

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 526  
31 October 1980

15p

## Tory Cuts ... THE WORST IS YET TO COME

### Slashing £2,000m will mean 1930s poverty for millions

Thatcher's Tory government has three policies: cuts, more cuts, and yet more cuts.

By September, Tory cuts had reduced workers' living standards by over £15,000 million a year—over £10 a week for every adult worker in the country.

But after a disastrous year and a half of Tory rule, much worse is yet to come.

Last week, Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine announced a ban on all new local authority housing spending. Even if relaxed slightly later, Heseltine's moratorium will kill stone dead the hopes of the millions of families waiting to be re-housed in a decent home [see special article, page 7].

Only hours after the housing moratorium was announced, there were reports that Thatcher is personally backing the Treasury demands for a further £2,000 million-worth of cuts in public spending.

The worst effects of these new cuts, to be implemented next year, would be on unemployment, welfare, and social security benefits—which would be reduced to barbarous, sub-poverty levels.

As unemployment continues to soar over the two million mark, millions of workers thrown onto the scrapheap by the

By Bob Wade

failure of private so-called "enterprise," will face levels of deprivation, poverty, and suffering unknown since the slump of the 1930s.

In particular, the children of the sick, the disabled, and the unemployed will suffer.

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## Starvation diet in Bromley Schools

How low can the Tories stoop? Tory councillors in Bromley, Kent, are obviously well in the running for the Margaret Thatcher Most Vicious Cut of the Year prize.

Bromley Tories appear to be the first in the country to propose to scrap cooked school meals. Instead, the Borough's school students will be served a daily starvation ration of a roll, soup, and a yoghurt [or, if they're lucky, an apple].

To show the councillors what they thought of them, 150 dinner ladies, parents, pupils, and one head-teacher last week massed outside the town

By John Bulaitis

(Beckenham LPYS)

hall in protest.

The high and mighty Tory education chairperson, Mrs Bryant, wouldn't talk to the lobbyists. But she did

bring herself to see a delegation of three, who presented a 5,550-signature petition and protest letters from children.

Unrelenting on the cuts, Mrs Bryant expressed great concern about the danger of the children on the demonstration catching colds on such a wet night!

What hypocrisy! Everyone knows that taking away proper school meals which, whatever their deficiencies, are a vital source of nutrition, will do serious long-term harm to children's

health.

The dinner ladies' union, the National Union of Public Employees, is fighting back. Cuts have already claimed 200 meal service jobs, and now another 400 are threatened. Council workers in the Transport and General have pledged their support, and some shop stewards favour immediate strike action against this monstrous cut.

A determined, united stand would force these heartless, food-snatching Tories to retreat.

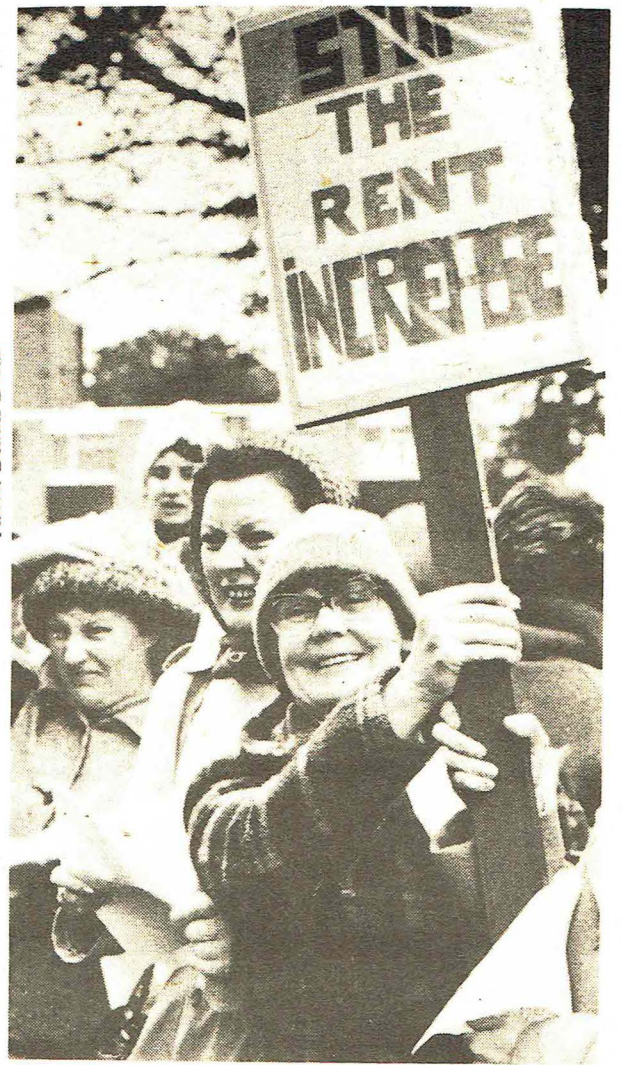
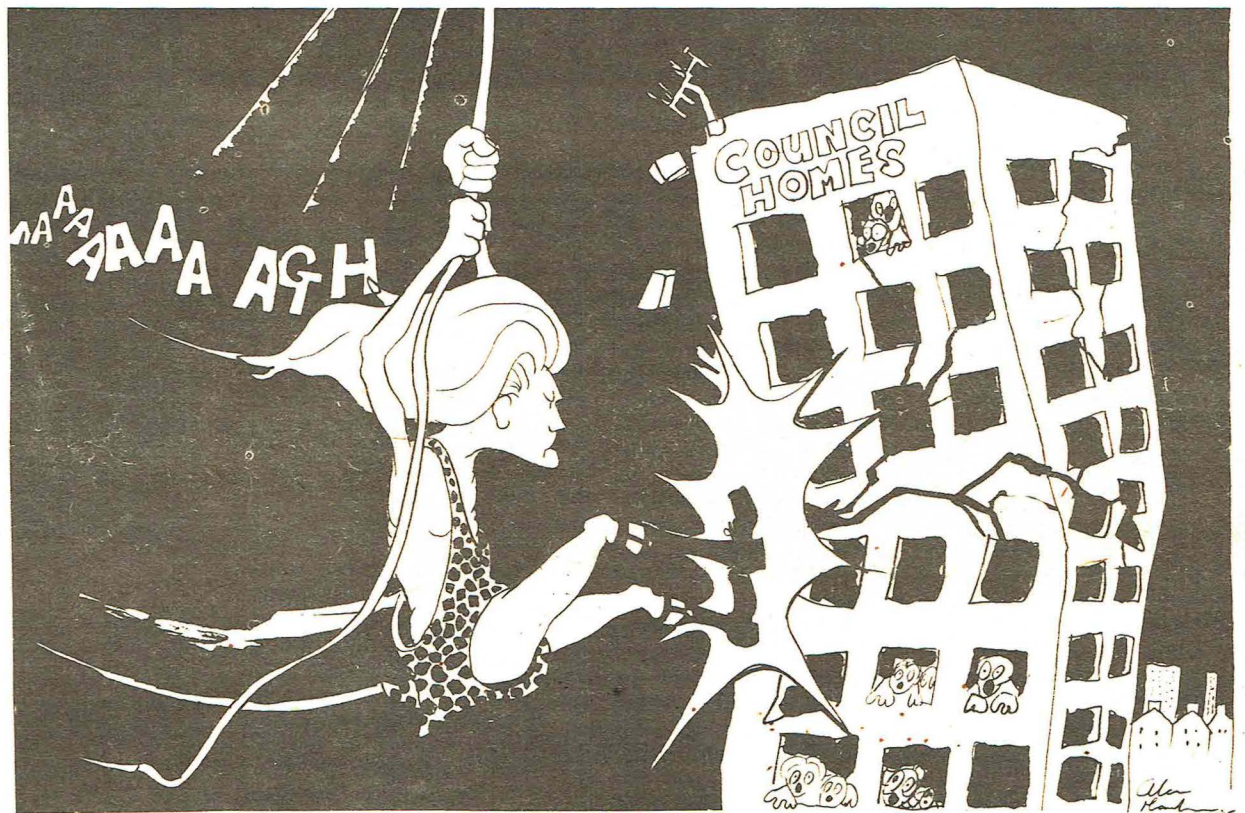


Photo: Dennis Doran

Tenants protest in Peterlee, Co. Durham



"Michael has worked for our wealth and now he is working for the good of the country. At least that's the way he sees it."

—Mrs Anne Heseltine

## Fight back

By  
Heather Rawling

Young people have had enough of this Tory government. The latest scandal of the tax fiddle of Vestey's [and they're not the only ones] has made working people very angry indeed.

There is one law for the rich and one for the poor. Local unemployed Labour Party Young Socialists responded in anger at the news on Tuesday that unemployment, already over the two million mark, has risen for the thirteenth month running.

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# Militant

## NATIONAL LEAD TO FIGHT CUTS

On top of the draconian cuts in local government budgets, already imposed by the Tory government, Michael Heseltine last month announced a second stab of cuts—aimed particularly at a number of Labour-controlled inner-city councils.

Using a completely arbitrary yardstick, Heseltine has decided to punish fourteen councils with alleged overspending of 30% or more, who will lose £18 million from their rate support grants this year. This penal measure completely disregards the exceptional needs of the overwhelmingly working-class population of these inner city areas.

In denouncing the sin of overspending, moreover, Heseltine apparently ignores the fact that local authority spending nationally is only 2.6% bigger than the budgets, normal at this time of the financial year—compared to the current 20% overspending of Thatcher's own central government.

Yet the Tories have now decided to withhold the £200 million supplement to the rates support grant which would be necessary to cover the rise in prices this year. The sheer vindictiveness of the Tories is indicated, for instance, by their decision to chop £3 million of urban aid from three London Boroughs involved in the so-called 'inner-city partnership scheme.'

The Tories' moratorium on local government housing spending dramatically announced last week also shows a cynical disregard for the desperate housing needs of working class families. However, many councils had already chopped nearly all housing spending because of the cuts already imposed on them.

This crisis clearly demands urgent action. There is an urgent need for a national lead to mobilise a massive movement against the cuts. Unfortunately, this has so far been lacking, and the half-hearted position of Labour's front bench spokesman, Roy Hattersley, who is proposing futile legal action against the Tory measures as a substitute for a real fight, is a disgrace.

In this situation, it is a welcome initiative that the Lambeth Labour council and joint trade unions, supported by London Labour Parties and trades councils, have called a national trade union and labour conference against the cuts which will be meeting this weekend.

When there is no real lead to the movement nationally, it would be possible for one or two big Labour-controlled authorities, taking a determined stand against the Tory government, to change the whole situation nationally. This would require a full mobilisation of the labour movement and wider mass support in the areas concerned, and above all a clear socialist programme on fighting the cuts.

Labour councils which

have come out against the cuts should stick to their determination not to implement any cuts, and not to cut any jobs. There should be no rent increases and the selling of council houses should be actively resisted. Rate increases, moreover, which cannot but hit workers, are no way out.

Clearly, such a policy would result in a collision with the Tory government. Heseltine's latest cuts show that the Tories will allow Labour councils no room for manoeuvre. The new local government legislation, moreover, will fetter Labour councils and give the government the ultimate power to take over the running of local authorities.

Unless, therefore, Labour councils are to be turned into unofficial Tory axemen and unpaid collectors of rent and rates, they must transform the councils into platforms for socialist policies—and use their council positions as a lever to mobilise a mass movement against the cuts and against the Tory government.

Responsibility must be laid squarely on the shoulders of the Tories and big business. One issue which must be brought to the fore is the enormous burden of debts and interest charges, currently eating up about 20% of local authority budgets. Lambeth, for instance, needs to borrow an additional £50 million every year just to stay afloat. Its outstanding debt, unavoidable to finance its services, is almost £400 million, and interest alone is costing £1 million a week.

Labour councils must demand the abolition of outstanding debts. If the Tories claim they cannot afford to write off this grotesque burden, the labour movement must demand the nationalisation of the banks and other finance houses which have Labour councils over a barrel.

A campaign against the cuts cannot be confined simply to local issues. There is no escaping the fact that there is no way out for Labour councils under a Tory government—or within a diseased capitalist system.

Local issues must at every stage be linked to the problem of a socialist change in society. The campaigns against the local authority cuts must be part and parcel of a campaign to bring down the Tories and return a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

This is the only programme on which an effective fight can be conducted. Socialist policies must be taken to the whole labour movement, especially to win the support of both public-sector and private-sector trade unions, whose industrial muscle is the key to any successful struggle by Labour councils.

All the resources of the labour movement must be deployed, through local meetings and demonstrations, street and estate meetings, etc., to mobilise overwhelming mass support.

# PROFITS RULE THE WAVES

The press owners have never been slow to beat the patriotic drum when it suits their class interests. But if profits become threatened patriotism is quickly thrown out the window.

By Jim Chrystie

Just look at how two press barons behaved last week. When Lord Thomson took over 'The Times' in 1966, he proclaimed it was "the greatest privilege of my life." Now facing growing losses, 'The Times' and 'Sunday Times' are to be sold by his son.

Bill Keys, general secretary of the print union SOGAT, explained that despite all the protestations of safeguarding a free press, the newspaper tycoons are only interested in power and money. He told the 'Financial Times' (23 October) that the present "Lord Thomson said to me in front of his father fifteen years ago that he had no commitment to the national press in this country."

And this class attitude is confirmed by fellow press baron, Lord Matthews of Trafalgar House, who owns Express newspapers. In August this year, on the occasion of the Queen Mother's birthday the 'Daily Express' proudly declared on its front page that this was the time to 'fly the flag'.

Not any more it isn't. Faced by losses in its Cunard shipping line, Matthews last week announced that he wants to fly Bahamian flags on two of his cruise ships, because then they could employ cheaper, non-British crews and not have to follow stringent British safety regulations.

"There is no way these ships are going to fly the UK flag" was Lord Matthew's October proclamation, "I have a sentimental attachment to the QE2, but you have to live in the real world."

Matthews' attempted diktat has been firmly resisted by the National Union of Seamen. Describing flags of convenience as "nothing more than a maritime mafia," the NUS Executive

## Lord Matthews of Trafalgar - A Patriotic Message!



has blacked all Cunard ships when they return to Britain, and called for a national strike on all British ships for 3 November.

Over 100 seamen have staged a sit-in on the 'Countess', one of the threatened liners in Barbados. Matthews won't get far with his other ship either, for the American National Maritime Union have promised to immobilise the Cunard 'Princess', currently in dry dock in Puerto Rico. International class solidarity is the way to counter the bosses. The 'Times' management found that out last year as well when

Turkish workers in Germany refused to print a scab edition of the paper during a strike.

The action of the seamen has won support from other workers. The Transport Workers Union has promised assistance as it sees that flags of convenience are part of a wider threat to all workers on pay, conditions of employment, trade union rights and safety standards.

By introducing Bahamian flags, Matthews says he will gain £4.5 million a year. So we can see how small the wages he intends to pay are.

And it's not as if British seamen's wages are high now. Even 'The Times' (23

October) pointed out in an editorial: "Traditionally British wages at sea have been low; the Red Ensign itself has been something of a flag of convenience to other European countries and the USA."

Nothing could more graphically expose the cynicism of the capitalists of all countries. They will use any flag as a cover for their profits and discard it when it hits their pockets.

Workers interests are in complete contrast to this. They stand for decent wages, working conditions and rights at work.

['Times' closure, see article back page]

## New cuts [CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE]

Among the proposed cuts are:

- \* Reversal of the government's commitment to increased child benefit in line with inflation next November. Already, at least four million or over a third of all children in Britain are living on the margins of poverty. Millions more would be condemned to poverty by this cut.

- \* This November, unemployment, sickness, and other short-term welfare benefits are already being cut 5% below the rate of inflation, and earnings-related benefits are being scrapped next year. Thatcher is now proposing an additional 5% cut next year.
- \* Supplementary benefit,

already a meagre safety-net for the poorest of the poor, is to be reduced by 5% by severing its link to cost of living increases. Not only a devastating blow to single parents and similar claimants, it would be another heavy blow to the unemployed. Already more than half the unemployed have exhausted national insurance benefits and have to rely on supplementary benefits.

In addition, the Tories are planning further cuts in the National Health Service, probably by reducing the number of people eligible to exemptions from prescription charges. A further £80 million will be cut from higher education

spending, which will inevitably hit working class students at Polytechnics the hardest.

Some Tory back-benchers and reportedly one or two "senior ministers" are apparently in revolt at this new round of spending cuts.

But let no one be fooled: if they are opposing Thatcher's cuts, it is because business profits are being affected. They still want cuts, even bigger cuts, in public-sector employment and state benefits, things which would primarily hit the workers.

The Thatcherite "monetarists" have no solutions. But nor do the Tory "Wets". The splits in the Tory leadership reflect the complete desperate crisis in which big business finds itself and the bankruptcy of its political spokes-

men. It would be an illusion to think that there could be a "change of line" by the Tories which would in any way benefit the working class.

There is only one answer to this catastrophic government: an all-out campaign by the labour movement to bring the Tories down. Mobilise millions of workers on the basis of socialist policies! Fight for the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies!

## RALLY

This year's Militant Sellers' Rally, which will take place in Bridlington, Yorkshire, this weekend promises to be a great success. For regular sellers who have not been able to book places, there will be a report in next week's paper.



# Fight back

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

Within a couple of hours they had organised a picket of Dewhurst the Butchers (part of the Vestey empire) in the Leicester market place to highlight the hypocrisy of the Tories and big business.

One placard had the slogan "Lord Vestey £4.3 million profit paid £10 tax, 2.1 million unemployed. Who are the real scroungers? Kick out the Tories!"

Not only does Lord Vestey live in the lap of luxury, but he gets away with a massive (legal) tax fiddle, yet he's not accused of being an idle scrounger!

People like Lord Vestey are responsible for throwing people on the dole anyway! Vestey has announced plans to make more Liverpool dockers redundant.

The picket got a good response from shoppers. One of the butchers was sent out by the manager of Dewhursts to complain. But he said that he paid more tax in a week than Vestey paid in a whole year.

A lady who told us she was 81 gave us 50p for a 'Militant' and said the sooner we get rid of Thatcher the better.

Some young socialists went down to the Radio Leicester offices to publicise the case of the young unemployed. The porter on the door offered to take Thatcher up to the roof in the lift and throw her off the top without a parachute! He got £53.21 for a 54-hour week.

## Massive Protest against Arms Race Madness

In the biggest anti-nuclear weapons demonstration for twenty years over 70,000 marched in London last Sunday. The growing anxiety about the escalating nuclear arms race could be seen in that last year only 600 people went on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament rally.

Undoubtedly the Labour Party's support of this year's rally and the Party conference call to ban all nuclear weapons in Britain has given a major boost to the campaign. Many Party banners were prominent on the march.

The support last Sunday came from a wide spectrum of views but it was overwhelmingly young people who were marching to save their future. The mood of the demonstration was quietly determined and angry against the Tories for the wasteful expenditure on arms which in no way defend the people of Britain.

It is vital that this opposition is given a clear class direction. Only the organised labour movement has the power and strength to end the arms race madness. Those who are campaigning against nuclear weapons and increased arms expenditure must not be left to march alone. The labour movement must win them to their ranks to fight for a socialist alternative, which offers the only practical way out of the present situation.

# Labour Party Unemployment Demo

# Organise now for November 29th

## A masochists' gathering is taking place this Saturday —the Conservative Trade Union conference.

**How is it that active trade unionists, after the experience of 18 months of Tory government can keep working for a party which is trying to dismantle the trade union movement itself?**

One trade union member who dared to speak at the Tory Party conference was jeered at and howled down. And this just for telling ladies and gentlemen that unemployment led to suicides and wasn't very popular among working people.

When they meet in Reading, the Tories will be reminded by a local labour

**By Kevin Ramage**

(Chairman LPYS National Committee)

movement picket that they should stop supporting the enemies of the trade union movement and fight back with Labour for socialist policies to end unemployment.

Reading Labour Party have set up a campaign committee to mobilise support for the National Labour Party demonstration on November 29th. This march and rally against unemployment points the way forward for all those who are threatened by the dole. Under

the impetus of 'Militant' supporters, Labour parties in many areas have set up campaign committees to ensure the maximum mobilisation for the march through Liverpool, an area with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Liverpool District Labour Party are producing leaflets for distribution to every household in the city. In the area where the march begins, Toxteth Labour Party have decided to canvass every household in the constituency. The trade union movement is being involved by the convening of a city-wide shop stewards' meeting and the T&GWU have already produced leaflets for all their members.

However, Labour parties have been alarmed by the apparent lack of enthusiasm shown for the march by Labour Party headquarters and are pressing for a big drive over the month leading up to the demonstration. The Labour Party Young Social-

ists have shown the way by producing a million free leaflets, a leaflet for the unemployed and now a free leaflet in four languages of the Indian sub-continent.

A national drive to secure union sponsorship for the unemployed to go on the march has been combined with canvassing on the dole queues. In Liverpool, three LPYS marches against the Tories will take place in the weeks prior to the march which itself will be preceded by an eve of march joint rally with SOGAT.

In Derry the Trades Council have called a half-day local general strike the day before the Liverpool demonstration, and a large TGWU delegation will be going over from Northern Ireland for November 29th.

The Labour Party can have a tremendous response if a push is given in each section of the movement. From different areas, dockers, bakers, hospital workers, engineering workers, miners and

civil servants' unions are booking coaches to send their members. Students at Hull are sending a coach and Sussex University have paid for £250 worth of seats.

The LPYS branches have booked coaches and are busy selling tickets to the trade union movement. But their main message is to the movement—get cracking for November 29th. Two million people are waiting to see if the Labour Party can mount a serious fightback against unemployment.

If Maltby NUM can book three coaches for the march what could the other branches do? If Hull dockers are sending a coach, what about the other docks branches who are threatened by the Tory onslaught? The TUC (which is backing the march) and the Labour Party National Executive must now use their influence to make this march the biggest ever demonstration against the Tories.

## Building the vehicle for socialism

**"We don't care if they introduce silicon chips all over the factory and employ monkeys to push buttons as long as we can have a job feeding the monkeys."**

That was how Tom Macaffee, convenor at Gardner's factory in Manchester, explained his fellow workers' attitude on new technology to the 150 people attending the London LPYS Young Workers' Conference last weekend. Tom was one of the main speakers in the morning session and he emphasised that his members would welcome a shorter working week, but that they wanted a share in the increased profits that new technology would bring.

Finally he appealed for financial help from the Young Socialists to ensure victory to the Gardner's workers who are occupying their factory to stop redundancies. In response to this and to an appeal from Linda Reid, Editor of 'Socialist Youth', an excellent £200 was raised in a collection to pay for the conference and to send a donation to the Gardner's strikers.

In the first part of the afternoon the conference split up into seminars on such varied subjects as Transport, Women, Education and a Socialist Policy for the Greater London Council. These smaller groups allowed a more detailed discussion on specific parts of the Young Socialists' programme and from which the participants benefited greatly.

The conference came together again later to hear Ron Brown MP, Arthur

**By Fiona Winders**  
(Hackney Central LPYS)

Latham (Chairman, London Labour Party) and Wayne Jones (Industrial Correspondent, 'Militant').

In describing the struggle for socialist policies, Ron Brown said, "The Labour Party is the vehicle for socialism—but every time we start to move forward the right wing take the wheels off," and added that, "the working class don't want a Labour government just to take office—they want it to take power."

He emphasised the major importance of struggle outside parliament to bring down the Tories. This theme was continued by Arthur Latham who in congratulating the YS on the excellent school, urged all young trade unionists present to join the Labour Party and the LPYS and to become involved in the fightback against the Tories and their system.

Commenting on the performance of the last Labour government he said, "Castration by Denis Healey is just as painful as that done by Thatcher—we should not be in the business of amputation."

In closing the conference, Wayne Jones outlined the "irreversible decline" of capitalism and the need for socialism which, he explained, was "not just for May Day rallies but is a bread and butter issue for the working class." Youth, said Wayne, must be to the fore in that struggle and said that he hoped the LPYS would organise more conferences of this nature to educate and organise young workers.

# 'We Want Jobs'



The start of last Saturday's march in Bristol

Photo: Militant

## Four hundred mainly young people marched for jobs on a Labour Party Young Socialists' demonstration in Bristol last Saturday.

Scores of working class youth joined in the march behind the stream of LPYS banners as it went through St Pauls and other working class districts. Shopkeepers came out and applauded.

Shoppers cheered as they heard the young people chanting against the Tories and saw the LPYS placards demanding a 35-hour working week, work or full pay for the unemployed and a national minimum wage.

So enthused were the onlookers that 300 'Militants' and 'Socialist Youth' were sold. In addition they snatched up the last 50 of

**By Robin Clapp**  
(Bristol LPYS)

the South West Youth Campaign Against Unemployment pamphlet on unemployment (all told 1,000 have now been sold).

Over half the march were probably on their first-ever demonstration. But not the last if the LPYS can help it. A bookstall was set up at the rally which followed the march to sign up new members. Now two hundred names must be followed up and won to the socialist cause.

Just two days previously, said Tony Saunois, the youth of Bristol had had a glimpse of the attitude of those who run society. Young people had demonstrated at the courts against the victimisation of youth who were being put on trial

following the St Pauls riot.

Just to show nothing had changed, the police had their own riot, wading in to beat up and arrest the demonstrators. "The St Pauls riot was born of unemployment, poverty and police harassment. It will be repeated again and again unless the labour movement can get rid of this system," said Tony Saunois.

Tony Benn also pointed out that Thatcher's government, while calling for defence expenditure had done more damage to British industry than Hitler's Luftwaffe.

For the 23,000 unemployed youth of Bristol the message of the rally and march was clear. Labour must be returned to implement a socialist plan of production to provide work for all. The alternative is poverty for our generation.



# NEC STANDS BY CONFERENCE

**Labour's new National Executive Committee, on which the left majority was strengthened by the election at the recent annual conference, held its first meeting last week.**

It was, by all accounts, a meeting which reflected the radical move towards socialist policies shown at the recent party conference in Blackpool.

The first major issue to come up was the proposal to increase the resources made available to the LPYS. These included recommendations that the national youth officer post should be elected, and that the LPYS budget (currently about one per cent of

total party expenditure) should be increased to £50,000.

There were apparently letters before the meeting from APEX (the union which represents white collar staff at LP headquarters) and NULO (the Labour agents' union) demanding that the minute on this issue, already agreed by the executive, should be withdrawn.

Instead of withdrawing the minute, however, the NEC (at Eric Heffer's proposal) voted 13 to 6 to refer all these items to the relevant sub-commit-

tees for 'application.'

This signifies a further move towards getting these decisions actually implemented. Support for the proposals will undoubtedly be flooding in from constituency parties and trade unions to all NEC members, who will probably come under strong pressure to back down from those determined to thwart attempts to build the LPYS.

The other crucial issue before the meeting was the question of the party leadership. Reflecting the clear wishes of the overwhelming majority of party members, the NEC correctly agreed to ask the Parliamentary Labour Party to suspend its standing orders at its meeting next week (at the start of the Parliamentary session) in order to postpone the election of a new leader until after a new democratised procedure is adopted by the special conference in January.



Members of the NEC's left wing majority discussing issues at this year's Labour Party conference.

Photo: MILITANT

Reflecting the increased left majority on the NEC this was carried overwhelmingly by 16-7 despite opposition from the right wing.

Correctly however, the NEC didn't leave the issue there. It agreed to a proposal from Jo Richardson that it would circulate to all affiliated organisations its own draft proposal for a constitutional amendment to establish an electoral college for the leadership of the election.

The exact content of this will be agreed at a meeting to be held next week. The NEC was not put off by right wing objections that the PLP had not been consulted.

As Tony Saunois, the Young Socialists' representative pointed out at the meeting: "Consultation is a two-way affair. The PLP or Shadow Cabinet did not seem so concerned about consultation with the NEC to discuss whether elections for the

party leadership should go ahead in the light of the conference decision."

All reports of this NEC meeting indicate that the mood of the party membership is now clearly being reflected by the determined stand being taken by the left wing NEC majority on most issues. It is essential they are fully supported in this by resolutions from constituency parties and trade unions.

## A RARE SPECIES



This bright young thing was spotted at Tory Party conference. However, outside conferences you don't see many of them about. They certainly couldn't muscle up much support in Leyton.

"Take a look at these people...you don't see many of these days" proclaimed Leyton Young Socialist Julie Morgan, speaking of only three Tories who turned up to debate with Leyton LPYS last week.

Over 40 people attended the meeting, where the Tories explained their 'solution' to unemployment, which has almost trebled in the area in the last four years.

"It's quite simple" explained the Young Tory "the 600,000 women who are on the dole and are married shouldn't be counted as they have husbands who may be working!"

"But aren't the men married too?" asked a bewildered YS member.

Our friend from the Conservatives realised that we might find his arguments difficult to understand, but he was definitely right as he had studied economics at university!

He went on, "Even if you haven't got a job at least

under the Tories you have lots of freedom."

"Why was I stopped by the police walking down the street for wearing steel-capped work boots?" asked one local youth at his first YS meeting.

"So you should have been," chorused the Tories—"they could have been dangerous."

"Yeah, it was lucky I had them on 'cos the copper stood on my foot!"

The meeting agreed that they could only think of one married woman who should be on the dole—Margaret Thatcher. Julie Morgan, speaking for the YS, exposed the Tory apologists for capitalism and outlined the socialist alternative, which won the support of the majority of the audience. Following the vote [where even one of the Tories voted for the YS!] almost £20 was raised in the collection, and the Tories went back into hiding.

By Peter Mumford

## Parties send in support

**Already many constituency Labour parties are calling on the Parliamentary Labour Party [PLP] to call off the election of leader and abide by the decisions of conference.**

Many parties have called for a "caretaker" leader, until the special conference early next year decides on a new form of electing party leader. These parties include; Attercliffe, Blaby, Braintree, Guildford, East Hertfordshire, Newbury, Toxteth, Vauxhall, Watford, Welwyn Hatfield, Leeds District LP, Radlett and District, and the City of London and Westminster.

Chester-le-Street CLP has agreed a similar resolution and strongly advised its MP, Giles Radice, to propose or support such a proposition in the PLP. This was after the MP had said he would "probably" vote for Healey. The party also agreed to hold a special discussion on alternative forms of electing party leader.

NOLS and Hammersmith North have specifically called on the PLP to elect a 'caretaker' leader and for the PLP to abide by the electoral college set up by special conference.

West Derbyshire CLP has called on the PLP not to hold an election and Penarth has given full support to the national executive to uphold the decisions of conference.

Trade union branches are also urging support for decisions taken at this year's conference. TSSA Euston No.2 branch has sent a resolution to its executive, saying it supports conference decision on election of party leader, and urges the executive to consult fully with the union on the issue. It also calls on the executive to "inform branches by circular of the facts of the issue and organise a special one-day national delegate conference to discuss the attitude our union delegation should take at the special Labour Party conference in January 1981."

The branch also stated its support for the electoral college system: 30% Labour MPs, 30% CLPs and 40% trade unions and affiliated bodies. The London Metropolitan USDAW branch also passed similar resolutions to be sent to their executive and to the union's Eastern Divisional Conference.

Make sure your Labour Party and trade union branch urges support for the decisions on the leadership taken at this year's conference.

## BELFAST YS FORM LABOUR CLUB

**Members of the Belfast Young Socialists have formed a Labour Club in the Ulster Polytechnic.**

We hold fortnightly meetings where we discuss topics such as 'Students Against the Tories' and 'Marxism—A Method for Fighting.'

On alternate weeks we set up a bookstall in a prominent place in the Students' Union building where we sell socialist literature and, of course, 'Militant Irish Monthly' and 'Militant.' This is a useful way to attract young people to the ideas of socialism.

At a recent Students'

**By Hilda McGrann**

(Ulster Poly Labour Club)

Union meeting a resolution opposing the Tory cuts and calling for "the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies" was passed. Anti-Tory feeling was high among the 300 students present.

Another motion, asking students to support the prisoners in H-Block and Armagh Prison, produced a lively debate. An amendment was moved calling for political status for the prisoners. But Glen Simp-

son of the Labour Club pointed out that a labour movement enquiry was necessary to differentiate between political prisoners and sectarian murderers.

Finally, a resolution calling for nuclear disarmament was discussed. Again Labour Club speakers offered a class analysis of the issue.

A Labour Club has now been functioning for a number of years in the Poly and is the only political organisation for students there. At the next students union meeting we intend to put forward a proposal supporting the demand for a mass party of Labour in the north.

We intend to make socialist ideas known to the widest number of students possible; socialism has more to offer them than ever before.

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# Bill Doggett reviews

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The fact that the Tory press have had to devote some space to the scandalous activities of Lord Vestey may make innocent people believe that the rest of his class have a pure, citizen-like approach to paying their full whack in taxes. The journal of the Institute of Factory Management, known as 'Industrial Management', shows that the average director knows more about 'managing' his tax avoidance than he does about 'managing' industry. [Industry, what industry?]

They have hints on how to get a £200 suit for £56 or two company cars through tax arrangements with directors' wives. You can also run a factory canteen. "This is tax-free as long as all employees benefit." Philanthropy is not dead. But wait...not all "employees" are equal.

"There is nothing to stop the boss having a smarter section for the top boys." And if the lower orders decide to see how the other "half" live the magazine reassures its frightened readers, "a frown should be sufficient to keep away the dungaree brigade."

According to the 'Sunday Mirror', a faith healer, Dzhuna Davitashvili, has been busily 'curing' the ailing Stalinist leaders of the USSR, Brezhnev and Kosygin [though it hasn't stopped Kosygin resigning due to ill health]. Apparently she emits 'bio-energy' from her palm which, so it is claimed, cures cancer, ulcers and heart disease.

She's not on the NHS, though. Her fee is a mere £150 a session—including one minute a day with Brezhnev! The fruits of 'comrade' Davitashvili's 'labour' include two houses in her home city of Tbilisi in Georgia, three cars, a maid, a cook and a chauffeur. She also shops in Paris. A far cry from the lifestyle of millions of Soviet workers. A modern-day Rasputin?

There is one thing she'll never cure—the sickness of Stalinism that allows such ostentatious privilege to flourish in the bureaucracy. The cure for that sickness lies not with 'bio-energy' but with workers' energy—to establish workers' democracy!

Old Etonian Sir Hugh Fitzgerald Arbuthnot, Master of the Jedforest Hunt, chased a fox into a factory, clubbed it to death with his riding crop in the boiler room and threw the body to his hounds outside. At Jedburgh Court, Arbuthnot admitted causing a breach of the peace. Sentence, though, was deferred until the end of the foxhunting season in May so he could carry on hunting! Can you imagine a similar decision being made about a football 'hooligan'?

There's nobody quite so right-wing as a lapsed Labour right-wing intellectual. Take Paul Johnson, former editor of 'New Statesman' in the '60s when the Party was controlled by 'nicer' people. A 'moderate'—the Tory press called him when he advised people to vote Tory in last year's election. Here is his 'moderate' opinion on the left in the Labour Party ["Sunday Telegraph" 19 October].

"In recent years Labour has been invaded, and to some extent occupied, by the Fascist Left. These people are essentially un-British, Continental in their commitment to a heartless ideology and the systematic cult of violence.

"Like the depraved creatures who swarm evilly through the pages of Dostoevsky's superb admonitory novel, 'The Possessed', the extreme Left yearns to summon up from the political sewers the murderous vermin so well described in Dickens' 'A Tale of Two Cities'...there can be no dealing with this faction—they have to be destroyed, expelled from the party by a process of proscription. For such a task, requiring singleness of purpose, ruthlessness, even a touch of brutality, Healey is just the man." Few Labour Party members will shed tears over this "gentleman's" defection.

"I clean 11 rooms a day for which I get £36 gross, for a 30 hour week, and a room which I have to share with another girl."

"You're angry and you're disgusted and still you've got to shut up because it's the same in all hotels here. You're not regarded as human beings doing a job, but as a servant or a slave, like in the days of 'Upstairs, Downstairs.'"

These are statements of fact expressed by hotel workers in 1980. This report exposes a booming business contributing £875 million per year to Britain's economy.

Over 50% of the half million hotel workers earn below supplementary benefit level.

In 1979 average gross weekly earnings were lower than in any other industry and except maybe for a few key workers, 'perks' such as tips go no way to alleviating this situation.

Long hours and often unsocial hours are worked with less than a third of all workers on a conventional day shift (i.e. between 7.30am

and 7.30pm).

The massive profits of the industry are maintained by keeping wages low (half of the firms looked at by the wages inspectorate in 1978 were paying less than the legal minimum) and by concentrating on immigrant workers and women. In 1977 nearly 14% of hotel workers and 25% of restaurant workers had been born overseas.

### Prospering industry

Migrants spent four years on a work permit. "For four years they've got us in a stranglehold—then we're free. Until then we've got to accept everything they tell us to do and whatever they pay us. We live in fear of losing our permit and getting sent back home" said one Filipino worker.

Work permits are issued to the employer, and not to the worker. Migrants depend upon employers writing every year to the Department of Employment confirming that their job will continue.

In sickening contrast is "the world of luxurious

accommodation costing up to £100 a night, the industry's directors on over £1,000 a week, and hotel firms whose profits run to tens of millions of pounds a year." (CIS Report page1)

The industry has prospered in recent years. While employment in manufacturing industry has declined, by almost one million since 1968, the number working in the hotel and catering industry has grown by over 200,000. Between 1969 and 1974 more rooms were built than in the previous seventy years.

The report informs us that "...the collective membership of trade unions in hotels and catering is only 41,000 or less than 6% of the workforce." While recognising the difficulties facing trade unionists in the industry—eg. high labour turnover, large numbers of casual workers, small workplaces etc—this does not make the problems of union organisation insuperable.

The G&MWU and T&G WU have increased their membership in hotel and catering in recent years, but although rivalry between the unions might have led to more aggressive recruitment drives, it has also led to a lack of

unity which has been exploited by many employers.

The report looks at the achievements the unions have made but doesn't avoid making valid criticisms of the ways in which the unions have functioned.

Like many previous CIS reports 'Hardship Hotel' provides much useful information, putting paid to the myth that the law (in this case the wages councils) protects workers from the 'employers' offensive'.

### Leisure for all!

All socialists should read it and fight in workers' struggles to instigate union organisation and to explain that their plight necessitates more than just organising into a trade union.

It requires a socialist system where the 'leisure' industry would be open to all people, controlled and managed by those who have for so long 'sweated' to create massive profits for the few who at present own and control it.

## The man from Eden's Grove

The books written by Jack London are an enormous testament to his commitment to socialism and the struggle against capitalism that was to break him at the age of 40.

In a very entertaining play, "Jack London: the man from Eden's Grove" the story of London's life is told in a clever autobiographical form which throws light not only on this, but also on his disillusionment with the American Socialist Party.

The play begins with Jack London relating his early experience of the brutal side of life, how his pregnant mother was thrown out by his father and how he was disowned by his father. His experience of child labour in the Alaskan canning factories is a graphic illustration of the realities of America at the turn of the century.

All these events left a deep impression, but it was not till he was employed as a scab that he realised that his thoughts were propelling him towards socialism.

His realisation that this was the only answer to problems of poverty and

greed came after thoroughly searching his local library for answers to the questions he found all about him.

London had to write 'Dog stories' as he put it, trashy novels, which were the only writings that publishers would accept. In a very amusing anecdote he explains how he shot to fame and used this as a platform to explain the need for socialism—and was promptly boycotted by the publishers!

The reasons why Jack London was a socialist came across very clearly in almost an agitational way, how he saw the Coronation of King Edward in London and

compared this with the living standards in the East End.

In another telling piece he explains how the savages of Alaska were better looked after than the working class of modern society. He uses examples of the demise of the dinosaur to explain the impending collapse of capitalism.

The mammals were eaten by the handful by dinosaurs during the day, but at night they ate the dinosaurs' eggs and so the dinosaurs died

out. He confidently believed in the victory of socialism.

In the final part of the play, we see London almost broken. A combination of drink, a mystery disease, a divorce and the unrelenting pressure of the publishers finally sapped his confidence in the overthrow of capital.

The play is well worth seeing, but some knowledge of Jack London's life is useful, as his despair before his death could leave you with the wrong impression.



Dave Farrar reviews

"Jack London: the man from Eden's Grove". The play is showing in Edinburgh from 29 October, London from 4-8 November and Manchester 11-15 November.



# 'Terrorism' Act used against trade unionists

It was Saturday 11 October. Trade unionists from miles away were journeying back to their home areas after lobbying the Tory conference.

Five members of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union on their way back to Northern Ireland were stopped by police on their way to catch the ferry from Stranraer to Larne. Manus Maguire of 'Militant Irish Monthly' spoke to one of the arrested workers.

**What were your reasons for going to Brighton?**

"I am a trade unionist, a committee member of branch 11/96 and I volunteered to go to Brighton to show the need for the entire trade union movement to

take up the fight against the disastrous economic policies of the Tories.

"For example, I face redundancy at Kilroot power station but I am only one victim of the ceaseless attack by the Tories against the working class in both Britain and Northern Ireland."

**What happened at Stranraer?**

"We (the five arrested) were the last off the bus. I was stopped by the police on a regular check, and asked my name and date of birth. When I replied I was sent to a waiting room. I then recognised four others being held.

"When another trade unionist, from Newry Trades Council, stated that he had to return home to attend the funeral of a dead relative, he was ignored by the Special Branch. I knew then that we were going to

**Photo right: Workers protest in Belfast at arrest under Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1978**

be held for a long time." **What was the attitude of the Special Branch?**

"We were told that we were being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA); but no explanation was given. The Branch men ignored all requests, treating us as common criminals. At Dumfries Police Station, all our valuables, our jackets and our shoes had to be surrendered.

"Each of us was then directed to a separate stone floor cell, with a mattress and a blanket. The toilet in my cell was disgusting and it wouldn't flush. When I asked for toilet paper I was given an old newspaper. When I asked for it to be flushed I was again ignored by the police.

"At approximately 9.30—I don't know the exact time since all our watches were taken—we were given breakfast. This consisted of one



**The enormous growth of repression in Northern Ireland, the conditions in the prisons and the "special legislation," pose a serious threat to all workers in Ireland and in Britain**

slice of bread and beans, one egg and a cup of tea. Not only was it served on plastic cups and plates but it was cold.

"Then we returned to our cells. Again the police ignored any requests for flushing the toilets.

"At about 12.30 we were taken for interrogation. I was asked everything conceivable under the sun, from information about my brothers and sisters to where I went at night. If they wanted this information they could get it from the RUC in Belfast. Nonetheless I co-operated. My photo, front face and sides was

taken—also my fingerprints. **What is your opinion of the arrests?**

"Firstly I would like to state that we had had no alcohol to drink, we were sober as judges. As I see it, the arrest of trade unionists from Northern Ireland is to stem the flow of people like ourselves coming over, but in no way will something like this scare us off.

"We have nothing to hide—we aren't subversives or criminals. We are trade unionists."

**How do you see the present repressive legislation which enables the police to hold trade unionists in this**

**fashion?**

"I am totally opposed to the PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) and the EPA (Emergency Provisions Act) and other repressive legislation because it involves innocent people such as trade union activists.

"Inevitably, this legislation will be turned on the entire labour and trade union movement. Events in Northern Ireland show how it has been perfected with ruthless efficiency over the years. These laws are now being turned on the labour movement as this and other incidents have proved."

## PRISONS Costly, chaotic and unjust

The prison officers' dispute has led to the irony of Tory Home Secretary 'Short Sharp Shock' Whitelaw instructing magistrates to fine rather than imprison offenders because prisons and police cells could no longer cope. Even before the dispute though, conditions faced by prisoners were deteriorating as this article shows.

As the economic recession in Britain deepens, the prison system is in crisis and chaos. Record overcrowding, unfit prison buildings, the denial of prisoners' rights, and a disturbing number of assaults and prison deaths characterise the British penal system.

Thirty years ago there were about 20,000 prisoners in Britain. Now there are up to 43,000 men and women in jail with 90 prisoners for every 100,000 in the total population. Britain is now one of the leading countries of the world in mass imprisonment. 16,000 of the prisoners in Britain have to share a small cell with two or three others.

Facilities in some prisons are so poor that many prisoners are locked in their cells for 23 hours a day. Some prison buildings are in such a poor condition that they would be closed down if public health inspectors had powers of inspection and prosecution. They have no powers on Crown Property! The Prison Department can

On 29 September, Stirling Sheriff court in Scotland sentenced a 45 year-old unemployed man to prison for 60 days. He had been charged with five driving offences in July. His sentence had been deferred twice in order for him to try to find work to pay a fine, but after numerous attempts he had failed to find a job [unemployment in Scotland is well over 10%].

The Sheriff said "I do not blame you for not being able to get a job" but "The kind of fines involved here would be well beyond your ability to pay. I have no choice but to impose a prison sentence."

**By Andy Irlan  
[Secretary, Greenwich Labour Party]**

thereby escape responsibility for providing accommodation fit for human beings to live in.

Some prisoners can work in prison—but in doing so earn the lowest wages in Britain. Special prison rates mean that between £1 and £4 maximum is paid for a full week's work!

Prisoners in Britain have never had basic human or democratic rights. All letters are censored and sometimes stopped without explanation. Prisoners have no rights to seek independent medicals, an important matter when the use of drugs and psychiatry for control purposes is often alleged.

An elaborate Home Office complaints procedure effectively denies the prisoner any

chance of a fair hearing. When assaults are alleged against staff, the inmates have no proper access to legal assistance.

There were 21 suicides last year in British prisons—the highest number for a decade—and the 1980 figures look like being even higher.

**'Growth industry' in Tory Britain**

Quite simply, the penal system provides a useful means of social control. Is it a coincidence that most people appearing in court on criminal charges are unemployed? Is it a coincidence that the

lower your income the more likely it is you will be sent to prison?

At least a third of the present prison population have broken minor laws, many of which (eg. vagrancy) are in themselves unjust! One prison governor estimates that 50% of his prison population should not be there!

About a third of people released are homeless on discharge. Is it a coincidence that 80% of recorded serious crimes relate to theft? Or that the crimes of the powerful are so often not prosecuted nor even reported?

The Prison Department is currently trying hard to recruit more staff and is concentrating on areas hard hit by unemployment, such as the steel towns. A Tory government forcing the unemployed to lock up other unemployed people!

The present British prison system costs a fortune to run: £232 million a year, with a further £720 million to build further prisons. Apart from armaments, it is the only growth industry in Tory Britain. And there is not a shred of evidence to suggest that imprisonment does anything to reduce the chances of someone being re-convicted.

A socialist Britain will need to start afresh by repealing unjust laws and above all by removing the economic causes of crime.

## Maze prisoners' protest

While firmly opposing the methods of individual terrorism used by the Provisional IRA, the labour movement must fight against the state's use of repression and torture in Northern Ireland, including the brutal methods used in the prisons.

The deaths of prisoners in the H-blocks of the Maze prison [formerly Long Kesh internment camp]—which could undoubtedly result from the hunger strike now beginning—would have disastrous repercussions for the workers in Northern Ireland and for the labour movement in Britain.

A new eruption of sectarian violence would also blow up in the face of the ruling class itself.

The intervention of the labour movement, which is the only power capable of forcing the Tories to concede rights to the prisoners, is therefore more urgent than ever.

Republican prisoners in H-blocks have announced that they intend to go ahead with their hunger strike "to the death", starting with seven prisoners this week.

They have rejected what first appeared to be a partial concession by the Tory

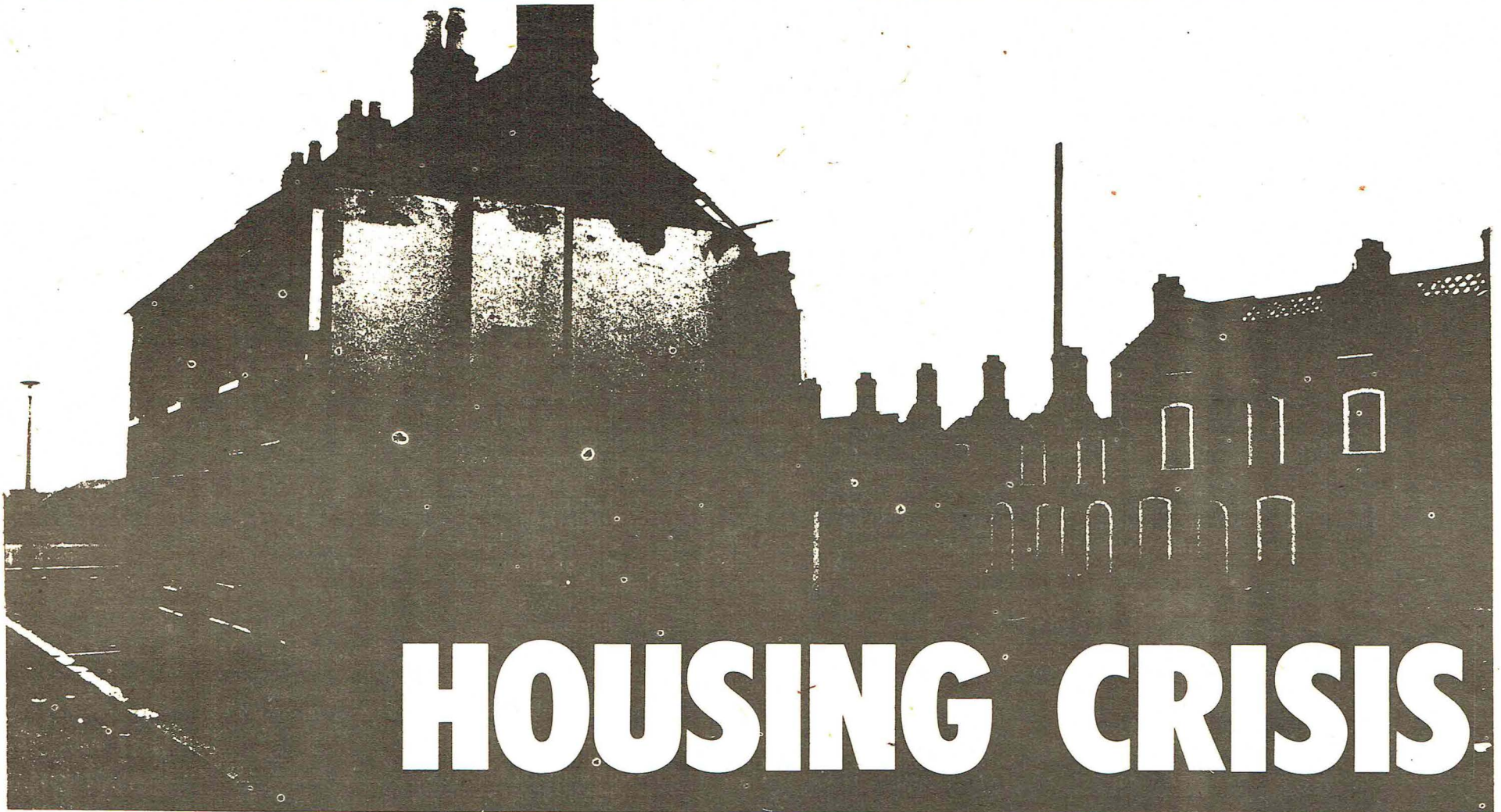
government. Last week there were reports [based on "sources close to the Northern Ireland Office"] that prisoners would be allowed to wear civilian clothes. Later, however, it turned out that this meant that the authorities would issue "civilian-type" clothing—another kind of uniform.

However, even this token concession undoubtedly reflected a partial retreat by the Tories under the pressure of protest, particularly the growing protest within the ranks of the labour movement against the brutal treatment of NI prisoners.

The Tory government must be forced to concede the right of all prisoners to wear their own clothes, a demand fully backed by the Labour Committee on Prisons in Northern Ireland.

This must be backed up with pressure for implementation of the other vital demands: access to newspapers and books, with no restrictions on letters; two unsupervised visits and two food parcels a week; a choice of work and educational facilities, with trade union rates of pay; and the right of all prisoners to elect their own representatives to negotiate on their behalf.





# HOUSING CRISIS

The Tories, as part of their kamikaze cutbacks to try and bolster up their profit system, are ordering a total freeze on council house building. For the thousands of homeless and the hundreds of thousands on council waiting lists, this is intolerable.

The housing situation in this country, both council and private, is at breaking point. In Greater London alone over the last two years, 200,000 households applied to councils for housing. Yet because of public spending cutbacks, very few had a chance of getting somewhere.

Now, 300,000 are on London waiting lists—but while in 1971 over 24,000 council homes were built in London, last year only 7,300 were built. And now the Tories have put a freeze on all building, and councils have also been ordered to end home improvement grants and loans as well.

In fact throughout the country, according to the Building and Civil Engineering Economic Development Council, only 55,000 council homes were planned to be built this year, but even this small figure will be reduced even further with Heseltine's plans. Yet in Leeds alone, 20,000 houses are needed!

The Tories' response to the situation is not only to put on freeze but also sell off council houses. Although very few tenants can afford this, it must be opposed. It means another house lost from the declining pool of houses available and is not a financial gain for the local authority. A 1978 Department of Environment survey published in 'New Society'

**By Bob Labi**  
(Greater London Labour Party Executive)

(January 24) showed that each council house sold would, over 50 years, result in losses of between £3,500 and £8,500 for the public sector, in lost rents.

On this issue, the labour movement must take the lead of the Newcastle NALGO branch, who have refused to handle applications for council house sales. All public sector unions must make the stand.

More directly, Labour councils must refuse to implement the Tories' law. But it is not enough just to do as Rochdale Labour council did for a short period (but later backed down). While welcoming the stand they made in refusing to implement the act and calling for the Department of Environment to do their own dirty work, struggles such as these must be taken out of the council chamber and onto the streets.

**The Tories must be met with mass opposition**

Mass leafletting and canvassing of estates must be carried out to rally tenants behind Labour councils. Demonstrations must be held. The Tories must be

shown that there is mass opposition to their policies.

Similarly, the working people cannot afford to compensate for Tory cutbacks through rent and rate increases. A demand by Labour councils of 'No cuts, no rent or rate increases' would gain enormous support.

New homes are wanted badly enough, but the Tory cuts are also hitting thousands of homes, desperately in need of massive repairs. Even the Tory-controlled London Boroughs Association has been forced to admit this, and in a recent survey they stated that over 40% of council dwellings in London needed repairs costing over £1,000 each. And they add it will get "steadily worse over the next few years."

But it is not the public-sector cut backs alone that are to blame for the council housing crisis—more so it is the crazy system of councils being forced to pay off massive interest charges to the banks and money lenders, on the money they borrowed to pay for their housing programmes in the first place.

For example, the 1978/79 Greater London housing account received £91,360,000 in income from rents, yet had to pay out a staggering £257,239,000 in interest charges to the London financiers! This meant that for every £1 paid in rent, nearly £3 went to the banks. And this was eighteen months ago before the Tories jacked up the interest

rates even further!

But while council housing programmes literally grind to a halt, can we rely on 'private enterprise' to provide homes for the low paid and elderly? Far from it! The private housing industry is spiralling deeper into crisis itself!

## Markets declining for private building industry

The Tories' friends in the building trade (twenty-three of whom gave £166,800 to Tory party funds last year) are proving incapable of filling the gap. Last year, private builders started work on 140,600 homes (compared to 228,000 in 1972) and this year the number is expected to drop below 100,000.

Private builders build houses to make profits, and with the present recession they cannot sell their goods. As 'The Times' (29 September) in an article on private housing pointed out: "One in twelve workers is on the dole and others wonder when they will join them. Less overtime is being worked, a bleak winter lies ahead, and people think twice about buying homes."

Coupled to this is the massive rise in interest charges which put mortgages out of the reach of many middle-class families, let alone the working class.

As if the chronic lack of

housing stock was not bad enough, the decline in private and public sector housing results in yet another important industry putting more and more workers, whose skills are desperately needed, onto the dole.

This doesn't only affect building workers—the subsidiary industries are being decimated too. Blue Circle, the cement manufacturers, who control 60% of the home market, have this year had their markets reduced by 28% ('Financial Times', 24 October).

Similarly, the brick industry has been badly hit, with deliveries declining by 20% this year alone!

So this is the crazy logic of the capitalist system. And its champions the Tories now want to stop council house building altogether. As the general secretary of UCATT, Mr L Wood, said last week, "There are already over a quarter of a million construction workers unemployed, and this savage measure will inevitably put thousands of our members out of work—and all this at a time when a million people are crying out for houses."

Enough is enough. Working people can tolerate this crazy situation no longer. Labour councils must mobilise mass opposition and forge strong links with the public sector unions, not only in the building trade but in other public sector facilities too, to ensure the labour movement is united as one in this struggle.

Nationally the labour movement must campaign to get these Tories out as soon as possible, and return a Labour government committed to socialist policies which will:

★ launch a massive council house building programme which will also provide work for some of the two million unemployed;

★ take into public ownership, with compensation based on proven need, all rented accommodation with rents set at levels working people can afford;

★ nationalise under workers' control the banks and finance houses and wipe off the massive interest charges now crippling local authorities;

★ nationalise under workers' control and with compensation on proven need the commanding heights of the economy, to end this capitalist economic chaos and introduce the planned economy which will make all these resources available.

**'In 1918 they promised us houses fit for heroes. But we will be entering the 21st century with slums.'**

These words by Leeds Labour Councillor, George Moody, speaking on a Radio 4 programme on housing, on 23 October, sum up the failure of capitalism to provide a decent home for all



# BITTER MEMORIES OF MASS UNEMPLOYMENT

By George  
Wright

**"No return to the 1930s" has been the call from around the labour movement as unemployment has climbed to over two million and the Tories and the bosses have launched an all-out attack on workers' living standards and trade union rights.**

**Already, thousands of school-leavers are faced with no better future than the dole queue. But the younger generation of workers who grew up at the end of capitalism's post-war boom obviously have no personal experience of prolonged mass unemployment.**

**In these personal recollections, George Wright, a class militant from Edinburgh, recalls the terrible conditions imposed on workers and their families during the pre-war slump and the ruthless attitude of the bosses and their political representatives.**

They say history repeats itself. If this is true, then those of us in Britain today who are feeling the draught of the recession had better make preparations to weather the hurricane which seems about to follow.

Alternatively, we socialists must quickly take decisive, vigorous action to

stop the hurricane in its tracks.

It all happened before in the 1930's. But we in that era could claim that we did not understand what had hit us. No such plea can be accepted in the 1980s.

In 1931 the National Government headed by ex-Labour prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, ignored the advice of Keynes to reflate the economy, and instead implemented the recommendations of the May Committee. Those were to cut government

spending, which amongst other things meant that the salaries of all state employees were reduced. Naturally, employers in the private sector quickly jumped on the band wagon and did likewise.

Worst of all, however, was the decision to cut all unemployment benefit by 10%.

Unemployment during the 1930s was widespread, reaching an average 22% in Scotland, 23% in North East England and 31% in Wales. At one time, the rate of unemployment in Merthyr Tydfil was 70% of the workforce and in Jarrow 80%.

**It is difficult to comprehend the distressing atmosphere which existed where only two or three men in ten were working...**

It is difficult to comprehend the distressing atmosphere which existed where only two or three men in ten were working, not forgetting the mortification of those who were idle. For the latter, the cut in unemployment benefit, for which they had made contributions for many years, and which was meagre enough to begin with, was nothing short of catastrophic.

It also struck terror into the hearts of those who were working, in case they should lose their jobs, and enabled employers to force employees to accept cuts in wages and harsher conditions of service.

In those days few wives worked, most had enough to do attending to the welfare of the family. There were no washing machines or refrigerators. Few houses had fixed baths and many had outside toilets. No hot water came from the taps at the sink and large pots and kettles stood perpetually on the black iron grates. Widows, and wives with invalid or disabled husbands, had to work mostly as domestic servants, charladies and cleaners, having to be at work in the very early hours of the morning.

The men were the only breadwinners in the family. I was lucky. I was never unemployed. But my father was, and the experience of what happened to him, to my family, and to neighbours and friends, is unforgettable.

The job I managed to get in Edinburgh, my home town, was in the drapery department in the local Co-operative, which had the second largest membership in Britain at that time. As they had never been known to pay employees off and had a superannuation fund, it was deemed a good, safe job. Nobody asked me whether I would like such a job, things like that were just not done in those days.

After an apprenticeship of ten years the pay reached £3 a week, which was just about the minimum subsistence level. As two-thirds of the nation was living on, or below the poverty line, I was fortunate to be earning such a wage, but most of us had to contribute to our less fortunate relations who were not working. Indeed, your pay packet was handed intact every Friday night to your mother, who gave you back as much in pocket money as she could afford. Sometimes that was next to nothing, especially if the rent, rates or gas bill was due.

There was a Shops Act which amongst other things stated that, because of the high incidence of varicose veins found in shop assistants, who were normally on their feet from 8.30 am to 6.30 pm every day, seats should be provided for the employees. Seats were indeed provided, but woe betide you if the boss found you sitting on one. You should be so busy working that you'd not have time to sit, was the employers' attitude.

**Seats were indeed provided, but woe betide you if the boss found you sitting on one.**

The Act also covered the hours a shop could remain open, but at times when those regulations should have been operative, for example at Christmas and New Year, it was suspended, with the result that assistants had to work till 9, 10 and 11 o'clock at night so that all possible trade could be captured. Although we were in trade union, and a closed shop at that, no overtime was paid because of a union-management agreement.

At that time, clerical work in an office was considered socially superior, although many clerks were very poorly

paid. Often they were handling thousands of pounds of their firm's money and, of course, some of them fell by the wayside and helped themselves, often to help them get over a difficult patch. Even G.K. Chesterton wrote, after noticing one of those cases in the paper, that instead of the judge sentencing the prisoner to six months' imprisonment, what was really required was a sentence of two weeks at the seaside.

When a worker was thrown out of work he invariably, for some queer reason, thought that he was bound to be able to find some job, however menial, that would keep the wolf from the door until such times as the economic depression receded.

There was no such thing as a redundancy payment in those days. Good firms might give the employee one or two weeks' notice. Tradesmen who were considered as socially inferior did not get even that. Joiners were told at eleven o'clock on Saturday that they were no longer required, and the time from 11 o'clock was to be used to sharpen their tools. Firms more or less sacked you on the spot.

There was one consolation in all this. We were all suffering together. Even the King, George V, had volunteered to tighten his belt! Instead of taking £60,000 a year (equivalent now to about £1,200,000) he would give up £10,000 of that payment to help the country!

When the newly unemployed man went to the Labour Exchange to find a job, he found that none existed. Nevertheless he had paid insurance stamps which entitled him to unemployment benefit. This amounted to 85p for himself, 40p for his wife and 20p for each child under 16. The average family of four, it can be seen, received £1.65, or about the half the amount required, to keep his family on the subsistence level.

Some perhaps had managed to put a little away in the savings bank when they were working, to provide for a rainy day. Well, the rainy day had arrived and they found their savings were not long in disappearing.

To meet the rent, rates, the coal, gas and food bills, and all the other bare necessities of life, it was imperative to think up some new methods of raising money. A few had taken out endowments to give them a little nest egg towards the end of their life, for superannuation funds were

only in existence for the top employees, and were glad they had done so, as they could now get their payments back. They were quickly disillusioned about that.

**The rainy day had arrived and they found their savings were not long in disappearing.**

The insurance companies offered to let the payments lie till the policy matured, but on the other hand, if the insured person wanted his money back, that would be classed as a surrender policy and the actual amount repaid was but an insignificant fraction of the amount paid in. It was bare-faced robbery.

So now this respectable family had to do what others had to do before them, resort to the pawn shop for help. Watches, rings, alberts, family heirlooms, anything the pawnbroker would lend money on, had to go.

Employers took on boys of 14 and 16 years of age and worked them like men, for cheap labour was good business practice. As boys got older the chances of a job were less, till a man of 35 had absolutely no chance whatever. Even some cabinet ministers who had served in the Labour government and who had lost their seats in Parliament in the disastrous defeat at the general election, were to be found in the dole queue.

Things were at rock-bottom and they could not possibly get any worse, we thought. But they did.

The government decided that the unemployed were not trying hard enough to get work. As we see today, some of our fellow workers who were in work believed this to be true, and went out of their way to call those who were, idle layabouts, scroungers and parasites. Unemployed they would never be, they asserted, because they were prepared to work at anything for any small wage. They would not be found dead in any dole queue and in their abysmal ignorance, they did not know that thousands before them had said the same thing. Then all of a sudden it happened to them!

The government seemed to think that the unemployed were having it too good, so they decided to beat them down even further. The dreaded Means Test was introduced and brutally im-



plemented. This was an enquiry into your means, and a rule was that if a son or daughter was working he or she had to contribute to the family income.

Although this was already being done in nearly every family, the snag was that the Government now decided how much the family should each contribute from their pay, and the father's dole money was cut by an equivalent amount. This was indeed a humiliation for the parents. One way out, was for the sons and daughters to leave home and go into lodgings thereby ensuring the father's benefit was not reduced.

Many families were broken up at this time, never to be united again. Some sons and daughters decided to get married, which sometimes worked out, but if the depression hit them they found out they were worse off than ever. The saying then current, that when poverty enters the door, love flies out the window, was only too true for them.

Cards were issued to each unemployed man at the Labour exchange, which had to be signed by three employers every day. This meant that twenty-two employers had to sign this card every week, and one can imagine the weary miles trudged by those with no hope of a job whatever. Employers took a poor view of this, because they were not paying foremen to stand about signing cards all day. Foremen were instructed not to sign cards, or else a place would be opened for half an hour a day for this purpose.

**The government seemed to think that the unemployed were having it too good.... The dreaded Means Test was introduced and brutally implemented.**

One can see the hundreds of cards being pushed under the foreman's nose for signature. Everyone was an early bird to get a good place in the queue for a signature, because when the half-hour was up the door was slammed and you went away empty handed, so the poor man was in trouble again at the Labour Exchange if the card was not completed.

Sad to say, some of the clerks there seemed to revel in their new found authoritarian position, and enjoyed being impudent to applicants for benefit. Such people were not only found in the civil service, and unfortunately, too many of the same type are with us today. If an applicant should happen to raise his voice in dispute about his payment, the clerk had only to lift his head and nod to the ever-present policemen, and the applicant would be jostled out into the street. Further protest would end in his arrest.

The government then introduced a system of snooping on the unemployed, by clerks from the Labour Exchange. They would call at the homes of those people who were claiming benefit and invite themselves inside. It was not diplomatic to refuse entry. The object was to see if there was any evidence that the family were living on a higher level than the unemployment benefit justified.



Members of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement at a mass demonstration in Hyde Park, October 1932, directed mainly against the hated means test. Later, mounted police charged the marchers at Marble Arch

# We socialists must quickly take decisive, vigorous action to stop the hurricane of capitalist crisis in its tracks

The man should not be at home, he should be out looking for work. If he happened to be in bed he was in trouble, but as another saying at that time was "sleep is food," and since there was precious little food about, he was sometimes found there. If you have ever known hunger you will know how true that saying is.

**Cards were issued to each unemployed man at the Labour exchange, which had to be signed by three employers every day.**

The snooper would also look around at the furniture and if, in the better days, a gramophone, china cupboard, piano or some such object had been purchased from your hard-earned wages, he "suggested" you could do without it and it could bring you in some money. Most people noted the veiled threat and got rid of those articles before the next visit.

Beggars were numerous, coming round the doors asking for a piece of bread, a

cup of tea or some coppers. Respectable men, and one of our family friends was one, would go to some far off suburb and sing in the streets for money.

While some men stood around in groups at the street corners, or went to the public library to keep warm, others went to coal bins to gather any scraps of coal which had been thrown away by mistake. In winter keeping a fire going at home was a major problem. Some more adventurous characters would set traps to catch rabbits at night, or even steal a sheep. Others confined themselves to stealing potatoes, cabbages, or turnips from the fields.

This method worked out alright if you were not caught, but if you were, it meant a prison sentence. This again was alright for you, as in prison you got fed and were warm, but then the wife and family were in dire straits without your dole money. It is exasperating to realise that whilst this starvation was going on, wheat was being burned and fish was being thrown back into the sea because the owners could not get a profitable price for them.

There were marches organised by the unemployed to demonstrate at the House of Commons, and two of them from Scotland and from Jarrow, are best remembered.

I saw the Scottish marchers arrive in Edinburgh before picking up additional demonstrators on their way through England. They lit huge bonfires on all the spare ground to keep themselves warm at night. Some residents, the local Co-op, and the Labour and Communist Party members gave support to the marchers, by setting up food kitchens and providing food and accommodation as best they could.

**There were marches organised by the unemployed to demonstrate at the House of Commons...**

Not all of the marchers could find shelter for the night and in Princes Street, which is acknowledged to be one of the finest streets in the world, they slept in the doorways of the shops, and used the shop windows as mirrors next morning when washing and shaving. The fruit market was situated nearby, and someone supplied over-ripe bananas for breakfast.

Across the road from the shops is a row of spiked railings separating the street from the famous Princes

Street gardens. It was not long before every spike was adorned with a banana skin, which showed the marchers still had a sense of humour. But this turned out to be a most effective advertisement of the men's plight. The attention of the passers-by was roused, and questions and discussions inevitably followed amongst the politically unconscious natives of the city.

The police, ever present, kept a low profile as the least incident would have set ablaze a serious riot. The only daily newspapers to support the marchers were the Labour 'Daily Herald' and the Communist Party's 'Daily Worker.' Other than that there was only the 'Forward' and the Independent Labour Party's 'New Leader,' both weeklies.

The government seemed to believe that the depression was an 'act of god', and it was even suggested that it was caused by spots that had appeared on the sun. It is impossible to describe the horrible experiences of unemployed men and their families in the 1930s. Men were thrown on the scrapheap, many of whom would never work again. They had walked the streets day after day, week after week and year after year, seeking a job, whilst their families were at

**It is impossible to describe the horrible experiences of unemployed men and their families in the 1930s.**

home, undernourished and cold, living in poverty. They had all lost their self-respect, dignity and hunger had brought them to their knees.

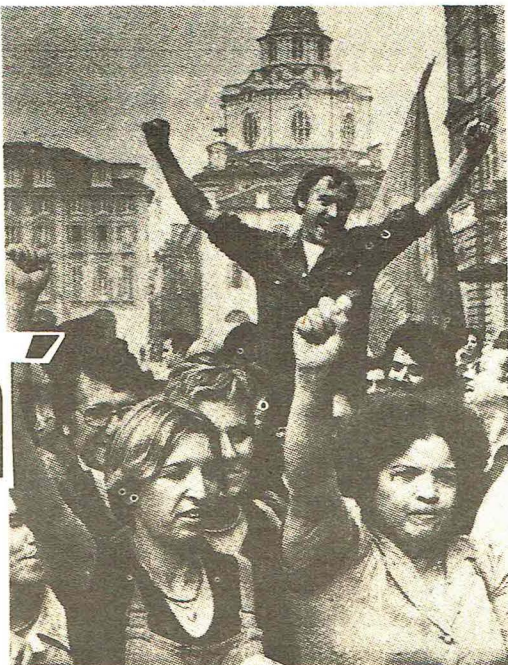
Then in 1938 Chamberlain returned from Munich to tell us of the agreement with Hitler, and assured us that it meant "peace in our time." Behind the scenes, the government told the engineering firms to switch over to the production of arms, and the three million idle slowly started to find jobs.

Despite the fact that the Oxford Union had debated and carried a motion that "they would not fight for king and country" thousands joined the forces. It was a job at least, and it was not long before those men, who had been maligned as layabouts, parasites and scroungers were being hailed as the heroes of Dunkirk, El Alamein and Normandy.



# ITALY

## The hot autumn begins



Fiat workers on strike.

**On October 10th, over 10 million workers from all over Italy struck for four hours in support of striking colleagues who work for the giant car firm, Fiat.**

The Fiat workers have now been on strike for five weeks in protest at the company's proposal to lay off 24,000 employees due to falling orders.

A national fighting fund has been launched to raise £350,000 and collections have been taking place at work-places throughout the country. £130,000 was raised in the first few days.

The strike call made by the leaders of the three trade union confederations (the CGIL, CSIL and UIL) received an overwhelming response. Most major factories stopped work and in the city centres, shops and banks remained closed.

In Rome, all public transport stopped for an hour. An estimated 50% of civil servants supported the action, as did 50% of agricultural workers and 90% of factory workers. Even those places not closed by the dispute suffered severe absenteeism and reduced services.

Huge demonstrations, some of them the largest since the war, took place in Rome, Turin, Milan, Florence, Bologna, Naples, Sicily and many other towns and cities throughout Italy.

The Fiat workers have now won some temporary concessions from the company, including a pledge from the company not to lay off the 24,000 workers

in January—although a scheme to lay some workers off in rotation has been conceded.

The protest against unemployment heard calls for the occupation of factories which threaten redundancy. One speaker at the rally in Rome echoed these sentiments when he said: "For Fiat, for the youth, and for the south of Italy, there is only one demand—occupation."

The strike, which is estimated to have cost the Italian economy £250 million, takes place against the background of economic difficulties and Italy's latest constitutional crisis.

Last month inflation rose by 2.1%. Unemployment is now about 1½ million and many employers are undoubtedly waiting the outcome of the Fiat dispute before attempting similar moves.

The 40th government since the war is now being cobbled together by Forlani, a Christian Democrat, after the previous government fell in September. The previous coalition, led by Francesco

Dave Campbell reports from Rome

Cossiga was defeated on a vote on its economic programme, hours after winning a 'vote of confidence.' It is widely accepted that up to 30 members of Cossiga's own Christian Democrat Party voted against his financial policy.

The new coalition of "government of four" is expected to be an alliance of the Christian Democrats, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), the social democrats and the republicans with possibly the small liberal party. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) is staying in opposition but mainly because the right wing Christian Democrats refuse to consider it as a coalition partner.

The criterion applied by the PCI leadership is "in government or in opposition." Their paper, L'Unita expands on this—either the PCI is given ministerial posts or it remains in opposition. In other words the PCI is prepared to ally itself with the Christian Democrats (Italian Tories) for the sake of a few top jobs!

Both the PCI and the PSI fail to offer any long term socialist solution to their millions of supporters in Italy. Forlani, who is on the liberal wing of the Christian Democrats is unlikely to hold his government together for many months.

Between them, the PCI (with 201 seats in parliament) and the PSI (62 seats) outnumber the Christian Democrats with 262 seats. The refusal of both parties to support the Italian Tories in parliament would enable them to fight for truly socialist policies to solve Italy's severe economic problems.

# WHO PROFITS IN MALAWI?

**15p a day basic wages. that's all the British owned Ruo tea estate pay their Malawian workers.**

By Jim Chrystie

Under the vicious dictatorship of Hastings Banda, which suppresses all opposition to his personal rule, many British and South African firms have been reaping in the profits.

On the Ruo tea estate there are 4,000 workers, some as young as eleven years ago. Their wages, calculated on piecework rates, are said to be offset by fringe benefits, including free meals, housing, education and medicine.

In reality low wages make it difficult to save enough to move and the grandiose-sounding social services turn out to be cramped, overcrowded living quarters, poor health and inadequate schooling.

Wages and conditions are not that different on other British-owned estates: Booker McConnell, Singlo Holdings and Blantyre Tea Holdings Ltd. And whilst the working people of Malawi struggle to survive, Banda squanders the wealth they have created. Earlier this year he bought four aircraft to ferry his teams of dancing women around the country to sing and cheer him wherever he goes.

Banda, through his virtual total ownership of the giant Press Holdings Company (he owns 4,999 of its 5,000 shares) and its subsidiary General Farming, directly runs 30% of Malawi's economy. Quite a big rake-off for any dictator.

He is supported by British, US and South African capitalism. Successive British governments have helped arm and train the Malawian army.

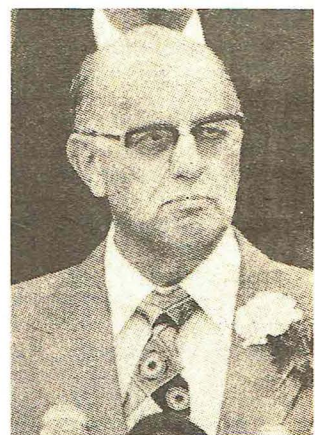
And recently the American Defence Department has proposed to give Malawi military assistance as it is "a southern African state which shares the US goal of peaceful change in Southern Africa." Preparing for the day when the ageing dictator dies, the US Defence Department argues such a program would be welcomed by the military command in Malawi and would tend to build ties for the US with the Malawi military leadership.

US and British capitalism want to use Malawi to help hold back the growing revolution in southern Africa. And Banda has seen his interests lying with the apartheid regime of South Africa.

South African funds helped build the new capital of Lilongwe. From 1969 till 1973 even Malawi's Minister of Information was a South African. And this year Mal-

awi was awarded a 'Rand Medal' for improving trade with South Africa.

But despite all this economic assistance, the Malawian economy is in difficulties. This year there will probably be no growth in the economy at all. A widening trade gap meant that in August last year Banda had to approach the International Monetary Fund for assistance.



South Africa wants to use Malawi to launch a Southern African Common Market. Above, Botha, South Africa's Prime Minister.

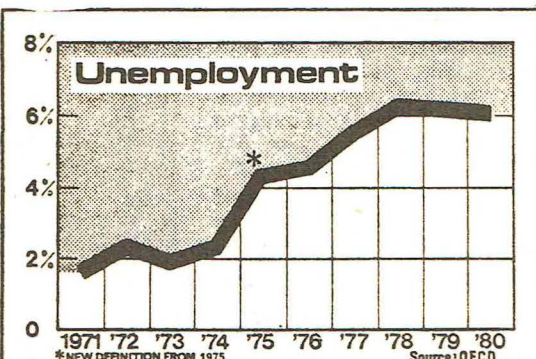
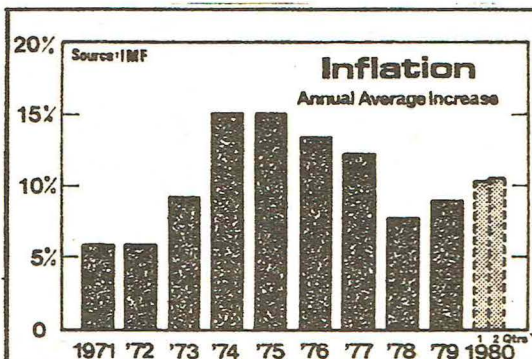
His erratic personal direction of the economy is taking its toll. Forced public displays of support for the dictator cannot hide the undoubted opposition underground. This year this has been reflected in opposition within the army.

Banda and international capitalism has nothing to offer the people of Malawi. A private school and hospital is being built at Kasungu, Banda's home district; he himself suggests that this is necessary because of the poor quality of the existing educational system under his own government.

It is vital that the international labour movement gives support to workers and peasants struggling for liberation and a socialist society. In Britain the Malawi Support Committee has been organising solidarity action. At this year's LPYS Conference a resolution was passed in support of this Committee. Since then the LPYS has persuaded the Labour Party to provide printing facilities for 5,000 leaflets.

Speakers and further information on Malawi, campaigns etc. can be obtained from David Ward, Malawi Support Committee, Starr House, 57 Church Road, Richmond, Surrey.

## Tories cling on in Australia



Thatcherism in Australia came near to defeat last week. With a swing to Labour of 6%, the 'Tories' [Liberal-Country coalition] got only 0.2% more votes than Labour. But the way the seats are distributed resulted in a double-figure majority for the Tories.

Rising unemployment and inflation has resulted in a clear class polarisation in Australia's Prime Minister Fraser, has been from the mis-named Liberal Party] lost a third of the votes. The "Tories'" narrow victory was greeted with euphoria by businessmen. On hearing the results the Stock Exchange rose by a record amount.

Although Labour had watered down its policies, the bosses had been scared of the

pressures a future Labour government would have under to reverse the Liberals' disastrous monetarist policies. These policies have not brought down inflation and unemployment has levelled out at 6% of the working population. Just like Thatcher, Australia's Prime Minister Fraser has been passing the effect of the crisis onto working people.

But the lesson from this election which should be taken by the British labour movement is that reliance on anti-Thatcherism is not enough to win elections. A bold socialist programme is required to galvanise mass support and give a clear alternative to capitalism.

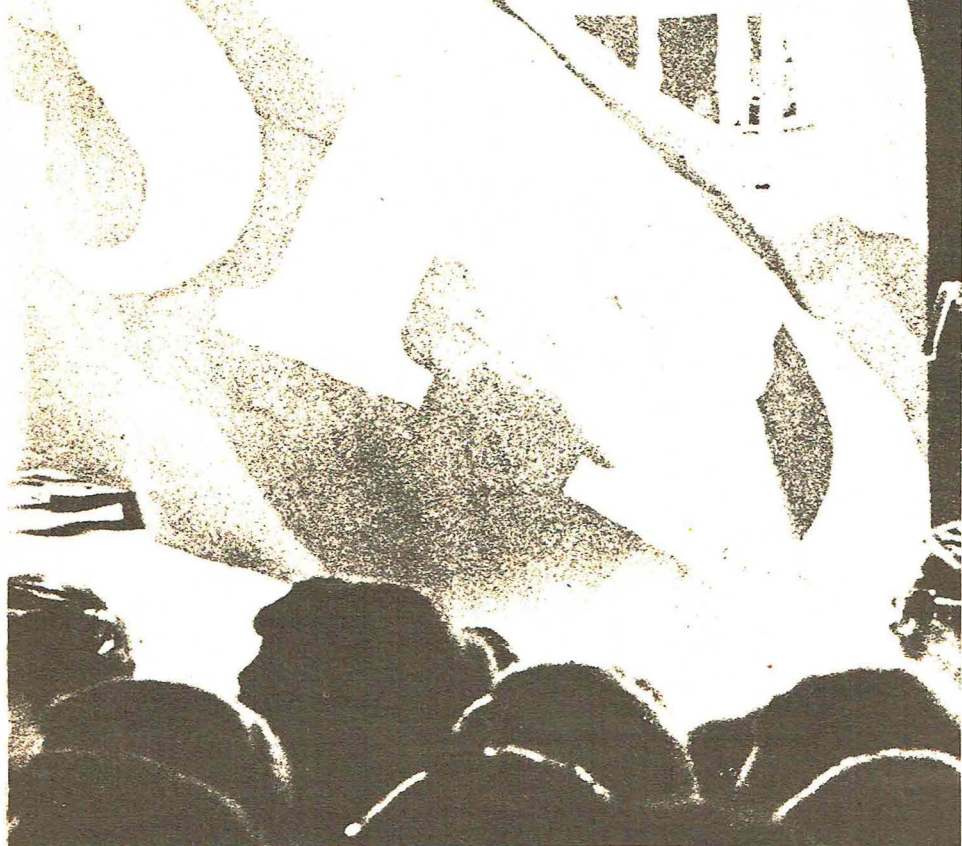
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# German workers face growing threat



As the attacks mount up, increasingly workers will move into the SPD to make it a real fighting workers party.

**As the West German economic miracle fades all the reforms gained by the workers in the past are now beginning to come under attack from the bosses.**

All the assurances made by the Social-Democratic Party (SPD) leaders during the election campaign that they would "guarantee the already achieved gains" are being undermined by the international recession and the oncoming German one.

Last week the Economic Ministry admitted that its revised forecast for next year was of economic growth of under 1%. This is on top of a growing balance of payments deficits and a currency that has lost 7% of its value since 1978 and is at the bottom of the currencies in the European monetary system.

As a proportion of the Gross National Product German exports increased from 21% in 1970 to 28% in 1979. But sobering for German industrialists is the invasion of the domestic market by foreign manufactured goods—as a proportion of imports they rose from 27% in 1958 to 44% in 1968 and 55% in 1978.

Pumping and priming the economy with vast injections of deficit spending has increased the total debt of the Federal Republic and the individual states to the literally unconstitutional level of 420 billion marks.

It is calculated that in 1983 the government will have to borrow 30 billion Marks merely to pay back on the interest! And it is

**By Greg Powell**

(Social Democratic Party, Altona-Alstadt)

this that stabs at the heart of any government's reform plans.

Even before the elections the SPD Finance Minister Matthöfer had spoken of "operation red pencil" (i.e. cuts) to reduce the danger of inflationary tendencies. There is already talk of a "saving budget."

The SPD leadership is not making a stand to defend the millions of workers and their families against attacks by the system—but is on the contrary letting itself be guided by the pressures and demands of the owners of the means of production and the banks, the parasitic minority that the SPD was created to fight.

West Germany is not a paradise; it is more and more being caught up in the fits of crisis and open class struggle. Inflation, soaring rents, rocketing gas and electricity prices as well as enormous increases in petrol and oil are eating away at the hard-earned living standards of the German workers.

Rationalisation will, according to the 'Frankfurter Rundschau,' affect up to 50% of jobs directly or indirectly in the coming years. And so far the powerful trade unions have

behaved more like polite auxiliaries and commentators to the government.

But the rank and file of the unions are calling their leaders out of the corner and demanding that they take up the challenge. Recent trade union conferences have reflected in no uncertain manner their members' urge to transform and galvanise their unions into combat organisations against the unscrupulous attacks of the bosses.

Absolutely loyal to their organisations, active workers are nevertheless becoming increasingly critical of the leadership. These steps must be welcomed by every socialist and they are at the same time a vindication of the marxists' optimism as well as a condemnation of those 'lefts' who have for so many years ruled out the West German working class as a progressive force.

Yet the workers will not stop there.

It cannot be ruled out that initially the SPD and the Jusos (Young Socialists) could be set back and confused by the immediate period ahead. But if the re-elected governing SPD-Liberal coalition tries to pass the costs of the recession onto the backs of the workers, they will be forced sooner or later from the day-to-day struggle against their bosses onto the political arena, to counter general attacks on their living standards and that of their families. And they will move into the SPD, their SPD with the same determination as they are beginning to show in the unions to transform it into a really effective fighting party with a clear socialist programme to change society.

# Why the left lost in Portugal

**By a Portuguese Socialist**

**The election results confirmed the view of Marxists in Portugal that all attempts to water down socialist policies to try to appeal to the middle-class would prove counter-productive.**

And this is what happened as the right-wing Democratic Alliance (AD) coalition increased its share of the vote to 47% and its parliamentary majority from 6 to 18 seats. Why vote for a shadow when you can vote for the real thing was the attitude of many Portuguese voters.

The Socialist Party led coalition (FRS) vote was about the same as in last year's election and overall the left vote was still above the total for the combined vote of the AD and the small fascist groups. This shows the enormous possibilities for Portuguese socialists if they were able to give a clear class lead to the workers and middle class.

But during the election both the workers' parties and

the Socialists and the Communists concentrated on personal attacks on the AD leader Sa Carneiro. Indeed during the last part of the campaign the Communist-led coalition (APU) spent most of their time attacking the Socialists and even produced a special poster for this.

## Reversing the Revolution's gains

APU lost most seats in the election and its overall vote fell by 120,000 so that it now has 16.9% of the total (compared to 19% a year ago). Another factor in the ADU decline was the Communists' refusal to discuss the events in Poland. Even the final signing of the agreement between the Gdansk Soviet and the Polish regime only got five paragraphs on the back page of the party's paper 'O'Diario'.

During the election the right-wing AD promised great reforms. They raised the national minimum wage from 7,500 to 9,000 escudos and old age pensions during the

election campaign and promised fuel subsidies for farmers. The workers' parties did not point that these 'reforms' were only temporary.

They did not really explain that the economic crisis gripping the country would see the AD government try to turn back the gains of the 1974-75 revolution. But that is now what the right-wing government will attempt. They want to remove all the collective farms which exist in the Alentejo region and embark on wholesale de-nationalisation.

It is vital that the labour movement resists these attacks. But the only way to win over the small farmers and middle classes is not by offering identical policies to the AD but to put forward a clear socialist programme. The next period will show the necessity of unity between socialists and communist workers and will prove that the only alternative for the present crisis is the socialist programme for building a real socialist democracy. The fight will continue.

# Poland: Preparing the hard line



Polish workers on strike this month for the implementation of the free trade union agreement made in September.

The Polish bureaucracy is already preparing the way for future rounds of repression against the leaders of the recent struggles. This intention has been clearly shown by the strengthening of the 'Supreme Council of Control' which is headed by a 'hard-man' General Moczar.

This body, which has officially been given the task of "overseeing all government officials as regards abuse of authority, corruption and errors," will undoubtedly begin its work with a purge against sections of the bureaucracy which have been guilty of the worst excesses, such as the former head of Polish radio and TV, Maciej Szepeanski who is reported to have accumulated personal assets which must make him a challenger to Lord Vestey: 7 personal cars, two executive aircraft, a helicopter, a £1 million yacht, a sheep farm, a mountain villa, and a hunting lodge in Kenya!

The reason for this purge is not a sudden dissatisfaction

**By Kevin Ramage**

at the lifestyle of these bureaucrats, who have lived like this for years without comment, but a fear that otherwise the aroused workers would take action themselves. But no one should imagine that small purges of this kind represent any fundamental change in the bureaucracy. They are intended as the opposite—to strengthen the hand of the remaining bureaucrats, and attempt to build up support for people like Moczar. These are the typical actions of a Bonapartist regime—blows to the right to prepare the way for future blows against the working class.

The next moves of the bureaucracy, when the workers' movement has subsided, will be, as after 1956, 1970 and 1976, to begin a round of repression against the workers' leaders.

And General Moczar has the ideal credentials. In the 1960s he helped organise anti-Semitic movements, which he followed up by organising, as Minister for the Interior, the arrest of 3,000 students after the riots of 1968. After the uprising of 1970-71, he was forced, along with Gomulka and others, into the background, but it can be clearly seen that all the re-shuffles of posts have one aim; to maintain the rule of the bureaucracy, even if it means disposing of a few of their own ranks at the moment.

A fight against corruption will never really be carried out by the General Moczars, but by the successful struggle in the future to carry through a political revolution, and a return to the programme of Lenin, of regular elections of all officials, with the right of immediate recall, no official to receive a wage higher than the average worker, and for a rotation of the tasks in running society.





# Letters

IEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?  
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO:

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## More Tory crocodile tears

Dear Comrades

On the evening of the 15th October, I was "privileged" to be attending a lecture given by Dr Rhodes Boyson, at Huyton Civic Suite.

Thanks to "picketing" by an organised group of Huyton Young Socialists, the learned "quack" was left in no doubt that ordinary people are thoroughly opposed to Tory butchery of education services.

Eventually, having successfully battled to the rostrum, the lovable Doc proceeded to give a thorough, boring account of the last 100 years of state education—however, as someone said later, no mention was made of the next 100 years, or indeed the pernicious 1980 Act.

Furthermore, although Boyson voiced alarm over the declining standards in our schools, he failed to identify the root cause: public expenditure cuts.

In addition, he failed to answer the questions of what was in store for the thousands of trained teachers rotting on the dole. It seemed ludicrous to train people for Bachelor of Education degrees, in order to educate nobody, said one young Scot.

All Boyson could offer was a weak argument that "employers are asking for too many qualifications" and that "they should give youngsters a chance."

With his Party's policies the reverse of this is the case—with monetarist policy throwing thousands on the dole every week, and the hardest-hit group being the 16 to 24 age bracket (his "youngsters"), then it is plainly obvious that Dr Boyson is a hypocrite.

Yours fraternally

Alan Keating  
Wirral Labour Party

## Chile: 'a better job'

Dear Militant

Last week at the invitation of the Federation of Conservative Students, Sir Geoffrey Howe came to University College. His speech received a hostile reception from a large section of the audience.

In his speech he said that although Britain was going through a hard time at the moment, it was obvious from looking around the world that many countries were going ahead well on the basis of capitalism.

"Like Chile, I suppose?" interrupted a heckler. Sir Geoffrey's shaking reply was, "At least Pinochet's doing a better job than Allende did."

Pinochet's bloody coup is obviously seen by Sir Geoffrey through profit-tinted glasses. Every act of suppression by the military dictatorship means more profit for the multinationals and more arms deals with Britain.

Yours comradely  
Robert Lewin  
UCL Labour Club

## Faded memories

Dear Comrades

The more my fellow workers hear the outpourings of the gang of three [who elected Shirley Williams?] and the gang of twelve, the more they realise the careerist positions of these so-called representatives of the workers.

As local authority manual workers in Hillingdon, we had the task earlier this year [as a gang], of replacing all dead trees in our area.

We came upon one that had been planted by the Mayor 'In Memory of the Queen's Jubilee, June 1977.' The tree was dead of course.

Buried underneath we found a 'plastic bag' [Harrods] containing newspaper cuttings and a tape relating to the various working class issues [sic] of that happy time [for some].

Well, to cut a long story short, we decided to add a little bit of meaning to the planting of the new tree. On a piece of paper we wrote the following 'This present tree was planted by the workers in memory of the imminent demise of capitalism; long live the socialist revolution.'

The new tree is growing well and receives the best attention!

From 'our gang' of workers to the 'Parliamentary Labour Party gangs' we say, "We want the socialist alternative to this rotten system, not its reformation; lead us or be led!"

Yours fraternally  
Wally Kennedy  
and fellow workers  
T&GWU Hillingdon  
Parks Department

## Where's the money?

Dear Comrades

I was one of the lucky ones who managed to get a job this summer. I was waitressing in a restaurant for the directors and top executives of a large multinational computer and printing firm.

The restaurant was completely free and was a tax evasion along with their very plush company cars and help with mortgages and school fees for the real elite.

Every day they would have a choice of starters and main meals with a selection of vegetables. This would be followed by luscious gateaux, an impressive cheese board, coffee, all washed down with plenty of wine.

On top of this there was the well stocked bar, for an aperitif or two, all on the firm of course. For big sales customers we would lay on big buffets with plenty of booze.

The hypocrisy is that the Tories say there's no money around. Consequently they expect us to accept cuts in health, education and social services. It is also the cause of inflation, unemployment and all attempts to cut the standard of living of the working.

The trouble is not that there is no wealth but that it is all in the hands of a few. The only way to achieve a fair society is if the wealth is in the hands of the workers who create it.

Fraternally  
Madeleine Pascoe  
Manchester  
Moss Side LPYS

## Clean-up—with a new broom

Dear Comrades

An article in a recent edition of 'New Scientist' reported that an American multinational chemical company, the Cynamid Corporation, was fined for illegally requiring the sterilisation of women employees.

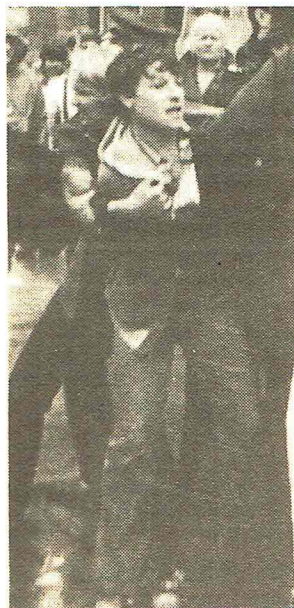
The women are exposed to lead in the workplace, and it's thought that exposure to lead might cause malformation of foetuses—it can also damage the nervous and urinary systems of adults.

This horrifying incident illustrates only too well that when it comes to making a choice between profits and a safe and healthy environment for workers, then profits always come first. For these bosses, it was 'too expensive' and 'too much trouble' for them to clean up their manufacturing process so that the women wouldn't be exposed to lead in the first place.

The company was fined a paltry \$10,000, and even this was overturned on appeal, which just goes to show workers must rely on their own strength, not the courts or government agencies, to force the bosses to eliminate workplace hazards.

Only when we get workers control and plan production can the contradiction between the bosses' need for profits and workers' health be removed.

Fraternally  
D Bowdler  
Selly Oak Labour Club



King Henry's workers arrested for stepping off pavement

## Vestey's pennies

Dear Comrades

If we believed everything the Tories and the press say we would be saying that unemployment was caused by workers—"pricing themselves out of jobs with excessive pay claims."

A recent study by the Low Pay Unit revealed that 34% of Britain's workforce earn less than £60 a week gross. What was most startling was the report that Britain's poorest paid workers earn less in relation to average pay than they did 100 years ago in 1880!

The report went on to state how the Tories were doing their best to ensure that this situation continues by reducing the number of wages inspectors in industry.

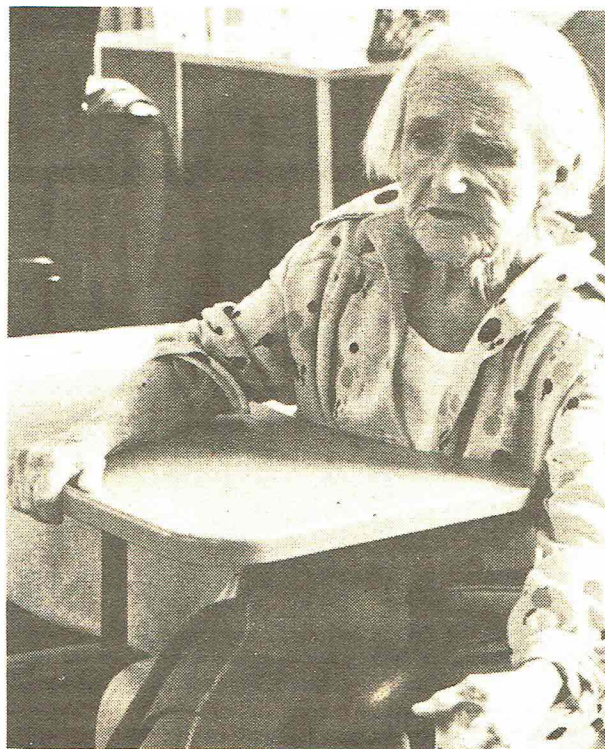


Photo: MILITANT

Patients at hospitals like Newsham put at risk by cuts

## Charity or health

Dear Comrades

The greed of the capitalist system is well illustrated in the hospital where I work. While the patients no longer receive a cooked breakfast due to public expenditure cuts, the consultants and doctors are "treated" to luxurious dinners by the profiteering drug companies.

In order to sell their products these parasites entertain the hierarchy with turkey, salmon, wine and cigars. While hospital waiting lists grow longer and working people are "dying" for treatment, big business grows fatter on the misfortunes of others.

The "solution" to the chronic shortage of cash put forward by the hospital authorities is to organise a fête to raise the funds for a

desperately needed air bed at a cost of £1,000.

This means that once again the lowest paid workers in the country have to dig into their pockets. The skills of the nursing staff are wasted on knitting, sewing and collecting jumble, all of these far removed from their primary task of caring for the sick.

While charity is part of the society we live in, it is no solution to the problems brought about by the present government or indeed of capitalism.

The real solution lies with the working class, their strength and determination to replace this sick society for socialism.

PS: Enclosed is £1 for the only "Charity" worth donating to!

Yours fraternally  
M Hughes  
Provan CLP

## Bakers' thanks—keep it up

Dear Colleagues,  
Recognition Dispute; King Henry Meat Products, Levenshulme, Manchester.

On behalf of the Strike Committee, the Bakers' Food & Allied Workers' Union and myself, may I express thanks and appreciation for the support you have given to the strikers from the above Company, over the last 15 weeks.

I would also like, through the medium of your paper,

to thank all those on the Brighton Demonstration on Unemployment, for the way in which they contributed to the collection of £96 for our Strike Fund.

In disputes like this we really need support, particularly when fighting a reactionary management such as we have at King Henry.

Once again, many thanks.  
Yours fraternally  
W Harrison  
District Secretary,  
Manchester District,  
Bakers, Food & Allied Workers' Union

## The despairing blow

Dear Comrades

Again that vile and ugly rumour, redundancy, was spread through the factory. Then our management informed us that one third of the workforce, seven men, [following nine men this time last year] were to lose their jobs in the timber trade.

One worker took it so bad he clung to another workmate and sobbed his heart out. He didn't know [and at the time of writing still doesn't know] if he is on the list or not but he could not hold back his despair.

Myself and other workmates looked on helplessly; we couldn't offer any comfort. Not through lack of feeling, but because we felt

## NOLS: inaccurate report?

Dear Comrade

Your reports (3 and 10 October) concerning the National Organisation of Labour Students are partial and inaccurate.

In dealing with Stirling Labour Club, Mike Gapes was acting constitutionally and in accordance with the wishes of the NOLS national committee. He asked the Scottish Organisation of Labour Students to organise a meeting at Stirling to re-establish the club given that there was no sign of life in it. (There had been no meetings since April, no mention in the Students' Union Handbook, no application for a union budget, and the club still owed NOLS a considerable sum of money.

Following a request from the student organiser, SOLS successfully convened an inaugural meeting at the Stirling Labour Club and it seems likely that the club will meet regularly as a result.

Similarly, there is no question of arbitrary action towards clubs which received letters offering help in the recruitment campaign, it is well known that there have been times when, because of the turnover of officers from year to year, some student Labour clubs fail to meet regularly or cease to exist. It is surely the job of the student organiser to make sure that such clubs receive assistance to help their continued existence.

If 'Militant' clubs have nothing to hide, it is strange that they are reluctant to provide information on their clubs' developments.

Mike Gapes has made a major contribution to the development of NOLS in the past three years which has resulted in our occupying a predominant place in the British student movement. Now that Mike has moved on from NOLS I am certain that most student activists would prefer to wish him well rather than engage in worthless attacks.

Yours sincerely  
Steve Page  
NOLS Chairperson  
(for the National Committee)

the same gut feeling, as though someone were tying knots in our stomachs.

One of the lads said "Some bugger ought to shoot that bitch [Thatcher], but we know that when she's gone another gross Tory pig will take her place" to serve their capitalist masters.

Marx wrote "the modern working class developed a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work and who find work only so long as their labour increases profit."

The teachings of Marx [which are as relevant today as ever], and the incident at work convince me more, that we must fight against unemployment, and go forward to socialism on a Marxist programme.

A.G. Jones  
T&GWU, Gedling, Notts



# ads

CLASSIFIED: 5p per word, minimum ten words  
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.  
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY

# Build

# MILITANT

**EASTERN REGION LPYS**  
Demonstration against unemployment. Venue: Midsummer Common, Victoria Avenue, Cambridge. Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP, Jack Boddy, Gen. Sec., NUAAW, Nick Toms, LPYS NC, plus speakers from SE TUC and East Anglia TUC. Assemble 1.30 pm, move off 2.00 pm, Saturday 8 November

**Lothian Labour Party Young Socialists Public Meeting**

'Why we hate the Tories.' Hear Andy Bevan [Labour Party National Youth Officer] on Thursday 13th November, 7.30pm. At Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh. All Welcome

**TOWER HAMLETS Labour Party Young Socialists**

'Organise—Hit Back—Join the Young Socialists To Fight Thatcher!' Meeting—Tuesday November 18th 7.30pm. Speaker: Andy Bevan. At Bethnal Green Labour Party Rooms, 349 Cambridge Heath Rd, London E2. Be There!

Nottingham 'Militant' supporters express their condolences to Margaret, Ian and Christine Taylor on the death of Peter Taylor—a friend of the 'Militant' and a fighter for socialism.

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	3240		5,000
East Midlands	2904		3,800
Hants & IOW	3707		4,600
Humberside	1345		2,500
London East	4636		6,200
London West	2549		4,700
London South	4054		4,700
Manchester & Lancs	2377		5,100
Merseyside	3385		6,000
Northern	3816		7,300
Scotland East	1854		3,200
Scotland West	3334		5,000
Southern	3705		5,900
South West	1886		3,200
Wales East	1297		2,800
Wales West	2578		3,100
West Midlands	5754		9,000
Yorkshire	3594		7,300
Others	10215		10,600
<b>Total received</b>	<b>66230</b>		<b>100,000</b>

## BLACKTHORNE RECORDS

KILROY WAS HERE

(BR 1063)

Has it ever crossed your mind to ask yourself why Mrs T talks funny?

The answer may be found on Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl's new disc

**KILROY WAS HERE [BR 1063]**

£4.30 [p&p incl.] from:

**Blackthorne Records**

35 Stanley Avenue

Beckenham, Kent BR3 2PU

**THIS WEEK**  
**£1,109**

# TARGET FOR YEAR-£100,000

# MONEY NOW TO COUNTER THE PRESS BARONS

By Steve Cawley

The owners of 'The Times' newspaper have decided to pull out. On the Stock Exchange their share price went up—speculators don't care about the news, they're in business to make money.

The thousands of print workers, journalists and other workers involved are looking for a solution. With even a fraction of the cash put into 'The Times' over the years, the labour movement could have a daily paper to counter the lies of the Tory press.

We need a daily 'Militant' with a mass circulation that will rally the working class—but unlike 'The Times' had, we have no oil millionaire Lords on our Editorial Board, so we need your constant support for our fighting fund.

The main way every reader can help us in the next month or so is by selling 'Militant' 'Winter Holiday Draw' tickets (only 10p each) to work-mates, family and friends. The two lucky winners will have a £500 winter holiday abroad in the country of their choice, and there are many other prizes!

Thanks especially this week to supporters in Strathclyde NALGO for the disco which netted us £106, and for the other Scottish readers including J Banks and A Skinner (both AUEW Edinburgh) who bumped the total up to well over £300 from Scotland.

A number of ISTC members have contributed recently—thanks to K Robinson (Teesside) and C

£1.90 from Cllr G Dobson (both Nottingham). Bath readers have started again to send regular donations—don't let the cash pile up: send it in promptly!

Our income for the week should have been £3,000 for our fighting fund rather than the £1,110 we actually got. We therefore once again appeal to readers to dig as deeply as they can into their pockets to pay for the socialist voice to be heard.

Imagine what life would be like without the 'Militant' and our clear Marxist analysis of events worldwide! The mere thought would be enough to drive you mad, or—a far better alternative—drive you to your wallet or cheque-book.

There is no better way to ensure that the nightmare doesn't happen, that instead the 'Militant' carries on going from strength to strength, from weekly to twice-weekly—and from there on to a daily 'Militant'!

## MILITANT WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Win a winter holiday abroad for two worth £500—can be taken any time mid-January to mid-April!

Second prize: a weekend for two in Paris! Eight other prizes include record tokens and a portable TV.

Tickets only 10p from your 'Militant' seller. All proceeds to the 'Militant' fighting fund.



Sellers of 'Militant' at the LPYS demonstration in Bristol sold more than 200 Photo: MILITANT

'Militant's' October sales drive was given an enormous boost on the CNL demo with hundreds of copies being sold. With all the various campaigns being conducted against government policies more and more activists are seeing the need for a fighting Marxist paper and we have not only gained new readers but new sellers as well, with new

bulk orders from such diverse places as Cwmbran, Ammanford, Loughborough, Kettering, Kingston, Harrogate and Coggeshall in Essex.

It is the sellers in Swansea who have really gone to town selling well over 1,000 papers in October so far. Other areas that should be congratulated are Cambridge where over 50 papers

were sold at a Labour Party rally, over 100 at a Tony Benn meeting in Weymouth, 50 on a demo in Braintree and at least 200 on the demonstration organised by the LPYS in Bristol.

Keep up the good sales, comrades, and build to a monster sale on the November 29th demonstration in Liverpool.



# GKN sack 10,000

**POEU  
draw up  
claim**

## 'BOXING CLEVER' IS NOT ENOUGH

**The West Midlands engineering industry faces the worst recession in its history.**

**Over 65,000 workers are on the government temporary short-time working compensation scheme, and already between 60,000 and 109,000 jobs have been lost [depending on which figures you use] in this area since January.**

GKN (Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds), the country's biggest engineering company, announced 10,000 redundancies this year, with at least another 2,000 next year.

Look at my own factory, GKN (Screws and Fasteners), Heath Street, the birth place and HQ of the multinational empire. They are trying to persuade us that 560 redundancies (30% of the workforce) is part of a streamlining exercise to make us more competitive. But it is obvious that the company is getting

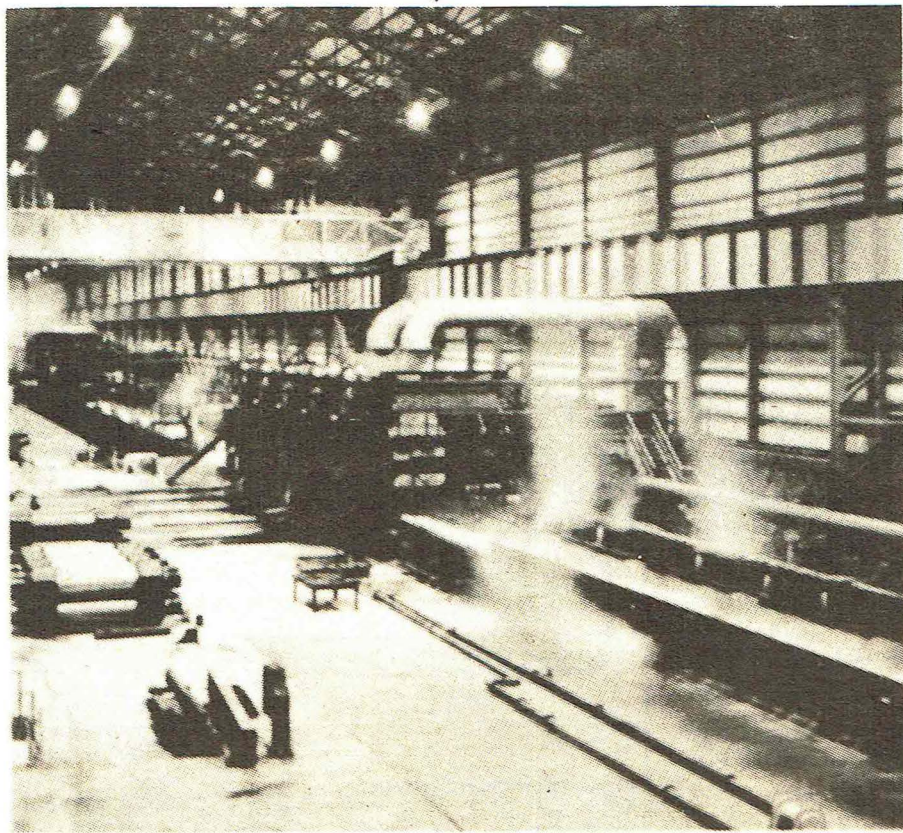
**By Simon Heather**  
(GKN, Birmingham)

out of the UK fastener industry and moving into lucrative markets abroad.

Under the present government (to which GKN paid £63,000 last year to get it elected) the company is divesting itself of a major part of its UK manufacturing base—and of all its responsibilities to its workers—with the full backing of the Tory government.

What has been the reaction of our union to this blatant sabotage? Brother Terry Duffy (AUEW president), reportedly said last week: "there's a time to box clever and a time to fight. Now's the time to box clever."

But it is daft to talk about boxing clever when the bosses are putting the boot in—and when the referee is Maggie Thatcher!



Steel strip from the 5-stand finishing mill at new GKN-associate plant in Australia: new plant is being expanded abroad, financed by lavish government hand-outs and asset-stripping in Britain

To carry on 'boxing clever' would mean a permanent knock-out for thousands of AUEW members, leaving the rest too punch-drunk to get off the canvass.

### Scapegoats

In the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' (Confed) national claim document, Bro. Duffy says to the employers: "Like you, we believe that we must create the wealth, and we are not opposed to profit-making—in fact we welcome it."

Does this mean that our President supports the emp-

loyers' present onslaught on our jobs and living standards? For, as we are told every day by the bosses, this is what is necessary to make them profitable again.

Our union must reject the idea that the recession is our fault. It isn't. We won't be made the scapegoat for the Tories' rotten policies.

National action is the only way of saving the engineering industry. If our present leadership is not prepared to prevent this bloodletting and lead a campaign of industrial action against closures and redundancies, then we must elect a new leadership.

The time for talking is over.

Our demands must be for a 35-hour working week; no redundancies; no closures; share out available work with no loss of pay; and for a fighting AUEW leadership to carry them out.

We need a national and local leadership prepared to use any methods to protect our jobs, and above all to fight for a socialist solution to the problems of our industry.

We have to take on this government now while we still have a union to fight with. Our leadership must fight to achieve the historic aim of our union: "The control of the industry in the interests of the community."

## Northern Ireland

### SPAMOUNT MILL

The whole of Spamount has been electrified by the announcement that the mill, whose wheels keep the local economy alive, is closed for all time. The workers have voted for an immediate sit-in and take over of the factory.

Spamount is a cosy little village, not far from the County Donegal border in Northern Ireland. You would never believe that just seven miles away is Strabane, a large town with the highest unemployment rate in Western Europe.

Spamount's secret is its mill, which for 81 years has been turning out top quality tweed, the best in Northern Ireland, if not indeed the whole of Ireland.

Since 1975 however things changed when the introduction of new technology resulted in redundancies. Earlier this year 30 people were laid off when the spinning department closed, the company was taken over and short-time working was introduced for some.

Then last week the bank decided that profits were not

adequate and the receiver was sent in. The workers, of course, take second place to profits so the decision was made to close the mill for all time this Friday night (24 October), throwing the remaining 81 workers on the dole, in an area with no other work.

A hastily arranged meeting was called by Omagh Community Development Project and Omagh Trades Council.

To prevent the valuable machinery being removed, the workers adopted a Trades Council speaker's proposal that a sit-in should commence immediately and continue whilst a working party negotiated for the take over of the factory.

The workers of Spamount in their sit-in, would appreciate any messages of support or donations in their struggle to fight back against unemployment. These can be sent through Omagh and district Trades Council, 34 High Street, Omagh, Co. Tyrone.

**By Pat McGinchey**

### EEPTU MUST BACK THIS FIGHT

EEPTU members at Stability Electronics in Antrim, Northern Ireland, have been on strike for almost three weeks.

The dispute began when management imposed a new rule that their workers, all women, must in future ask permission before going to the toilet.

Five workers were sacked and 14 others sent home for refusing to obey this degrading rule. The rest of the production workers came out in support.

For two weeks the majority of the 250 EEPTU members supported the strike. Picketing effectively stopped deliveries to the company. The dispute was well set on the road to victory, the reinstatement of the victimised workers and the withdrawal of the toilet rule.

Lack of support from

EEPTU full time officials in Belfast has swung the issue in management's favour, however.

A deadline set by the strikers for official support expired on 24 October. It was at this stage that the workers learned that the union officials had held a private meeting with management at management's request, on the condition that none of the strikers be present.

A deal arranged at that meeting was totally rejected by the strikers. In frustration the majority of the workers decided to go back to work at least until they heard further from the union.

Meanwhile the 19 victimised workers have been left outside the gates. "We will

fight on regardless," one picket told us.

EEPTU members and branches in Britain can assist by backing these workers and demanding of their union that the strike is made official. In addition the electrical components made by Stability, itself a subsidiary of Lucas, should be blacked.

Messages of support and financial donations from all sections of the labour movement in Britain would be welcome. These should be sent to: Kathleen Moran, Stability Electronics Strike Committee, 15 Repulse Court, Townpark North, Antrim, Northern Ireland.

**By Peter Hadden**  
(Belfast Labour & Trade Union Group)

### T LUCAS

Union members at T Lucas, Bristol are back at work, with a wage settlement under their belts that represent a climb-down by management.

The strike started on Friday 17th. After management refused to fully implement the 15% pay award negotiated nationally (see last week's report). On Tuesday 21st, union officials, stewards and a representative of the strike com-

mittee went into a five-hour negotiating session, and management agreed to pay a 15% pay increase on all basic rates, plus 9% on bonus rates, an average increase on earnings throughout the factory of 12.5%.

We would like to convey our thanks to the T&GWU delivery workers, milk, bread and postal workers, who honoured our request not to cross picketlines.

**By Tony Golding**

At its last meeting the POEU Executive agreed to call a special Wages and Allowance Committee meeting at the end of October 1980 to consider the drawing up of the 1981 POEU wage claim.

At the EC meeting, Phil Lloyd, a 'Militant' supporter, moved a resolution attempting to lay down guidelines for such a claim. His resolution called the the POEU EC to completely reject the use of 'cash limits' to hold down the living standards of public service workers, and to resist any attempt by the government to undermine the living standards of POEU members.

The resolution welcomed the decision of the Wages and Allowance Committee to call a special meeting on the 1981 claim, believing that such a claim must take full account of the need for compensation for all rises in the cost of living; a significant percentage increase to take account of the POEU members' continued co-operation in the introduction of new systems and equipment, with consolidation of the full claim.

After a lengthy debate the resolution was lost by 14 votes to 8. Objections raised included it being "restrictive"; "too early"; "the cost of living could be down to single figures"; "cheeky" and that "last year's settlement was better than 99% of settlements."

It was also made clear, however, that the eventual claim will take into account all the aspects of the resolution. It was fully accepted that unlike last year, the membership would be involved early in the consultation.

POEU members will now be keen to ensure that this assurance given at the EC meeting becomes a reality.

**By Wayne Jones**

### COURTAULDS, BRAINTREE

**400 angry Braintree workers marched on Saturday 18th against factory closure threats. "Sack the Tories, not the workers," "We want work, not the dole," echoed round the narrow, twisting streets.**

Courtaulds, who started in Braintree over 100 years ago, are closing down the local factory and scrapping 260 jobs. Hundreds of shoppers stopped to listen as workers addressed the march:

"The Tories won't stop until they have reduced every worker to poverty. The bosses are only interested in profit and loss accounts, not the community...A united fight, standing together we will beat the Tories and their system."

The local Tory MP was presented with a town petition. He began to express his regrets at the closure: "I don't want unemployment to increase in Braintree..."

"We don't want redundancies anywhere!" was the spirited reply. This demonstration is but a beginning.



# Bowaters

## - can still be saved

Report by Richard Venton

Many workers and unemployed will have been puzzled by recent developments in the fight against Bowaters closure in Ellesmere Port.

With only three weeks to go in the 90 days before redundancy and closure, the task is to learn from the campaign so far and take a sharp turn to decisive action to save these 1,600 jobs.

From the first day, Labour Party Young Socialists and 'Militant' supporters locally and in Bowaters have consistently argued that the company and the Tory government are equally responsible, and that the only way to save jobs is industrial action including, if necessary, factory occupation.

Unfortunately some trade union leaders, locally and nationally, have attempted to save the mill by a campaign aimed at changing the government's mind. The Bowaters action committee have tried every possible method of negotiating and lobbying, but have argued that it's best to avoid conflict with the company, to keep a 'low profile', linking up with the company, local Tory MPs and the north-west CBI in a 'joint approach'.

These methods have failed to convince the hard-faced government, who only understand the language of action, as the dockers proved. Bowater workers have been led to rely on a joint approach with their own worst enemies, the multi-millionaire bosses of Bowater, who proceeded to spit in their faces.

Even last week workers sweated in vain to persuade these people to stop the closure. An action committee spokesman explained "last week's production figure was 4,215 tons, 315 tons above target and an all-time record—but it had no effect."

What else could trade unionists expect? The bosses will close down factories to suit their profiteering, no matter what proof of prod-

uctivity is given—unless they are stopped.

Two action committee members said to me last week "perhaps we've played too low a profile, perhaps it's time we took some bloody action." These jobs can still be saved if that is done.

Trade unionists are understandably alarmed at the AUEW and T&GWU decision to start negotiations over redundancy money. This follows the mass meeting of SOGAT members where a majority rejected the call for industrial action.

Those who voted against intensified struggle will regret their decision if they allow these jobs to go. Ask any ex-worker in Shotton, where social evils like alcoholism and wife-battering are increasing as mass unemployment bites.

There is a way to save these jobs. It has been spelt out in words by Bill Keys, SOGAT general secretary, and clearly adopted by packed meetings of the Merseyside SOGAT branch.

The local and national trade union leaders should immediately call a series of mass meetings on the Bowater site. They should fully explain the case against accepting the cheap bribery of redundancy money.

They should show the massive reservoir of support they could call on for a struggle in all sections of the labour movement, and convince the membership of the need for strike action throughout Bowaters and in Fleet Street, in preparation for occupation of the mill. The Gardners workers are an example to learn from.

If the SOGAT branch committee and national executive in a 'joint approach' with all the other trade unions, confirm the Tories' worst fears about "rumblings of industrial action," they will have the full backing of the labour movement and the 1,600 jobs can still be saved.

## LIVERPOOL HOSPITALS: All out war

All-out war has finally broken out in Liverpool hospitals, a strike of all ancillary workers across Liverpool is due to start this week.

Despite the unions' willingness to compromise on some of management's points on bonus and overtime, voluntary transfer etc, in the talks about cuts, management have flown in the face of agreed procedure.

NUPE official Dave Connor said "enough is enough we can't take any more."

Because of the renewed threat in Newsham hospital, management have said they

will call in police to ensure patients from 'J' ward are removed.

Newsham workers are organising a sit-in strike. Irene Riley, G&MWU shop steward at Newsham, said "We can't work while other members' jobs are in jeopardy. We'll organise a rota to involve everyone."

The unions are determined—a fight must now be made for complete withdrawal of all Area Health Authority cuts, which threaten the future of Liverpool's health service.

By Jimmy Hackett

# GARDNERS

## we'll return to work when we all have jobs

"It gets stronger every day," a Gardners worker declared, as the occupation of the Manchester plant goes into its fifth week to prevent management carrying out their threat to make 590 workers, nearly a quarter of the workforce, redundant.

By Matt Wrack

(Farnworth LPYS)

The workers are going from strength to strength, organising committees to deal with picket duty, entertainment, transport and canteen work. They have absolutely no intention of wavering—but management don't seem to have got the message.

All strikers were recently sent a letter pleading for a return to normal working and acceptance of the redundancies. This was generally regarded as a joke.

The laughter rapidly turned to anger last Friday, however. Management began sending out redundancy notices to some, while others were told they could choose voluntary redundancy if they wish.

Now ballot forms have been sent out, courtesy once again of these management 'democrats', to see if workers want to return to work! The redundancies are to be enforced by the end of the year.

As the convenor's report spells out, the company are

attempting "to bring about the betrayal of 590 of our colleagues by the remaining 1,800. It is an insult to our integrity and principles.... unrestricted redundancy in any form gives them automatic license to return again and again and reduces a proud and confident workforce to one anxiously waiting for their turn to come."

The workers' answer is yes, they want to return to work—all of them. They are quite capable of organising their own union meetings and votes, as they have many times before. When management stop trying to run the union and give a pledge of secure jobs for all, then no doubt the workers will vote accordingly.

Meanwhile Hawker Siddeley, the parent company, are enjoying a profit boost—over £4 million up on last



year. Last year they closed their factory in Port Elizabeth, South Africa—it wasn't a profitable enough prospect for them, despite savage exploitation, with black workers' wages as low as £23 a week. Gardners workers know that redundancies are the thin edge of the wedge; if they let the company walk all over them, it would only pave the way for more sackings.

If the company say they cannot afford the 590 jobs, let's open their books to the trade unions, to see where the profits have gone. There should be no more "behind the scenes" decisions, no more business secrets.

The workers have not caused the recession; they should not have to pay for it.

It is obvious that this

dispute now has national significance, despite a virtual conspiracy of silence by most of the national press. The workers are travelling to Liverpool, London, Sheffield, Leeds, in fact all over the country; a speaking course has been organised so that more speakers can be sent out.

Support continues to flood in from all over the country. The labour movement must not let this battle be lost. Support should be sent from every source possible; food is being collected as well as money.

Donations, messages of support etc. to Bro. Dave Marsden, 187 Barton Lane, Eccles, Manchester. Cheques payable to L. Gardner and Sons Joint Shop SteWARDS account No. 2.

## OPEN REED'S BOOKS

The threat of 700 redundancies hangs over workers at Reed's paper mill in Aylesford, near Maidstone, Kent.

So far SOGAT, supported by the other unions in the mill, have refused to negotiate with the management. Any discussion, they point out, would be an acceptance of the need for redundancies.

The paper industry is a major employer in Kent. Mills and associated enterprises stretch from one end of the county to the other. If Reed succeed in shedding 700 jobs, it would point the way for mass redundancies

throughout Kent.

Blaming the industry's recession on cheap imported paper, the bosses neglect to say that the foreign firms they blame are in the main their own subsidiaries and offshoots—Reed International, Reed Paper, etc. While the workers would suffer on the dole queue scrapheap, the bosses would continue to rake in the profits.

Chris Scott, SOGAT branch chairman and a member of the union's National Executive, has said that, "If the mills close they'll never start up again. The 'thirties have got noth-

ing on this." Concerted action is needed.

At present fear is haunting the workforce; fear born of over two million unemployed in Britain, at least 40,000 of them in Kent, a formerly 'prosperous' area. With the daily onslaught of closures, workers are wondering whether it might be best to accept redundancy and quickly look for jobs elsewhere before the dole numbers hit three million.

The only way of overcoming this is for the national leadership of the unions to give a fighting lead. In reality there are no

other jobs to go to.

The Tory government is the political representative of firms like Reed. The undoubted bitter anger and hatred for Thatcher must be harnessed in a fight to save every job at Reed.

**No sackings!  
No redundancies!  
No short time working!  
Open Reed's books: Let the workers see the real state the company and its international offshoots!**

By Kirk West  
(Rochester and Chatham Labour Party)

## DOWNINGS - FOR 100% REINSTATEMENT

A high proportion of workers at Downings (Kellingly Pit Site) are actively engaged in picketing as the dispute becomes a fight for 100% reinstatement (see last week's report).

The morale of the pickets is high, pointing out that nothing had moved on site since the dispute began eight weeks ago.

Widespread support has come from their brother-members of the AUEW construction section throughout the region. What is needed now is the same

resolute backing from the national leadership to bring a victory to the dispute.

The 3,500 miners at Kellingly Colliery have given consistent aid and made clear to management that no blackleg labour will be permitted to work on the pit.

The dispute, which started over bonus, can now only be resolved by 100% reinstatement with a commitment that the present workforce will be kept on to finish the remaining 12 months of the contract.

Management, on the other hand, seem determined to resolve the dispute then pay off large sections of the present workforce and bring in others to do their jobs.

Billy Steele, AUEW shop steward, explained that even in the best times, when a contract ends you're out of work. The firm only takes you on if your face fits ("no offence to workers who have been with the company a long time"). Under such conditions, he said, there is no way you can tolerate being forced off a site for

others to finish your work.

'Militant' fights for a massive programme of useful public works and socialist economic policies as the basis for the resuscitation of British industry. The building of new schools, hospitals and factories is the only way to guarantee the future of building workers today and the prospect of full employment for all.

By Bill Winn (South Leeds LP) and Jon Ingham (Leeds No. 6 AUEW)



# VITAL NEED FOR WORKERS UNITY

Last Wednesday Thomson British Holdings announced their decision to sell 'The Times', 'The Sunday Times', and the Times supplements.

"Despite strenuous efforts of management at all levels and the expenditure of vast sums of money," they claim, "the existence and development of the titles will have the opportunity of a more secure future in other ownership."

Pools of sweat and other signs of strenuous effort have not been much in evidence. Indeed, our impression is

**By Jim Brookshaw**  
 ('Times' AUEW Chapel Committee, personal capacity)

that, as before, most effort is spent in trying to put one over on the chapels (trade union workplace branches).

Back in August the journalists thought they had a worked-out agreement, but when they went in for the formal signing they were presented with a complete

different set of proposals. The journalists went on strike for the first time ever—such was their indignation. This was apparently "all a misunderstanding," which it took the bosses a week to realise.

In November last year, when publications resumed after the eleven-month lock-out, the compositors believed they had an agreement for the introduction of new technology (which they accept) retaining typesetting in their hands. But it seems that when they were on the verge of final agreement the management once again raised the question of a "front end system", where certain material would by-pass the compositors.

We engineers were told that we would be in "division one" of the wages league but now apparently there are a lot of

teams in the first Division, some at the top and some at the bottom. We were told that we would lose nothing by agreeing to forgo national Newspaper Proprietors' Association awards, but have been offered 2½% less than the NPA award.

The recent losses of 'The Sunday Times' have resulted from an agreement over differentials. On the return to work it was agreed to reduce the differential between the NATSOPA members, machine minders and assistants, and the NGA machine managers, the engineers etc.

Many skilled workers are opposed to a narrowing of differentials while some of us think that they are still too wide. However, the point is that an agreement on differentials is three-sided: the

skilled, the semi-skilled and management.

This agreement was between two sides only—the management and NATSOPA, so it is not surprising that problems have arisen.

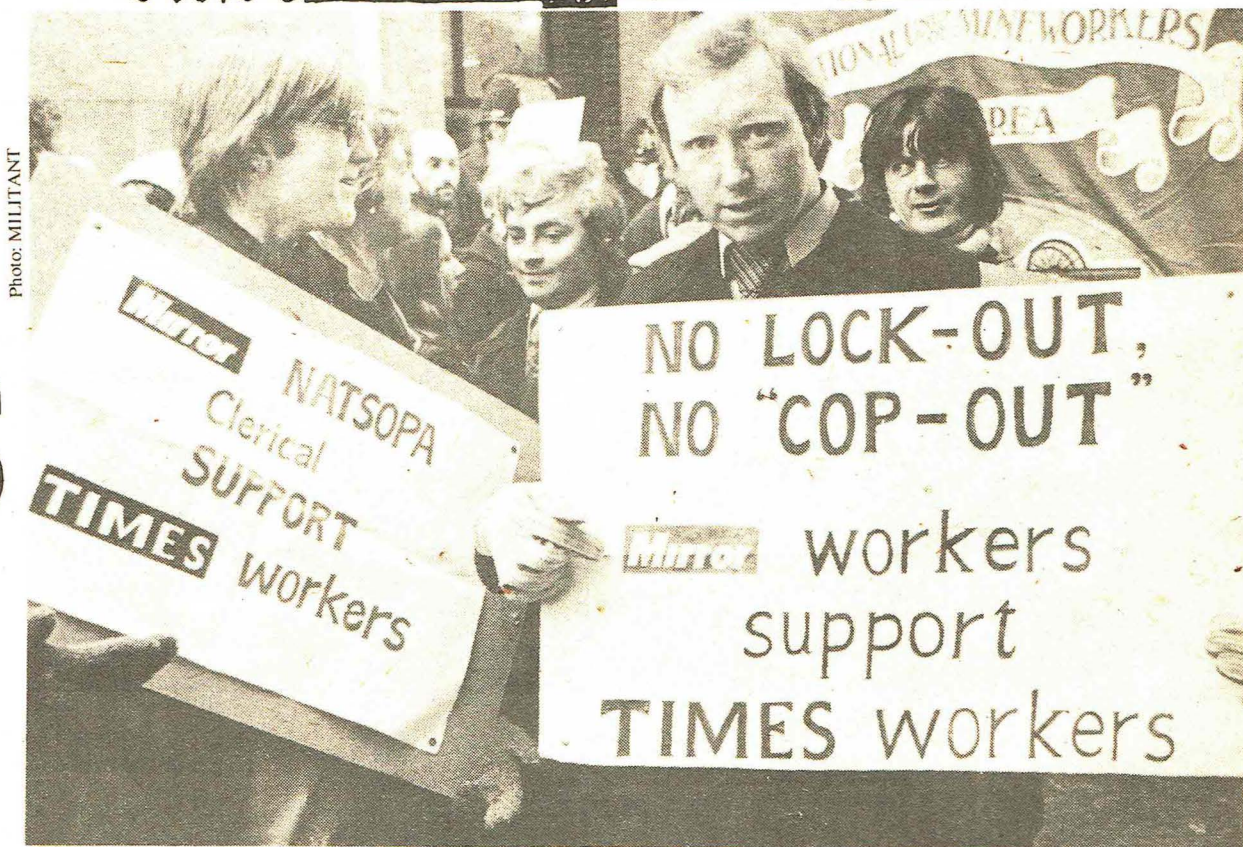
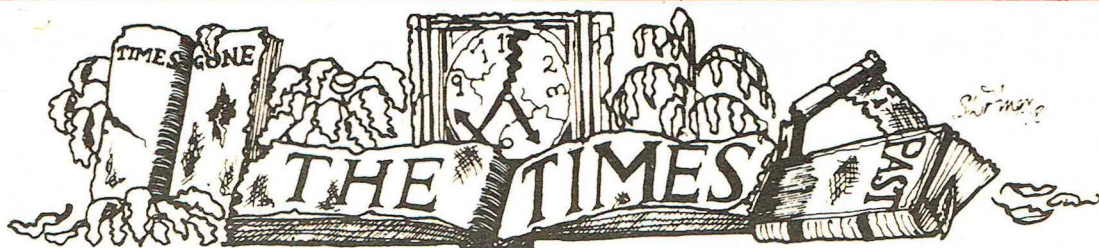
The company state that "the titles will have the opportunity of a more secure future in other ownership." That is probably very true. They say that they have failed to win "the hearts and minds" of the employees and if by that they mean that no one believes a word they say then they are right.

It could well be that under a different management (and I don't just mean different owners) the outstanding problems could be solved and the publications strengthened.

Many newspaper workers

who have won better wages and conditions than other workers, believed their industry immune to the general sickness invalidating British industry as a whole. The closure of the 'Evening News' and the threat hanging over Times Newspapers are rapidly dispelling such illusions. Even "sacred institutions" are now figures on a balance sheet and that is what is decisive.

At a time like this we in the industry have to work for the maximum possible trade union unity with an end to private deals. We have to carefully consider a radical alternative to capitalist ownership, through the public ownership of the printing industry under workers' control and management.



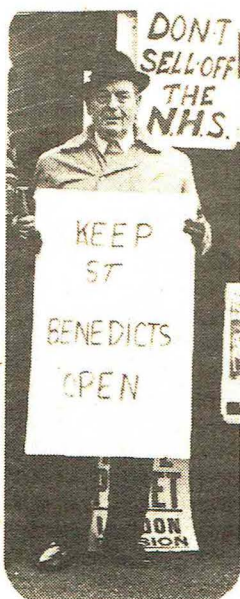
Two years ago 'The Times' ceased publication for eleven months. The response of printworkers was immediate. Unity is essential now

# St Benedict's Fighting the Closures

St Benedict's, a long-stay geriatric hospital in Tooting, South London, was just a statistic to the Tories—another victim of their ruthless cuts campaign.

But while the St Benedict's occupation (see 'Militant', 12 September) might have been defeated, the battle is not forgotten by those who took part.

The St Benedict's Support Group Committee still meets weekly, to organise future activities for the defence fund aiding those arrested on the picket line



and also to the cuts in general. As part of this campaign, a demonstration protesting at the closure of St Benedict's and against all cut-backs has been organised for Saturday 15 November.

The demonstration will assemble at 10.30 am outside St Benedict's, Church Lane, Tooting (nearest tube Tooting Broadway), and march to the South London hospital for a rally. All Labour Party, LPYS members and trade unionists should do their best to get there.

The Wandsworth and East Merton Health District chopped £6 million off its budget, closing St Benedict's, Cumberland Hospital and St George's, Hyde Park.

Yet on 6 November, the Queen will visit St George's in Tooting. This hospital, opened a year ago, will be redecorated for the occasion at considerable expense.

A few years back, Princess Anne visited the old block at St George's. Here too they redecorated the corridor. Three months later the block was knocked down. While everything else has collapsed the District management's feudal sense of priorities remains intact.

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