

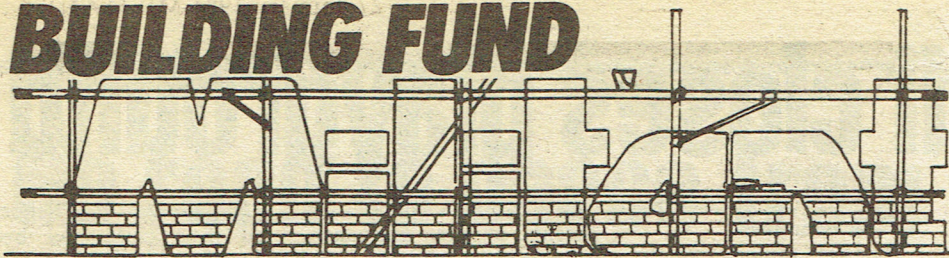
Photo: Militant

Black activist banned

THE DECISION to ban Kwame Ture, formerly Stokely Carmichael, from entering Britain for a ten day visit shows where Thatcher's political bias lies. When Ture was here last September he supported blacks and Asians in Newham who defended themselves against racist attacks, (above).

But whilst those who want to prevent racist attacks are banned, fascists wanted for terrorist attacks are allowed to stay in Britain. Last year nine Italian fascists were allowed to stay here although the Italian government wanted to have them extradited to face serious charges.

BUILDING FUND



£40,000 raised to build Militant

WITH ONLY a few days left to the end of the month every reader who made a promise to the Building Fund should send in their money immediately. Readers who have been recovering from the financial onslaught of Christmas should be just about recouping their losses with this month's wages.

Of course, not everybody is fortunate enough to have a job in Thatcher's Britain but that's all the more reason why we need your support. Whether in work, on the dole, unemployed, at college or retired, everyone who wants to fight for a socialist society has first to fight for the resources to put our ideas across.

We still have to convince those workers who have not heard the programme of the *Militant*. To do this we desperately need a more frequent Marxist voice. Help our campaign to acquire new premises from which a daily Marxist paper could be produced by sending in a large donation to the fund.

The sacrifice of finding

the money, of selling something valuable or of doing without something long sought after will be well worth it. It might be difficult in the short-term but just think of the difference it would make to our work.

Deadline near

Show our opponents that there is no holding us back. We can show them the confidence we have in the ideas of Marxism by beating the target and obtaining large new premises to help our work develop.

I/We promise/enclose £. for the Marxist Daily Building Fund.

To be sent c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

The money is beginning to hurry as we approach the target deadline. From readers in Brighton we have received £676. Jeannie Molyneux from Dorset had redeemed her pledge of £300, and Peter Luke from Lothian has paid off £150 as has Kit O'Conner of Hampshire. DA Croft of the Black Country, together with Kathy Evans from the Thames Valley area and Gary Freeman from Leicester have each sent in £100. Readers in Stevenage have so far sent in £839.

We now have over £40,000 in cash and over £4,000 has arrived in the last two days. Speed up the dispatch of contributions in order to speed up the appearance of a more frequent *Militant*.

FIIGHTING FUND Stop Tory Attacks



Support for Liverpool City Council and *Militant* on demo last November.

HOW VICIOUS can the Tories get? Reports recently revealed show that the government is planning to make new cuts and restrictions for thousands of disabled and handicapped people.

Patients who have more than £1,000 saved are going to face cuts in benefit. This will mean that they will not be able to save up and purchase equipment to improve their comfort and mobility. The changes will affect the mobility allowance for people who cannot walk, and the attendance allowance for severely disabled people who need someone to look after them. These cuts can only worsen the care and attention available.

The Department of Health is also planning to halt the backdating of benefit payments to disabled people who become eligible for extra money as their condition deteriorates. These proposed cuts can only be described as vindictive.

DONATIONS THIS WEEK INCLUDE:

Brian Moorley, Coventry, £2,
B Collinson, UCATT, £4,
Newcastle Readers' Meeting, £51.32,
K Bernard, Bootle, £5,
Video Night, Llanelli, £18,
Martin Castle, Maidstone UCW, £4.50,
West Bromich LPYS, £5,
Merseyside LPYS, £5,
Broadgreen LPYS, £2,
Tyneside Disco, £45.

The Tories are also looking to make further cuts in housing benefit in order to save £230 million. On top of the dramatic increase in rent and rates over recent years these cuts will have a devastating effect on unemployed and low paid workers.

Bold leadership

It is the job of the organised labour movement to protect the disabled and unemployed by removing the Tories. To do this we need a

fighting leadership programme based on the ideas of Marxism.

Support the paper that fights to defend all sections of the working class by contributing to our Fighting Fund. Help us build up the resources of the paper so we can guarantee a genuine socialist society where every person can play a full role and is not consigned to the dustbin by the greed for profit.

By Nick Wrack

ADS

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

For Sale

BADGE: *Militant* enamel stud badge—£1.00 p&p
CALENDAR: 1984 poster calendar—£1.00 p&p
Cheques made payable to *Militant*. Send to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

MILITANT STICKERS. Still available. 200 for £2.30; 500 for £5.60; 1,000 for £11.00. Contact: *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

'*Militant* Turn left for workers unity and socialism'

T-shirts—£3.50-white, yellow, navy black.
Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

Small 32"-34" chest
medium 34"-36"
large 36"-38"
extra large 40-42"

All proceeds to *Militant* Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

Accommodation

SELF CONTAINED two-bedroomed flat in Acton, West London. Available from mid-January. Close to bus and tube. Low rent—would suit two to four *Militant* supporters. Phone 01-749 7903 evenings.

ROOM to let, all in, £20 per week. In Tooting Broadway. Contact Box 3, *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

ROOM IN shared flat. £15pw + bills in Forest Gate, London E7. Phone Jane on 01 552 3204.

BOLSHEVIK Poster Calendars. Send 50p (includes p&p) to S. Davies, 2 Keswick Avenue, Roath Park, Cardiff. All proceeds to Fighting fund.

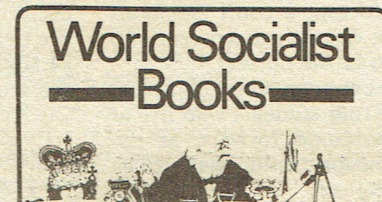
BIKE FOR sale. Raleigh RFW 3, small wheeled model. Needs new tyres, hence £25 ONO. Buyer to collect. All proceeds to the Building Fund. Ring Iain, 01-689 4690.

FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

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

Birmingham Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign DEMONSTRATION AGAINST TORY ATTACKS ON YOUTH SATURDAY, 11 FEBRUARY

Assemble 11.30 am, Chamberlain Square, City Centre.
March to Rally 1 pm. Duddleston Manor School.
Speaker: D Nellist MP



A new booklist now available (free) from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Militant

MEETINGS

For events in your area contact your local *Militant* seller.

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternative Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

BLACKBURN: Wednesday 15 February at 7.30 pm, at King George's Hall. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*), Terry Fields MP.

MILITANT MEETING at Greater London LPYS Regional Conference Speaker: Peter Taaffe Saturday, 11 February at 5.30 pm, Kingsway-Princeton College, Sidmouth Street WC1

COVENTRY *Militant* supporters wish to express greatest possible sympathy with our comrades Paul and Julie Smith over the tragic death of their baby son Karl.

CALLING ALL Marxist athletes. Have you past the finishing post for your pledge for the Building Fund? No? Then start training for the *Militant* Marathon! Join this fund raising event to be held in early spring. Contact Paul Henry, c/o 10 Kensington Road, Chorlton, Manchester.

Sri Lanka The tasks today

New pamphlet from the Nava Sama Samaja Party (UK Branch). Obtainable from World Socialist Books (see address left) Price 75p plus 10p postage

OBITUARY: Harry Selby

By Davy Dick (Pollock CLP)

LAST WEEK brought the sad news of comrade Harry Selby, the veteran Glasgow Marxist, who was found dead in his council block.

All Glasgow socialists knew Harry's lifetime struggle for socialism and his tireless campaigning in the Labour Party. Harry never

strayed from his working class experiences and spent his life as a dweller of the infamous Glasgow tenements, even during his period as Labour MP for Govan.

Although Harry and the *Militant* had their differences, Harry was always a dependable class fighter who never lost his reliance on the strength of Marxist theory. A defender of democratic rights in the Par-

ty, Harry had himself suffered expulsion from the Party in its darker years. He spent his last years as a member of the Pollock constituency, where he was of great assistance in the battle for a campaigning socialist constituency with representatives equal to the coming class struggles.

IN MEMORY OF HARRY SELBY, CLASS FIGHTER, MARXIST VETERAN AND PARTY ACTIVIST. FROM POLLOCK MILITANT SUPPORTERS

Sales drive underway

DESPITE THE atrocious weather our supporters in the Eastern Region are determined to get the paper known in every part of the region. Last weekend for the first time there was a street sale in Bletchley, Buckinghamshire where 15 papers were sold in an hour. Even better, in Welwyn Garden City through the work of sellers in Hertfordshire an order of 25 has been requested and this is only the start. In the past few months we have had new orders from Hatfield and St Albans.

Is the *Militant* sold in every town in your area, if not, why not? Get your LPYS to take our an order, sale or return minimum order 5.

On the industrial front 30 papers were sold at the London EETPU Press branch last week. Get your local TU branch to take out a regular order.

The sellers in West Wales are planning a major campaign to boost our sales covering almost every aspect of sales. They intend to set up regular sales at every Tech, organising a rota of

dole sales, extending estate sales in the pit villages and setting up sales at YTS schemes. Days of action are being held at all the major shopping centres. Throughout the area supporters are asking local shops and libraries to take the paper.

What are your plans for increasing sales? If you wish to become a seller of *Militant* contact 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986-3828.

Dave Farrar

HEROIN-

The new cancer of the council estates

IT IS young unemployed workers who are the new victims of the heroin epidemic currently spreading through Britain's economic blackspots.

Paula Staunton, of Liverpool Broadgreen LPYS, spoke to a 29 year old female addict who is married with a small child and lives on the top floor of a council tenement block. Both the girl and her husband are addicts.

AROUND HERE about 20-30% of young people take heroin regularly. Most of the cannabis pushers have stopped pushing that because of the easy and ever increasing availability of heroin. So it's fast becoming young people's first drug experience.

I started taking heroin about a year ago when I lost my job. Nearly all young people around here who take heroin are unemployed. I think that the reason is that it's easier to get a bag of Smack than it is to get a job.

If I'd a job I probably wouldn't have started taking Smack. But if I got a job tomorrow I think it would be easier for me to give up as I would have an incentive to stop.

Supplementary Benefit is little enough to keep you in food so it's not going to keep an addict going on heroin. That's what causes some addicts to steal.

'It's ruined my life'

I think there are two types of addiction, mental and physical. Some people think they are addicted before they usually are. But I know I am definitely addicted. If I try to stop I am in agony with withdrawal symptoms. I sweat, my head hurts, I get cramps and my legs won't move. I hate taking heroin—it's ruined my life.

First thing in the morning I used to think of a cup of tea. Now I think of heroin. I just

take it to keep normal, not to get stoned.

Tablets but no advice

I am now taking three quarters of a gram a day. This is a large amount and my health is suffering. I now have pleurisy, according to the doctor caused by the heroin lying on my lungs and suppressing my breathing. I went to the doctor in a state of anguish to ask him to help me give up heroin. The only way I can describe how he treated me—he looked down his nose at me as though I was filthy. He gave me tablets, no advice and no sympathy.

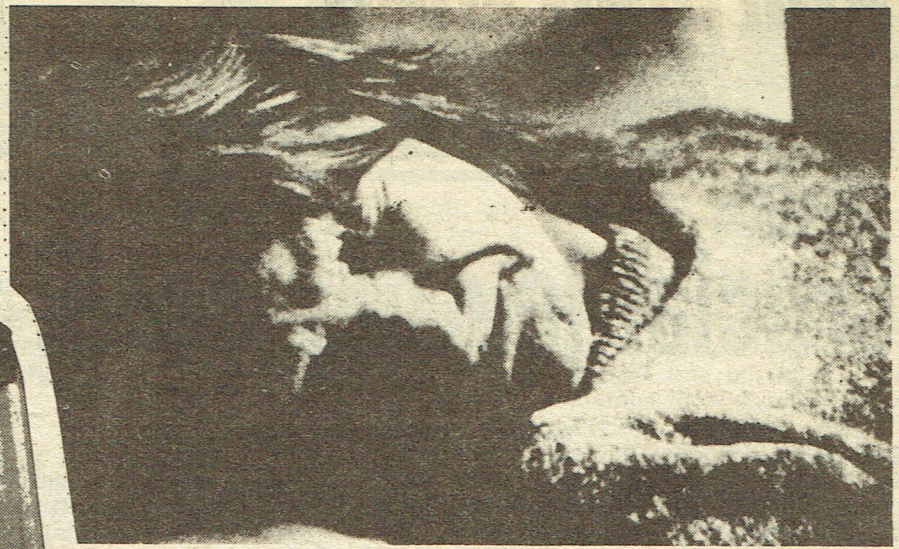
I really wish there was somewhere around here that I could go. But there is absolutely nothing for heroin addicts. There is no one for us to turn to. At the moment heroin completely runs my life. It is in my mind all the time.

I never allow my little boy to see us taking it. I don't know what I would do if he started taking it. There's not a day that goes by when I don't think about stopping taking it but there's no one to help us so I'll have to try stopping myself, reducing the amount I take.

I'm not the only one in this situation. There are hundreds like me yet there's hardly anyone who will help.

Political reasons

I think the reasons for the mass import of heroin are political. But I don't know where all the profits go. Heroin passifies young people. The people who are at the top of heroin dealing are indirectly to blame, but the system is the real enemy. Its the system that drives people to take drugs, and drugs stop people from fighting back.



Pushers' market

Slowly but surely, the cancer of heroin addiction has been taking grip of the desperate youth in Britain's economic blackspots. On working class estates with high unemployment the wretched addicts are now a common sight.

The number of addicts is increasing by 40% a year. There is an estimated 100-150,000 addicts in Britain. If heroin addiction continues at this rate this figure will rise to a quarter of a million over the next five years.

It is the unemployed teenagers on the large housing estates that are providing the new market for the pushers. With no hope of a job, deprivation and hopelessness, many have turned to heroin for comfort. Once hooked there are only two ways to get money for the next fix; prostitution or stealing. A Drug Squad officer told the *Times* recently, "Parents won't believe this...they should come down to Bury Park Road in Luton and see schoolgirls selling themselves for a fix."

Tories to blame

It is the Tories' economic policies that have created the environment for the pushers to move in. Since 1979 the Customs and Excise department has lost 3,600 jobs—1,000 of these from the front line customs control staff.

Cuts in customs staff has meant that carriers arriving at peak times in Heathrow or Dover have less than a 1% chance of being caught. However, even with a cut in staff, heroin seizures rose five fold from 1980-82—this is a small indication of the vast amount of heroin now reaching the market.

In the 1960's when the rise in heroin addiction caused near panic, there were less than 1,000 addicts. Yet in Britain today with 100-150,000 addicts there seems to be little concern on the part of the government. In the whole country only 200 beds are available in special clinics. Specialist treatment centres for addicts are few and far between and often left to voluntary groups to organise.

Workers organise

The Tories clearly have no solution: indeed it is their policies that are aggravating the situation. In many areas workers have found they are having to rely on their own organisation to fight this epidemic.

In Dublin, tenants at the St Teresa's Gardens and Dolphin House estates organised and succeeded in driving out the pushers. This was not done through 'vigilante' style tactics. It was mainly the women of the area who carried out the patrols around the estate, and addicts themselves were treated with care.

There have been similar developments on the West Pilton estate in Edinburgh and at the end of last year, Liverpool Broadgreen Labour MP Terry Fields convened a meeting of labour movement representatives and parents of heroin victims. The lessons of this meeting are to be taken out to the rest of the country.

YS around the country



LPYS members Nick Toms and Dave Brown addressed a highly successful meeting of 30 engineering apprentices, organised by AUEW shop stewards at the Molins factory in Deptford, south east London, last week.

There was an enthusiastic response to the speakers. After the meeting several apprentices joined the LPYS and now Deptford LPYS branch hopes to develop these links into a campaign to build a factory LPYS branch at Molins.

The Scottish LPYS are holding a day school on disarmament this Saturday, January 28. Guest speaker will be Denis Canavan MP. The school will be held at the

AUEW hall in Glasgow, beginning at 10.30 am.

Two YTS trainees sponsored by the local TGWU branch were among a delegation of several from East Kilbride LPYS to the Young Workers Assembly last December.

After the 2,500 strong Assembly in Manchester, the branch delivered reports to all unions and labour organisations who sponsored delegates or gave funds in the East Kilbride area. Two days later the secretary of the local TGWU replied saying he was impressed with the report and wanted a copy for every shop steward in the district.

WHY I JOINED THE



This week, members of Brighton LPYS branch tell why they joined the Young Socialists.

June and Juliet, both 19:

"We went along to the YS to find out about what's going on in the country. We enjoy most of the meetings, especially the one about working in MacDonalds. The conditions are like where we work.

"We both work as waitresses in Brighton. Conditions and wages are bad. There is no first aid box or an accident book, yet there are often accidents. We get no training and we have to have our holidays when the boss says.

Boss like Hitler

"Our boss should be called Hitler. He said he'd rather go bankrupt than have a union."

Charlotte Raven, age 14, school student:

"I wanted to become actively involved in changing society. So I signed up to the LPYS at the YCND festival. There are three of us in the LPYS in my class. In our politics class we ran a mock election. I was the Labour candidate. We did well considering it is a private school. We drew with the Conservatives.

Terrible Manifesto

"The Conservative candidate was terrible, her dad wrote her manifesto and it was still terrible. She didn't know what inflation was."

"The school held a public speaking contest, which I won speaking on 'Poverty in Britain'. Also, we managed to get an LPYS speaker to address the school assembly. A lot of parents phoned up the school saying how terrible this was."

Graeme Hendry, age 15, school student:

"Under today's Tory rule, the youth are the main centre of exploitation for the reason they're just starting out in life and have to take what's going.

"Youth are not in unions or experienced in fighting the bosses."

"In school we have a debating society where all important issues are discussed e.g. vivisection, CND. Once the monarchy was discussed and the vote was 19-5 to abolish them. I am very vocal in the debating society. The school has agreed to have a debate between the LPYS, Young Conservatives and Young Social Democrats."

Have you recently joined the Labour Party Young Socialists? What made you join? Write to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

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about

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GEORGE ORWELL 1984

Crucial journey north

"THE ROAD to Wigan Pier" marks Orwell's decisive beginnings as a 'political writer'. After his journey to northern England he called himself a socialist and was to remain one till the end of his life.

The idea for a book about the northern working-class did not originally come from Orwell, but from his publisher Gollancz. The substantial £500 publisher's advance given to Orwell enabled him to give up his part-time job as a book shop, travel north and marry.

His book gives a vivid and realistic picture of life in the depressed areas in the 1930s. He describes at first hand the lives of the miners, the

hazardous working conditions, the over crowded houses, and the drudgery faced by working class women.

He writes of the lives of the unemployed, and counters the myths put forward about unemployment by those in the affluent south. ('Why only last week we wanted a man to weed the garden and couldn't get one! The same sort of thing that we hear from the Tories today!')

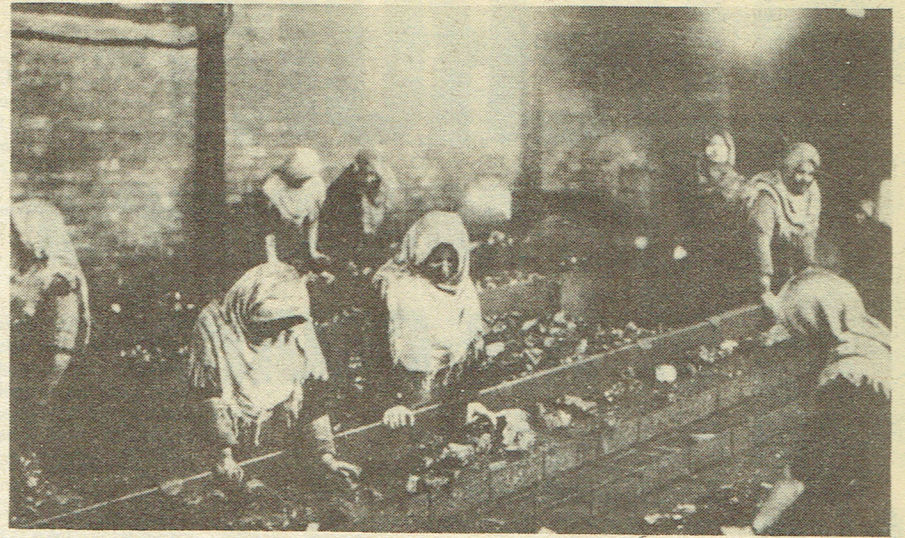
One theme which runs through the whole book is the question of class and class prejudice. Orwell talks very frankly about the prejudices held by his own middle-class in relation to the working class—how they regard workers almost as a race apart.

Perhaps his inbred prejudices and also his desire to overcome them are expressed best in the following

paragraph:-

"In a way it is even humiliating to watch coal-miners working. It raises in you a momentary doubt about your own status as an 'intellectual' and a superior person generally... all of us really owe the comparative decency of our lives to poor drudges underground, blackened to the eyes, with their throats full of coal dirt driving their shovels forward with arms and belly muscles of steel."

Generally in the book Orwell is addressing fellow-members of the 'intelligentsia' trying to convince them that their interests are the same as those of the workers. In his concluding paragraph he expresses the hope that the misery of class prejudice will disappear, and that the "sinking middle-class" will finally sink into the working class where it belongs, for after all we have



Not a scene from the 1890s. But women sorting coal at Wigan, 1930.

nothing to lose but our aitches!"

Finally Orwell states his political views. To him socialism is elementary commonsense, a blatantly obvious solution to our problems. But in the 1930's he saw socialism as being on the retreat, defeated by facism in one country after another.

He does not offer any analysis as to why this was

Writing for middle-class

the case, but he blames socialists for failing to get their message across. Many people he believed, who had faced poverty and wished to

resist tyranny and war would naturally be allies of the socialist cause, if it were not for the image that socialists had given themselves.

Too many socialists were associated with Labour Party backstairs climbing, worship of the Russian system, or crankish causes of teetotalism. He also criticises socialists for sloganising, instead of effectively putting forward their case.

The Left Book Club re-published the book and this firmly established Orwell's reputation as a socialist writer. But they only printed the first part of the book, the descriptive sections, and omitted the criticism of

socialist groups.

Much of his criticisms of various socialist groups in the 1930's are probably fairly realistic, but cannot offer a full explanation of the defeats which took place for the labour movement. Nevertheless Orwell was confident of the possibility of building mass support for socialism, which he said, was the only way that fascism would be defeated.

BARBARA HUMPHRIES
reviews
The Road to Wigan Pier (Price £2.00 from World Socialist Books)

'Thought Crimes'

THIS EXHIBITION looks at issues of state control and repression, to see how far we have realised Orwell's warning.

Peter Kennard's series of black and white political photo montages tries to highlight examples of '1984' and show how real the book has become. He uses quotes

from the novel and relates them to stark images that are drawn from current technology and events around the world. My favourite was one of Thatcher, substituted in a photograph for Queen Victoria.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the show is

the collection of Polish pre-martial law posters; they range from posters about the Katyn massacre during the Second World War up to 1981. The Poles are world famous for their graphics and most of these posters are excellent, powerful examples of defiance against the bureaucratic regime.

The exhibition is free and well worth going to see. And in addition, elsewhere at the

Barbican Centre there is a wide variety of films, discussions, plays and debates, with a different programme every day. (For prices of these events and further details contact the Barbican Centre Tel 01-628-8795)

JOHN VINER reviews
Thought Crimes—an exhibition at the Barbican Centre, London. 16-27 January.

Poplar yesterday — Liverpool today

WHEN LABOUR first took control of Poplar Council in 1919 the social conditions they faced were amongst the worst in Britain. It was the Councillors' efforts to end mass poverty which brought them into conflict with Liberal Coalition and Tory governments.

At one time they were in jail for six weeks until massive pressure from the labour movement forced their release. The full weight of the establishment was used to try and break the spirit of the councillors; new laws were introduced and existing laws mis-interpreted.

It is under powers first drawn up in 1927 to deal with Poplar, that Liverpool City Council is now faced by suspension, and basically for the same reason; the policies pursued were popular and acted as an example to other councils. Joynson-Hicks,

Tory Health Minister in the 1920s accurately diagnosed the problem: "Poplarity is an infectious disease".

The whole labour movement should acquaint themselves with the lessons from the Poplar struggles. And Noreen Branson's book is indispensable for this, as it gives a full story of the events. For as Poplar's leader, George Lansbury, explained; "The attack on Poplar is the direct result of Poplar's endeavour to do the thing that others only talk about".

FRANK LEETCH
(Wythenshawe LPYS) reviews *Poplarity 1919-25* by Noreen Branson. (£3.00, including p&p from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN).

Cleveland—chemical disaster area

WITH THIRTY-SIX chemical plants, Cleveland has the greatest concentration of such sites in Europe, and recent events have shown the dangers.

In the last few weeks we have had major fires at ICI, British Steel and a chemical leak at Carless Chemicals. Only the skills of the fire service and a large dose of luck have prevented a major disaster.

Public expenditure cuts have seriously added to the dangers. After the ICI fire there was only enough foam in stock to cope with one major fire, and no cash in the coffers to replace it for three months. Closure of burns units meant that firemen had to be ferried to three hospitals before they could be treated.

It took the whole resources of Cleveland

Brigade to cope with the ICI fire. What would have happened if the BSC fire had happened on the same day?

Luckily the wind took the fuels away from the town centre and housing estate. But over 1,000 people had to be evacuated. If the wind had changed or the tanker had exploded then the numbers affected or even killed could only be guessed at.

But now the Tories have new plan to 'help' the area. They plan to dump nuclear waste at Billingham (See *Militant* 618). Given the record of the existing industry, Teesiders are viewing government assurances about the safety of dumping nuclear waste with considerable scepticism.

By Norman Hall



39,000 Queue for 300 jobs

More than 39,000 people queued in temperatures below freezing to apply for 300 jobs as letter sorters at four Chicago post offices this week. With many people huddled in blankets, lines began forming at 1 am on Monday.—*Report in the Daily Telegraph, 18 January.*

Bosses pessimism

Some on the left are full of total pessimism and defeat *Militant* has consistently argued against this, pointing out that the workers' organisations have not been decisively beaten or crushed. And in a round about way this perspective is confirmed in a leading article in the January issue of the bosses magazine, *Management To-day*:

"The period of relative calm—culminating in 1983 strike statistics which are likely to show the smallest number of working days lost in disputes for forty years—may now be coming to an end...much of the unions recent docility (or 'realism' as it is wishfully projected by Ministers) has more to do with the recession and the possibility of redundancies than any conversion to the policies of the Prime Minister or Norman Tebbit.

"When the upturn brings the de facto pay policy to an end, the unions will certainly find it easier to resort to time-honoured down-tools methods...Few employers have used their unaccustomed dominance, handed to them on a plate by recession, to consolidate their advantage or to plan for a future when the balance of industrial forces may have swung once again...

"Today's relative industrial peace gives a misleading impression. Privately, many employers

are apprehensive about the future. They fear that the shopfloor will seek to recoup its lost authority in any upturn."

Len Murray please note.

Going, going...

With the Tory press all ready for a vicious hatchet job at Chesterfield, Sid Weighell hasn't been able to resist sticking his knife into Labour. In a letter to the *Guardian* (18 January) the ex-railworkers' leader says he would not vote Labour in Chesterfield, because the candidate is Tony Benn.

He blames the left for almost everything in the last six years beginning with the rank and file's opposition to wage restraint. In this he mentions the 1978 Labour Party Conference decision (but when did the last Labour government do anything Conference asked?) Yet he forgets that the TUC voted against wage restraint a few weeks before; but then it is not the first time that Sidney has made a mistake about voting.

He can write about conspiracies until the Tories give adequate finance to British Rail, but it won't alter one fact. His policies are out of date and it is ordinary workers, not least in his own union, who have been arguing for a socialist alternative.

Gone

Just in case his class interests were in any doubt, Lord Harris has joined the board of Eddie Shah's *Stockport Messenger* group. The noble Lord, when he was a mere untitled John Harris, was Press and Publicity Officer at the Labour Party. He moved on to become Roy Jenkins press officer and from 1974-79 he was a Labour Minister of State at the Home Office.

Two years later he joined the SDP, like many other right-wingers whose careers were beginning to flag in the Labour Party. Having risen to influence and his title on the back of members of the labour movement, Harris now turns round and spits in their face. He, and his actions are a true reflection of the SDP.

(Amongst the contributors to *Left and Right* this week were Richard Knights, and Steve Cawley)

IF YOU come across something which will make a good 'Left and Right' send it in—if printed we'll acknowledge it.

Tories plan to cripple unions' political funds

IF THEY know little else, the Tories certainly appreciate the importance of money. Labour's finances—already half a million in the red—will be savaged if the Tories get their way.

They want to make the unions "re-consider" their affiliation to the Labour Party. They hope that their new Trade Union Bill, coupled with a barrage of lies and propaganda from their Fleet Street friends, will persuade trade unionists to wind up their political funds and so cripple Labour.

According to Tory propaganda millions of people are forced to join trade unions against their will. And these tyrannical bodies have grasped money from their members pockets and given it to the Labour Party.

The Tories would have us believe that they are friends of the individual trade unionist against the union bureaucrats. The truth is that they were viciously opposed to trade unionism from its inception. The Labour Party was the result of a mass movement of Trade Unionists for parliamentary representation.

A 1920's cabinet memo from a Conservative minister lets the cat out of the bag:

"The real point we have to decide is this. Do we wish to attack the trade unions as such or

ANDY BEADLE looks at the twin threat to Labour Party finances. First the deliberate political attack from the new legislation proposed by the Tories. Secondly (below left) at the blunders of Labour's right-wing and how those privileged to represent the Party in Parliament could help redeem the situation.

do we not? . . . the major part of the outcry against the political levy is not motivated by burning indignation for the trade unionist who is forced to subscribe to the furtherance of political principles which he abhors. It is based on a desire to hit the Socialist Party through their pocket..."

Labour has always been based upon the trade unions. In 1982, for instance, 78% of its £3.6m national income came from Trade Union affiliations, compared with 16% from the Constituency Labour Parties.

Two attacks

Under the existing law unions can't use their general funds for political purposes but they can decide to set up a special political fund which individuals may choose to "contract out" of. Labour get the bulk of its cash from millions of trade unionists each chipping in 50p a year.

The bill due to become law later this year has two main prongs of attack against trade

union political funds. The first seeks to re-write unions rules by demanding a ballot at least every ten years to confirm the existence of a political fund.

By contrast unions without a political fund won't be asked to re-consult their members. Unions whose political funds were set up more than ten years ago (practically all of them) will be given 14 months from the enactment of the bill to conduct a ballot.

If the vote goes against, contributions cease immediately and any remaining funds must be spent or wound up within six months. To ensure correct application of Tory "democracy" the rules for the ballot will ultimately be at the discretion of the law courts.

The second line of attack is to re-define the meaning of "political objects". Up to now all unions have been allowed to produce "political" literature providing that the main purpose was the pursuit of trade union objectives.

Under the new proposals

union campaigns against cuts or privatisation, or for a minimum wage would be all be deemed "political", unions without a political fund could not fight on such issues. The Tories hope this will silence public sector unions like NALGO, CPSA, SCPS, and NUT whose members jobs, pay and conditions depend on a successful fight against their employers, the government.

In contrast, companies can run political campaigns without a special fund. In 1955 a court ruled that Tate and Lyle could spend cash on the infamous "Mr Cube" anti-nationalisation campaign and could even claim tax relief on it!

The Tories, SDP and Liberals get most of their cash from construction firms, finance companies and other big business concerns. It was revealed this week that the Tories have refused to allow any of these decisions to be decided by ballot of shareholders or workers.

The Tory proposals are a deadly threat to the labour movement. But the Trade Union bill is a double edged weapon. It would force unions like NALGO to set up a political fund for the first time in their history.

Even if they forced certain unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party the Tories plans

could still explode in their faces. The outcome could force Labour to become a radical campaigning party in order to survive. A campaign by the Labour and trade union leaders against this bill could show millions how democratic the Tories really are.

The only possible reply to the Tory attacks is a socialist campaign. Last year the Boundaries Commission Report worked an enormous fiddle against Labour. The Tories couldn't have filched more seats more brazenly if they'd hi-jacked a rush hour bus.

Law no answer

The Labour leaders tried to fight them through the law courts and ended up with a massive bill! They didn't understand that only a mass movement could stop the Tories. And how could they expect workers to defend Labour on a secondary issue when they offered no clear programme to defend workers' livelihoods?

If the leaders explain how Labour can defend jobs, services, and living standards, the workers will rally to its defence and any ballot could be turned into a resounding vote of confidence.

P.S Ask your union branch to make a donation to Militant's fighting fund before it's too late!

Labour in cash crisis

LABOUR'S FINANCES are already in a mess without the Tories' interference. The party has debts of £535,000 with another £90,000 in legal bills on the way. There is still around £210,000 in the election fund but union leaders are insisting that it is saved for the next general election. If things go on their present course the Labour Party would be bankrupt in the next year or so.

Perhaps it is not surprising that ex-treasurer, Eric Varley, has decided it's time to get out! He is now ditching the Labour Party for a more lucrative career as a boss of Coalite. Unfortunately, some other Labour leaders seem to share his economic priorities. The annual income of the 200-odd Labour MPs is more than the entire national income of the Labour Party!

It also appears that some right wing trade union leaders have been prepared to withhold money to prevent the party fighting for socialism. The Engineering workers' union has pulled out of 'Trade Unions for a Labour Victory', to return to the old arrangement of financing the Labour Party directly. AUEW general secretary, Terry Duffy, explained that they were now satisfied—as they were not when TULV started—that the present NEC and leadership were behaving responsibly enough to be trusted. (Presumably this 'responsi-

ble' behaviour includes slashing the LPYS budget). The AUEW is now prepared to increase its contributions! Remember a couple of years ago, the right wing were blaming the left for getting the party into debt!

Cutbacks

No financial remedies have been taken by the NEC so far—except a decision to appoint a fund-raiser for the first time in the party's history. But various 'solutions' have been floated such as staff cuts and moving into smaller premises.

General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, is said to favour reducing HQ staff by twenty. These cuts would mean compulsory redundancies among the 120 full-timers at Walworth Road. The premises are leased from a group of trade unions. The leasehold is valued at a nominal £1,000—practically the only assets of the party! So in the short-term, smaller premises would just mean a big removal bill.

Perhaps *Labour Weekly* is



The Party was built on the unions. (Above) Engineers voting at Party Conference.



Two ways of coping with Labour's financial problems. Right-winger Eric Varley (Above left) resigns as Party Treasurer, and takes a company directorship. Left-winger Dennis Skinner (above right) gives donations to Party funds.

for the chop? It is losing the party £2,000 a week because of its small circulation and its price has just been upped to a phenomenal 40p, which certainly won't boost its influence outside a narrow circle of party faithful.

Such is the gloom and doom perspective for Labour's finances. But cuts and catastrophe are not inevitable. Organisation flows from political ideas and nowhere is this more true than finance. Labour MPs

and top party officials could afford to give a fortune.

Worker's wage

Terry Fields and Dave Nellist stood in the general election on a platform on a "a workers' MP on a worker's wage". If all Labour leaders followed their examples then many ordinary members would contribute ten times the present £7 per annum membership

fee. We must campaign to build Labour into a mass socialist party capable of driving out the Tories and using trade union power to change society and remove the moneybags at the top. If the Labour leaders took the task seriously, how many of our 6,000,000 affiliated members would be content to give only a penny a week?

MP's can pay up

—Letter from *Labour Weekly*, 20 January.

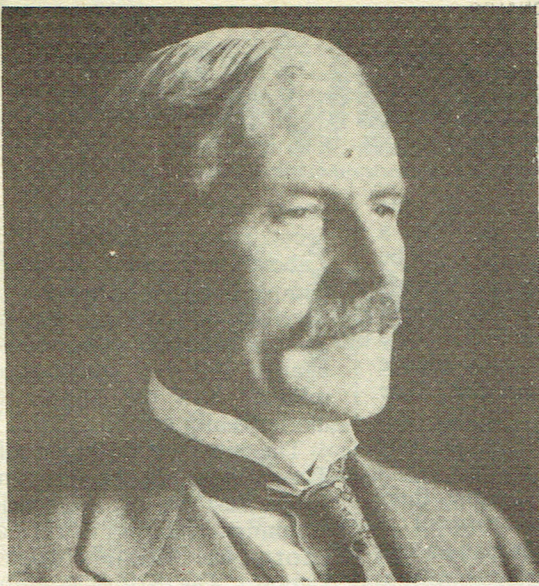
THE financial crisis in the Labour Party is one in which we all have to share the blame and of course the answer in the long run is a mass party where subscriptions are collected on a regular basis. This can only be achieved by making the Labour Party a mass fighting organisation.

In the meantime, the deficit could be practically wiped out overnight if our party adopted the same course as the SPD, in West Germany, where every MP—who after all, owes everything to the party and its rank and file—has 10 per cent of salary deducted for party funds.

A further good source of income would be also be that all monies earned by Labour MPs or Lords from writing for newspapers, magazines, and appearances on TV and radio, should be paid direct into party funds.

It would be interesting, and encouraging to the rank and file to hear how many Labour MPs at present do so, or are now willing to start paying 10 per cent of their salary to the party funds, and so help stop the redundancies which are being talked about at party headquarters at Walworth Road.

Stan Natras
20 North Street
Littlehampton
West Sussex



Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald.



The Cabinet 1924—it included two Tory lords.

CIVIL WAR PLOT

MOSCOW ORDERS TO OUR REDS.

GREAT PLOT DISCLOSED YESTERDAY.

"PARALYSE THE ARMY AND NAVY."

MR. MACDONALD WOULD LEND RUSSIA OUR MONEY!

DOCUMENT ISSUED BY FOREIGN OFFICE

AFTER "DAILY MAIL" HAD SPREAD THE NEWS.

A "very a-c-r-e-t" letter of instruction from Moscow, which we publish below, discloses a great Bolshevik plot to paralyse the British Army and Navy and to plunge the country into civil war. The letter is addressed by the Bolsheviks of Moscow to the Soviet Government's emissaries in Great Britain, the Communist Party, who in turn are the masters of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government, which has signed a treaty with

of disclosure of the letter...
ARMED INSURRECTION.
The I.R.I. (Executive Committee) International (Communist) International will...
In the meanwhile, however...
A statement of relations...
The letter is addressed by the Bolsheviks of Moscow to the Soviet Government's emissaries in Great Britain, the Communist Party, who in turn are the masters of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Government, which has signed a treaty with



The Daily Mail, 25 October 1924. 'Discloses'

As we stood waiting for His Majesty, amid gold and crimson of the Palace, I could not help marvelling at the strange turn of Fortune's wheel, which had brought MacDonald the starveling clerk, Thomas the engine-driver, Henderson the foundry labourer and Clynes the mill-hand, to this pinnacle beside the man whose forbears had been kings for so many generations. We were making history."

Thus wrote JR Clynes about the first Labour government which took office sixty years ago this month, and was brought down the same year. Was history made? That a Labour Party government could come to power at all did undoubtedly illustrate the important advances made by the political voice of the organised working class just a quarter of a century after its formation.

In one sense it marked an historic milestone in the growth and political awakening of the working class but MacDonald's appointment certainly did not mean that the British workers were now stepping decisively on to the stage of history. No subsequent Labour government, however ineffective, achieved as little as this one.

It served as a warning to Labour activists that merely having Labour MPs in the Cabinet will change nothing. Unless they have a resolute programme of fundamental social change and a labour movement mobilised in support, they will simply become administrators of the capitalist machine which they inherited, and then be thrown out when their job for the capitalists is done.

British crisis

The background was a Britain in crisis, its position as a world super-power under threat, rising unemployment, militancy on the part of the workers, and both the capitalist parties, but especially the Liberals, wracked by crises and splits. Like every other European ruling class, the British were still haunted by the recent Russian Revolution and feared its spread.

Thus while they were quite prepared to tolerate a Labour government, they were terrified of the movement on which that government, they were terrified of contradictory view of the ruling class emerged time and time again throughout 1924, culminating later in the year in the red-scare, "Zinoviev letter" election campaign.

It was a minority government. In the 1923 election, the Tories won 258 seats, Labour 191 and the Liberals 158. Baldwin remained in office for two months until he was defeated on the issue which for years had divided the two parties of the ruling class—tariffs against free trade. Then, on 21 January, Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labour Party, was summoned to the Palace, as the leader of the next-biggest party, and asked to form a government.

The ruling class could easily have

conditions...we will sleep more or less comfortably in our beds. Capital steadily pursues its old routine of continuous and on the whole prosperous investment...their foreign policy is the same as ours."

To the mass of Labour supporters, however, the formation of 'their' government was seen as an historic victory. In Glasgow the following Sunday, public meetings were overflowing. At one of them Jimmy Maxton, one of the most left-wing MPs of the time expressed the rather naive optimism of many workers:

"The cabinet is a good sound cabinet, representative of every interest in the Labour Movement...There is no reason why the inauguration of a Labour government in Britain during the past week should not be the first step to put Britain in the van of the nations as being the first to solve its poverty problem, the first to solve its problem of disease and the first to solve its problems of ignorance and of hatred and enmity among the nations."

In the event, not one of these problems was even tackled, let alone solved. Only Wheatley, through his Housing Act, which increased subsidies for council housing and extended local authorities' powers to build houses for rent, can be said to have carried through any reforms whatsoever.

In every other field, the government's policies were no different from those that would have been implemented by a Tory or Liberal government. Snowden's budget was an orthodox capitalist measure. Although Keynes had already begun to put forward his ideas for alleviating unemployment through increased government spending, these had not yet been absorbed by the Labour leaders:

"You are never going to settle the unemployment problem," declared Snowden in Parliament, "You are never going to mitigate it to any extent, by making work...As a matter of fact, in a sense, we are aggravating unemployment, because we are making unemployment in the future."

Keynes' ideas ultimately proved not to work either, but Snowden's alternative was no different to that of Thatcher and Lawson today.

Despite the Labour Government, or perhaps because of it, workers continued to fight through their trade unions for legitimate rights and improvements in living standards. The number of strikes rose from 628 in 1923 to 710 in 1924, with the numbers involved increasing from 405,000 to 613,000.

The behaviour of the government towards militant workers was no better than that of a Tory or a Liberal administration. Under pressure from MacDonald over a dockers' strike, TGWU leader Ernest Bevin commented: "I wish it had been a Tory Government. We would not have been frightened by their threats", adding his excuse for abandoning the interests of his members: "We were bound to listen to the appeal of our own people."

By Pat Craven

The capitalist class could sleep easily in their beds

avoided this outcome if they had seriously believed the views of such figures as Churchill, who declared that, "the enthronement in office of a socialist government will be a serious national misfortune such as has usually befallen great states only on the morrow of defeat in war."

More typical was the view of George V who said: "Labour must be given a fair chance. They have different values to ours as they are all socialists, but they ought to be given a chance and treated fairly." In other words, the ruling class don't like the Labour Party, but has nothing to fear from a minority government led by the likes of MacDonald, which it can get rid of whenever it wants!

The capitalist class would have been reassured by the composition of the Cabinet. For in addition to the chief Labour leaders—Henderson, Clynes, Thomas and Webb, MacDonald included a Liberal, Lord Haldane, as Lord Chancellor, and even two Tories, Lords Parmoor and Chelmsford. As *The Scotsman* exclaimed in an editorial: "Both have been life-long Unionists and up to this time they have given no hint of any change in their political convictions."

MacDonald had earlier given an idea of the sort of Cabinet minister he was looking for when he wrote to Haldane: "I wonder if you would be disposed to help me by taking an office like education. I want there a good man, earnest efficient and yet not extravagant."

The representatives of the capitalist class had the measure of the MacDonald Cabinet. Asquith explained to the National Liberal Federation that the formation of a Labour Government "with its claws cut" was the best insurance against a genuine Labour Government.

"This experiment", he went on, "could hardly be made under safer

1922
First Labour government

Reactionary Foreign Policy

The following year, Ben Tillet told the Labour Party conference he had never heard the "same menacing tones or the same expressions of fear" from Liberal or Tory ministers.

As the Communist Party's paper *Workers' Weekly* put it on 8 August: "The Labour government has just done the same as either a Liberal or a Tory government would have done—used naval men to unload mails during the dock strike, got the proclamation declaring a State of Emergency to exist signed during the tramway strike, threatened to introduce naval men into the power stations during the railway shopmen's strike, set up courts of inquiry in order to get a compromise in all other disputes."

Just as bad was the government's attitude towards the colonies. Asquith was right—Colonial Secretary, Thomas, proclaimed at the British Empire Exhibition that "the government intended above all else to hand to their successors one thing when they gave up the seals of office, and that was the general recognition of the fact that they were proud and jealous of, and were prepared to maintain, the Empire."

To this end, the government sent bombers to attack the peasants of Iraq, killing and wounding large numbers, destroying houses and crops, because they refused to pay taxes for the maintenance of British troops in the country. Only George Lansbury, a leading left-wing backbench MP protested against this.

There is some evidence however that opposition even within the Parliamentary Labour Party was swelling. A Party activist from South Wales wrote to *Workers Weekly* about the report given by his local MP to the party:

"He said that the rank and file members in the House, i.e. backbenchers, were in a state of absolute revolt against the cabinet. He pointed out that the government were simply despising them...they were treated practically with contempt..."

"He concluded he was one of the many members who was dissatisfied, stating that they had not fulfilled, or attempted to fulfill, the pledges given at the last election; that they would and should be judged not so much as to what they had done, but by what they had not attempted to do."

But the real discontent was building up below. The more advanced sections of workers were quickly realising the shortcomings of the Labour Government. In August 1924 the National Minority movement was launched, at a conference attended by 270 delegates, representing over 200,000 leftward-moving trade unionists.

Potential blunted

Unfortunately, the great potential of the Minority Movement was to be blunted by the failure of its leading elements, especially the Communist Party, to clearly and critically distinguish itself from the more woolly 'lefts' on the TUC general council. The interests of the increasingly bureaucratized Communist International were mainly focussed on the Anglo-Russian Trade agreements and the parallel formation of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee—both hailed as significant victories for

BY SOCIALISTS' N

25,000
AS A WEEK FOR
LIFE.

"DAILY MAIL"
ELECTION COMPETITION.

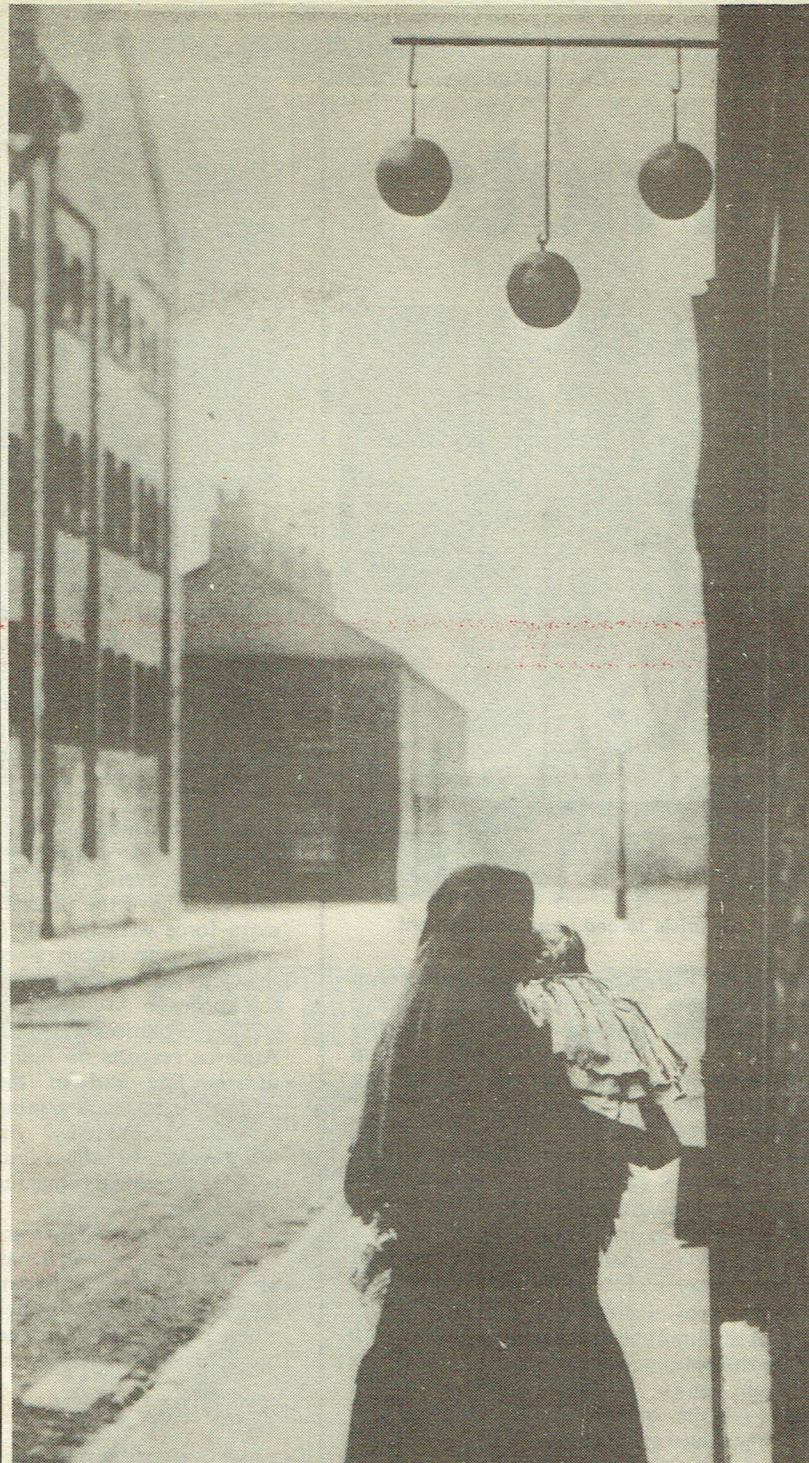
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Mr. De V. Arri...
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Mr. De V. Arri...
...the Union...
...when he...
...County...
...in 1922.



A miner's wife visits a pawn shop in the early 1920s—the first Labour government had little effect on workers' lives.

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our
ment

organised labour—to the detriment of a sharp and audacious class policy at home.

There was however, little sign of any widespread opposition at the Annual Conference, where on 7 October, MacDonald was able to reassure delegates with the bland statement that "some things we should like to do we saw quite plainly we could not do, and on these we had to face boldly a little disappointment amongst our own people."

At this conference, the leadership was able to get support for a measure to ban members of the Communist Party from being members of the Labour Party. It was this kind of issue, rather than the Government's record, which was dominating political life. Even as the conference was meeting, the country was on the brink of a new election, totally dominated by the "issue" of the Labour government's attitude towards "Communism".

The Soviet Union in 1924 was at a turning point. Lenin died the day MacDonald was appointed Prime Minister. Although many members of the future bureaucracy which grew under Stalin had already moved into positions in the Civil Service and Diplomatic corps, their position was not yet secure.

At least in words, the Soviet government was still calling for world-wide revolution. At times the rhetoric of people like Zinoviev, President of the Communist International directly contradicted the diplomatic activities of such figures as Chicherin, Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

The bulk of the British ruling class still took the rhetoric seriously and still feared the spread of social revolution. MacDonald was certainly no sympathiser of the revolution, but, in common with a minority of the more far-sighted

representatives of big business, saw the advantages of establishing normal diplomatic and commercial relations with the USSR.

The main motive was to gain access to the huge potential market in the Soviet Union for British capital. Thus, diplomatic relations were established on 2 February, and MacDonald, who was himself Foreign Secretary, began negotiations for a trade treaty, which was finally agreed on 10 August.

The treaty, which *Workers' Weekly* described as "a victory for the labour movement, the first for six months", included the provision by Britain of a loan in the region of £30 million, in return for the settlement of debts to British interests which had been outstanding since before the revolution.

Red scare

The treaty was never ratified by Parliament. The right-wing diehards, in both the Tory and Liberal Parties launched a hysterical campaign in the press against it, under the slogan "No Money for Murderers".

The Tories saw this as the issue on which to get MacDonald out. Even Lloyd George, who had a few years earlier argued for such a treaty with the USSR, swung behind the majority of his class. It was only a matter of time before the government would be defeated.

When defeat came, however, it was not over the treaty, but another "red-scare". On 1st August, the *Workers Weekly* published the following special appeal to the armed forces:

"Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen! Will you Kill your Mates? Remember—you are workers! The bosses are your enemies. Don't shoot strikers! They are workers like you. They are fighting for a de-

cent living for themselves and their women and kids. If the profiteering capitalists, through their agents—your officers—tell you to murder British workers—DON'T SHOOT."

Although light-years from the kind of statements made by the "Communist" Party of today, this appeal can hardly have posed a serious threat to the British ruling class. The Communist Party in 1924 had only 3,500 members and had failed to make the kind of advances which other such parties had made, for example in France and Germany.

In the hysterical atmosphere of August 1924, however, it provoked a raid on the Party offices; files were taken, and the acting editor of *Workers Weekly*, John Campbell was arrested. Mastings, the Attorney-General, a recent-convert to the Labour Party, brought charges against Campbell, under the Incitement to Mutiny Act of 1797, of "attempting to seduce from loyalty to the King members of the Navy, Army and Air Force."

Hastings had not even consulted any other member of the Cabinet. There was an immediate campaign within the labour movement. So great was the outcry that the charges were dropped almost immediately, supposedly on "legal" grounds, but in reality because of the pressure within the Labour Party.

The Liberals and Tories seized on this as yet another example of MacDonald "capitulating to Communism". And when Parliament debated the withdrawal of the Campbell prosecution on 8th October, the Liberals actually moved the resolutions against the government and they and the Tories brought the government down. A general election was called for 29 October.



Friendly explanations during the Woolwich By-election (in which he was defeated) between Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald who supported the war and Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald who opposed the war; also between Mr. Macdonald, the candidate of the ILP, and Mr Macdonald who has the blessing of the bourgeoisie; and Mr. Macdonald, Secretary of the Second International, and Mr. Macdonald, official of the ILP, which has repudiated the Second International. From 'The Communist' Newspaper, 1922.

Forged
Zinoviev
Letter
dominated
election

There then followed the most sensational of all red-scapes, the publication on 25 October of the "Zinoviev Letter". This purported to be a letter from Zinoviev to the Central Committee of the British Communist Party. It urged them to bring pressure to bear to ensure ratification of the Anglo-Russian treaty, called upon them to establish "cells in all units of the troops" and prepare for "armed warfare" and "armed insurrection".

In fact the "letter" was forged by White-Russian emigres in Berlin, in collusion with the reactionary government of Poland. Its aim was to try to prevent the signing of the treaties.

It was passed through Polish intelligence officials to one of their opposite numbers in Britain, Donald Im Thurn. (There has been speculation that "master-spy" Sidney Reilly may also have been involved in getting the letter to Britain.)

Im Thurn found various civil servants, Tory Party leaders and Fleet Street editors who were willing, whatever their motives, to accept the letter as genuine, and they laid plans to use it to ensure Labour's defeat.

Four days before the election it hit the front pages. The *Daily Mail* had no fewer than seven headlines above its article. (see picture top)

Most blatant was the *Sunday Express*, which declared: "It may be a forgery, but it was a mighty convenient forgery."

MacDonald was unable to mount any counter-attack; he had been totally out-manoeuvred. He had even been sent a copy of the letter before its publication, in his capacity as Foreign Secretary. He merely sent it back to the Foreign Office with a note urging that great care be taken to establish its authenticity.

Only the Labour *Daily Herald* was prepared to state openly that the letter was a forgery. Even when faced with electoral disaster, MacDonald was not prepared to criticise the civil servants who had been up to their ears in the plot to get him defeated.

The plot succeeded. The Tories gained 155 seats to give them a majority of over 200. Labour lost fifty seats, though their vote actually grew by more than a million. It was the Liberals whose desertion of the government had caused the election to take place, who were the biggest losers. They lost over 100 seats and became a minor party, with only 42 seats. They have never recovered to this day.

MacDonald's reaction to the Zinoviev Letter typifies his general character, utterly naive to the hard

realities of class politics. In a letter to the outgoing Lord Advocate, just after the election defeat, he wrote: "I am rather depressed for the time being, not at the results which have more hope than despair in them, but in the character of the attack. If this is how political contests are to be waged, our poor country has hard times in front of it."

This attitude, that the Tories had somehow broken the 'rules' of decent behaviour, was displayed by the Labour leaders generally. *Forward*, the Scottish ILP paper, quoting the *Sunday Express* article about the "mighty convenient forgery" complained that this "illustrates the mentality of the gang of unscrupulous ruffians who seek to dope the minds of the working masses of this country."

The experience of 1924 demonstrates clearly that the Labour movement can never underestimate the depths to which the bosses and their political representatives are prepared to sink, and the lengths they are prepared to go to, to defend their class position, even when the threat is more imaginary than real.

Whatever the legitimate aspirations of the mass of working people, those whose toil and sweat built the trade unions and then the Labour Party, the Cabinet members of 1924 had no programme or perspective for the socialist transformation of society. Class politics were foreign to them.

Class interests

Their policy of social reform was in no sense based upon the struggle and mobilisation of organised workers themselves but on gradual change, slowly, imperceptibly, improving the lot of the common people: to carry out reforms on their behalf. MacDonald's 'salon socialism' came up against the harsh realities of ruling class interests, and the capitalists' fear, not of the leaders, but of the labour movement beneath them.

As Trotsky pointed out, MacDonald and the Fabian leaders who dominated the 1924 government were "an awkward and useless survival" of "the insipid, optimistic Victorian epoch, in which it was believed that tomorrow will be somewhat better than today and the day after tomorrow still better than tomorrow." He went on to add that they were now (writing in 1925) the "most reactionary group to be found in Great Britain..."

"These inflated authorities, pedants, conceited and highfalutin' cowards are systematically poisoning the labour movement, obscuring the consciousness of the proletariat, paralysing its will." (Trotsky: *Where is Britain Going?*)

At the time these lessons were not widely drawn. By arguing that "we were robbed," that "we didn't have a majority "and didn't have time to carry out our programme", MacDonald was able to retain the loyalty of the bulk of Labour activists, until his conservative outlook was finally revealed for all to see in the betrayal of 1931, with the formation of the National Government.

Hong Kong, Uruguay, Pakistan, Japan

Hong Kong youth riots

"HONG KONG investors see hopeful signs," said the *Financial Times'* headline on 12 January. Two days later another *FT* headline ran **"Hong Kong rioters loot shops."**

The Hong Kong "success story" blazoned by the monetarists in British and American government doesn't look so successful from the shanties and overcrowded flats of Kowloon. The biggest social unrest since 1967 started with a taxi drivers' dispute over the raising of licence and registration fees by as much as 500%.

The riots seemed to have arisen during the disruption caused by the strike. Mainly unemployed youth looted shops, destroyed vehicles and stoned the hated police. This was a gut reaction to the rising unemployment, the undemocratic colonial system and the mass poverty amidst the ostentatious wealth of the few.

Hong Kong was captured by British imperialism in 1842. An excellent deep water port, it became rich on trade and developed a highly profitable manufacturing base after the war, based on small-scale low-wage industry. This has made millions for Western investors and made a few thousand millionaires in Hong Kong itself.

Rapid growth ended

The rapid growth carried on even from 1975 to 1982 but the last recession caught Hong Kong too. Manufacturing income plummeted 30%, the property boom which had taken much of the



Young workers demonstrated in Hong Kong before the crisis forced up unemployment.

investment in previous years went bust, unemployment went up as did short-time working. The rags to riches myth which kept down dissatisfaction at home and dazzled hopeful unskilled workers from the Chinese mainland, had gone into reverse.

Fears that the anger of the riots might take on a con-

scious class basis have caused jitters in the Stock Exchanges in Britain and Hong Kong. Investors had been apprehensive for the future of their wealth when the lease for Hong Kong expires in 1997, returning control to China. The British ruling class who have until now maintained direct control through a colonial governor,

realise they have no prospect of maintaining the colony against the wishes of the Chinese government.

Now the Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing (previously Peking) have proposed a compromise, at least temporarily. They say Hong Kong can maintain its capitalist economy until at least the middle of the next century. Ji Pengfui of the Hong

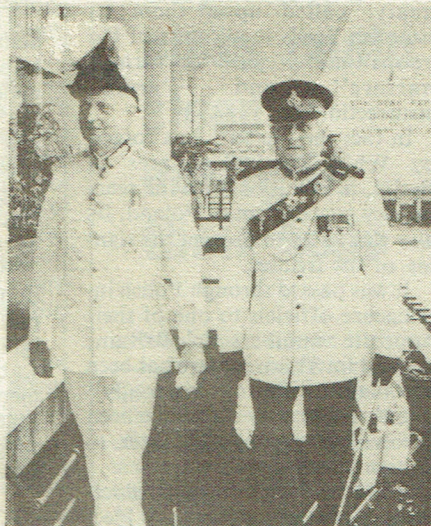
Kong Bureau in Beijing even send "Communist cadres" into the ex-colony as they might not be able to restrain them from preaching socialism!

How long a hostile capitalist enclave in a Stalinist state could maintain in practice is a different matter. But economically Hong Kong is a major source of foreign currency for China, and the port also provides access to advanced Western technology. China's bureaucracy want stability at least up until the transition to government.

Dreams in tatters

Just like their fellow bureaucrats in Moscow, they have little concern for the working class of any country and have no wish to promote revolution. But a worsening of the crisis in capitalism may leave all the dreams of Western millionaires and Chinese officials in tatters.

By a Militant reporter



The British governor of Hong Kong. Plumbed hats and all the trappings of colonial domination.

Uruguayan general strike— Time running out for military

ON 18 JANUARY, workers in Uruguay held the first general strike in the ten years of vicious military rule. They were demanding better pay, an amnesty for the thousands of political prisoners and the lifting of the ban on political parties.

The walkout which paralysed the entire economy, was particularly strong in the capital Montevideo. Unions demanded a monthly wage rise of \$57 for all workers (the present average is \$150). But what gave the protests extra force were the raised political expectations since the October elections across the border in Argentina.

The revolution in South America respects no boundaries. The end of the military regime in Argentina was celebrated in Montevideo by thousands running cheering through the streets.

Within a week there were strikes throughout Uruguay and a battle between students and riot police where one student died and hundreds were arrested.

Mass rally

In November, a rally organised by all the political parties attracted 400,000, over a third of the population of Montevideo, the country's biggest demonstration for half a century. But it is not the opposition parties, who are still very timid, who are fighting the junta. It is the working class.

Riots have flared up over the government's closure of an independent radio station and riot police were called out to arrest 50 people the week before the general strike when 2,000

demonstrated in support of workers occupying a textile factory.

"Uruguayan workers no longer have anything to lose," said a textile workers' leader Alicia Santamaria. Police have now forced the textile workers to leave. But they cannot crush the new mood in the working class.

Repressive tactics

The government are trying their old repressive tactics with a government decree outlawing the "Inter-Union Plenum" which called the strike, banning all union meetings and stopping the media from reporting union activities. But the signs are that workers will defy the ban.

Just as in Chile, protests have been taking many forms, including demonstrators banging on pots and pans. This has happened in all neighbourhoods including the middle class areas. There is no social base for the regime. The President, General Alvarez is trying desperately hard to form a civilian group to replace the military backing but seems to be getting little support. Time is running out for the military dictatorship.

By Roger Shives

Japan - A Career in the unions?

FURTHER EVIDENCE of the type of leaders the Japanese working class are saddled with was given in a recent *Financial Times* article.

Mr Ichiro Shioji is the president of the 60,000 Nissan Motor Workers Union and the 230,000 Federation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions. Shioji, a graduate of Harvard Business School, began his career in the Personnel department at Nissan.

Rise to fame

His boss in that department, Kwaamata, had the good fortune to be made president of Nissan! Shioji's rise to fame is euphemistically described as follows:

"In the early 1950s Shioji, then a young member of Nissan's personnel department, co-operated with some of the company's executives in a successful attempt to break Marxist control of the

company's workers by setting up a new anti-communist union."

No details are given of the birth of the "responsible" union but a competitor of Nissan's, Toyota, at the same time smashed their union following a 100-day strike, so the chances are that Shioji built his position on the mass sackings of the early 1950s when hundreds of thousands lost their jobs for belonging to the radical Sanbetsu.

Three-quarters of Japanese companies have extra-union leaders on their boards in recognition of services rendered. It is only a matter of time before the Japanese working class retake their own organisations. Then characters like Shioji will experience a sudden decline in their career prospects.

By Mike Waddington

Socialist revolution and Pakistan

PAKISTANI activists in a number of European countries have been organising meetings to build up the fight against the dictatorship of General Zia and the system he represents.

Five meetings were organised to inaugurate the perspectives document *Socialist Revolution and Pakistan* published by *Struggle* supporters. They were held on 8 January, the eve of the birthday of the executed Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The meeting was organised by the Co-ordinating Committee of PPP Europe.

Amsterdam

In Amsterdam Sardar Nezhari Ali Khan, a left wing leader of the PPP reminded 75 Pakistani workers in the

audience that socialism was part and parcel of the PPP manifesto and would remain so.

Role of the state

He pinpointed the reason for the present set back in the mass movement to overthrow the Zia dictatorship. The pro-feudal leadership of the PPP in Pakistan were unable to mobilise the masses. As long as these leaders representing the ruling class remain in the party, martial law would continue to suppress the workers.

Farooq Tariq, a member of the *Struggle* Editorial Board explained the role of the capitalist state which is now attempting to smash opposition to the dictatorship. The same apparatus played a vital role for the ruling class during the Bhutto government, by limiting and opposing the reforms carried out.

Even under democratic governments the capitalist state is a tool of repression and must be replaced by a democratic workers' state based on the organisations of the working class. That was the message of the book.

In West Berlin over 150 workers heard Malik Iklaq Ahmed the president of PPP Belgium and a *Struggle* supporter speak on the necessity of democratising the PPP. There was an immediate need for a strong, organised PPP with a socialist programme to fight the Zia dictatorship.

Perspectives document

Despite the repression the fight would go on. The socialist perspectives document would prove to be an historical event, determining the path of the revolution and filling the gap created by the confusion in the Stalinist parties in Pakistan. Without

building a socialist movement and breaking the power of the capitalist class and the feudal landlords, no more reforms would be possible in Pakistan.

Other well received meetings were held in Brussels, Martsa in Sweden and Newham, in London.

By Ijaz Ali Ghori
(PPP, Belgium)

Socialist Revolution and Pakistan published by *Struggle* supporters in Urdu. Please order from Box 46, Kingsland High Street, London E8. Phone number: 01-533 2730.

The Urdu edition of *Struggle* is published ever six weeks. The English edition will be published in February.

Israel, Morocco



A military parade in Israel. The costs of the occupation of Lebanon are coming home to the working class.

Strikes and storms in Israel

'ISRAEL', the Finance Minister recently commented, 'is in a state of transition'. Most Israeli workers would agree: but transition to where?

By John Pickard

Israel is in the same state of 'transition' as a barrel of gunpowder set with a slow burning fuse. It can only be a question of time before the gathering economic and political storms break.

This last week has seen a virtual general strike, as hundreds of thousands of workers have gone to the brink or have taken industrial action in order to defend their living standards. Soon the storm could break over Parliament, with an early election, which in turn would increase the ferment and create upheaval in all of the main political parties.

All the policies of the Likud government are now falling down about their ears. The invasion of Lebanon in 1982 has proved a minefield. Moreover, because of the enormous instability of the



Israel's Prime Minister, Shamir.

Lebanese state, it is a minefield from which the Israeli ruling class cannot easily extricate itself.

The occupation, now costing Israel 1 million dollars a day, is becoming increasingly unpopular among Israeli workers. Already, more than one hundred army reservists are serving gaol sentences for their refusal to serve in occupied Lebanon.

During a recent tour of inspection of troops in Lebanon, Israeli Prime Minister Shamir, was

harangued by soldiers opposed to government policy.

"We should not have come to Lebanon to begin with", one soldier commented, "When I am here I feel as if I were watching a film about Germans occupying Europe or the Russians occupying Afghanistan. I hope that more soldiers will refuse to serve in Lebanon, because that will bring pressure on your government to get us out." (*Times*)

Towards the end of last year there were increasing signs that the Lebanese population under Israeli control were prepared to organise opposition to the Israeli military forces with a general strike, involving the majority Shia Muslims, from the Israeli border in the south, right up to the outskirts of Beirut in the North.

Thousands of shops and businesses were closed in an unprecedented display of solidarity. The bitterness and opposition of the local Lebanese community will only increase, the longer the Israeli occupation lasts.

The Lebanese adventure has added more burdens to the economic crisis faced by Israel. The government is now running a balance of payments deficit of something like \$5 billion per annum, increasing the total foreign debt to \$25 to \$30 billion, on a per capita basis, seven times that of Brazil.

The Israeli government have only been able to finance their huge defence budget, and the West Bank settlement programme, by literally resorting to the printing press. In December, for example, the exchequer printed 28 billion shekels, (£180 million) in order to bridge the gap between income and expenditure.

Massive inflation

The rate of inflation, now approaching 200%, is having a dislocating effect on the whole economy, forcing a flight away from the Israeli currency towards dollars. The Likud government, reflecting the interests of the Israeli ruling class will inevitably force the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of workers, undermining the basis of the Likud among its traditional supporters in the poorer Oriental Jewish community.

Essential subsidies on foods and basic necessities, and spending on social services have been cut whereas Israeli workers are given partial protection by a regular (quarterly) cost of living increase, Shamir is now determined to see that price compensation curtailed, so inflation will be allowed to follow its course at the direct expense of Israeli workers. Hence the enormous strike movements, and the threats of strikes involving the entire workforce over the course of recent weeks.

But the economic crisis is inextricably linked to the National Question, and in particular, the rights of the Palestinians.

The population of the West Bank and Gaza will continue to struggle for their national and democratic rights, against the brutal military regime in those areas. It is beginning to dawn, even among Jewish workers, that in the long term this military occupation will not provide any permanent stability for Israeli workers anymore than it will for the Arabs fighting for the land and livelihood taken from them over the course of the last seventeen years.

The economic burdens entailed, and the permanent insecurity generated will force many Israelis to question the reactionary policies of Zionism in Israel and the occupied areas, and the associated manoeuvring of the imperialist powers.

On the West Bank enormous tracts of land have been seized, now almost half of the total area, representing the best and most fertile land, in order to provide for Jewish settlements. Yet the huge investment in these settlements, along with the roads, schools, hospitals and infrastructure with them, have

been for the benefit of only 50,000 Jewish settlers, so far.

By co-incidence, the external debt of the Israeli state, \$25 billion or so is roughly equal to the total invested by Israel in its West Bank settlements. In other words 98% of the Israeli population are being forced to carry an intolerable economic burden, for the benefit of the 2% of the population so far involved in the settlement programme.

So it is not surprising that recent polls (*Jerusalem Post*) show that 72% of Israelis believe that in any economic austerity programme, the West Bank settlement programme should be cut.

Marxists have always explained that one key indicator of social upheaval and revolution is the realisation by large numbers of workers that society cannot continue in the old way. That is true of Israel today.

The Israeli capitalist class have no perspective whatsoever, except that of more economic sacrifices, more international instability, and more wars to consume the sons and daughters of workers. The Likud government have moved from one reactionary expedient to another since its election in 1977, each step bringing Israel closer to disaster.

The inevitable political and economic upheavals in Israel will force tens of thousands of workers to seek new ideas, new policies and new methods to solve the enormous problems facing them. Zionism has failed to solve any of the fundamental problems of the Jewish people, and it will lose its grip on the minds of the mass of Israeli workers.

Socialist federation of Middle East

It is in that perspective that socialists must place their confidence and argue their views. Socialist policies would consist of an implacable struggle against all the reactionary policies of Zionism within the Israeli state, and a fight for the common interests of workers of all nationalities and religions.

Israeli capitalism offers no way forward. A socialist Israel, with a socialist federation of Middle East states, is the unique basis upon which social and national questions can be solved.

This fundamental policy of socialist change and workers' internationalism may not at this stage have a wide base of support in the Israeli working class, but such ideas will have their day, in the storms and stresses now being prepared by the Israeli capitalist class.

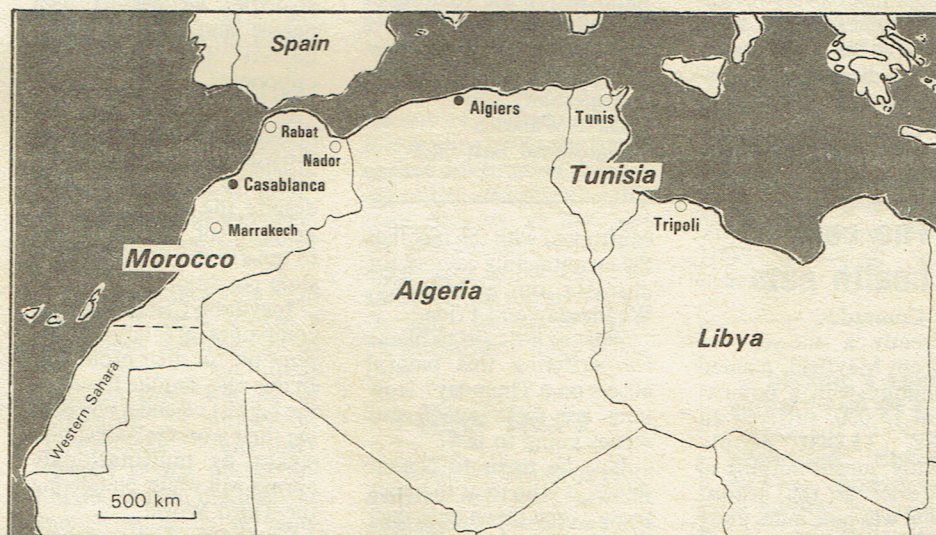
Morocco: IMF demands lead to riots

JUST WEEKS after strikes and riots led Tunisia's leaders to abandon price rises, Morocco's reactionary regime has been forced down the same humiliating road.

King Hassan of Morocco showed his deep grasp of contemporary politics by blaming the riots on Marxist Leninists, the Israeli secret service and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.

Troops kill hundreds

But far from being provoked by this unlikely alliance, the root causes of the riots are very much at home. The protests of secondary school and university students over plans to charge extra for enrolment and examinations were joined in a



number of towns by people demonstrating over food price rises of about two-thirds.

Even after Hassan rescinded the price rises, one

city, Nador, staged a general strike against government policy.

Press reports from Spain, which have been the main source of news, suggest that

more than 140 people had been killed by the Army who had enforced a dusk-to-dawn curfew and placed troops in all the trouble areas.

There have been riots over food prices in Morocco before, in 1981, reflecting the burden which capitalist crisis is causing to the so-called "third world". It is the International Monetary Fund rather than the Marxists or Islamic fundamentalists who have been most busy "fomenting revolution".

The IMF and the government agreed stabilisation measures last autumn, to reschedule foreign debt, to cut government spending severely including on education, and to allow big rises in basic food prices. The international money brokers may have thought this would lead to economic stability for the multinationals but they left the reaction of the population out of account.

The economy has also been suffering from the vicious war their forces have

waged for nearly a decade in the Western Sahara against the Polisario liberation movement. The economic problems have not been helped by two drought harvests, the one-third drop in the price of the main income raiser phosphate rock, and the falling market for fruit and textiles in the EEC.

No stability likely

Morocco has the largest population and the smallest income in this part of North Africa. The Alaouite dynasty, to which Hassan belongs, has ruled for 300 years and the cosy links between the capitalist class and the old landowners have long stood in the way of any advance for the people. Stability is the last thing the ruling class can expect in Morocco.

Letters

Write to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Job Centre besieged

Dear Comrades,
An incident last week in Coventry gave an insight to the unemployment situation here.

On hearing rumours that the Job Centre would have application forms for 25 jobs at Coventry's Massey Ferguson plant, a crowd of 500 unemployed converged on the building on the Friday morning. Some had been waiting outside the Job Centre from 5 am, to make sure they were first in the queue.

However, there were angry scenes when it was revealed that there would be no forms until the next Monday. The Job Centre staff had to lock themselves in for their own protection. On the Monday, the 500 turned up again.

That this should occur in a city with an abundance of skills and empty workplaces shows the senselessness of this decaying capitalist system.

Yours fraternally
Phil Tutchings
Coventry SE CLP

Religion—a method of oppression and exploitation

Dear Comrades,
I'd like to refer to the letter (Issue 682) written by Mr Thrumpeter. He writes, "A true Christian is a socialist too". May be it would help if he looked closer to the history of Christianity and also read the Marxist view on religion in general.

I was born in a Muslim family and brought up in a fanatic Muslim society in Iran. I have always condemned religion for what it stands for. However, I do not condemn those who have fallen in its trap, and that can only be a Marxist attitude.

I have always regarded religion as a method of oppression and exploitation against the working people for the personal gain of those who misuse people's faith and willingness for a better life.

Socialism is not a dream or fantasy story but is purely based on scientific facts and years of research by those who understood the decay of our society. No true socialist has gained personal advantages out of it and socialism promises people a better life in the world that we can see and live in, not some unknown world which is not even logically proven to exist.

You only have to look at history to understand the massive effects that socialism has had on our lives, and all the revolutions and uprisings that followed it in less than a century. And socialism never massacred millions of Muslims in Spain, nor did it appeal to people for money for a better house or clothes and life style in some fancy palaces.

Yours fraternally
Hamid
Bradford North LPYS

Thatcher's victims

Dear Comrades,
As a nurse in psychiatric hospital, I see all sorts in my job: psychotics, people with depression, drug and alcohol abusers to name but a few. I see people for whom the primary cause of their illness is inability to find work. The stress and desperation of staying at home all day, nothing to do, and no self-respect does not make for a healthy state of mind.

I have seen the tragedy of alcoholics and drug abusers in a society where they have no security and no friends. In an area like this (on the coast), where drugs are easy to get, is it any wonder people turn to this release?

I am not saying socialism can cure mental illness, but a society based on co-operation, not competition, with stability and without the indignity of the dole, would do a lot to prevent the illness I have seen.

And what about health workers? Not being big headed, I can say that ours is a bloody hard job. We need skill, compassion and some dedication; for which I am paid as a second year student, the average princely sum of about £69 a week. This doesn't go up by more than £15 when I qualify.

Remember, you are not as immune to mental illness as you may think. One in six people need some form of psychiatric care at some time in their lives. Do you think there is any room for mental illness in Thatcher's schemes for privatisation? Most patients are poor, that is like you and me. There's no profits to be made from mental illness.

Yours fraternally
Peter Unwin
Herrison Hospital
Dorchester

Class struggle in South Africa

Dear Comrades,
I recently attended a weekend school organised by Yorkshire NUM. There was a speaker who was a black South African railway worker—I say *was* because he cannot return. As he put it, "I'm a s... stirrer". He criticised the TUC for not backing workers involved in struggle and saying you shouldn't break the law. In South Africa black workers break laws.

Blacks in SA are facing the same type of struggle as we are in this country. It is not a racial conflict in SA. He said it doesn't matter to the bosses if you are black, pink or green. Their only interest is how much money they can make out of your labour. The blacks in SA are facing a class struggle.

I'll leave the last words with Zola Zomba, a representative of SACTU; "I haven't read my oppression out of books, it has been forced upon me!"

Yours fraternally
R Clarkson
Wakefield LPYS



Riot police broke up the mass pickets at Warrington during the NGA dispute in December.

Photo: Militant

Why TUC must fight —

Dear Comrades,

I disagree strongly with Comrade Hobley (letters, issue 682) in his defence of Len Murray. Comrade Hobley, with respect, is showing the same short sighted response to Labour's election defeat as the right-wing, who heaped the blame on the working class.

Certainly many trade unionists voted for the SDP and the Tories, but this was because of our leadership's lack of credibility in explaining the issues. Furthermore, the leadership were still cloaked in the old ragged suit of failed policies; massive government borrowing, incomes policy, and spending their way out of the crisis, but without the economic basis to sustain proposed policies. The workers had all that in 1974-79—why should they be expected to vote for a re-hash of policies that culminated in attacks on their living standards?

In my mind many voted SDP under the illusion they would escape from the old discredited party policies.

It is certainly necessary to continue explaining to workers the necessity of supporting Labour. Already many of those who voted

Tory or SDP are in the process of changing their mind through their experiences. Blue collar and white collar workers, including those sections previously described as 'moderate' are being forced into conflict, not only because of attacks on their living standards but the assaults on hard won trade union rights.



Len Murray

As such there has been a growing determination to take on the Tories. However, whenever the mood for a fightback has grown, the leadership has continually backpedalled. Comrade Hobley described Len Murray as a "strategist"—train drivers, health workers and printers would think otherwise. Len Murray and the leadership effectively derailed these recent disputes.

They may think this 'responsible' approach enhances Labour's chances at the next election—rather it demoralises the movement with his self-inflicted impotence and makes a Labour success less likely. Also, the next election could be four or five years away. Many workers cannot simply afford the luxury of sitting back and waiting for better times.

Comrade Hobley says that 'law breaking' and violence will give Thatcher a propaganda weapon. We in the Labour Party do not for one minute condone violence or 'law breaking' for its own sake. But let's put this into perspective. These laws are designed to neuter the bargaining power of the unions and weaken their base, and therefore weaken the strength of the working class. These are anti-working class laws, for the benefit of the rich.

Therefore it is up to Murray and Co. to mobilise the trade union movement in defence of these hard won rights (many of them gained only through the breaking of past laws).

As for the violence, the Tories condoned the violence of the riot police against the

Warrington mass picket in order to defend their class interest, and will do so again in the future. I don't think it correct that workers should lie down and play dead while the police truncheons rain down on them, just to appease the Tories' Fleet Street propaganda machine—which will tell terrible lies about them anyway. Think back to the TUC 'Day of Action' on May 14, 1980. The press still crucified the action, not to mention Len Murray himself.

General strike

I believe in the near future we will see a general strike in this country, despite and not because of the likes of Len Murray—below the surface pressures are building up which have found no outlet. And I give this guarantee. When a general strike is forced upon these leaders, Len Murray or those of his kind will be going into it backwards looking for a way out, just as the leaders did in 1926. Then we shall see on which side of the fence Len Murray will fail.

J Shevlin
Ashton-upon-Lyne
Lancashire

Stalin would turn in his grave

Dear Comrades,
I recently had the opportunity of leafing through a copy of *Soviet Weekly*, the official Moscow journal in Britain. Most of the articles were fairly uninteresting, but one contained a very revealing statement from the deputy minister for oil in Russia. He was discussing the construction of the gas pipeline from Siberia to the west, which he claimed had meant 250,000 jobs for Western

The cost of health cuts

Dear Comrades,
Recently a one-year-old girl from Mayfield, a small community with a population of 15,000, suffered an abscess. 15,000 people evidently, means nothing to the Tories as the nearest hospital was nine miles away in Edinburgh.

With no ambulance available it was only through the kindness of a neighbour that she finally arrived at the hospital. However, on arrival at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children they were

workers, in industries supplying equipment to Russia.

Sanctions imposed by American imperialism to try and stop the export of such equipment to Russia had been shown to be futile, and this "well demonstrated the interdependence of the world economy", he said.

The question is, whatever happened to the building of 'socialism in one country'? Or is the deputy oil minister a Trotskyist infiltrator?

Fraternally
Dave Walkden
Gateshead East CLP

confronted with the fact that the hospital only catered for abscesses on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Was the little girl to blame for suffering this painful abscess on a Thursday? How long are these outrageous scenes going to last?

It is up to us to change things, it is up to us to knock those Tories down onto their knees, because until that happens the working class will always be under threat.

Yours fraternally
Brenda Scott
Mid/East Lothian
Trades Council
Youth Section

Third World problems

Dear Militant,

I have read the articles on Sri Lanka in the recent issues of your paper with mixed feelings. One is of outrage as inevitably yet another 'Third World' government commits atrocities against its own people and stirs up racial hatred to divide its opponents.

More significantly, though, I felt admiration for the workers' movement who refuse to be crushed and, despite the wishes of their government, are not content to quietly starve to death in slum conditions.

Inevitably multinational companies are largely responsible for their problems. In this case Brooke Bond are the biggest offenders by paying their workers' starvation wages as multinationals always will whilst plundering the Third World.

There are, of course, those apologists for capitalism who say that such companies can be made to respond to reasonable appeals and in due course will improve the lot of their employees willingly. What then has been

the response by Brooke Bond to the many calls from leading world organisations rightly concerned with the pay and living conditions of their plantation employees in Sri Lanka, India and Africa? Particularly in view of the massive increase in tea auction prices resulting in vast unearned profits for the company?

None, of course. In fact Brooke Bond at their recent annual meeting urged rejection of a motion tabled by some conscious stricken shareholders which demanded information about the wages and conditions on the company's estates.

To conclude, it is obvious that capitalism will not solve the problems of the Third World any more that it will survive its crisis in the developed countries. Exit capitalism, enter international socialism to the rescue. Carry on the fight to introduce it as soon as possible.

Yours fraternally
Alan Ursell
Sittingbourne

How a nurse becomes a militant

Nowhere has the growth of trades unionism been more rapid than in the Health Service. It has been a hard fight, especially among the nurses, who have always been under great pressure to keep out of the unions, but the fight is being won.

PAT WALL, a nurse and NUPE member from Newcastle tells how she became a trade unionist and (right) recounts her experience of private medicine.

I STARTED in 1964 as a cadet nurse, then began my training a year later. In those days in the hospitals you were never advised to join a union; it just wasn't heard of. We didn't know anything about negotiations on pay.

In the days when I started my training if you worked over your time, which was often, you never got paid for it or time in lieu.

You couldn't get married in your training. A year later that rule was changed, but I remember an Indian girl I worked with who had got married secretly. The authorities found out and it finished her career.

nurses were frightened to take industrial action. There is still that fear among nurses—I think it is breaking down, but at that time you were known as something out of the ordinary, you 'didn't care about the patients'.

But in the place I was at that time, the girls saw there was a leader in myself as steward. So we used to have weekly meetings and we took action such as not signing doctor's letters for discharge, the odd jobs that are not ours. We just stuck to our nursing duties, would not touch the meal service because the ancillary



Ms Pat Wall

So we tried to back the ancillary workers. I was never actually on strike, but I was on picket lines and demonstrations. We learned a lot because we had never been involved in such an action. It was new for ancillary workers as well. We got ourselves really organised and, although some people say it went on for six months and we came out with nothing, I think we did come out with a lot of education and experience.

We will be more ready the next time. We learned to work with other trade unionists through the Coordinating Committees. There was the organisation of meetings; getting nurses to meetings is hard, but we learned about how to contact the different nurses.

If there are reports going out on the news, they take notice of the media, but if you can get to them yourself and explain what is going on, you get through better.

All-out action

It is very difficult to organise meetings, because it is all shift work. A lot of people think you should be able to just come out of the workplace for a meeting, but it is hard for nurses to come out. If you were well staffed it would be different.

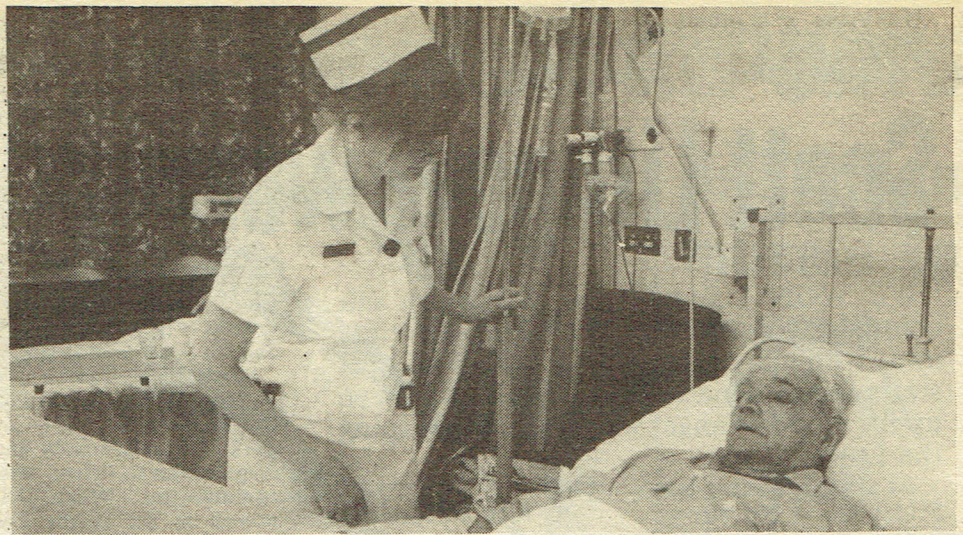
These one-day strikes are just no good at all, and that's what the members were annoyed about as well. They just didn't hit the service the way they should have, and again it was the TUC who put out these guidelines saying this was the way to deal with it.

A lot of members wanted all-out action, even for a little while—I know it is hard for nurses, but there are parts you could hit, like the out-patients, that wouldn't endanger life, but would cause disruption. There could have been lightning strikes but there weren't any at all. Management knew exactly when we were going to come out and so were prepared for it.

I feel these are all the lessons we learned and now it is leading up to the battle against privatisation. It is going to be more effective this time, because we have got the base already. We are going to get a leaflet drawn up especially for nurses—to get through to them how privatisation will affect them.

New faces

Nurses are becoming more aware. At our branch meeting last Tuesday we had four new nurses there, which might not sound a lot, but to us it is, because I am usually the only one sitting there. It was great to see new faces. And at my hospital they have all come into NUPE.



Hospital care for the old is now a political battleground.

Private medicine leeching off old people

I HEARD that a lot of nurses employed by the Newcastle Area Health Authority had gone on a private agency's books. They had worked in private nursing homes and were coming back saying: "It is disgusting the things you see in those nursing homes!"

Appalled

I decided to go myself, to compare privatisation with the Health Service. I thought it would make a good story for the NUPE Journal. So I went in, and there was such a lot wrong. I was actually supposed to be looking after just one old lady, who was paying the nursing home £160 a week. But she was also paying my agency for a nurse 24 hours a day.

She was a sick old lady. The matron charged all the eight or so residents about this amount. It appalled me when I found out that she got all her equipment off the NHS. She did not buy anything. She just got the doctor to write out a prescription for medicines, walking zimmers, blood, oxygen—she did not pay for anything like that. So it was all profit.

And they were short of food; in the morning there was nothing for them to eat for breakfast except toast and tea. They were looked after during the night by a care attendant who had no nursing experience. She had worked in a Co-op for twenty years, been made redundant and got this night job from the matron.

She told me that a gentleman had fallen out of bed; she could not get him back in and there was no help on the premises; she was totally by herself at night. She had to make him comfortable on the floor. The next morning the doctor was called because obviously there was something wrong, and that gentleman had lain with a broken hip all night! He was transferred to an NHS hospital.

Injunction

The care attendant was only paid £1.30 an hour. She had to look after those old people, wash clothes, iron, peel potatoes—you name it she had to do it. The residents were up this flight of stairs that were so steep that they terrified me. In

hospitals there are health and safety regulations—you don't see stairs like that in geriatric hospitals. But this matron could so just what she liked with those old people.

So NUPE put in a report to social services. It got into the press and a High Court injunction stopped the story going out on Tyne-Tees Television. At least it started a public enquiry into private nursing homes, brought to the public's knowledge that they are going to contract out old people from geriatric hospitals to private nursing homes.

Pre-war conditions

And what is going to happen to all the qualified nurses who look after them? There is going to be no work for them, or they are going to be forced to work under these pre-war conditions in private nursing homes. It was just appalling, and if it does nothing else this story will bring to the public's eye the question of whether they want their old people treated like this?

By Pat Wall
(NUPE Shop Steward, Newcastle)

Photo: John Smith (IFL)



Nurses join the Liverpool, December 1982 TUC/NHS Day of Action demo.

I wasn't involved in politics then. I had always voted Labour, always had socialist ideas, but had never been allowed to put them into practise. My marriage broke up in 1976 and that is when I really started to take an active part in trade unionism

Well organised

I was in COHSE at first, but then they were not militant enough for me. They just seemed to be dormant. So I joined NUPE, started to take advantage of their education programme, and I joined my local Labour Party. I was completely new to it all.

By this time I was working in Newcastle General. I became a union steward and we got ourselves well organised. Sisters and everybody were in NUPE, because I was actually on the floor talking to them and communicating all the time.

The 'Winter of Discontent' was the first dispute I was involved in, though

workers were out, and it was quite effective.

Standing alone

The 'Winter of Discontent' was a failure really, because NUPE were left standing alone at the finish. But to us it was the very first industrial action we had been involved in, so from there more girls became involved. It has always been hard to get nursing stewards, mind; you can get active members, but actual stewards are very hard to get.

That leads up to the NHS dispute in 1982. It was a marvellous lesson to all of us, nurses included, although there was a lot of slandering of nurses in NUPE—the ancillary workers saying nurses did not do enough, did not take enough action. But we blamed a lot on the TUC, because they put out the guidelines which said 'emergency cover' when most of the wards were manned with emergency cover anyway—we were so short staffed.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)



Left: Thorton View Hospital occupation, Bradford, September 1983. Right: Nurses protest in London, September 1982.



Photo: Bill Thorneycroft

Support is strong, it just needs organising. It's stronger than in the dispute last year, because of the jobs threatened and the thought of losing the Health Service. They are realising that the NHS is going to be dismantled.

NUPE had a weekend school to help us in the industrial action ahead and there were that many new members, young people of nineteen and upwards who had just decided to become involved. The support is definitely there, it is just a case of getting round other workplaces, not just the hospitals but everything that is going private.

Socialism

I feel that we'll have the biggest campaign you have ever seen once it gets off the ground. It has had an effect on nurses' political consciousness; quite a few nurses have come up to me asking for literature on politics, which is great.

"I became a union steward and we got ourselves well organised. Sisters and everybody were in NUPE, because I was actually on the floor talking to them and communicating all the time."

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Scott Lithgow work on!

"WE WON'T stand back and watch our community destroyed. The Tories have got away with murder up till now—the fight back starts here." One shipyard worker summed up the mood of anger which is now sweeping the Lower Clyde.

At a mass meeting last Friday the 4,200 strong Scott Lithgow workforce decided to fight the threatened closure of the yards by refusing to accept either temporary lay off or compulsory redundancies in what shop stewards describe as "the first step towards an overall occupation of the yards."

300 workers temporarily laid off were instructed by the meeting to continue to report to work as usual in defiance of British Shipbuilders' management. They are now being paid and employed by the rest of the workforce in what has been coined a 'work-on'.

Cost of closure

The workers of Scott Lithgow have made it clear that even one compulsory redundancy will be met by an immediate occupation of the yards. With BS management poised to begin the run-down of the yards in a matter of weeks the stage is set for a massive confrontation between the Clydeside working class and the Tories.

The towns of Greenock and Port Glasgow, where 95% of the Scott Lithgow workforce are concentrated, have already experienced the equivalent of an industrial holocaust at the hands of the Tories. Once thriving industries have been laid to waste. Thousands of working class families have been forced to suffer the purgatory of poverty.

In Greenock 17% of the population exist on supplementary benefits. In neighbouring Port Glasgow the figures paint an even more horrifying picture—no fewer than 27% of the population now live below the poverty line.

If Scott Lithgow were to close, however, the present

By Alan McCombes

situation would appear like prosperity by comparison. It is estimated that including workers in supply industries and their families, 15,000 people out of a population of 100,000 depend upon the Scott Lithgow yard for their livelihood.

It has been demonstrated that closure of the yard would cost almost £100 million taking into account redundancy payments, unemployment benefits and the cost of running down the yard etc. This is far in excess of the cost of keeping the yard open.

For some time now the Tories have orchestrated a black propaganda campaign against the workers at Scott Lithgow, implying that they are work-shy layabouts who have brought the closure upon their own heads. This is utterly false.

In every yard in the world where there has been a change over from shipbuilding to rig-building similar difficulties and delays have been experienced. Particular problems on the Lower Clyde are the result of the structure of British Shipbuilders, which like other nationalised concerns is managed by accountants and functionaries who know little about the industry.

Workers' strength

The real crime of the Scott Lithgow workforce is that they have refused to lie down and allow the Tories to trample all over their rights and hard-won working conditions. The government have cynically and callously set out to inflict hardship and suffering on the Lower Clyde, with Graham Day Chairman of British Shipbuilders playing the role of executioner.

It is as clear as daylight that for some time now they have intended closing the yard, hoping to make an example of

Scott Lithgow in order to cow workers in the nationalised industries into submission.

Scott Lithgow workers have a long tradition of skilled craftsmanship but also of working class solidarity and preparedness to defend their communities. When 200 women at the nearby Lee Jeans factory defied a giant multi-national and staged a six month sit-in to protest at closure plans, Scott Lithgow workers were first on the scene to offer financial and industrial support.

Occupation

By showing the same fighting spirit as the Lee Jeans women and by welding it to the industrial and numerical strength which they possess, the Scott Lithgow workers can shake the Tories to their very foundations. With work on a £60 million oil rig almost completed (leaving aside the Britoil order), and with tens of millions of pounds of technology and equipment in the yards an occupation in response to redundancies would be enormously effective. A long drawn-out struggle could be avoided if support, including industrial action, was organised in other yards.

Focus of struggle

A defeat for Scott Lithgow would give the Tories the green light to massacre the entire shipbuilding industry and hand over the remnants to a gang of spivs and asset strippers. On the other hand a victory would have repercussions amongst workers the length and breadth of industry.

On Clydeside there is the potential for a huge movement in support of any struggle at Scott Lithgow. With jobs at British Leyland plants in Bathgate and Glasgow also under threat at present many shop stewards are raising the idea of convening a conference of all shop stewards in the West of Scotland. Such a conference should make plans and preparations to defend Scott Lithgow and other industries under threat and begin the organisation of a massive fight back against the Tories.



Scott Lithgow workers leave a mass meeting at Greenock Town Hall.

Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Leyland Trucks—stop rolling redundancies

By Dave Beales

ON THURSDAY 19 January the axe fell once again on the workers of BL's trucks division with the announcement of 1,057 reductions.

The proposed redundancies include 522 at Leyland in Lancashire, 387 at the Albion Axle plant near Glasgow and 148 at Scammell in Watford. The Bathgate plant, near Edinburgh is also threatened.

More to come?

Management blame the collapse of the export market. This factor combined with the freezing of the Cummins engine project at Bathgate, and the phasing out in 1984 of the production of the Terrier trucks make Leyland particularly vulnerable. Complete closure of the Bathgate plant could well be announced in the next week or two.

The workers are bitter about this latest blow. Around 5,800 workers at the Leyland and Chorley sites

came out on strike when faced with the redundancies in 1982, and the defeat of that strike after four weeks continues to have a deep effect on the morale of workers here.

At that time the Leyland Works Committee produced an alternative plan for the company. But management just didn't want to know. There has been tremendous management incompetence and an appalling lack of investment over the years, but even if this could be put right it would be very difficult for Leyland trucks to regain its former overseas markets.

Some groups of Leyland workers may now go for the best redundancy payments they can get and accept the dole queue as inevitable sooner or later. Whilst rejecting any quick and simple solutions others may look increasingly for a lead from other sections of the trade union movement involved in

AT THE time of the Leyland vehicle strike two years ago over 4,100 redundancies, the unions said that management's strategy was to turn the Leyland Lancashire site into an assembly plant.

The latest announcement, considered in the context of job losses at Leyland trucks over the last five years confirms that view. 7,000 jobs were lost in 1979-80 and an additional 3,000 in 1981.

Output has fallen from 31,000 vehicles in 1977 to a mere 11,000 vehicles in 1983, with Leyland way down the league of West European truck producers. "Trouble with our radical plant is that it was not radical enough!" Les Wharton, managing director of Leyland trucks, said recently.

Management say their 'radical' plan, which brought about thousands of redundancies, created a cost structure which needed an annual output of 20,000 vehicles, while output in 1983 was, in fact, 11,000 and estimated to be 12,000 in 1984.

There is evidence, however, to suggest that management never intended the 20,000 output figure to be achieved in the first place and used it as an excuse to introduce their long-term mass redundancy plan in stages.

struggle, especially towards building closer links with other groups of workers locally who face redundancies.

Threatened boilermaker—'fighting mood'

SANDY CLARK, member of the GMABATU Boilermakers Section, a plater at Scott Lithgow spoke to Hugh Henry, Central West branch, Inver Clyde CLP.

What effect would closure have on the Inver Clyde area?

The area would be finished. It depends on the yard and if it closed it would leave workers feeling there's no hope. The social consequences would be terrible.

What was the mood of the workforce at the mass meeting?

The mood was one of anger and it was directed at a number of people. There was anger at the top union officials, who we believe have not taken a strong enough stand. They have kicked us in the teeth after the workers here had voted to support the national action over wages. The men are in a mood to fight.

The anger at the union officials has led some to talk of stopping their union dues ad

using the money locally. This would be wrong since we are going to need the support of the rest of the trade union movement.

There have been calls for occupation, but at the moment we are "working-on", including those that British Shipbuilders want to lay off and we are levying £2.00 per week from the rest of the workforce. There could still be an occupation if one compulsory redundancy is announced.

There has also been anger at British Shipbuilders, particularly those who negotiated the contract which included impossible time scales, and also at Britoil, whom we think are exploiting the situation to get a good deal at the expense of our workers. George Younger, the Tory Secretary of State, has also come in for criticism, as it is obvious the Tories don't care what happens to this area.

Can the Scott Lithgow workforce win on its own?

No. Initially, we need the financial support of the rest of

the movement. I have been involved in strikes here where we had to go back only because we had no money to stay out. We expect full support from other shipbuilding workers. At the moment we are only looking for money. But we would expect industrial action in the rest of the industry, if necessary.

Do you think the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and the Labour Party have given a sufficient lead.

No. The STUC and the TUC have been relatively quiet and the Labour Party needs to be harder in its support. Although Norman Godman, the Labour MP for this area, has given us a lot of support the Labour Party locally will need to take up the question of rent arrears, which might arise, in order to avoid action from the housing department.

But it is no use going for meetings of all political parties as most of them are prepared to accept a reduced workforce in the yard. We don't want to see any redundancies or any reductions in the workforce.

BLOC

BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

national delegate conference
Saturday 24 March 11 am - 5.30 pm
at
Octagon Centre, Western Bank,
Sheffield 10

Sessions to be opened by David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield Council and LP NEC, and Joan Maynard MP. Main speaker: Tony Benn.

Any bona-fide trade union body is welcome to send up to five delegates. For credentials and further information contact: George Williamson, Organising Secretary, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

Inside:

1924

First Labour
government
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Tories blind to..

TORY CONTEMPT for working people has plumbed new depths. A Tory MP has been experimenting with life on the dole. Unfortunately unlike most workers, his stint lasted only one week.

Tory MP Matthew Parris spent the week in Scotswood, Newcastle living on Supplementary Benefit of £26.80 on behalf of the TV programme *World in Action* who filmed his activity.

After one week on the dole, Parris could not manage. He ended up in debt, had to scrounge drinks in a pub, ran out of gas and electricity and was forced to walk the streets in the evening.

He saw little chance of getting work. When he went to a Job Centre with an ex merchant seaman, they could offer only one job part time at £30 a week. But after a week he can return to Westminster to tell of his suffering and return to his usual life.

DOLE DESPAIR

By Dave Cotterill

There can be no doubt the Tories live in a completely different world, in fact they might as well live on a different planet. Parris, a member of Thatcher's private office, was educated at public school and Cambridge University.

How can this upper class twit understand what it is

CONTINUED ON
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- ★ More than half of all men who attempt suicide are unemployed, according to *New Society*.
- ★ People out of work for more than a year are 19 times more likely to kill themselves.
- ★ 40% of people up before English courts are unemployed.
- ★ The children of the unemployed are physically smaller than average, and they are more likely to suffer child abuse, ill health and suffer reading problems at school.
- ★ Families are "unable to afford trips to pub, cinema, relations or friends, and unable even to phone them".

Workers back Liverpool council
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Daily Mirror apologises

THE *Daily Mirror* carried a disgraceful report on its front page on January 11, alleging that supporters of *Militant* had been expelled from Blackburn Labour Party on the grounds of illegal activity and following allegations of the misuse of Party funds.

After legal representation had been made, the *Daily Mirror* has now apologised, publishing the following retraction last Saturday, January 21.

"Our front page report of January 11 stated that six members of the Blackburn Labour Party—Simon Bush, Peter Harris, Rosina Harris, Des Mulcahy, Mary Orange and Kay Wright—had been expelled for misusing party funds and that the party had acted on a report about illegal activities.

"We now accept that the expulsions, which were by majorities ranging from 54-28 in the case of

Rosina Harris down to 42-40 against Mary Orange (not 2-1 as our report stated), were on a resolution alleging that clause 2 of the Labour Party Constitution had been breached. There were no allegations of illegal or dishonest behaviour. We are happy to correct our previous report and unreservedly apologise for any embarrassment and distress caused".



Local authority union members were very well represented on the highly successful 24 January London demonstration.

Photo: Mark Pinder

Thousands march to save jobs and services

THE MASS demonstration on 24 January to save the Greater London Council and the other metropolitan counties was a big success. Over 30,000 turned out, not only workers for the GLC and ILEA who were determined to maintain their jobs.

Significantly there were large groups of workers from the

London boroughs and delegations from other metropolitan counties together with students and school students.

In a rally after the march, GLC leader Ken Livingstone pointed out that in the same way the labour movement supported Liverpool council, they had come to save the GLC. The

biggest applause went to Labour MP Frank Dobson who called for the council to defy the government even if the GLC were defeated in Parliament and to Rodney Bickerstaffe NUPE general secretary who called for defiance of bad laws. The GLC, the unions and the Labour Par-

ty must build on this foundation, a campaign based firmly on the labour movement to stop the Tories' plans.

As part of this campaign the Labour Party Young Socialists held a very successful meeting of school students to discuss co-ordinating plans to stop attacks on London's schools.

How to get rid
of Thatcher

Build Militant

DO YOU sincerely want to get rid of the Tories and their system? Then help us in our fight for a daily Marxist paper!

We still need £100,000 in cash to reach our target, so we appeal to all our many supporters who have pledged to redeem to send in their cash now.

If the money carries on coming in as it has recently, we should have no problem. £4,000 has arrived in the last two days. If just the current pledges are redeemed, we'll reach over 70% of the target, so the 100% bullseye is possible, thanks to you.

If you want us to move into new premises and get one step nearer a daily Marxist paper, follow the shining example of domestic workers at All Saints Hospital in Medway, Kent.

They are low paid workers who have been on strike against privatisation; they have already made huge sacrifices for our future. But they were so impressed with the help given by *Militant*

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