

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 537
30 January 1981

15p

LABOUR
PARTY
SPECIAL
CONFERENCE
REPORT

See
centre
pages

new jobless peak...

2½ MILLION REASONS TO DUMP TORIES!



Harlow workers show their anger at unemployment [see back page]

Workers in Tory Britain have just suffered the sharpest monthly rise in unemployment since the second world war — an extra 175,000 on the dole!

Unemployment has shot up by a million since this time last year, the fastest annual increase since records began.

One in ten workers are now jobless!

Officially, the new total is 2,419,452. But if we are realistic and count unemployed workers who don't register and those temporarily on various government schemes, the total is already well over 3 million.

And worse is yet to come. Big business and all their leading economists admit this. They

only disagree how soon it will be 3 million, 3½ million, or even 4 million.

Mere statistics, however, can't express the suffering and anger of workers thrown on to the scrapheap. There is enormous, pent-up bitterness among working people—and a growing demand for action.

That is why Newcastle

Trades Council and its Centre for the Unemployed have called a conference "Working Against Unemployment" this weekend.

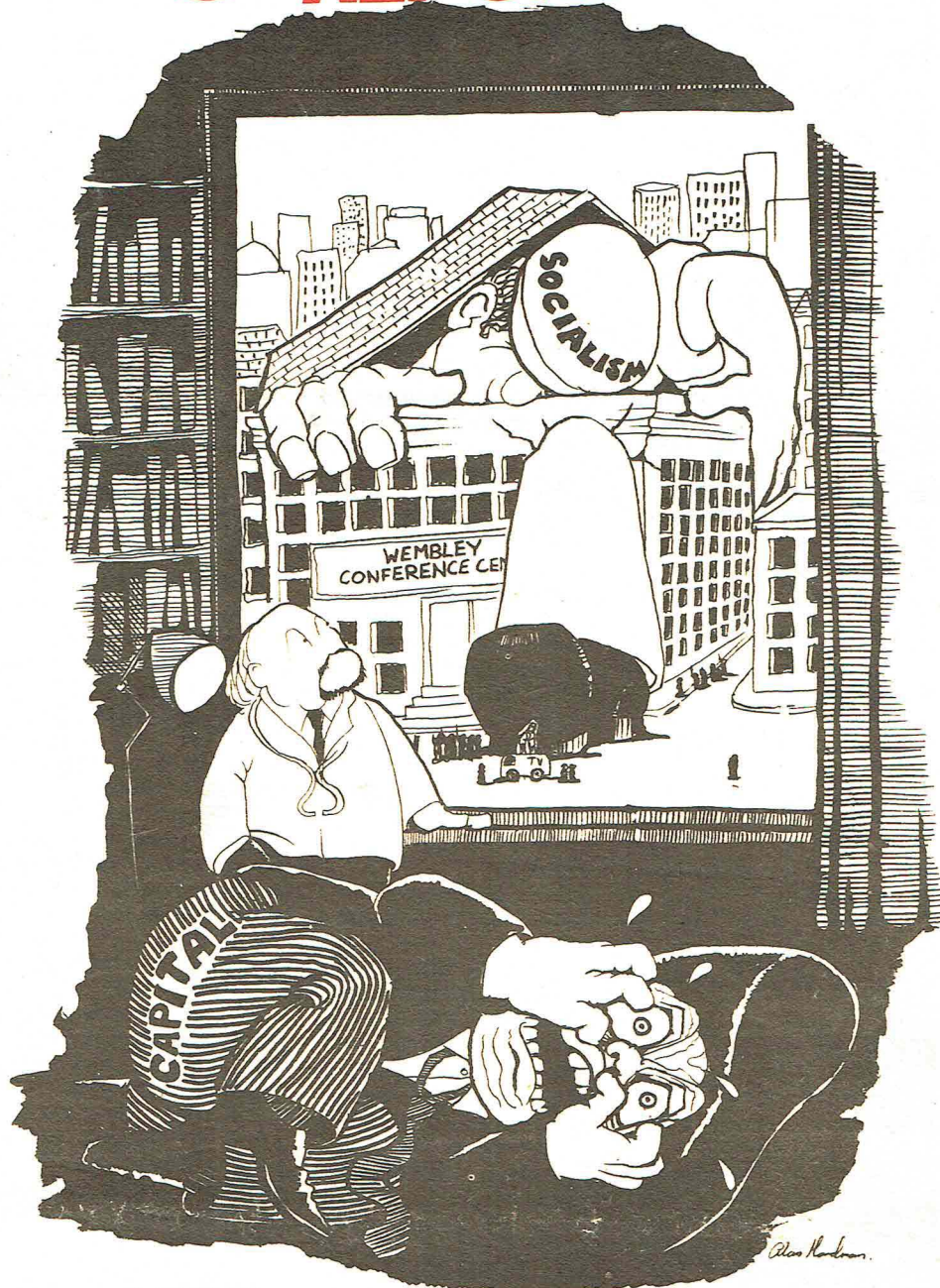
It has attracted a "capacity crowd" of 240 delegates from trades councils, union branches, unemployed groups, and community organisations.

We have no option but to fight back. What kind of future is there for the youth who we meet in the centre or in the streets of Tyneside? This is an area which has been an unemployment black spot for decades.

If you can't live on about £18 a week dole, you might get a place on the Youth "opportunities" programme. This means £23.50 for 40 hours—some opportunity!

What chance is there of a real job at the end of it? Is that what young people have been educa-

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I KEEP HAVING THESE FRIGHTFUL HALLUCINATIONS ABOUT A GIANT THAT GROWS AND GROWS AND...

LABOUR PARTY SPECIAL CONFERENCE

Victory at Wembley

By Eileen Short

(Delegate, Bethnal Green & Bow Labour Party, personal capacity)

"Well, I feel a lot better now," said one trade union delegate after last Saturday's special Labour Party Conference: "We've made a few year's progress today!"

This remark summed up the feeling of a big majority of delegates at Wembley.

The jubilant applause when the results were announced underlined the importance of the great step forward taken in adopting an electoral college for the election of Party leader.

Now the whole party—not just the Labour MPs—will have a say. The Parliamentary Labour Party and the Constituency Labour Parties

will each get a 30% share of the vote for leader.

The trade unions, which created the Labour Party and remain its solid class basis, will have a 40% share of the vote.

This 30-30-40 college is the formula put forward by "Militant" after last year's annual conference, when the broad principle of a wider election fran-

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Ron Brown, MP for Leith, speaks to 'Militant'—page 10

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PRICE RISE

As we announced recently, the price of 'Militant' will rise to 20p next week. We are sure readers will agree it is still the best value paper in the labour movement!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

Wembley was a great victory for Labour's ranks. But for the right-wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party grouped around the "Gang of Three" it was "the last straw".

With the setting up of a "Council for Social Democracy," the right are now actively preparing for the split-away and formation of a new party.

According to the right, the adoption of radical policies and the democratisation of the party are the result of sinister "conspiracies" and "plots" by the extreme left. They cannot acknowledge that these developments are the result of a deepening crisis in capitalism.

The 'Militant' is a prime target of the right's attacks. According to Shirley Williams and David Owen, the strength of the 'Militant's' support is one of the main reasons why they can no longer remain in the Labour Party.

They are incapable of understanding, apparently, that the counter-part of an overwhelming rejection of right wing's discredited and defeated policies is a growing support amongst Labour's activists for the policies of Marxism.

On what ideas and policies will the social democrats fight Labour?

The Gang are simply trying to serve up a re-hash of the Labour right's old pot-pourri freshened up with a few flowery phrases. This is clear from Dr David Owen's forthcoming book, "Face the Future".

The Gang's "socialist philosophy...asserts the radical, democratic, libertarian tradition of de-centralised socialism, which revives the concept of fellowship and community within a participatory democratic society..."

What do these flowery phrases really mean?

In attacking "centralism" Owen makes it clear that he completely rejects Clause IV, part IV, of the Labour Party's constitution [embodying the party's basic

THE THIN PINK LINE

socialist aim]. In his view, all would have been well if Hugh Gaitskell had succeeded in expunging clause IV in 1959, as the German Social Democrats did at Bad Godesberg.

Also perniciously "centralist" are the Labour Party's links with the trade unions, which Owen thinks should have been severed long ago.

But what is offered to working people under the guise of "de-centralisation"? In truth, practically nothing. Owen advocates: "local income tax and greater freedom for local government"; "directly elected health authorities"; and "national and regional assemblies, united in a reformed second chamber..."

What, in concrete terms, the benefits would be to workers is never made clear. In reality, Owen is trying to justify the same old policies of previous right wing Labour governments—policies of reformism but without reforms.

For instance, Owen claims that "at the heart of socialism lies...an abhorrence of the misery which poverty brings and positive belief in the virtues of a just and equal society..."

But under the last Labour government the top one per cent of tax-payers' share of wealth rose from 22.5% to 24.9%! Neither enormous concessions to the wealthy, nor massive state hand-outs to big business, did anything to halt the helter-skelter decline of British capitalism. On the contrary, workers' living standards suffered, and the Labour government began the policies of monetarism and cuts in public spending.

What would be different if the new social democrats were in power? Fundamentally, nothing—except the position of workers would be even worse, as British capitalism continued to slip down the international ladder.

Any confused workers

who are bamboozled into voting for a new social democratic party will rapidly be disillusioned.

What are the prospects for a new social democratic party—will the social democrats be a serious barrier to the victory of a Labour government?

The Centre for Social Democracy is clearly meant to be the launching-pad for a new party. During the count-down, Jenkins, Owen, Shirley Williams and Co. hope to be able to raise finance and put together the basis of a new organisation.

Reportedly, Jenkins has been offered up to £15 millions from business sources.

Big-business backing

"Since his return," comments the 'Financial Times' [27 January] "he appears to have attracted a considerable amount of financial support—largely it is claimed, from those quarters of the City of London where monetarism is highly unpopular..."

In an effort to demoralise Labour supporters, the gutter press daily predicts the "disintegration of the Labour Party." But, as the serious strategists of capitalism are clearly aware, "the post-Wembley Labour party has a real chance of power." ["Daily Telegraph" 26 January]. They fear that a Labour government, under massive pressure from the working class, could make radical inroads into the wealth and power of big business.

Their strategy, therefore, is to bolster up a centre or social democratic party capable of acting as a safety-net for disenfranchised Tory voters—and in the hope of enticing away from Labour a layer of less conscious working-class supporters.

They hope that a new social democratic party

would gain 10, 15 or 20 seats in a general election. This, they calculate, together with 15 or so seats for the Liberals and a 15-seat advantage to the Tories through the redistribution of constituencies, would be enough to prevent the coming to power of a majority Labour government.

But even with this perspective, they are not too hopeful. "The future of parliamentary government," claims the 'Daily Telegraph', "seems at present to depend on 'the thin pink line', or brave, if anaemic, little band of social democrats who may have it in their power, not perhaps to emerge as a serious political force before the next election, but to condemn the new Labour Party to a defeat which could prove lethal to it."

The serious commentators of big business, have completely cynical attitude toward the 'Gang of Four' and their friends. "The role to which Providence seems to be beckoning the 'Gang of Three' is that of a suicide squad. That role calls not only for courage but for a kind of courage which does not come easily to natural politicians. Let us hope they will rise to it."

The trouble is, the new social democratic party will be top-heavy with generals with very very few troops. "Few activists," admits the 'Guardian' [26 January], "will leave for the social democratic camp." And they admit: "The new grouping will not expect anything like the surge of support which the polls have indicated."

With people like Roy Jenkins at the head of the table, the social democrats will be more like a dinner party than a political party. Its leading lights have more of a reputation for wine-tasting than for work on the door-steps.

But Labour activists be warned: temporarily, given

enormous big business backing, the social democrats could have some successes.

The 'Financial Times' [27 January] bluntly warned the Labour leaders: the Labour Party has one last chance to "reform itself from within." "But," it threatened, "if it continues in its leftward lurch, we shall give more than the present cautious welcome to the CSD [Centre for Social Democracy]." Clearly, all the resources of the FT, the press generally, and the television would be swung behind the social democrats in an effort to block Labour.

Active trade unionists and the more conscious sections of the workers will remain firm in their support for Labour. But sections of the less active, politically uneducated and inert workers may be swung temporarily behind social democratic candidates.

The Labour Party must not, therefore, just allow the CSD to split and beguile workers with their flowery new phrases. There should be an active campaign in every area to counter the ideas of the right and win support for bold socialist policies. The social democrats will not stop the growth of the Labour Party and the return of a Labour government—provided Labour campaigns boldly on the basis of socialist policies.

Michael Foot has called for a mass campaign against the Tories, linking opposition in Parliament to mass agitation in the country.

An impregnable basis for the Party must be built in the trade union branches, in the factories, on the housing estates and amongst the youth. Legions of new members must be recruited into the Party, with bold socialist policies and mass support, nothing will stand for long in the way of the Labour Party.

Weighed against the mass forces of the Labour Party, the social democrats will be like so much dust.

chise for the leadership was adopted.

Over recent years, supporters of 'Militant' have played a prominent part in the fight for Party democracy, both on the issue of re-selection of MPs and the election of the leader.

It was 'Militant' supporters who played a key role within USDAW (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers), ensuring that this union submitted the 30-30-40 proposal, which was eventually adopted by the special conference.

The issue of the election of Party leader is not just an airy-fairy constitutional question, as the capitalist press and television try to pretend.

Underlying this battle in the party is the bitter anger of trade unionists and Labour Party members at nearly three million unemployed, the destruction "of the welfare state", and the Thatcherite counter-revolution against all the labour movement's past gains.

Demands for democratisation have also been strengthened, as many delegates indicated at Wembley, by an overwhelming rejection of the right-wing policies of previous Labour governments.

In eleven years of post-war office, they failed to make any fundamental change in the capitalist system.

MPs like the "gang of three" and their fellow travellers have had every opportunity to put their case to the labour movement. Until recently, they dominated the leadership. They have the fulsome support of the capitalist press and other media.

Yet now they have been unmistakably defeated, these great "democrats" are not prepared to accept a democratic decision.

"Some of us", said Peter Kelly, (Salford East delegate) to loud applause from conference delegates, "if we had only remained in the party when we won, would only have been in the party for about two days!"

The right wing splitters will not stop the growth of the Labour Party. Far from being a "shambles" or "chaos", as the "gang of three" and the media claim, the Labour Party has been immeasurably strengthened by the recent democratic reforms.

Party Loyalty-Back the NEC

Immediately after the Wembley conference, the "gang of three" suddenly became the "gang of nine", as other right-wing MPs announced their intention of joining a "social democratic" split-away.

The Tory press speculates that other right-wing MPs will follow later.

According to the 'New Standard' (26 January), right-winger Neville Sandelson (MP for Hayes and Harlington) "said over the weekend that he was leaving the Party, [but] changed his mind again after the sudden Council for Social Democracy development."

After reading Bill Rodgers' statement, however, Sandelson said: "I'm with the Council...I would have preferred a clean break. Obviously I have to bow to the position of the others in

matters of strategy. I shall have to keep in line with the fellows in the CSD (Council for Social Democracy) and it is our duty to see how best we can work in parliament."

Labour Party members will be outraged at statements like this from MPs who think they can keep their positions in the Party while denouncing its policies and preparing to stab it in the back.

Last Monday, Wrexham CLP passed a vote of censure on its MP, Tom Ellis, after he had announced his support for a social-democratic break-away. The resolution called on him to resign from the LP. Its proposer acknowledged that he could continue as an independent MP, but said, "An honourable man might feel he had

to resign as an MP."

Other CLPs will undoubtedly be following Wrexham in taking a similar course of action.

It is also significant that the social democrats have announced that they will stay within the Labour Party until after the May local elections. They obviously hope to be able to recruit a number of right-wing Labour councillors—after they have just been elected for another three-year term on a Labour Party platform.

In view of these scandalous statements, Labour Party members will undoubtedly welcome the resolutions put before this week's meeting of the National Executive Committee by Tony Benn and Tony Saunois (Labour Party Young Socialists' representative).

Tony Benn's resolution is:

"That this committee, and each of its members, pledges itself wholeheartedly and without reservation, to work together for the return of a Labour government at the next general election through the election of Labour candidates in every constituency, standing in support of the election manifesto that will be presented at the time; and invites all individual and affiliated members of the party to endorse this call personally and to seek support for it in all constituency Labour Parties and affiliated organisations of which they are members; and to seek endorsement for it from all Labour candidates in the local elections this year."

Tony Saunois' resolution, which will be considered by

the NEC along with Tony Benn's, is as follows:

"This NEC condemns those who are threatening to desert the Labour Party and form a new 'social democratic' party. Such a party would be nothing more than a Liberal/Tory party in disguise. It has received promises of massive financial backing from big business and support from the media. Clearly, the objective of such a new party would be to prevent the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies. Those participating in the formation of any such party would be stabbing the labour movement in the back, and weakening the chances of defeating the Tory government."

"The NEC resolves that the Labour Party will not be deflected from the campaign to defeat the Tories and all parties opposed to Labour. Only a Labour

government committed to socialist policies can solve the problems facing working people.

"We therefore call upon the Labour Party throughout the country to fight for the election of such a government."

Labour Party members will undoubtedly feel that this initiative on the NEC should be backed up at a local level.

All Labour Party candidates in the local elections should be asked to sign a declaration along the lines of these resolutions.

Just as important, there must now be an active campaign in every constituency Party and every affiliated trade union branch to explain the importance of the democratic reforms passed at annual conference and at the recent special conference in Wembley.

'March against the Bosses Government'

Glasgow 21 February

There's real anger and hatred in Scotland against what Thatcher and her crew are doing.

And that is providing much of the driving force in the days leading up to the mass demonstration in Glasgow on 21 February.

There's anger at the 250,000 workers on the dole (1 in 7 of the working population), anger at being forced on to a four, three or even one day week, with the weekly announcements of more redundancies or closures, and fury at being told

By Jim McLelland
(ASLE&F Corkerhill branch)

to move to find work. Where should we move—Shotton, Coventry, South Wales?

Every family has a tale to tell, with at least one relation or close friend unemployed or facing that prospect. And what does the future offer with fears of more redundancies on the shipyards, Talbot's threatened closure, the run-down

of steel and coal production, and cuts in transport, education, housing and the health service.

Strathclyde is one of the poorest areas and hardest hit in terms of unemployment and it's time that workers said enough is enough. Labour Parties, trade union branches and shop stewards' committees must urge workers and their families to join the march.

The demo must be seen as a major step towards building a movement that will give confidence and strength in the fight against the Tories.

Only the power of the mobilised working class has the strength to remove the Tories, and the economic system that creates unemployment.



Part of the LPYS contingent on the November 1980 anti-Tory demonstration in Liverpool

Photo: MILITANT

Huddersfield

Huddersfield Labour Party Young Socialists are supporting the Trades Council and Labour Party anti-unemployment demo this Saturday 31 January.

We have handed out 5,000 LPYS leaflets over the last fortnight. Jobcentres, dole queues, schools, youth clubs, the tech and the Poly—all have been visited.

By George Knell
(Huddersfield LPYS)

Outside one school one worried teacher at first thought that we might be the National Front but was very happy when he found out the truth. Together with Batley and Dewsbury LPYS and the Trades Council we have started a petition calling for an unemployed centre, free bus passes, sports and social facilities for the unemployed.

**Organise
now
for
LPYS
Week
of Action
February
14-24**

**"Save Jobs, Sack the Tories"
badges 20p each [inc' p&p or 10 for £1.10
Youth Campaign Against Unemployment,
P.O. Box 104, London E9 5TP**



The flats were announced in an advert in the London evening paper. By midnight there were over 1,000 people queuing

2,000 queue for 'hard-to-let' flats

Last week 2,000 people held an all-night vigil outside a Greater London Council housing office.

What was it about? A protest at the growing homelessness in London? A picket line, as some of the passing lorry-drivers thought? No—this was a queue for 350 GLC 'hard-to-let' flats.

Most of the people were desperate for housing. They were queueing for up to 24

hours just for the chance of getting a place to live in some of the worst estates in East London.

Fortunately it was a relatively mild night, but people have in the past queued through blizzards and hail just to get what should be the right of everyone—a place to live.

Yet there is no shortage of houses. A glance through the same day's 'New Standard' showed four columns

of flats and bedsits to let.

The drawback, however, is the £20 for a single bedsit, £65 for a one-bedroom flat, £170 for a three-bedroom house. How many young couples or single people can afford that?

Out of the 2,000 who queued for a flat last week, 1,600 were disappointed—and these are 'hard-to-let' flats!

Stirling

By
Alastair Wilson

The demonstration on Saturday 7 February is part of the local Trades Council Federation's campaign against unemployment.

The campaign includes amongst its demands the establishing of unemployment centres and is receiving growing support from many parts of the labour movement in mid Scotland.

As well as being part of the build up for the big demonstration being held in Glasgow on the 21st the Stirling march promises to be the biggest ever held in the area. Locally the effects of unemployment have been devastating.

In the small town of Denny unemployment has nearly doubled in the past year with the local paper mills and foundries announcing a whole string of closures and redundancies.

Even workers in formerly prosperous industries are now being hit. In Cumbernauld the Borough's computer plant is making over 300 of its 1,600 workforce redundant and at Grange-mouth the first lay-offs have been announced in the giant petro-chemical works.

Nearly 13,000 people are on the dole in the Central Region. In Stirling this month there are 200 more people registered at the Job Centre than a month ago—and about the only work

available is with the government's census.

The February march will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact both on trade unionists and on the ranks of the unemployed. So to help to organise a proper follow-up, the LPYS have arranged a meeting in the Cowane Centre, Stirling, on Wednesday 11 February at 7.30 pm.

Central Region Federation of Trades Councils march against unemployment, Stirling, Saturday 7 February.

Assemble Raplock Community Centre, 10.30am. March through town centre to rally in Albert Hall at 12.00.

Main speakers: Neil Kinnoch MP, Tony Sauniois [LPYS representative on Labour's National Executive] and a speaker from the Scottish TUC.

Unemployment is not just from 2-4pm

By Stuart Watson

(Waltham Forest YCAU)

At the opening meeting of the Waltham Forest Youth Campaign Against Unemployment, a councillor told us that there was no need for a campaign as the council had decided to give the unemployed a better deal.

They had decided to give the unemployed entry at nominal prices to the swimming baths, squash courts and leisure centre, in the off-peak hours of 2pm to 4pm! When someone pointed out that the unemployed do get

up before 2pm and go to bed well after 4pm even the Councillor had to admit that their efforts were pretty pathetic.

The Waltham Forest YCAU is campaigning for better leisure facilities with only nominal prices for the unemployed. We are calling on the council to set up a day centre for the unemployed to give them a place to meet, find out about their rights and organise to fight against unemployment.

The local Careers Office forecast that there will be at

least 2,000 unemployed young people in Waltham Forest by late summer. Yet now they only have nine local vacancies.

The campaign has had a good response locally, gaining support from Labour parties, trade unions, trades council, youth clubs and local youth generally. The meeting decided to have a rally on March 7th and a demonstration on March 21st with a local band leading the demo. After the demo we are going to picket the next Council meeting to demand a Day-centre, nominal entry fees to all council facilities and free bus travel for all unemployed.

Support Lambeth Workers

FEBRUARY 1st—7th

Lambeth Direct Workers strike, supported by T&GWU and AUEW

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4th

Lambeth NALGO one-day strike.

Demonstration by labour movement.

Assemble Clapham Common, mid-day

LABOUR PARTY LABOUR PARTY

New members - right wing style!

SOHO

After the 1979 Labour Party conference there was an immediate rush of 10,000 membership applications.

Last year's Youth broadcast brought in 2,000 enquiries. The days when local Labour Parties resembled knitting circles are ending.

In many areas this has continued ever since with large numbers of working class men and women joining the party. In the Soho ward of Ladywood (Birmingham) for instance, 50 applications were brought to the November meeting by one comrade alone.

Naturally other members were impressed by this industrious activity and enquired how this had been achieved. The bulk of these applications had been delivered to the comrade's house by a member of an adjoining ward of Handsworth C.L.P. This seemed even better—recruitment without effort!

But when these forms were examined, many were found to be either incomplete or incorrectly filled-in. It was decided to check the applications by calling on the people concerned. This would have to be done anyway, as our ward has a policy of checking trade union membership.

Meanwhile, our M.P. (who has appeared on T.V. saying that he feels he is under threat from the "Left") took an interest in the matter.

At December's General Management Committee meeting, he said that the National Agent, David Hughes, was 'very concerned' about the delay in dealing with membership applications in Soho ward. How the National Agent comes to know, within a month, the names and addresses of people applying to join one particular ward Labour Party in unclear.

The meeting passed, by a large majority, a vote of confidence in the Officers of Soho ward.

The officers of the ward made every effort to contact all applicants. At the January meeting the officers were able to propose acceptance of twenty-five applications. Some were new but the majority had originally arrived in November.

During the course of the checking, evidence had come to light that all was not as it should be.

By Simon Petrie
& Pete McNally

(Soho Labour Party,
personal capacity)

One comrade reported some applicants could not recall filling in the forms. Some claimed that they had paid money to join the party, but no money has been received by any ward officers. When the chairman asked the meeting if any comrade knew anything about this there was no reply.

Even more mysteriously some of the applicants interviewed claimed to have been told that subscriptions would be "looked after" or "taken care of". Someone has told potential Labour Party members their subscription will be paid for them. This is known as buying votes.

Nobody at the January ward meeting knew who might have made such an offer. The Regional Organiser, who had been invited to the meeting, mentioned that "this sort of thing" had happened before.

The Regional Organiser also had a question for the meeting. Who had photo-copied the original membership applications and delivered the photo-copies to Labour Party Regional Office? There was no answer.

The matter of the applications was disposed of by acceptance of the Executive Committee report, this being proposed by Pete McNally, the vice-chairman. There were no votes or speakers against. This having been settled the Regional Organiser left, as did our M.P.

Can it be co-incidence that this chain of events has taken place just prior to the Annual General Meeting of the ward in February? As comrades will know elections for Officers, G.M.C. delegates and so on take place at the A.G.M.

We are confident that Soho Labour Party, now 125 strong, will grow even bigger. This will be on the basis of an open invitation to working people to join the party, take part in democratic debate and come to their own conclusions—having paid their own membership fee!

HAYES AND HARLINGTON

I have written in a personal capacity to congratulate 'Militant' on its constructive and objective account of Neville Sandelson's recent activities in Chichester.

This branch has overwhelmingly supported a resolution put forward by Ian McCleave of the Young Socialists and a supporter of 'Militant' calling on the NEC to take the strongest possible disciplinary action against Sandelson following his support of a new 'Centre-Left' political party.

In view of the stock accusations levelled by Sandelson against the Marxist wing of the Party, I feel that the comrades might like to know of the steps taken by the right to block this resolution.

For years this branch of the local party has been run by a clique of reactionary Sandelsonite Councillors and it has always been the policy of the branch to begin ward meetings at 7.30 pm. Recently following the national trend against both Thatcher and the crypto-Conservative policies of the right, control of the ward passed into the hands of the progressive wing of the Party and is now under



Neville Sandelson, MP for Hayes & Harlington

constant attack by Sandelson supporters.

Shortly before our last ward meeting I received a letter from the previous ward secretary, a Councillor and a close friend of Sandelson, requesting me to put our meeting back until 8pm.

I consulted our Chairman and other comrades and decided to proceed at the usual time as there was no valid reason to alter the usual procedure.

The meeting was attended by about the usual number of members including the Councillor who had requested starting later.

About 8.30pm members were surprised by loud bell ringing. To our surprise we discovered a leading Sandelson supporter together with some eight companions, none of whom had ever attended party meetings to my knowledge.

Five of our visitors were armed with completed

membership forms and copies of the minutes, none of which had been supplied by myself. The prospective new members were all prepared to pay a full year's membership immediately, which in this area is unusual to say the least.

The ward then proceeded to the urgent business of the resolution calling for action against Neville Sandelson. When the vote was taken the resolution was defeated by the combined vote of the usual Sandelsonite reactionaries and the "new members."

Our Chairman pointed out that the newcomers were not entitled to vote as yet and established that out of the group only four were in fact existing members entitled to vote. After a discussion amongst the membership a second vote was taken.

As a result of three of the group, brought along to the meeting as a result of conspiracy, defecting to the progressives and the 'new members' not being entitled to vote, the resolution was passed with a large majority. Needless to say once the vote was known our Councillor friend stormed out followed by the Sandelson clique.

By William A.
Burborough
(Secretary, Barnhill-
Yeading Labour Party,
personal capacity)

Trade Union Youth

NSMM

'Thatcher's gone too far and we have to fight back now!'

This angry mood was expressed throughout the hall at the annual youth conference of the National Society of Metal Mechanics.

The major resolution passed was on the fight against redundancies, outlining the need for a fighting leadership and programme. A rounded out policy was passed covering apprenticeships, health and safety, against import controls (for a socialist economy) and for unilateral disarmament.

These showed how the policies of the LPYS and 'Militant' find a greater response amongst working class youth.

This year for the first time, the youth conference took on a formal role in the



Last year's TUC youth conference

rule book. Two of our resolutions go to the full union conference, with two delegates to move them.

The two resolutions were on the fight against redundancy, and health and safety. We also elected one delegate, Flo Wardle, to the

union's TUC delegation and two delegates to the TUC youth conference.

Youth in our union have made tremendous steps forward over the past five years, with the LPYS and 'Militant' supporters playing an important role in its

development.

With the Tory attacks on youth, it's time every union took up our lead!

By Steve Glennon
(Stevenage NSMM)

TGWU

Two of the three delegates elected to represent the T&GWU at the coming TUC Youth Conference were supporters of 'Militant'.

At the recent T&GWU Youth Conference Gordon Wilson [Region 7—Scotland] and Keith Birch [Region 5—Midlands] polled the highest votes in the election contested by six delegates.

This result emphasises the

growing influence of 'Militant' in the labour movement.

A variety of issues were discussed including trade union education and the press, but by far the most lively and constructive discussion was on the TUC's Alternative Economic Strategy, outlined by Moss Evans.

Delegate after delegate stressed from their own experience the barbarism of Thatcher and her class. Without exception the delegates stressed the need for strong and bold alternatives

to the Tories' vicious anti-working class policies.

However, criticisms were aired of the TUC's alternatives, particularly on selective import controls. 'Militant' supporters explained that import controls contradicted one of the cornerstones of the labour movement, namely internationalism, and that it nurtured the dangerously false impression that workers and bosses had a common interest.

Other delegates pointed out the threat of retaliation and

trade war.

The election of 'Militant' supporters reflected the role they had played in the conference and also served to stress the inexhaustible potential that the ideas of Marxism have amongst working class youth.

By Keith Edwards
(Delegate, Region 4,
Wales)

MILITANT PAMPHLETS

BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

History of the Labour Party 30p

1926 General Strike by L. Trotsky,
E. Grant, P. Taaffe 30p.

All available from World Books, 1 Mentmore

Terrace, London E8 3PN. (Add 10p. each P&P)



"The International Year of Disabled People will, I hope, call forth a lot more voluntary effort on the part of the disabled. Most of us think that it is more laudable to try to do something for oneself." So Mrs Thatcher told MPs earlier this month.

Oxfordshire's Tory county council have taken the hint. A dozen teenagers are to lose their right to state education after 16, with the merger of two schools especially designed for the disabled. They have scrapped grants enabling disabled people to take holidays, saving an estimated £22,000 of the annual £200 million council budget.

"It's a most disgusting thing that this government, the council and the social services should do this to the very people that cannot hit back," said one victim, who will have to give up her booked holiday at a Red Cross home. An integral part of Tory economic policy, it seems, is 'weakest to the wall—quite literally.

Storey Brothers' factory in Brantham, Suffolk, is to close, axeing 1,000 local jobs. Nothing new: the columns of the press read as a regular role-call of such disasters for jobs and industry. Except that this is one of the companies, in the chemical industry, which were to be the backbone of the Tories' slimmed-down, revitalised, post-crisis British economy. It was also with Storey's that Mrs Thatcher got her much-lauded 'experience in industry'. Whatever it did for her, it didn't do them much good.

"If anyone thinks £75,000 is a lot of money, he must be in a different world." Admit it: it does seem quite a substantial amount compared to your pay packet. But then Mr Peter Cadbury, quoted above, was chairman of the ill-fated Westward Television company—much more demanding than your average job, no doubt. He received a £150,000 pay off when Westward were deprived of their TV franchise in the recent sort-out: £75,000 redundancy money, plus £65,000 towards the costs of his legal wrangles with other directors, and £10,000 in a waived debt.

Readers should facethe bitter truth—if you think £150,000 sounds like even more money, you definitely inhabit a very different world from Mr Cadbury and his friends.

Thirty-seven Lords and Ladies, twenty-six knights, six ambassadors and a Field Marshal were among the 191 guests at a dinner before Christmas. Also celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Atlantic-Richfield Oil company takeover of the 'Observer' newspaper were twenty-one Tory MPs, including twelve ministers. Sir Keith Joseph was a speaker. Among the others enjoying this happy occasion were Sir David McNee [Metropolitan Police Commissioner], Sir Richard Marsh [Labour Party deserter, now chairman of the Newspaper Publishers' Association], Lord Victor Matthews [Trafalgar House Boss], Sir Raymond Pennock [CBI President] and banker Mr Evelyn de Rothschild. No doubt a good time was had by all, with food, wine, and the wisdom of the 'Mad Monk' making a night to remember.

Definitely not an event you would expect to find workers' representatives at. So what were Labour MPs James Callaghan, Michael Foot, Denis Healey, Dr Dickson Mabon, Dr David Owen, John Smith and Eric Varley; printers' leader Bill Keys [SOGAT], Len Murray and Norman Willis [Murray's deputy] doing there After the ball, will our leaders be going home to fight big business?

WHAT PRICE A LIFE'S WORK?

Jimmy Morley has spent most of his working life in the Scunthorpe steel mills. The closure of the Normanby Park works now means redundancy for him, with thousands of others. This was his life—now it's gone.

My old father had two decades with the iron works and I was born at old Scotch Row, Santon, within a stone's throw of the old blastfurnaces at North iron works.

I have seen so many changes in my years of service. I was on the finishing section mill when the first pylons were rolled, something unique.

I even remember the part where the plate mills now stand when it was ponds of water called Top Gate ponds. Yes, where Redbourn Offices stood was one of the soup kitchens in the bad old '30s.

I have known when there's been a kick as we termed it, or as the old furnace men would say, the monkey went up the coke and stone would be blasted all over the row of houses known as Old Row, Santon.

I was known as Santon Sammy Morley when I was at Frodingham section mills. I hold fond nostalgic memories, yes, of the mills and the men who worked them, good

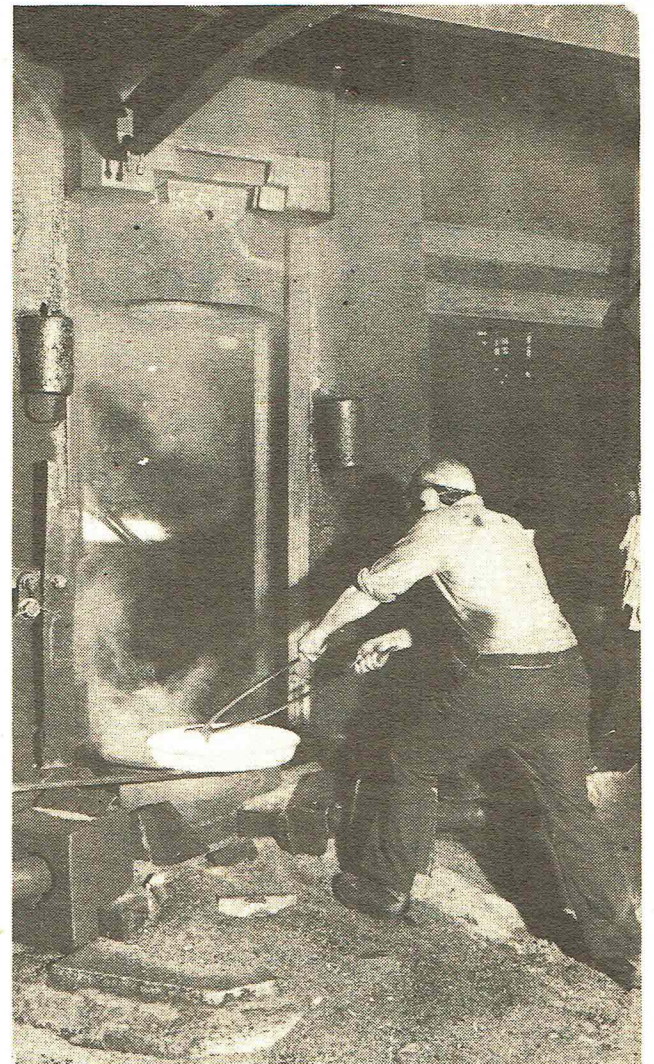
honest hard working people. They worked with a smile on their faces, and I would say they were happy.

The dismal days came when I was conscripted into the forces. I was with the first batch into France with the British Expeditionary Force at the start of the Hitler conflict and witnessed the disaster of Dunkirk.

After that I had service all over the Middle East. The desert war, the Tunis conquest and many more including Italy, Austria and finally the end of the conflict which engulfed seven years of my life.

I came back from the war hoping to win the peace. Back to App Frod this time, to the plate mills where I worked my way from the soakers up through the reheaters.

Many were the workmates I had, many now gone who are just memories, some sad. I have known many successive managers, undermanagers, and foremen: all human beings. Some people may have differing opinions, nev-



"You can't work at a job for years and not get attached...it is quite a pull when severance comes."

ertheless they had jobs to do and could be held in high admiration, although they sometimes seemed a bit overbearing.

Heart and soul in work

Many years I have had on the union as representative and I think helped industrial relations considerably, always tried to be fair and impartial. Yes I had some memorable

times, but there were others best forgotten. You can't work at a job for years and not get attached. My heart and soul has been in my work, although sometimes people haven't thought so.

One doesn't distract and disentangle so easily after so many years—one becomes so attached to his fellow workers, that it is quite a pull when severance comes.

When we get the chance

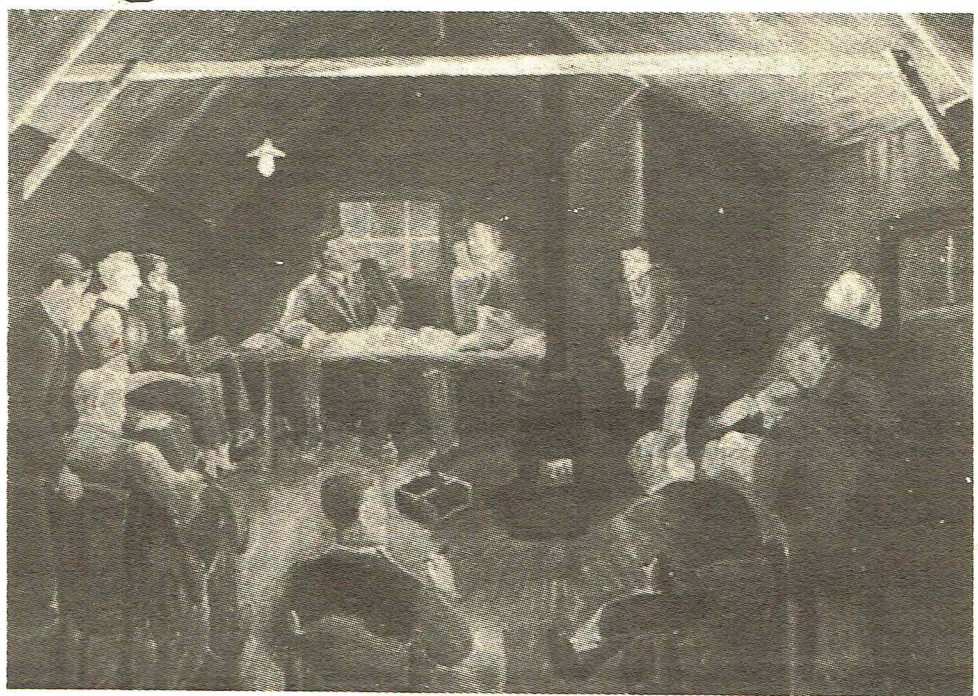
In Ashington, Northumberland, the Workers' Education Association decided in 1934 to change the subject it had been studying from 'evolution' to 'art appreciation'. A Newcastle lecturer attempted to put a group of miners and mineworkers on the road to self discovery in the field of painting.

The men were at first, naturally, embarrassed and self-conscious. One of them, a man named Harry Wilson, said in 1938, "It needed some courage to paint before the lot of other chaps, but once we got to know each other, nobody minded any more."

So every Monday night the art class, or group as it became in reality, met to discuss and criticise their work. Then they would pick a new subject to be painted at home. Gradually they came to assemble and compile a detailed pictorial account of life in a mining town in the dark 1930s.

The men changed the name of their work from 'an experiment in art education' to 'seeing by doing'.

Harry Wilson again: "When we paint as we do in our group there is a feeling of being my own boss for a change, and with it comes a sense of freedom. I can move and act without being answerable to anybody but myself.



The Committee Meeting, 1935, by Harry Wilson

"When I have done a piece of painting I feel that something has happened, not only to the panel or canvas but for myself. For a time I have enjoyed a sense of mastery—of having made something real."

Times were hard and the group began by painting on whatever materials they could scrounge: walspamur on cardboard, old muslin stretched over hardboard. Gradually an interest was taken in the group and its work.

Sociological intellectuals, not very interested in the subjects the group painted, but in the group themselves, established a 'mass observation' unit in 1937, to examine everyday man.

It took an interest in the 'Ashington Group'. They were looked on as a sort of 'working class miracle'.

Despite this false interest, the group continued to work until the early '50s. Its existence faithfully recorded the life of the working class for several decades.

Almost all aspects were covered in great detail. Sociologists may find them 'interesting' but the local people have them as living proof of their conditions of life.

Most of the work of the 'Ashington Group' is kept in storage at the NCB training centre near Newcastle. Why? A good question. Perhaps they will be worth something to the NCB in future.

The idea of workers participating in the 'arts' is not a freak question, of academic interest to sociologists and intellectuals, but a question of fundamental importance to the quality of life for workers in a socialist society.

Workers have more right to that 'free feeling' Harry Wilson described in 1938, than all the 'patrons' of the arts in the bourgeois circles of the 'cultured'.

The working class long ago earned that right, and will continue the struggle for it in the years to come.

By Steve Amor

Compromise won't beat Heseltine

It is no longer possible for any Labour council to "square the circle" of maintaining services and balancing the books. Heseltine has seen to that.

A clear socialist programme and strategy is essential to counter the Tories' attack.

By Bob McKee

Last November the Lambeth conference on 'local government in crisis' agreed to oppose all cuts in services without raising rates, rents or other charges on the working class. Councils should prepare for a confrontation with Heseltine and the Tories.

However since then Lambeth council has imposed a supplementary rate increase which adds £50 to the rate bill of the average household. It has presided over council rent increases and allowed council houses to be sold through the Tories' legislation.

As Lambeth was a focus of opposition to the Tories' policies of cuts in local government, its failure to stick to the decisions of November has weakened enthusiasm for a continued fight among some activists. This was reflected in the lower attendance at this month's recall conference.

There were about 350 delegates with another 100 visitors at the January 17 conference, compared to 700 delegates and 300 visitors in November. The organisers said that this was mainly due to Christmas interfering with the preparations for the conference, but many delegates thought the real reason was the retreat of Lambeth and other councils from a

fight against the Tories on the basis of the November decisions.

It was this retreat in Lambeth council's policy which provided the clear division at this January conference. Motions from Lambeth Trades Council and the National Committee of the LPYS attempted to re-affirm the policy of November and the LPYS motion also spelt out a strategy to fight the Tories.

The LPYS argued that if Lambeth was to avoid cuts it had to refuse to meet any deficit imposed by Heseltine. If that meant bankruptcy and the intervention of the commissioners, the council must respond by mobilising non-co-operation, industrial action and rent and rate strikes.

Such a vigorous campaign could mobilise 15-20 other Labour councils to take similar action. Then the Tories would find it difficult to isolate and defeat Lambeth.

This argument was strongly opposed by Ted Knight, the leader of Lambeth council, who accused his critics of arguing for bankruptcy which would hand over power to the Tories. He was backed up by a number of speakers from the Workers Revolutionary Party, who said that rate rises were a tactic necessary to buy

time for the council until the "community councils" could be set up to fight against fascist reaction coming from the Tories.

But what does this mean in reality for ordinary working people? And how can this help a campaign to defeat the Tories' attack?

As Councillor Turner, one of the four councillors in Lambeth who had opposed the sale of council houses, explained "Let Ted Knight explain to the many callers phoning me every day to complain about the rent and rate increases introduced by Lambeth Council that it was just a tactic."

In the end the conference re-affirmed its support for a policy of no cuts and no rent and rate increases, by passing Lambeth Trades Council's motion. But the LPYS motion, despite receiving solid support from many Labour Party delegates, was narrowly defeated.

The conference did however pledge its full support to the week of industrial action planned by the Lambeth local authority unions. It urged other trade unionists to take sympathy action, particularly on Wednesday, February 4th when a major march is planned in Lambeth to bring to the attention of the public the struggle of the Lambeth council to preserve services against the onslaught of the Tory government.

Action must now centre around full support for the February initiative by the Lambeth trade unions in the hope that it is still not too late to reverse the retreat that Lambeth council has made. That is only possible if the decisions of the first and second conferences are acted upon by Lambeth council.



Demonstration against rent rises in Peterlee, County Durham

Photo: Dennis Duran

Fight Council Rent Rise

The sheer viciousness of Tory councils can be seen by their housing policy in Bracknell. They are putting the council house rents up 40%, which will give them a surplus of £352,350 in the coming year.

By Terry Pearce

(Councillor, Bracknell District Council)

Bracknell council tenants now face an average £3.36 per week rent rise.

At a time of rising unemployment and short-time working in the Bracknell area these increases are certain to lead to growing rent arrears and an increase in evictions. The housing situation in the Bracknell area is becoming critical, particularly for young married couples and single youngsters.

The waiting list currently stands at 3,518 yet the Tories have sold off over 1,000 council houses and only plan to build 48 new dwellings this year. Single youngsters under the age of 25 are not even allowed on the waiting list.

The Labour group on the Bracknell District Council and Wokingham Labour Party have campaigned vigorously against Tory housing cuts and the sale of council

houses. The LPYS has presented a petition to the council opposing the ban of single youngsters from the waiting list.

This fight must now be stepped up against these vicious rent rises. Similar increases are being implemented throughout the Thames Valley.

There must be a united labour movement campaign involving the trade unions and tenants' associations throughout the area. As the Tories attempt to drive down the living standards of the working class to the 1930's they are trying to destroy the public housing sector, through a combination of house sales and high rent rises.

The labour movement must respond to this threat with a socialist housing programme to end the power of the money lenders and building construction monopolies. Only a labour government committed to take them over and plan on the basis of need can solve the problems facing council tenants, homeless and poorly housed.

WORKERS NOTEBOOK

■ About the only section of industry doing well during the recession is oil. They continue to reap in the profits. One of the large US companies, Standard Oil [Ohio], in which British Petroleum has a 53% stake, has just announced its profits for 1980. They total £755 million or over £2 million a day.

Very little of this will be re-invested into manufacturing industry, which is the only firm basis for a thriving, expanding modern economy. Unless of course the idea is to follow the advice from the lunatic fringe of British economists, who preach a return to an agricultural, raw materials producing economy, with little manufacturing and a growing reliance on tourism.

■ With hundreds of thousands of people on housing waiting lists, desperate for a decent home, what has been the response of the private building industry? Nothing that would get in the way of their profits. As you can't make much money out of housebuilding, they've cut back.

According to the latest report from the National Federation of Building Trades Employers, the majority of employers say new building and even repair and maintenance is well down in the last quarter of 1980. And recent Department of Environment figures show that contractors' orders for new housing in the public sector were 33% down, and in the private sector 38% down on the 1979 figures.

With unemployed build-

ing workers, stockpiles of bricks and housing materials available, what a condemnation of the capitalist system that they are so unable to combine resources to meet the needs of the homeless.

■ Manufacturing output fell by a further 0.5% in November making it 14% below the 1979 average, according to the latest provisional figures from the Central Statistical Office. The devastation being wreaked on British manufacturing industry is now worse than the 1929-31 depression.

Excluding North Sea oil and gas, total industrial production is 12% down on the 1979 figure. Amongst

the worst hit industries are metal manufacture [down 29%], textiles [down 23%] and engineering [down 13%].

■ Remember the Tories' Tax and Price Index [TPI]? They invented it in the heady tax-cutting days of the summer of '79 to distract trade unionists away from using Retail Price Index in wage negotiations as a measure of inflation. TPI reflected changes in income tax as well and shows the rise needed to maintain real purchasing power after tax changes.

The Tories don't drag TPI out much nowadays. That's because now that they've increased taxes overall TPI is running at 16.4% compared to RPI's 15.1%

Militant Trade Union Pamphlets

- “UNITY: the voice of ‘Militant’ in the CPSA” No.2 10p
- ‘A Militant Programme for NUPE’ 20p
- ‘The Way Forward for NALGO’ 20p
- ‘T&GWU’ 20p
- ‘A Socialist Strategy for Steelworkers’ 20p
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- ‘GMWU Review’ 20p
- ‘POEU—The Way Forward’ 30p

Available from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. [Add 10p for post and packing]

The Civil & Public Services Association

UNITED ACTION NEEDED TO WIN PAY CLAIM

The CPSA Special Pay Conference on 29 January must respond with a real campaign of action against the attacks of a Tory government determined to drive down the living standards of civil servants and workers generally.

The government has suspended the National Pay Agreement and withheld the pay research comparability report.

In November the government announced a 6% pay limit. With inflation still running at over 15% this would mean a real cut in members' living standards. And rate, rent gas and electricity increases are on the way.

Members are looking to our union to give a lead to defend our living standards. The Executive Committee statement correctly states that "for industrial action to be successful it has to be taken on a common basis by all civil service trade unions."

The council of Civil Service unions (covering 500,000 civil servants) is drawing up co-ordinated industrial action plans. These call for a mixture of large scale strike action e.g. beginning with a one-day general strike. These are to be followed by a long-term selective strike action complemented by short-term guerrilla action.

The Council is banking on a small number of key workers to win the strike. Whilst in 1979 these groups had a major impact the Tories have learned from that experience and it is most unlikely that they will allow for example, computer workers to disrupt the running of the state.

The entire civil service memberships must now be alerted and prepared for the possible need to escalate the action into a total stoppage. The right wing leadership of the CPSA has failed to convene branch membership and Section Executive Committee meetings to prepare for action.

Instead of membership meetings leading up to the conference to launch such a campaign, the right wing Executive intend to send the conference decisions back to local consultative meetings, probably with the hope that members coming cold to the situation will reject the conference and let the right wing off the hook.

Conference is the supreme policy making body of our union and its decisions must be implemented. Of course all members meetings involving the other civil service unions should be held in workplaces after conference but the purpose of such meetings

Over the last ten years civil servants have moved into action, including marches [photo, right] and one-day strikes. To protect living standards now, this fighting approach needs to be adopted and extended

strike action in the most effective areas [eg. Customs, Immigration and Civil Aviation Authority]; One day strike of all members; Coordination with other civil service unions to set up 'all unions' campaign committees; A strike levy; Regular information bulletins; Industrial action to be escalated as and when circumstances require.

By Bill Boyle

(Department of Health and Social Security, Glasgow North)

should be to mobilise the members to action in support of our pay claim.

But even if the NEC are successful we shall still go all out for a massive yes vote. We cannot rely on the right wing NEC to argue convincingly for industrial action they do not believe in.

The claim before conference of a 15-20% increase should be coupled to a £10 per week minimum flat rate increase for the lower paid.

Composite motion 250 from the Customs Excise Liverpool sets out the basic strategy to pursue such a realistic claim:

No section of the membership should be excluded; Selective

The second issue before Conference concerns the future of the pay research system itself. This system has resulted in: continual interference by government, continuing low rates of pay, failure to deal with long-standing membership grievances (eg. incremental scales, differentials), secrecy by the senior full-time officials, lack of membership control over the claim and negotiations and the use of less well-organised workers outside for pay comparison.

This has led to pressure from many branches to end this system. The alternative strategy is contained in motion 16 from Land Registry Lytham branch.

It calls for an annual pay conference to: draw up the claim based on information



Photo: MILITANT

provided by the union's research departments and to determine the strategy to support the claim; united action with other civil service unions in any campaign, and pay settlements to be decided by the membership in workplace ballot.

Whatever pay system is used it is essential that the membership control the

claim and the strategy to achieve it through a full delegate conference. The right wing and bureaucracy will fight tooth and nail against a conference, as instanced by Kate Losinska's (President CPSA) recourse to legal advice to see if she could rule out of order all motions to the special conference proposing the demand.

But given the economic

decline of British capitalism, workers will more and more need to rely on their own strength to defend and advance their living standards. Conference must prepare the members for the battles which lie ahead. For this the union will require the return of a strong Broad Left National Committee and President.

'Why I'm standing for President'

In the CPSA Presidential election it is vital that civil servants elect a candidate who can lead a real campaign against the Tories' onslaught. In this interview with 'Militant' Kevin Roddy, the Broad Left's candidate, explains the policies on which he is standing.

Why are you standing for the Presidency of the Union?

The Presidency of the Union is a very powerful position in the CPSA. The President can help to determine the stance that the union takes in fighting for and defending members' living standards.

And why are you standing in particular, what are your qualifications as a candidate?

Well I've served the union for 16 years. For a long time I was on the committee of the largest branch of the union—the Newcastle Department of Health and Social Security Central Office. Amongst the posts I filled was that of Secretary, which is regarded

as being one of the most demanding jobs of the union.

Currently I am organiser of the largest departmental section of the Union, the DHSS. This puts me in touch with members of branches throughout the country. Previously I've served on the National Executive Committee. I've seen the Union change over the years and been fairly prominent in the struggle to develop a strong trade union out of the old Staff Association.

That wasn't an effective Union?

The 10 years between 1969 and 1979 were crucial. In 1969 the Union didn't even have a strike policy. I became active in the Union in the late 1960s in the struggle to establish a strike clause in our constitution, and participated in the early Civil Service strikes.

What are the main issues facing the Union now, or what will be the main issues in the next couple of years?

Pay is the principle issue particularly the Tories' attempt to inflict a 6% cash limit, or even a more punitive wage settlement this year. I am absolutely opposed to that.

They've removed the traditional method of wage determination in the Civil Service. I thought that the old Pay Research Unit system was bad enough, but the Tories want to go much further in depressing living standards than that could have done, and obviously that's totally wrong.

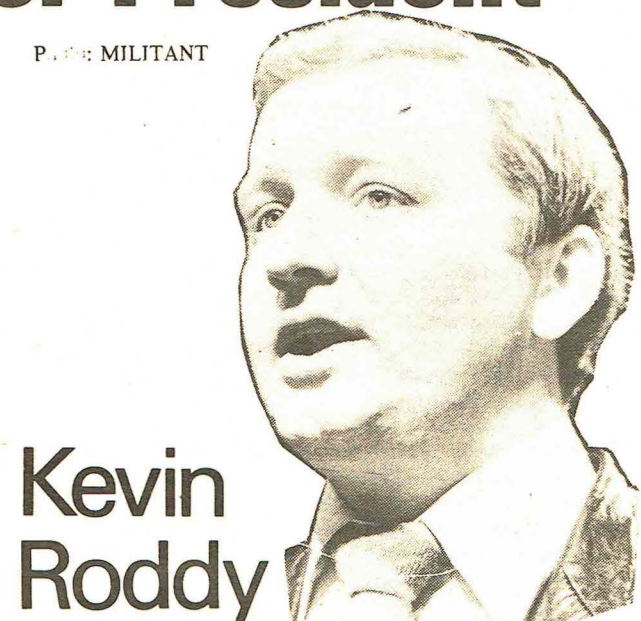
I'm hoping this year for a united Civil Service trade union struggle around the demand of 15% with a £10 per week minimum underpinning level for all Civil Servants.

Also there's the question of cuts in jobs services and the attack on members pension rights. The current CPSA National Executive Committee have dropped the cuts campaign.

They are ignoring the issue, and accepting a particularly punitive new technology agreement. Instead they should be looking for a beneficial new technology agreement which would cut the working week, improve holidays etc. but they are about to sacrifice tens if not hundreds of thousands of Civil Service jobs.

What will be distinctive about this election campaign com-

Photo: MILITANT



Kevin Roddy

pared with previous years'?

In the past the Broad Left have tended to see the election campaign just as slips of paper going out to branches. I intend to take Broad Left policies to the members. In the CPSA we have one of the most democratic Broad Left organisations in the whole of the trade union movement.

That's something I've helped to fight for and we've got a worked out attitude on all of the problems facing CPSA members. Over the next few

weeks I intend to address about thirty-three Broad Left meetings throughout the country.

Are you confident that the Broad Left's ideas will win support and that your candidature will be successful?

The right-wing in the CPSA have traditionally received a lot of support from the press. They always launch a "red scare" election campaign. But if we can get our policies across to the members, we can certainly win.

Labour Party Special Conference



A GREAT STEP FORWARD

The Electoral College gives Labour's rar

The adoption at Wembley of an electoral college for the election of Party leader is a great step forward and a victory for Labour's ranks.

The college gives 30% of votes to the constituency parties, 30% to the Parliamentary Party and 40% to the trade unions.

This decision—as 'Militant' supporter Eileen Short (Bethnal Green and Bow CLP) said in the debate—was rooted in the rank and file's disappointment with the policies of previous Labour governments. "The membership wanted a change of policies," she said, "and this meant a change of parliamentary representatives and a change of leadership."

"Changes were needed to give the Party a cutting edge," Eileen continued, "and it is right that the trade unions should have a major say, not as a compromise, not just because of trade union money, but because the trade unions represent Labour's mass basis among the working class."

The special conference adopted the best option put before it, an electoral college at conference giving the trade unions a major say in the leadership election.

This was the option advocated by 'Militant' after last October's annual conference, and 'Militant' supporters have played an active part in

By Lynn Walsh

ensuring its adoption.

Originally, when the question of leadership first came up, 'Militant' supported straight-forward election at conference. This would have been the most democratic procedure, and would have avoided the argument over the proportioning of the votes. It would also have ruled out possible anomalies which may arise from the existence of an electoral college.

However, as a majority of the left supported the college, 'Militant' put its support behind this. From the beginning however, we favoured the trade unions having the biggest say.

As Pat Wall (Shipley CLP) said at Wembley, it was a question of who controlled the Labour Party. "The vital influence of the trade unions must be maintained as the basis of the Party," he said. "To open the Party to a system of one man, one vote, through postal ballots, as advocated by the right, would open the Party to the influence of five multi-milli-

onaires—soon to be four—who control the press. Who elects them?" he asked.

Nevertheless, when the National Executive Committee put forward its formula of a third—a third—and a third, we were prepared to swing behind that, if that proposal had a majority of support, to ensure that the electoral college was established.

In the event, it was the right wing's own manoeuvres which assured that the 30-40-40 option was passed.

First, Terry Duffy, determined that the AUEW delegation would have no say in casting the union's vote, insisted on sticking rigidly to the decision of the Union's right-wing dominated National Committee. This was to support 75% of votes going to the PLP.

This clearly stood no chance of success, as Duffy himself admitted at conference. But he declined to put the AUEW's vote behind any other proposal.

Thus, the AUEW's votes did not go to the 50 (for the PLP)—25—25 option supported by the G&MWU. However, after the eliminating ballot, Duffy cast the AUEW vote against the 30-30-40 system in the card vote necessary to confirm this constitutional change.

The G&MWU's proposal, however, was not acceptable to a majority of CLPs or trade unions.

Bill Deal (Fire Brigades Union) drew loud support when he said that "I wouldn't accept that the PLP knows better than us who should be the Party leader."

Arguing for the USDAW resolution, Dave Ryland (Blackburn CLP) pointed out, "The PLP voted Prentice top



Pat Wall—"Who controls the Labour Party"—the workers or the press millionaires?"

of the poll for the shadow cabinet shortly before he left to join the Tories." Recently, the PLP had not voted Tony Benn to the shadow cabinet—and conference clearly agreed with his conclusion that the PLP was out of step with the rank and file.

The overwhelming mood was that the ranks of the Party were not prepared to trust the PLP, still dominated by the right wing—with the biggest say in the leadership—even after the PLP had by itself elected Michael Foot to the leadership.

The NEC's three-thirds proposal undoubtedly had considerable support. But the right-wing leaders of US-DAW had made it clear that

if their 30—30—40 proposal was defeated—as they clearly expected that it would be—they would vote for the G&MWU's 50—25—25 (rather than for the nearest proposal, the NEC's three-thirds). This was confirmed by Friday night's decision of the US DAW delegation.

It was this decision—clearly against the spirit of the USDAW resolution—which determined other key trade union delegations, like NU PE, ASTMS, and the T&G WU, as well as constituency delegates, to vote for the 30—30—40 proposal in the final round of the eliminating ballot.

This 40% share of the unions' vote is completely

justified historically and politically. Supporting the US DAW motion, Tony Banks (Tooting Labour Party) said "the Labour Party is a trade union party, and we should recognise that fact and be proud of it."

He was alarmed (he said) at the anti-trade union sentiments—"not all from CLPs but some from the trade unions themselves."

Many trade unionists will indeed be bemused by the "moderate" trade union leaders' complaints that they now have "too much power" as far as the Labour leadership is concerned.

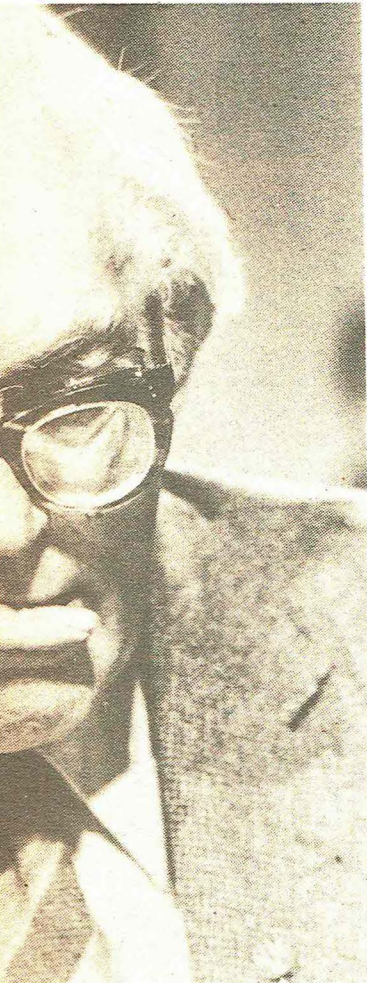
They never complained, as a number of delegates pointed out, when they cast their block votes to bolster up the policies of right wing LP leaders in the past. They are against the biggest say going to the unions now because they want to preserve the dominance of the right-wing dominated parliamentary party, and because they fear the pressure of their own ranks to commit the Labour leadership to socialist policies and to make them accountable to the membership.

Nevertheless, there are genuine misgivings among some Labour Party members and trade unionists about the block vote.

Some of the manoeuvres around the special conference themselves point to the need to democratise the block voting system.

First, the decision to postpone the question of an electoral college was insisted on by the trade union leaders on the ground that they needed to consult their members. But in a number of big unions, there has been precious little consultation and

Labour Party Special Conference



Photos: Left. Platform at conference studying results of ballot
Centre. Labour leader Michael Foot
Right. Delegates applaud conference results

Photos by Julian McKittrick

WARD

Delegates take a decisive say in the choice of leader

some union leaders have clearly ignored the opinions of their members when they didn't find them acceptable.

In the AUEW, moreover, one member of the conference delegation, Jock Quinn, was obliged (rightly in this case) to take legal action to ensure that he kept his place in the delegation after attempts to exclude him by the right wing.

In the case of USDAW, whose resolution eventually carried the day, the right-wing leaders clearly would have been only too pleased to see the resolutions sink.

Most disgraceful of all, however, were the arguments put forward by right wing leaders like Frank Chapple (EETPU) and Sidney Weighell (NUR).

Arguing for a system of "one man, one vote" ballots, Chapple said that he was against the block vote because it would allow "Communist, Fascists, and Conservatives" who might be union members a chance to decide who should be Labour leader. This provoked uproar. But he went on to say "the block votes of trade unions are not real votes," they are "bought by trade unions in an auction."

Sidney Weighell's arguments were as outrageous. "The block vote is bought," he said, "I know, I've got one in my hand." Referring to constituency delegates, he said "I'm telling you, I came here as a constituency delegate in the past. Nobody knows where the card goes."

In putting forward arguments like this against the electoral college, the right wing trade union leaders are not arguing against the principal of the block vote—but against the undemocratic

mis-use of the block vote.

Frank Chapple argued (as did David Owen), that to oppose their favoured "one man, one vote" system was to put forward the same arguments that the South African and other dictatorships use against democracy.

But we are in favour of one man, one vote, not through postal ballots, open to the influence of the capitalist press, but through the democratic channels of the labour movement itself.

It is vital that the trade unions maintain their key role in the Labour Party; but the block vote must be exercised in a fully democratic manner.

The membership of the trade unions must be fully involved in all decisions relating to parliamentary representation, the leadership, and policy issues within the Party. The issues must be fully debated in the branches of the unions. Union delegations to local CLPs and to party conference must be

elected in a democratic manner which reflects the views of union members.

Union delegations at Labour Party conference should be able—as some but not all do at the moment—to debate the issues on the agenda and decide their voting on the basis of union policy—and in the spirit of their own conference decisions.

Just as the Labour Party has undergone a process of democratisation and radicalisation in the last period, so

too has a process of transformation begun in the trade unions. As the demand for action against mass unemployment, slashed living standards and Tory attacks generally grows, there will be a demand for democratisation within the unions, and for the adoption of bold, fighting policies.

With the transformation and re-transformation of the trade unions, they will play an even bigger part within the Labour Party. The block

votes of the union delegations at Labour Party conference will become a vital transmission belt for the demands of an aroused and mobilised working class.

Far from being a danger to the Labour Party, or an electoral liability as the right wing claim, the dominant influence of the trade unions will be the key to the growth of a fighting socialist Labour Party.

HOW CONFERENCE VOTED.....

Delegates [1,130] came to Wembley in a calm but determined mood. They wanted to settle the issue of the leadership election, and unite the movement in the fight to bring down the Tories.

The overwhelming feeling, particularly amongst CLP delegates, was that the electoral college—which clearly had strong support at annual conference—should be implemented. The main question was what would be the proportions making up the college.

The debate lacked the tension and excitement of the debates at Blackpool, although the rank and file support for the carrying through of democratisation was clearly reflected, despite the relatively large number of trade union leaders called in to speak.

There was a clear desire to

settle the issue and quite early in the afternoon there were chants of "vote! vote!" At about 3pm the Chairman, Alex Kitson, put the different options to the vote—and within an hour or so a result was known.

USDAW proposal

At the beginning of conference, John Boyd (AUEW) moved the "reference back" objecting to the eliminating ballot method proposed for the options. If passed, this would have effectively prevented the conference from reaching a decision, but it was defeated on a card vote by 5,600,000 votes to 1,936,000.

Delegates were then asked to choose between five broad means of choosing future leaders. The results were: (1) electoral college at conference 6,283,000; (2) postal ballot

electoral college 434,000 (3) separate electoral college 11,000 (4) ballot of individual members 431,000; (5) miscellaneous 6,000.

With the principle of electoral college at party conference adopted, delegates then had to choose between seven systems (some of which included constituency ballots etc).

The first ballot on the form of college produced the following result:

The four options with the lowest votes were eliminated, and the second ballot produced the following result

Option (1) NEC—1,757,000
Option (4) USDAW—1,813,000

Option (6) GMWU—2,685,000
In the next round, the NEC's formula was eliminated, and the final choice was between USDAW's option and the GMWU's.

The result was:

USDAW (30—30—40): 3,375,000
GMWU (50—25—25): 2,865,000

The successful formula was then put, after consequential constitutional amendments had been passed on the show of hands, to a card vote for ratification. Conference voted formally to adopt the USDAW proposal by 5,252,000 to 1,868,000—a majority of 3,384,000.

FIRST BALLOT

Option [1]	NEC's 33-33-33-1 [for socialist socs]	1,763,000
Option [2]	38 [PLP]-2[Soc socs]-30 [CLPs]-30 [TUs]	192,000
Option [3]	30-30-40 [TUs]	59,000
Option [4]	USDAW's 30-30-40	1,763,000
Option [5]	33-33-33	24,000
Option [6]	GMWU's 50 [PLP]-25-25	2,386,000
Option [7]	AUEW's 75 [PLP]-10 [CLPs]-10 [TUs]-5 [Soc socs]	992,000

SEE ALSO EDITORIAL PAGE 2



AFGHANISTAN

FLEET STREET'S DESPERATE TACTICS

Ron Brown MP for Leith speaks to 'Militant'

Early this year, three Labour MPs—Ron Brown, Bob Litherland and Alan Roberts—went on a fact-finding visit to Afghanistan. Their trip brought a torrent of denunciation, cynical mis-representation and outright abuse from the capitalist press.

The press and the television, who base their stories on the reports of "travelers" [diplomats and businessmen], "diplomatic sources" [US and British government propaganda], and blatant fabrication, were clearly not interested in any independent report.

RON BROWN spoke to 'Militant' last week, and we publish below his account of the visit and his view of the current situation in Afghanistan. 'Militant' also spoke to Alan Roberts, who confirmed all the essential points of Ron Brown's report.

At the time of the Russian invasion, 'Militant' made its own position quite clear.

Although the Soviet Union intervened to uphold a regime which was carrying through progressive social changes, with the abolition of landlordism and capitalism and the introduction of other reforms, we opposed the invasion.

The military character of the intervention, primarily to defend the interests of Russia's bureaucratic ruling caste and to prop up a bonapartist elite in Afghanistan [not a workers' and peasants' democracy], meant that the social advantages in this one small country would be far outweighed by the reactionary effects on the working class internationally.

Carter [now Reagan], Thatcher and other capitalist leaders have exploited the invasion to the utmost, to blacken the "socialism" associated with military intervention to justify a stepping

up of arms spending and more "interventionist" foreign policies.

This is why the MPs' visit brought hysterical attacks from the capitalist media.

However, once the Russian forces had gone in, it would have been wrong to demand their immediate withdrawal. This could open the door to a bloody counter-revolution, with the restoration of the landlords and capitalists, and a Zia-type regime dominated by imperialism.

Our predictions for developments in Afghanistan are, in fact, borne out by Ron Brown's report.

Afghanistan is not becoming a "Russian Vietnam".

The social changes have given the Karmal regime a certain basis; most of the fighting against 'rebel forces' is, it seems, now being undertaken by Afghan troops with the Russian forces in reserve; and the Soviet bureaucracy will probably, according to present indications, prepare for the withdrawal of its forces when Kabul's bonapartist regime [threatened by the excesses of the Amin leadership] is stabilised under Babrak Karmal [or a new leader].

What has been the role of the press in relation to your visit?

The press and television indulged in desperate tactics.

They have endeavoured for a year or more to whip up a campaign supporting Mrs Thatcher and Carter against Afghanistan. It's a handy issue, after all. It can be used to take the attention away from unemployment and all the economic problems here. It generates support for the arms spending, the record arms spending that's going on in this country.

So clearly, our visit was something that the press were concerned about, particularly if we come back saying that many of their reports were untrue. They obviously realised beforehand that we

would contradict their stories.

We went out there with a fairly open mind, and we knew that what we saw we would record. We had a cine camera, we had cameras. But the press clearly didn't want that. When we arrived at Heathrow they were ready to denounce us, just as they had denounced us before we went.

The papers deliberately used, for example, photographs that we provided—saying that we were standing in front of a Russian gunman. Actually, we were beside an Afghan tank monument to the overthrow of the Daoud regime in 1978.

In this capitalist crisis, the ruling class are getting really desperate, and this shows up the tactics they will use. They will use it against strikers, they will use it against any group of workers in struggle, they will use it against Labour MPs who are trying to seek out the truth in other countries, and to explain the political issues involved.

Did what what you saw contradict Fleet Street's propaganda on Afghanistan?

Well, we flew into Kabul and we were rather surprised. We expected barbed wire, blood on the streets; we expected a heavy armed presence by the Soviets. But we saw little of that. It was an eerie place for us, because during the night there was nothing going on apart from dogs barking. It was clear that Kabul was not under seige, as is suggested in the press. Indeed, it was a very ordinary place, a very poor place. The people were going around minding their own business, going shopping, and there was no tension in the streets.

There was only one day that we saw three or four Soviet tanks going by. But, again, the Afghan people were not concerned, they didn't run away in alarm, they just took it in their stride, they ignored them. I just don't accept the point that the Soviets are repressing the Afghan people. Certainly not in Kabul.

Was it the same in Jalalabad and other areas?

We deliberately asked to go to certain places to check out various press reports. We went to Jalalabad because it was said to be under rebel control. We flew in a small aircraft, and could observe Kabul—which is not ringed by Soviet troops by the way. It is a very barren, open place, and you can see any movement. We flew over the mountains, where you can also tell for miles exactly what is going on. We flew into Jalalabad, and the only thing we noticed was a large public meeting. It might have been set up to impress us, but if it

was, it certainly proves one thing: they are good organisers!

There were men, women and children, people of all ages, really old people. It was a mass meeting, two to three thousand. There was a good response to the speaker. I didn't know what he was saying, but he was obviously a representative and he was getting support for what he was saying.

I spoke, and I indicated that I supported the basic demands and reforms of the April 1978 revolution. I couldn't comment on the role of the government and its methods, simply because I didn't know enough about them.

But the principle was important. I spoke about the international struggle of workers throughout the world, and I got a good response. It was a very short speech, and was quoted by Radio Moscow. The press tried to use that against me when I got home. But I have nothing to be ashamed of. I am a socialist, I want to see what is going on, I want to identify with progress, and struggles, and it was obvious that despite the fact there were many people with rifles and machine guns, the government had a lot of support. There is no doubt about it.

We went down to the border, knowing there could be problems there. We saw workers and peasants with machine guns—which is interesting: a militia indicates that they must have support. One factor is the tactics used by the other side, who come over the border shaking up the villages, destroying schools, libraries, and things like this. It's difficult to assess.

One thing that we can say is that many things we did see do not correspond to press reports. The clearest case is that of the deputy Prime Minister Airon. He was supposed to have defected to Pakistan. Now, the fellow is in his post, he's carrying out his duties. We asked him if he had a twin brother, and he

laughed. So we insisted on taking a photograph of him. The press in this country have been silent about that one.

We did check out with some diplomats, and they said this was the fault of "Voice of America", but the story is also repeated here. The press will not say that we are lying; they are just saying nothing.

I am not saying that some of the stories coming out of Afghanistan have not been true. But the US government have mixed up fact with fiction, they deliberately have to do this as part of the propaganda against the Karmal regime. So I think that British people should start asking why they are doing this? What is the role of the British press?

The press has alleged that because your visit was paid for by the Afghan government, you couldn't be independent and objective; that, in effect, you are an apologist for the Russian regime and the present Kabul regime. What is your answer to this?

Well you can look at the reports and what we have said. In no way do we apologise for that regime. If we had gone to perhaps Pakistan, or Chile or South Africa, nothing would have been said! Well, Tory MPs do go to some of these places, paid for by governments. I know that MPs are relatively well-paid, but certainly Labour MPs couldn't go to Afghanistan unless the air fare was paid for. We were not treated as VIPs. We were not greeted with brass bands and champagne.

What is your attitude to the Russian invasion?

Before 1978 Russia was not backing the Peoples Democratic Party, it was backing the Daoud regime, and they were taken by surprise. This is where all the fairy stories come in. It was only later that the Soviet troops became involved. I don't know if they

were invited in or if they came in of their own accord, perhaps in due course we will find out how they came in.

I believe that ideally they shouldn't have come in. But they did. The situation now is that it has got to be the Afghan government who decides when they go, and indeed they are saying that the troops are going home and they are willing to negotiate. If that's the case, I think that they should have the right to say to the rest of the capitalist countries: Do you really want this matter settled? I would like to think that in due course the troops will go home, because I believe that in any case the Afghans are ready and able to run their own country.

Under a future Labour government, Britain, with the technology that we have got, could help countries like Afghanistan. This is part of the development of socialism and socialist ideas. Workers will appreciate that if they are unemployed: it is not because their talents are not needed, but because the capitalist system does not need them. Socialism is a planned way out, involving all these other countries like Afghanistan. Mutual help is very important. We must stand for international socialism, and that's why it is important for Labour MPs to visit countries like Afghanistan.

When we returned, the media had made up their minds, that we are arch criminals, that we had done the unforgivable thing by going to check things for ourselves. We knew that the stories which have been told, the "travellers' tales" are simply not true. They hoped that the hysteria built up on our homecoming would fool many people. It did fool many people, and I have received many letters attacking me for many things that I have allegedly done or said, things that are simply not true. On the other hand, for every one letter attacking me, I have had two supporting the principle that I went.



INDIA: WORKERS DETERMINED - LEADERSHIP WAVERING

Capitalism in India is in deep crisis—and the government which defends its interests is in constant fear of the numberless popular movements sweeping through India.

The determination stamina and sacrifice of the workers and peasants involved is magnificent.

But as some movements are headed by capitalist parties in opposition to Gandhi's Congress (I) party, and even those led by left parties often lack any revolutionary aim they have not had the impact they could have had.

A recent strike shows how the twists and turns of the leadership can weaken and even demoralise workers in struggle.

Air India is a public sector airline dealing with international flight. The ground staff demanded a 20% bonus, which the management turned down, offering instead a paltry 8.33%. The workers refused to accept it.

The union, the Air India Employees Guild launched a strike of all ground staff.

Other staff; pilots, cabin crew etc, and workers in the domestic airline "India Airlines" are not members of the "Air India Employees Guild", they have their own unions.

Air India employees struck from 24th October 1980. As a first step, to intimidate the workers, the management withdrew recognition of "Air India Employees Guild." This only made the workers more determined to fight.

The management then resorted to suspending union office-bearers and other militant workers. 43 employees were suspended, three from Eastern zone, (including the secretary) and 40 from Bombay. Still the employees remained resolute.

Air India flights were seriously hampered but were kept running at a limping pace by the officers of Air India and by the other airlines.

The strike continued and the management began to lose confidence, despite full government support. The movement daily gained momentum; a section of the cabin crew joined the movement, disregarding the directive of their union.

Air India was on the verge of collapse, but then, a meeting took place between the union and the minister in charge of tourism and civil aviation who is also the president of the Congress (I) faction of the



PHOTO above: Workers on strike in Bombay. Employees of Air India need the support of trade unionists internationally

By our Indian correspondent

INTUC:

The minister made no firm commitments; simply requesting the president and the secretary to withdraw the movement. He assured them he would look into the workers' demands; suspension orders would be reversed; there would be no victimisation and so on.

The union leaders unilaterally stopped the strike movement. The workers were totally taken by surprise. Thirty days of strike came to nothing and the strike ended on 23 November.

This emboldened the management and sowed demoralisation among the workers. The Minister has not honoured any of his promises. The demand of 20% bonus will not be met.

The suspension of victimised workers remains. Only 26 of 43 suspended employees have been reinstated.

The union has been placed in a tight corner. The union leadership, to save face is contemplating a new

movement, but workers' response is understandably guarded, though it can safely be predicted that employees will ultimately explode and force the management and the government to retreat.

The tragedy is that the employees were on the verge of outright victory when the leaders wavered and forced the workers to embrace an ignominious defeat.

The dithering of the leadership shows that if not guided by a socialist and revolutionary aim, it can get a stake in the present system and then the leaders will not do anything that could increase the consciousness of the workers; but on the contrary, try to make the

workers kowtow to the capitalist system.

These careerist leaders are acting as a brake on the working class, but the growing crisis will throw up a new leadership from the rank and file.

The Air India employees are again re-grouping, so it will be appreciated if messages of solidarity are sent to the fighting employees of Air India to the following addresses:

1. Air India Employees Guild, D'Mello Bhavau, P D' Mello Road, Carnae Bunder, Bombay 400038.
2. Air Indian Guild (Eastern Indian Region) C/O M Bandyopadhyay, 87/19 Bosepukur Road, Calcutta 700042.

PERU - NO END TO THE PROBLEMS

"The sick man of South America" was an unenviable title for Peru, in a continent of sick economies.

But "these days are over" said the capitalist press a few years ago. Peru was now an oil producing country. A month in which massive price rises were followed by a one day general strike may make them think again.

In South America oil debts are a source of huge deficits, so an indigenous oil industry has been of some benefit. But any oil wealth has not only failed to solve capitalism's problems in Peru—the new industrial investment has also increased their problems by increasing the size of the working class.

By George Collins

Trade unionists in Peru were savagely attacked by the police on 15 January during a 24-hour general strike called following massive price rises.

A week earlier the government announced wages were to be increased by 12% in the public sector and by a similar amount in the private sector. At the same time prices of sugar went up 65%, bread 53%, rice 64% and cooking oil 93%. This was less than a week after the end of a food price freeze announced by President Belaunde last summer!

Belaunde's Accion Popular (AP) government swept to power in May after 12

years military rule.

The AP, closely associated with US capitalist interests has taken back into private hands industries nationalised by a previous government. The new government prides itself on depending on "Market forces rather than military force," and have given tax incentives for oil companies, particularly for re-investment and rehabilitation of old wells.

The press has been returned to private (but of course, very rich) hands. The policy of "opening up" the economy also means an end to food subsidies which, though inefficient, kept the poorest sections of society a step away from starvation.

The World Bank want to prevent any "populist experiments" even by this Washington puppet govern-

ment by putting power over interest rates purely in the hands of the country's Central Bank under the guidance of the World Bank. A programme of high interest rates and low tariffs, as practised by Chile and Argentina is accompanied by developing cash crop 'agribusiness' interests on the land.

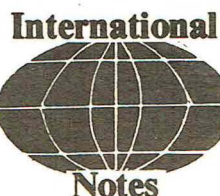
Wave of Strikes

All these measures have enriched small sections of the population, but the economic problems are not receding. Defence spending and the foreign debt take up half the national income, and the Army still have a veto on cuts in military expenditure.

South American countries have also found that the level of wages even under vicious military regimes like Chile and Argentina are too high for many multinationals who seek the starvation wages of countries like Taiwan and South Korea. But workers will not accept such misery wages.

A wave of strikes by workers in oil, textiles, iron ore, teachers and health workers has led the government to consider 'limiting' the right to strike. At the same time, local elections have seen big gains for the left.

With a larger working class enraged by these attacks, the 'sickness' of Peruvian capitalism has not finished—it has only just begun.



The Begin government in Israel has announced new elections for 7 July, five months before the parliament's full term is up. The date has been arranged to ensure that the government's chances of survival are increased. July 7th is during the Islamic feast Ramadan, reducing the Moslem voters who would oppose the Likud government. It also coincides with

holidays which could cut down the electorate.

The official inflation rate in Israel is 132%, unofficially it is even higher. The government has tried some pre-election cosmetics. They may restore food and fuel subsidies and grant monthly cost of living increases for workers—they are at present quarterly. But whether either electoral manoeuvres or economic sops are sufficient to prevent a Likud defeat is another question. The gloss of economic success is wearing thin in capitalist Israel.

The revolutionary feeling that has swept first through Nicaragua and now El

Salvador is having repercussions in Honduras, another Central American military dictatorship.

The right-wing leader of the Army national security wing Colonel Martinez has claimed that Cuba and the USSR are trying to turn the area into a "new Vietnam" in an attempt to justify a 'pacification' campaign throughout the country.

Recent 'peace-keeping' activities have included the arrest and torture of left-wing and trade union activists and peasant leaders. The military have also deported a number of refugees from Salvador, mostly children and old people, saying they were guerrillas.

OUT NOW!

Militant International
Review No. 21
Winter 1980/81

Articles on Britain, India and
the Belfast engineering strike
of 1919

[Available from World Books,
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Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



Anti-cuts demo last April in Belfast organised by N. Irish Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions Photo: D. Speirs (IFL II)

Support Irish socialists

Dear Comrades,

I have only been reading 'Militant' since I moved from Belfast to Middlesbrough about four months ago.

It was through comrades at Teeside Polytechnic Labour Club that I was

introduced to the paper and the work of the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group, in their fight to form a mass Labour Party in the North.

The N.I. L&TUG have won support from both sides of the divide, as seen in the

Free NHS?

Dear Comrades

Ever been had? Some time ago I lost my glasses, which I use for reading and watching television, so I went to the opticians to get a new pair.

After the eye test, which was free, I was invited to choose the frames for my new glasses. Being unemployed, I decided on National Health frames as I thought they would be free.

The optician was most helpful and said nothing to shatter my illusion.

A week later a card arrived asking me to please collect my glasses. But when I got there, the receptionist tells me the lenses are free, but frames cost £8.50.

"Ah, I'm on a low income (defined as less than £23.80 by the DHSS) so I get them free." I said.

"Well you'll have to fill in this form and we'll have to keep your glasses, until we hear from the DHSS."

OK, I thought, I'll buy it, so I waited another week until I got a letter from the DHSS. They would pay the standard allowance for National Health frames (they didn't say how much that was, and they didn't say it quite as simply as that either) but that I would have to pay extra, decided presumably by the optician.

So off once more to the opticians. "Ah" says the receptionist smiling sweetly and consulting a file, "the standard allowance for National Health frames is £1.30. Yours cost £8.50. That will be £7.20 please."

£7.20, or nearly half a week's wages, sorry, benefit.

Fraternally
P Bishop
Bath

Hypocrisy of work

Dear Comrades,

Mr Don Hitching, President of Bournemouth Joint Committee for Tourism, lost no time in challenging the report by the Equal Opportunities Commission, which clearly shows that women workers in Dorset are the lowest paid in the country.

To further his argument, Hitching cites one receptionist whom he claims to have recently employed on over £50 per week, after she had left the legal profession, where she was earning only £30. Hitching states that hotel proprietors and managers have, by law, to pay their employees a minimum wage.

It is a fact that many people who work in the hotel and catering industry do not know how much that minimum wage is! Many are too frightened to ask their employers, because they know they may find themselves out of a job in consequence!

Hotel proprietors and managers do not go out of their way to explain employ-

ees' rights, or their own obligations and responsibilities to their own workers. If and when they do get around to issuing a contract of employment, (which they are supposed to do after 13 weeks), it is usually a carbon copy marked, "Contract of Employment Act", and not worth the paper it's printed on!

It is significant that many hotels refuse to disclose profit figures to their employees, while moaning about what a hard time they are having. Surely a worker has a right to know just how much money is being made for directors and shareholders, due to his or her efforts?

We know very few hotel managers and owners care about the appalling conditions experienced by workers in the industry, but it is particularly nauseating when individuals such as Don Hitching, (who makes a handsome living from the industry!) close their eyes and bury their heads in the sand.

Sincerely
in solidarity
Lomond Handley
Poole Dorset

Lennon's heritage

Dear Comrade,

The murder of John Lennon underlines the sickness of capitalist society.

The assassin, Mark David Chapman, claimed that he was annoyed when Lennon had only scribbled his autograph. Moreover, it turns out that Chapman may have seen himself as Lennon and the real Lennon as an imposter.

Capitalism generates this type of perversion. Where the majority of people have to suffer the drudgery of a mundane life, there are few who make pop stars, great celebrities, religious heroes, gods etc. The despairing, frustrated fantasies which capitalism generates manifest themselves in an episode like this one.

Even Lennon's wife Yoko Ono has appealed to fans not to allow their despair to get out of hand. Apparently Lennon's death has led to depression among some of his fans and a few have even committed suicide.

Today John Lennon is dead, despite all the fantasy and myth which surrounds a singing star of his ilk. But the capitalist system, in which all the myth is rooted, continues to exist.

Now that the individual is dead, his name will be used to soak up massive profits. I have every confidence that John Lennon will now become a device for the sale of John Lennon books, John Lennon records, John Lennon jewellery, John Lennon dolls and puppets, newspapers and magazines.

P.S. It would not, of course, occur to the capitalists to publish the names of the workers killed in British industry every day.

Yours comradely
Paul Cunningham
Dunfermline LPYS

Artists aren't to blame

Dear Comrades,

Joan Baugh, in her article on Paul Tortelier (16 Jan), is of course right to point out the devastating conditions facing the working class. The comrade is also right to expose the hypocrisy of Mobil Oil. But, I believe it is wrong to personally attack a great musician like Paul Tortelier.

He is not the cause of poverty, inequality and class rule, nor even a symptom. He is, perhaps, one fortunate enough to have been able to devote his life to art.

Yes, this should be the right for all. But, we should attack the system, not the Torteliers, Menuhins, Louis Armstrongs even. They have a great deal to offer society, abilities which cannot be 'replaced' overnight.

Ballymena Young Socialists branch, which is extremely active in this stronghold of the Rev Ian Paisley's DUP.

I would urge comrades to support the work of the Group by bringing to light their activities at LPYS and trade union meetings. Like-

wise I would urge all comrades to read 'Militant Irish Monthly' which unfortunately many do not seem to be doing at present.

Fraternally
Adrian Lavery
Teesside/Thornaby
LPYS

Casualty of import controls

Dear Comrades,

A clear example of the absolute bankruptcy of import controls has emerged.

There is a quota system for the import of spun yarns to protect "British" firms like the multinational Courtauld Group.

Due to this system, a Welsh carpet factory has discovered that it cannot import any more of the special yarn it needs to make cheap, hardwearing carpets. No British company makes this particular kind of yarn so the carpet factory will be closing.

I hope you can afford an Axminster, or how about some carpet from T.H.K. Flooring—owned by Courtaulds!

Fraternally
Helen Mullineux
Havant and District
Trades Council



Islington Unemployment Exchange

Figures can lie...

Dear Comrades,

What is all the fuss about this high youth unemployment? In Sunderland youth unemployment is falling.

What, can this be true? Yes, but there's "no room for complacency" the principal careers officers told the 'Sunderland Echo'. He's

not kidding either!

The figure has actually fallen from 5,671 in June to 4,099 at present. But this time last year a 'mere' 2,902 were without jobs. Next year another 5,500 will be added to the figure.

What is more, one in five men on Wearside are now on the dole, so the unemployed youth have no chance

of a future.

But wait a minute—there is a future, in the Labour Party Young Socialists, the only organisation that has the policies to offer us a future—a socialist future that is.

Yours fraternally
Ray Physick
Sunderland North
Labour Party

Looking for scapegoats

Dear Comrades,

When the World Development Movement held a seminar in Nottingham on the effect of import controls on third world workers and the implications for British workers, a handful of young National Front supporters held a demonstration outside. Their placards said, "Jobs for white workers."

Youth such as these, many of whom are unemployed, are desperately looking for a way out of the economic crisis and there is a very real danger that they will get caught up in groups offering extreme right-wing "solutions".

It is vital that the labour and trade union movement

Labour sidetracked?

Dear Comrades,

I recently attended a local Ward Labour Party meeting and it was with some dismay that I noticed the majority of members were almost apathetic to the real issues at hand, the issues which are breaking the back of the British economy.

I realise the main purpose of the meeting was local issues, but surely there must be a relationship between the local and national

gets the message across that black workers are not responsible for unemployment.

What about the 1930s, when unemployment stood at three million—there were no immigrants in this country then. What about areas such as Glasgow and Northern Ireland, which have very high unemployment figures yet extremely small immigrant populations?

Unemployment is a fundamental symptom of capitalism in crisis, and it is only by fighting for the socialist transformation of society, and not by scapegoating black workers, that the working class can put an end to the nightmare of the dole queue.

Yours fraternally,
Jean Thorpe
Nottingham North LPYS

struggle?

The members admitted the present struggle against the Tory government, but they weren't willing to stick their necks out and take up the fight.

If this is the national trend, then the fight for a socialist Britain is being carried on the backs of the LPYS and the 'Militant'. If the whole Party took up this fight, the working class would be unstoppable.

Yours fraternally
A W Stevenson
East Hull LPYS

Capitalism's 'moderates'

Dear Sir,

One hears a great deal nowadays about Labour Party "moderates." The precise definition of a "moderate" is unclear but it appears to mean one who is opposed to any basic change in the structure of the economic system; in other words, one who believes in the retention of capitalism.

When one remembers that this system was built on the exploitation of millions

of people at home and abroad, the subjugation of whole continents, that it fought vicious "little" wars in this process, that it was a major contributory factor to the causation of two world wars in 25 years, one wonders where the word "moderate" fits in!

There is nothing, but nothing, moderate about capitalism.

Yours faithfully
J Limister
Childwall Ward
Labour Party

ads

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

NEWHAM Militant Readers' Meeting 'Socialist Policies to Fight the Cuts' Speaker: Eddie McParland (Executive Committee, London Labour Party) Friday 6 February, 7.30 pm, at the Labour Hall, 241e High Street North, East Ham, London E.6.

SOUTHERN AREA MILITANT SCHOOL on Sunday May 3rd-Bank Holiday Monday May 4th. 3 speakers + social (with food) Hotel Bed and Breakfast at the Danville Hotel (on sea-front) Cliftonville, Margate.

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'Militant' pamphlet

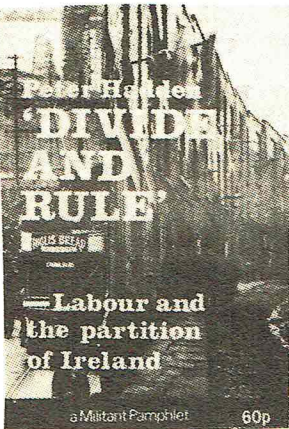
DIVIDE AND RULE

by Peter Hadden

Cost 75p [inc. p&p] from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN

HARTLEPOOL Militant Readers' Meeting 'Fight Unemployment'. Speaker: Brian Ingham. 7.30 pm, Thursday 5 February, Room 2, Town Hall, entrance in Lauder Street, Hartlepool.

History Workshop 15 Brighton 7-9 November 1981. We would be interested to hear from any comrade who would like to introduce topics to be discussed under the general headings: Imperialism, Peasantry, People's History, Labour Party and Social Democracy, Labour Party and Trade Unions, Labour Movement and Education, Labour Movement and Unemployment, Labour Movement and Defence and Disarmament, Teaching History, Trades Councils and their History. Please contact Andy Durr, 235 Ditchling Road, Brighton by 7 February.



SUPPORT SOCIALISM, SUPPORT MILITANT!

THIS WEEK £999

"Please find enclosed a donation of £20 to my own newspaper 'Militant'. Obviously there are many who cannot afford to send in large donations. That is partly why I am a socialist.

"However there may well be a number who if they thought about it seriously could really afford £20 or more. It might mean giving up some things—pints, etc. Anyway, keep up the work, I will always support

By Steve Cawley

'Militant'. Yours fraternally, Paul Cunningham, Secretary Dunfermline LPYS.

"PS. Please explain to the editor of the 'Sunday Times' that people like me donate to 'Militant' because it is an essential part of the arsenal of the labour movement. Therefore I give freely. I'll tell you this, however, they would have to

The fighting fund chart will return next week.

have me at gun-point before I would send £20 to the 'Sunday Times'..."

Donations this week, in addition to money already counted from 1980, amounted to £999.25. This is over double last week's figure, but only just over one-third of the £2,600 required each week now to see us over £30,000 by 11 April!

From steel workers this week came a £5 donation from the Llanwern Steel Action Group "in appreciation of important work being done by 'Militant' for the movement," and £6 from H Grainger in Scunthorpe. Merseyside NGA supporters sent us £4.20, £10 came from M Dodds, Boiler-maker, Austin & Pickersgill, Sunderland, almost £13 came from firemen on Merseyside (including E Magnall, £2) and £5 from a meeting on the Bowaters situation.

Elsewhere, we have had money from Stevenage from a New Year appeal, "thanks to the Greens and Peters", and £5 from D Tweedie (E Edinburgh LPYS). Another £5 from D Moss (Torbay CLP) and £20 from Littlehampton supporters, point to 'Militant's' ability to rally Labour supporters in the rural South and Southwest, as well as in the traditional industrial areas, where of course our ideas are received with the most enthusiasm.

Also from the South West

we were sent nearly £70 from Bristol readers, including £13 from R Hartill (Bristol S LPYS), and union expenses from P Hammond (Bristol SE CLP).

Thanks for £16.80 to Shipley readers, who also plan a number of events, including socials and a sponsored 12-mile run to help our funds! What are you doing to build 'Militant'? Send us your ideas, successes and experiences that may stimulate other comrades thinking along the same lines.

In the end, of course, there's no substitute for appealing to every reader to give us a regular (preferably weekly) donation to take the place of the cash which, if we were a capitalist paper, we would undoubtedly receive from big business.

Even if it's the first copy of 'Militant' you've seen, will you copy the example of the Young Socialist in Dunfermline, steel-workers from S Wales and Humberside, and the hundreds of other workers who have contributed to our paper?..

Will you ask your family and mates to have a good look at 'Militant', take a copy themselves, make a donation of whatever they can afford?

We're fighting for a different system of society, in which, for example, there'll be no question of one-third of the staff on two important newspapers suddenly becoming "surplus to requirements". If we want to change society we first have to convince millions of trade unionists there's no other way! That's the size of the task, so if you agree with our objective you must help us in every way you can.

Strathclyde Militant Trade Union Day School

Saturday 7 February

Morning: "Unemployment and the fight against the Tories" Ray Williams [NGA] Tony Mulhearn [Vice-President, Liverpool District Labour Party].

Afternoon: Seminars: The Employment Bill and the Closed Shop; trade union democracy; print unions and the freedom of the press; health and safety at work; the role of a shop steward; strategies for fighting the cuts.

Closing session: "Which way forward for the labour movement" Tony Sauniois, Labour Party NEC.

Venue: University of Strathclyde Students Union, 90 John Street, Glasgow.

Tickets: 50p from Bob Wylie 20 Loch Meadie, East Kilbride. Telephone E.K. 29082

NO PEACE AND QUIET FOR THATCHER

By Bob Wade (Brentwood LPYS)

There is a joke among labour activists in Brentwood that although the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was sparked off in this Essex town, nothing much has happened since!

In this light, Mrs Thatcher may have thought she'd have a quiet time when she came to have lunch with local Tories at Brentwood's Ball Room. How wrong she was.

Waiting for her were over 100 demonstrators, made up mainly of members of the Labour Party, CND and of course, the Young Socialists. The demo was good humoured, although when Thatcher eventually arrived the anger was genuine enough.

Second only to Thatcher on the demonstrators' 'hate-ometer' was a local school teacher, lovingly called by

his pupils a 'Tory Rasputin' who is prominent in that rare species, the Conservative Trade Unionists, and the local Young Conservatives. He received a loud jeer when he turned up.

As dinner time came, the demonstrators' ranks were swelled by school students from the nearby comprehensive school. However, there was a small turnout from Brentwood's bastion of Toryism, the town's Public School.

It's not that the school students there didn't want to join the demo—the headmaster had warned the boys not to attend! Those who did were caught by prefects sent to keep an eye out for any possible subversives. So much for Tory 'freedom'!



Thatcher—adored by Tory conference—hated everywhere else

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Industrial

**in
brief**

Refuse collectors and road sweepers are to resist attempts by Thurrock council to put their work out to private contractors. NUPE area organiser Dave Smith said, "We are totally opposed to private profiteers making money out of public services. Where this has happened in other areas, experience has shown that this leads to worse conditions of service, lower staffing levels and a lack of public accountability." A demonstration against the council's plans and a lobby were held outside the council offices on Wednesday.

The farm workers' union, the NUAAW, has attacked plans by the Tories to sell Forestry Commission land. The union's president, John Hose, said it was an immediate threat to jobs in rural communities, as well as affecting the long term future of the industry. He added the public would lose out too, by the loss of recreational areas. The union's stand has been backed by the TUC.

150 workers at a Yorkshire wool mill are to lose their jobs—after accepting a 10% wage cut which management told them would save their jobs. The workers at William Denby & Sons in Baildon, Bradford, accepted the pay cut in September. The firm, which employed 500 workers 15 years ago, will now only employ 100.

Nearly 1,400 NALGO members in the London borough of Lambeth are to hold a 'week of action' beginning this Monday [February 2]. The action, to defend jobs and services, will include work-ins and possible occupations. At the meeting which backed this action, £777 was collected for workers in Wandsworth currently involved in selective strike action against sackings.

Workers at BPC in East London are continuing the occupation of their workplace. They decided on this action in November after management demanded another round of redundancies. Donations and offers of help to; BPC Grand Chapel, co NUJ Book Branch, 314 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP [cheques payable to Macdonald Educational NUJ chapel].

At a recent Glasgow Trades Council meeting, a delegate from the T&G, Talbot, Linwood, expressed fears for the closure of the factory, currently on a one-day week. He was warmly applauded when he said that the fight to save Talbot would involve the whole shop stewards' movement in Strathclyde.

NALGO have produced a pamphlet on how to organise a creche, which will be of great use to all trade unionists and labour activists. Titled 'Organising a Creche', the eight page pamphlet can be obtained from the union.

FIGHT SACKINGS - SAVE JOBS !



STOP PRESS:
253 redundancies have been announced at Watney's brewery in East London
The workers held a one-day strike in protest this week, and now aim to take the campaign further linking up with other London Watney plants.

Tate and Lyle

All 1,570 Tate and Lyle workers last week voted to fight the closure of the Love Lane Refinery, Liverpool: after the meeting the workers spontaneously broke into "We shall not be moved."

The shop stewards moved a four-point plan—including total opposition to the closure, using all trade union and political power possible, the return of all redundancy letters to the shop stewards, and normal working until circumstances change.

Management say they will try to make the closure 'as painless as possible'. How can the extraction of jobs be anything but painful? However, with T&L profits rising from £26.2 million to £30.7 million, what do the bosses have to worry about?

According to management, "overcapacity" and the problems of EEC membership are to blame. This may be a factor, but

undoubtedly the main reason is the chronic underinvestment in the Liverpool refinery.

Clearly, decisive action is needed from the national trade union leadership.

The softly-softly approach has been tried at Bowaters, and the workers were kicked in the teeth. No common approach with management can save jobs. Experience has also shown that at a certain stage, in order for the workforce not to be fragmented, an occupation may be necessary.

The feelings are running high at T&L. Once again Merseyside workers are in danger of being crushed under the wheels of the bosses' juggernaut—T&L can be the beginning of the fightback.

KTM

By Dave Horne
(AUEW)

"There was a time when the AUEW sought to bring pressure on the company by 'blacking' sub-contract work and by banning job cards and overtime.

"This way, it was felt, the employees could hurt the employer at minimum cost to themselves. Those days are over. If the AUEW wants to take industrial action it must call a strike and its members must face the consequences."

Thus, the management of KTM, a subsidiary of Vickers, threw down the gauntlet in a letter to the homes of 500 AUEW members who walked out on Friday 16 January after 11 of their workmates were suspended.

The suspensions arose from in-house action we

were taking in support of a wage claim. The management had offered 6½%. This was completely unacceptable to the membership. As one of our members put it, "with a take home pay of £56 per week I just can't pay my way. My wife is under constant strain trying to make the money last a week."

When the suspensions became known a mass meeting was called and we decided by a large majority on all out strike action. This was followed by a meeting of the night shift who decided overwhelmingly to join us. We are determin-

ed to stand firm until the suspensions are lifted and the management make a decent wage offer.

The morale is high on our picket lines and we have received good support from the T&GWU lorry drivers, who honoured our lines, including a load of steel

Management's letter concludes, "Our ability to protect your job depends on you persuading your union to cease this unnecessary strike. This strike cannot earn you more money; it will mean less jobs."

Management's challenge is not just to us in Brighton but is part of the new so-called 'Edwardes' bully-boy style. They are only concerned to protect the shareholders' profits. It is our union which must protect our jobs and our living standards.

Please send messages of support and financial contributions to Mark Steele-Perkins c/o 179 Lewes Road, Brighton. (Secretary KTM S/S Cttee)

Ansells

"Return to work or be sacked...the company plans to recruit from the dole queues to fill the jobs of workers who refuse to return by Monday."

These letters were sent to the workers over the heads of union representatives. The pattern of threats seems all too familiar, especially in Birmingham.

The management threatened the Ansells workers with 96 redundancies, which the union refused to implement. On 9 January the

management sent their first letter out saying sales were down and they would have to start a four-day week on Monday 12th with nobody reporting to work until Tuesday, thus getting these redundancies anyway.

When the workers returned to work they were told they no longer needed the Monday shift. But the workers said no redundancies would be accepted, so the workers all came out on strike.

Management, seeing the workers would not accept these redundancies, started to issue letters to the workers threatening them with the sack, dole queue recruitment and complete closure.

The increasing cost of a pint of beer in these days of falling living standards has meant falling sales for Ansells. But management refuse to take the consequences, and instead sack workers, in order to try to get the same work for less money.

In this area, people not only rely on Ansells for work but a form of entertainment too—we must make sure we fight to keep every last job with decent wages, and continue the struggle for entertainment facilities at prices we can afford.

By H. Shields
(Newtown LP)

Elm Park Village

By Rob Lewin

After eight weeks of strike last autumn 14 UCATT members won union recognition, a slight increase in wages and improved conditions.

Three weeks later they turned up to work at the Elm Park site in north London to be told that they

were sacked.

An official strike was called, and after seven weeks mass pickets have begun. Last time they were on strike, 300 police turned up to control a picket of 50!

The employers, who have a contract with Labour-controlled Camden council,

are hiring scab labour. (Coincidentally the name of this scab outfit is P J Thatcher!)

The strike committee is appealing for donations to be sent to the Elm Park Village Strike Fund, UCATT Sub-office, 8 Camden Road, London N.1.

Mosedale

The mass picket of Rixton brickworks over the reinstatement of the victimised Rixton workers was a great success. Over 200 trade unionists attended in a splendid show of solidarity.

After the last picket, the Mosedale management fully anticipated the mood of the workers and closed down the Rixton works.

Bricks made by Mosedale have now been blacked in Manchester and Liverpool, and Securicor have refused to handle the scab wages.

Mosedale's oil supply has

finally run dry after some initial confusion within the union. Sources within the brickworks have revealed the management's grave concern over the blacking of these vital supplies. But after eight weeks on the picket line, the Mosedale workers still urgently need support.

USDAW — Learn lessons of the past

Elections are now underway in USDAW for President, Executive Council and Divisional Councils.

The need for a leadership prepared to make a bold stand in defence of jobs, and improvements in wages and hours has never been so urgent.

With unemployment of 2½ million and rising, it is clear when looking at problems facing the union it is important to study similar periods in the past, to learn from workers' struggles. From 1921 to 1926 the labour movement's rank and file fought heroically to defend their interests from the attacks of the bosses, who were trying to reduce wages and lengthen working hours. Then, as now the crucial question of leadership was the deciding factor as to whether or not the workers' struggles were successful.

USDAW's forerunner in the 1920's was NUDAW (National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers). In 1921 the mine owners decided to reduce miners wages.

The miners approached the other two component parts of the then "Triple Alliance" formed to fight together attacks made on any one of

By
George Williamson

(London Metropolitan
USDAW)

them (this consisted of the Miners' Federation, the National Union of Railwaymen and the National Transport Workers Federation of which NUDAW was a member). At a special Alliance Conference, a resolution gave full support to the miners, and ordered a stoppage of work from April 15th.

NUDAW's Executive Council proposed that a national strike food committee be formed with local committees manned by the unions' members and involving co-operative employees and the Co-operative movement. This would be responsible for providing food equal to strike pay, and, where necessary, a system of rationing to ensure equal distribution.

The determined mood of the special conference was not matched on the Executive of the Alliance. Many members were afraid to take on the mine owners, who were



Audrey Wise—Broad Left candidate for President

supported by the Conservative government. They felt that this would be taking their unions into a head on clash with the government itself.

The Alliance Executive decided that unofficial discussions which had taken place between miners, mineowners, and MPs (but repudiated by the miners' union) justified the calling off of the strike at the last hour. NUDAW opposed the cancellation, but the whole affair ended in

tragedy with the isolated miners being starved back to work on poverty wages a few months later.

Since then, April 15th 1921 has been known as 'Black Friday'. The Triple Alliance, potentially then one of the working class' most formidable weapons, was virtually destroyed.

Nowadays as the Thatcher government increases unemployment and tries to drive down wages, and take away

trade union rights a determined union leadership is required; one which is prepared to mobilise the whole industrial strength of the union. Over the next five weeks USDAW can elect a leadership more responsive to these needs.

By electing Audrey Wise as President and voting for supporters of the Broad Left for the Executive and Divisional Councils, USDAW members will be taking an important step forward to arming themselves for the challenges which lie ahead.

GEORGE WILLIAMSON, who is standing for the Eastern Divisional Council, says:

"Over the last six months the Eastern Division has lost several thousand members, and stands to lose many more unless the union begins to take a fighting stance against redundancies and for a living wage. I support the 1980 Annual Delegate Meeting demand for £70 for 35 hours, and if elected to the Divisional Council I will do what I can to help all USDAW members achieve this as a first step towards decent living standards. I will support all attempts to mobilise the labour movement in united action to bring down this disastrous Tory government and replace it by a Labour government committed to socialist policies."

Blackhall pit

At a mass meeting last Saturday, the miners of Blackhall colliery in Durham reluctantly accepted the closure of their pit.

The National Coal Board said the closure would be due to geological factors. Naturally, the miners were very suspicious of this claim, as Blackhall is on the NCB's blacklist of 50 pits marked up for closure. Also over the past five years, the pit has gradually been run-down.

However, the engineer employed by the NUM reported to the meeting that the geological faults affecting the mine were unlikely to be overcome.

There has been talk that the men may be transferred to a nearby pit. But this could meet opposition from men at the receiving pits. Because of the high levels of unemployment in the Durham coalfields, particularly amongst youth, there is a growing feeling among NUM members that job priority should be given to the unemployed rather than men made redundant due to NCB mismanagement.

As far as the community itself is concerned, they fear now that Blackhall will turn into a ghost town, like so many other ex-coliery towns.

It is now imperative that the Durham NUM executive calls a coalfield delegate conference to discuss this closure.

BREAKTHROUGH FOR SEAMEN

By Nick Brooks

(Southampton LP)

The seamen's strike is gaining momentum, with the union winning a major breakthrough. A large shipping company has broken away from the bosses' organisation, the General Council of British Shipping, and has conceded to the wage claim.

Canadian Pacific Steamships Ltd., which makes up about 10% of income to the shipping council, has agreed to the main claim by the NUS for time-and-a-half for overtime.

International solidarity is being stepped up. India's

seamen's union has told its members employed on British flag ships to boycott ships in British ports.

And the International Transport Workers' Federation said it would resist any attempts by British bosses to move to 'flags of convenience'.

The strike has really escalated in the south. On Tuesday 20 January, a full twenty-four hour strike was held in Weymouth, Poole, Southampton and Portsmouth.

During this strike, the management of the ferry company Townsend Thoreson untied one of their ferries, Viking IV, in Southampton, and used scab labour to let it go to France.

This action was in blatant disregard of all trade union practices and agreements in the dock. After the strike, Townsend Thoreson management laid off all the deck hands from another of their ferries, Viking Venturer. This brought an immediate response from the trade union movement, with the blacking of all Townsend Thoreson operations in Southampton and Portsmouth.

Two ferries, Viking Venturer and Viking Valiant, were occupied by their crews in Southampton. Pickets are

in force on the dock gates and inside the dock.

The seamen have the full support of the dockers and mooring gangs, who are refusing to handle any Townsend Thoreson operations.

On Thursday 22 January, one Townsend ferry tried to dock in Southampton. The ferry ramps and the dock were blockaded by pickets and lorry trailers. The mooring gangs refused to tie her up and, eventually, she was forced to return to France.

Another Townsend Thoreson ship has been stopped at Portsmouth. The last week has shown the willingness of seamen to fight, and the support they have from other trade unionists.

DEFEND THE DLO'S

Direct Labour Organisations are directly in the firing line for the Tory cut-backs. Bob Faulkes asked convenor Derek Hill and deputy convenor Terry Barra of Hackney DLO about the problems they face.

The main DLO problem at the moment has been the moratorium on maintenance—it's meant cuts in the housing grants, and in Hackney we're losing all overtime.

Management are tightening up on the bonus schemes, they are interpreting on how they want the

work to go. They're using the politics of the day to tighten up.

With the overtime going were losing about £20 per week. My rent and rates per week are £26, and there is a £3 plus rent increase coming! I'll be paying over £30—that's about one-third of my wages.

All Labour councils are facing basically the same problems. What do you expect from a Labour council in terms of standing up to the Tory measures?

We expect the councillors to lead a fight against the Tories. They should look

towards the tenants and local people as well as their workforces for whatever backing they need. It should be a combined effort from all Labour councils to fight back.

How do you see the future of the DLO and what in your views would be an effective fightback against the cuts?

What the DLOs need is unity—we need to organise. Convenors and senior stewards of DLOs must get together to discuss policies on how to defeat the cuts, beginning on a regional Greater London basis, then

moving to a national basis.

The full-time officials have the contacts, they have the authority and can be an enormous help in starting a national campaign.

**Militant pamphlet
CAPITALIST
CRISIS—
Tribune's
'Alternative
Strategy' or a
socialist plan?**

Price 60p + 15p postage
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1 Mentmore Terrace,
London E8 3PN

The POEU wage claim was again on the agenda of the union's executive at its January meeting.

It considered a number of recommendations from the Wages and Allowances Committee which would determine the basis of the claim.

The W&A Committee were also recommending that an approach from the CPSA to join with other public service unions in a campaign to mobilise opposition to the Tories' attempt to hold down wages in the public sector be accepted. This was carried without opposition.

However, an approach to submit a joint POEU/CPSA wage claim to the Post Office this year was not so warmly received on the grounds that CPSA had accepted a "single table bargaining system" which had been rejected by the 1980 POEU conference.

The PO last year paid 3½% to the CPSA for their acceptance and the POEU executive were determined to ensure that their members also benefited financially from any move towards a system of "single table bargaining".

With regard to its own 1981 wage claim, the W&A Committee recommended that the retail price index should be an important factor in determining its claim.

In addition the NEC accepted two amendments on behalf of the W&A Committee to ensure that there was "a significant percentage increase to take account of our continued co-operation in the introduction of new systems and equipment," and "consolidation of the full claim."

Both amendments were accepted and will now form part of the 1981 claim.

A further amendment stated that "the next round must be to achieve a further substantial improvement in real pay levels and on the basis of current forecasts, this would require a settlement in excess of 15%. And that this NEC now considers it opportune to inform the membership of our 1981 pay objectives." This was not carried.

The right wing majority on the executive considered it still too early to commit themselves to any actual percentage increase.

However, the union's research department will supply the executive with all the data necessary to keep them fully informed and up to date to ensure that the eventual formulation of the pay claim will protect the living standards of all POEU members.

A further amendment on advising members via the branches of the basis of the wage claim was carried 11-10.

The NEC also decided to commence a vigorous campaign around the demand to widen the availability of the nine day fortnight, obtained in the 1978 shorter-working week struggles, and which at present is restricted to a maximum of 40% POEU members within each area. This decision and the subsequent campaign will be welcomed in the branches.

HARLOW- SMOULDERING ANGER AT THATCHER VISIT

The new town of Harlow in Essex erupted in anger last Friday 23 January.

Just a week before, leading trades council and Labour Party members in the town had heard that Thatcher was visiting the largest non-union factory in the town, Pitney Bowes.

By Bob Edwards

(Harlow Labour Party)

In the 1979 election the Tories got some of their best results in new towns around London, mainly due to disillusionment with the Labour government. Harlow stayed Labour but only by a thousand majority. That was before local people realised what a Tory government could be like!

Over the previous year, unemployment in this town has grown from 1,700 to 3,500 with an avalanche of redundancies.

Workers in the town, many of whom had come to Harlow to start a new life with better housing and a plentiful supply of jobs, were stunned. There seemed hardly a ripple of real opposition.

Then came the first rumbings. Under the guidance of the Trades Council an unemployed association was set up. Over a hundred unemployed workers turned out for its first meeting.

No despair or demoralisation was expressed—only anger. 'Too old at fifty', 'Not experienced enough at 20'. 'The employers think they can pick and choose.' Now a chance to show their anger. Thatcher was coming to town!

Over 600 workers turned out to greet her. Shop stewards sent representatives. At the nearby factory, Cossers, disciplinary action was threatened against those who joined in. Such was the

feeling though, that the less well-organised women workers, covered in 'Tories Out' badges, stated "we only need the lead from the machine shop and we'll all be out."

In Pitney Bowes, workers had been informed from outside of their visit. Disciplinary action was threatened but many absented themselves on the day. Others walked out before she had left the factory, some refused to attend the reception.

Outside there was almost a festival atmosphere before she arrived. Suddenly a flashing 'chips' bike appeared. A shiver ran through the crowd. A black Daimler breasting the hill was the sign for the volcano to erupt.

The anger built up over months at last had an outlet. The car must have been jolted by a shock wave of noise as it sped into the factory for the reception—"Out, Out, OUT!"

Obviously the situation won't be changed just by a roaring crowd. But workers in Harlow had united against the Tories. A demo and rally has now been planned for 14 February.

Workers—young and old, male and female—are being drawn into activity. The movement is stirring and shaping up for the battles to come.



Photo: MILITANT

DUMP TORIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ted for?

We must defeat the Tories' divide-and-rule tactics and weld our class together.

Unemployed workers would shy away from any attempts to make them like the troops of the "Grand Old Duke of York", merely making up for declining trade union membership.

However, they will see the need to help shape union policy, to add strength to union struggles, and fight for jobs, conditions and wages.

The example of the unemployed workers' chapel (branch) of the print union, the National Graphical Association, in Liverpool which meets weekly should be closely studied.

If we are going to put an end to the rising toll of unemployment, we must put an end to the Tories and their cruel system. A bold fight must be launched by the movement as a whole—campaigning to chuck out the Tories.

We must fight for a 35-hour week, sharing out the work with no loss of pay. No more redundancies!

We need to fight for an £80 minimum wage for all workers.

The labour movement must also demand a massive programme of useful public works. We still need new houses, schools, hospitals. The workers, the skills, the materials are all there. Only private profit stands in the way.

If explained and fought for through mass campaigns, these policies would win the enthusiastic support of millions of workers

If the Tories and big business say "the country" can't afford these things, we say: "We can't afford 2½ million on the dole!"

The factories, the mines, transport, finance and distribution must be planned and developed for people, not the profits of a small handful of city financiers and boardroom barons.

Tory welcomes 'reserve army'

Sometimes the bosses' spokesmen blurt out the brutal truth.

Unwittingly, they also confirm the allegedly 'outdated', 'dead' ideas of Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism.

Speaking to Tory women this week, one of Thatcher's junior ministers, Nicholas Ridley, expanded on the great advantages to big business of the "inevitable" unemployment caused by government policies.

The jobless, he said, were a "reserve who could be used to increase future production..."

The Thatcherites see mass unemployment as a deliberate weapon to use against the trade unions. Two or three million unemployed,

they calculate, will intimidate workers. There's nothing like the dole queue to hold down wages, and take away past improvements in working conditions.

By Lynn Walsh

But were the Tory ladies of Cirencester and Tewkesbury aware that their Tory MP was only confirming an idea of Karl Marx?

This is what Marx wrote in 'Capital' [Vol.1, chapter 25] over a hundred years ago: "The industrial reserve army [the unemployed workers], during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active labour army..."

During the post-war

boom, the capitalists complain, the relative low level of unemployment enabled workers, through their trade unions, to gain improvements in wages and conditions. Now the bosses are desperate to claw these back.

But as Marx went on: "During the periods of over production and paroxysm." [like the present slump and crisis of British capitalism], the reserve army "holds [the workers'] pretensions [i.e. their demands for decent wages and conditions] in check."

Mass unemployment, a reserve army of labour, confines the law of demand and supply of labour to "limits absolutely convenient to the activity of exploitation and to the domination of capital."

Hasn't Ridley brutally

confirmed Marx's idea?

But Marx, unlike Ridley, championed the struggle of the working class against the anarchy of the capitalist market and the domination of big business.

The trade unions, built up to defend workers' interests—Marx explained—contain within them the seeds of the future society—a society based on planned production and democratic control by those who produce the wealth.

The real meaning for workers of Ridley's economic lesson to the Tory ladies was that unless the labour movement mobilises to kick out the Tories and put an end to their private-profit system, workers face a black future of mass unemployment, and untold suffering.

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