

WHY WE'RE MARCHING AGAINST THE TORIES

Tens of thousands of workers will be marching in Glasgow on 21 February in protest at the horrifying growth of unemployment.

In Scotland the dole queues have increased by 39% over the last year—now more than one in eight are officially out of work. One of them is Gerry McGowan.

SCOTTISH WORKERS PREPARE MASSIVE DEMO ON 21st

The teachers at Gerry McGowan's school told him to stick in at school so he would get a good job.

So he did. He finished with one higher [Scottish version of an 'A' level] and five 'O' levels.

But apart from a six-month spell on job creation, he's been unemployed since he left school in May 1979.

Gerry lives in East Kilbride. He expected to get a good clerical job in the civil service.

"Centre 1"—the tax centre for the whole of Scotland, is in East Kilbride. It used to take on 200 school leavers every year.

For 1981 it did not take on anyone.

Gerry has applied for about 50 jobs in the last twelve months. He has managed to get about seven final interviews.

"You get dead worried at the interviews—worried about another knock back."

He recently tried to apply for a job as a clerk



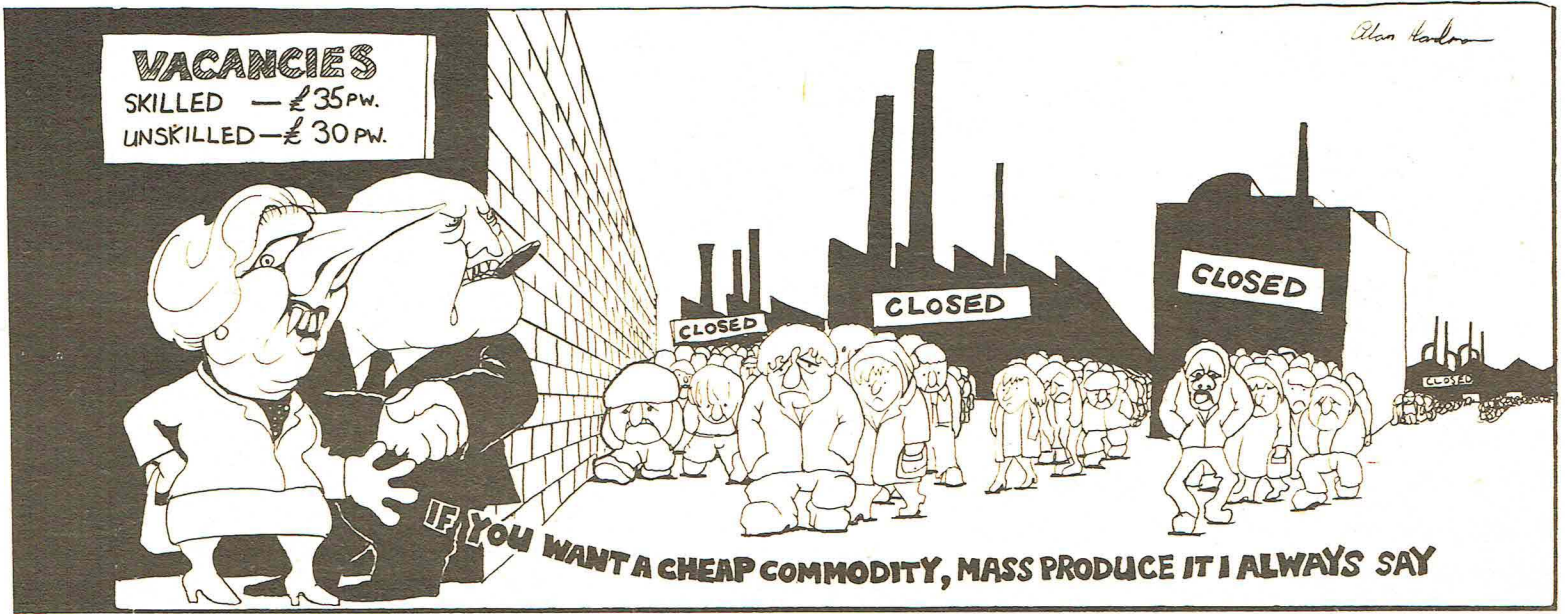
Gerry McGowan—twenty months and still no job

in the local health board. They wouldn't send him a form. There had been 200 applications made on the morning the job became available.

Gerry says that his mates can be divided into three categories: those at college, those in the forces, and those unemployed.

Being without work is beginning to get him down: "I don't feel too good now. I lie awake at nights a lot."

See feature: centre pages



Bristol Busworkers say

By Harriet Stevens
(Bristol South LPYS)
and Peter Hammond
(Bristol city councillor)

No fare rises...

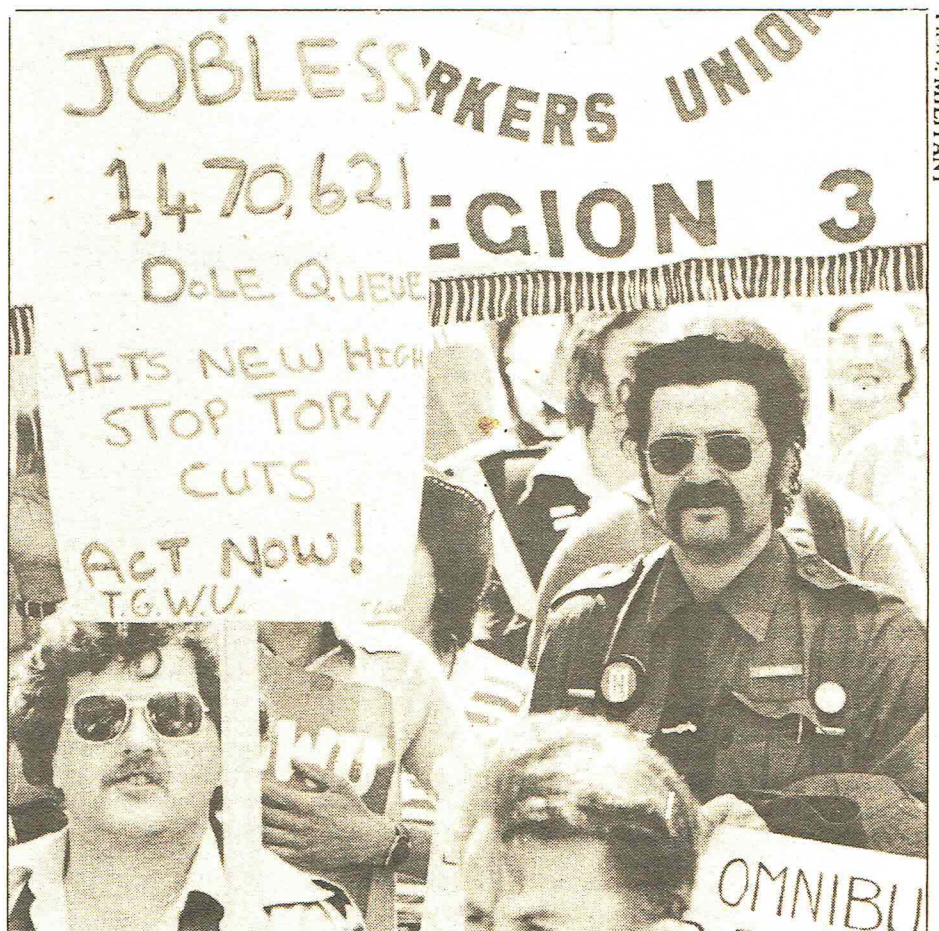
Save our jobs

"If you're disabled, young, old, or simply haven't got a car, Bristol Omnibus Company has got a message for you—tough."

A Bristol bus driver was commenting on the Bus Company's plan to raise their fares and sack hundreds of workers. But the workers are taking a stand, refusing to collect the new fares—fully backed by the inspectors.

They fear that increases not only mean hardship but less-used services and cutbacks.

On 8 February, bus crews turned up to work announcing that they would still be charging the old prices. In a des-



Picture: MILITANT

Bristol busmen demonstrated against the Tories on 14 May last year. With the dole queues up a million since, they are even more determined to fight

perate counter move, management suspended the entire workforce leaving the entire city without buses. It is believed several busmen have been

sacked. The TGWU have refused to talk to management unless all disciplinary actions are withdrawn. Once more the

busmen have displayed tremendous solidarity against management aggression and the com-

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

Lambeth

— at the crossroads

Only mass action can defeat the Tories



There were many disabled people on last Wednesday's march in Lambeth, fighting to defend decent services for the borough
Photo: Militant

Local Authority manual workers in Lambeth have just finished a week-long political strike against the Tory government.

Spear-headed by the Direct Labour workers, the strike also involved refuse collectors, road sweepers, and members of the Transport and General, AUEW [Engineering], and the electricians' union [EETPU].

On the Wednesday, some members of the General & Municipal (home-helps, caretakers, etc.) were also involved.

Sections of the council's white-collar (NALGO) staff supported the action. The Housing and Consumer Advice services staged a "work-in" without pay, and publicised the effects of the Tories' policies to the people of Lambeth.

More than 2,000 joined a march on Wednesday. Among them was a large contingent of disabled people in wheelchairs, covered with anti-Tory badges and stickers. As Peter Coles (T&GWU convenor) pointed out, it was to defend them and others who could not defend themselves that the "week of action" had been organised.

Lambeth teachers supported the demonstration, and now eight branch officers have been suspended from their union (NUT) for urging their members to march. They must be defended and pressure put on the NUT leadership to reinstate them.

Lambeth council and its leader Ted Knight have been subjected to a barrage of Tory propaganda from the media, nationally and locally. Because the council have adopted a policy of "no

By John Bulaitis

cuts" in services, the Tories have accused them of "profligacy".

As one NALGO leaflet said, "The way the press talk about Lambeth you might think it was a workers' paradise. We who live and work here know it is a swamp of unemployment, poverty and over-crowded, sub-standard housing. Council services often provide little more than a small safety-net for some of the neediest people in the area."

That's what the Tories want to cut. Yet while demanding big cuts and a freeze on all new recruitment, Lambeth Tories are still calling for a 14p in the £ supplementary rate (three-quarters of the present one) and an immediate £3.50 a week rent rise.

However, labour and trade union activists must seriously ask: is Lambeth council's strategy capable of saving jobs and services? Is it going to keep the Tories out of the Town Hall at the next elections?

If the Tories are going to be defeated—as 'Militant' has consistently pointed out—they must be confronted with a mass movement. The central task of Labour councils, given the lack of a national lead, must be to give a local lead to build such a movement.

Unfortunately, Lambeth council, although making a stand by refusing to implement cuts, have pursued a policy of massive rate in-

creases to compensate. There was a 50% rate increase last year and a supplementary rate increase of £50 per household implemented in January. It now looks as if a 60% rate increase is in the pipe-line for April.

This is not a strategy to build a movement against the Tories. In fact, it is doing the opposite. The council is becoming more and more isolated from the very people it needs on its side, tenants, workers and middle-class people, who should all be looking to Labour in the face of the vicious Thatcher government.

There were over 2,000 on last week's march, but this compares to over 20,000 on the march called by the council a year ago. Now, there is not the same confidence that a real determined, effective fight is being waged.

The Tories and so-called "Ratepayers' Association" have been given a new lease of life. There have been demonstrations against the council and big meetings of 600 and 1,000 people in different parts of the borough.

Many shops are getting customers to sign a petition against the council, and more and more "NO" signs (against the rate increases) are appearing in windows throughout Lambeth.

The lesson of all this is clear. Protests and propaganda alone are not enough to build a movement. A stand must be made.

The Tories must be told in no uncertain terms by Lambeth council: "We refuse to make your cuts and we refuse to make working people pay by raising our rates." They must demand the Tory government provides the money to defend services.

The Tories are trying to impose £37 million cuts. But, as the NALGO members' leaflet points out: "There is one item of

expenditure that uncannily resembles the government demand: the £37.7 million this council spent last year on debt charges to the big banks (nearer £50 million this year). Naturally, the government has not demanded any reduction of this kind of spending."

But we must, linking it up to the need for socialist economic policies, including the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions (with minimum compensation).

This stand must be coupled with mass meetings of workers, tenants and small businessmen to win support. A movement could be built around these policies. It cannot be built around policies of big rate rises.

This is not a strategy for "handing over to the Tories", as Ted Knight and others have mistakenly argued. It is a strategy to build support for the Labour council so as to defend jobs, living standards and services.

A movement can be built so the Tories are made well aware that if they dare to move in and dismiss the council, they will be faced with mass opposition and defiance, rate and rent strikes, industrial action, occupations and demonstrations.

The Tories or their commissioners would be suspended in mid-air, and unable to implement their savage cut-backs.

Lambeth council now stands at the crossroads. It can either continue its policy of rate rises, which will lose even more support, and lead to job losses and cuts, and possibly electoral defeat. Or it can make a stand and confront the government over the new Rate Support Grant for the next financial year, and begin building support for such a stand now.

Lothian council fight, article page 9

"They give the Samaritans' number with your rent book"

By Ian Russell
(Telford LPYS)

Telford corporation called 1981 the "year of the job". This week, this new town in the West Midlands will see one in five out of work. Telford is now second only to Corby in the British unemployment charts.

GKN Sankeys, the largest employer in the area has announced a crippling thousand redundancies. The mood at the Headley Castle works is one of anger, frustration and despair. Workers have seen their numbers cut from 7,000 to 3,000 in less than five years.

Already when you take a council flat here you are given the Samaritans' phone number with your rent card. All the more reason then that the fight for these jobs should be taken up.

If it is not, how long will it be before the lifeblood of employment in Telford stops? Those fortunate enough to still have a job would go alongside their friends who were made redundant at the last slimdown.

Telford is a new town whose slogans like "Your opportunities" brought thousands over here seeking the land of milk and honey. "The birth place of industry" should now read "grave yard of industry."

With unemployment already at 18% workers who are made redundant have no prospect of finding a job. They are being confined to a life of penury and misery.

GKN must not be allowed to get away with this. The unions and shop stewards must take a lead in order to break the shell shock felt by the workforce. They must not allow workers to be scapegoats for the company's mismanagement.

After all it is the bosses' lack of investment in new machinery over the last 30 years that has brought about this economic catastrophe. Workers must not be duped into believing that mass unemployment is their

fault. The Tories and the bosses hypocritically blame this recession on "excessive" wage settlements while British wages are the lowest of all the industrialised countries.

The workforce must demand that GKN Sankey open its books to union inspection—only then will they see where the money needed to obtain a decent wage and job for all is really going.

Preparations must be made to fight for jobs—enough is enough. A mass meeting should be called to discuss the possibilities of action to defend jobs. The union demands should be:

- ★ No redundancies, "share the work with no loss of pay."
- ★ Appeals should be made to Sankeys' employees in Britain and abroad for financial and moral support when a course of action is decided.

- ★ Recognition of any action taken by the workforce should be requested and immediately given by every section of the trade union movement.

- ★ A campaign to mobilise support throughout the community should also be launched.

Make no mistake—workers at GKN have the power to save their jobs. Gardner's workers succeeded through an occupation which gained enormous support in the labour movement. Many workers will now look to similar methods here.

The desperate situation demands emergency measures. Action to save our livelihoods is our first priority. The suffering caused in this town will also call into doubt the very future of capitalism in Britain.

After all, how could a rational socialist plan of production based on nationalising firms like GKN under workers control and management possibly do worse than the vandals who run the industry now?

A lesson for scabs

Scabbing hasn't done much good for those who broke the Catercups workers' strike for union recognition.

After a lengthy struggle last year, the Catercups workers were defeated. But the sequel appeared in the Legal Notices of the 'Guardian', January 14.

Three announcements were published under Section 293 of the Companies Act 1948, from Catercup Limited, Nichols Limited [a related Company in the same premises as Catercup], and Catercup Machines Limited.

These announcements gave notice of meetings of the 'Creditors of the above named Company'; or in simple terms—they had

gone bust! It is a matter of conjecture whether this anti-union cowboy outfit were always prepared to pack up and go elsewhere rather than recognise the union, or whether they misjudged the effectiveness of a strike when they decided to take the workers on.

The story contains an object lesson on the loyalty of management to all black-legs and would be scabs. I hope that the Catercup's scabs will think twice in the future before setting themselves against the labour and trade union movement by crawling up to the bosses in a dispute.

By Roger Bannister

'We don't think mass unemployment's inevitable'

The engineering union's [AUEW] march and rally in Chatham this Saturday, 14 February, is a great step forward in the fight against unemployment.

Big business is indifferent to the human consequences of their policies. James Henderson, plant director of local firm, British Twin Discs, has proclaimed, "There is no other course [to Thatcher's policies]."

All they can offer is a future of mass unemployment and waste of human skills. British Twin Disco laid off 170 people in August and has just announced that another 180 jobs will have to go.

The Medway towns, once a centre of the engineering and manufacturing industries, now face disaster. In the district as a whole there is 9% unemployment, and in blackspots like Sheerness in Swale it is over 14%.

Fine words of sympathy and anguished tears are plentiful, but action is needed. Every redundancy, every closure must be fought, every job fought for.

Henderson of British Twin Discs, praised the unions at his factory for understanding the com-

pany's situation and co-operating over redundancies. We must not allow this to happen again!

A mood of passive acceptance has unfortunately been reinforced by national and local labour movement leaders. Bob Bean, former Labour MP for Rochester & Chatham, has offered only gloomy forecasts of 20% unemployment in the Medway towns, with 10% of schoolchildren never having work.

Why should we accept mass unemployment as inevitable? The 'age of the microchip' certainly means mass unemployment under capitalism—but isn't that why we're for the socialist alternative of harnessing new technology with a plan of production to provide for people's needs? Under socialism the microchip would mean a shorter working week and a higher standard of living.

The labour movement must weld together the organisations of the working

class and fight for a socialist alternative to unemployment.

The local campaign to try and keep Metal Box open and save 760 jobs founded because it ignored the rest of the labour movement. Instead it directed its energies towards convincing the management of Metal Box that there was a viable method of keeping the factory open on a capitalist basis.

When the bosses want their factory closed it's no use going to them with a good industrial relations record. They treat it as a sign of weakness. It's no good either trying to run capitalist concerns better than the capitalists themselves.

Only a fighting socialist campaign can rally together the mass of the movement. That is why the AUEW demonstration is so welcome. It can be the beginning of a campaign against unemployment to embrace every trade union branch, every shop stewards' committee and every Labour Party.

Everyone knows that unemployment is a tragedy—now let's match our concern with action!

No sackings! No redundancies! Fight for every job!

For a 35-hour week—share out the work with no loss in pay!

It is vital that the Labour Party fights back effectively against the social democrats who are trying to prevent future Labour governments.

Instead of pleading with the anti-socialists to stay the leading bodies of the Party must explain the issues involved in a campaign.

In London the LPYS Regional Committee have submitted the following resolution to the Regional

Executive of the Party, for submission as an emergency resolution at the forthcoming London Labour Party conference:

"This Regional Executive Committee 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 busi-

ness and support from the media.

Clearly the objective of such a 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.

We resolve that the Labour Party must not be deflected from the campaign to defeat the Tories and all parties opposed to

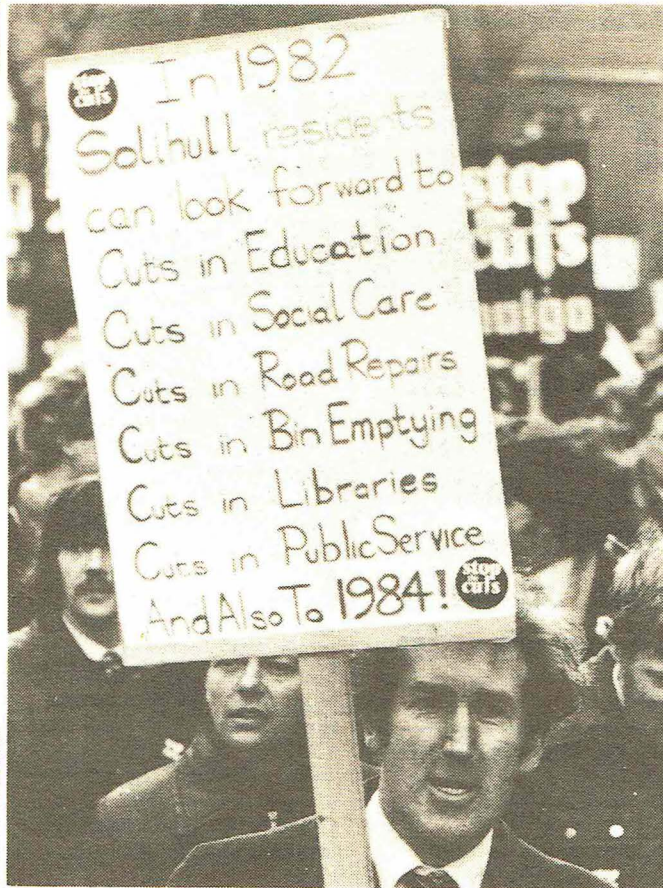


Photo: Militant

A demonstrator at last week's march in Solihull linking the Tories attacks on social services with their assault on democratic rights.

Fightback spreads to new towns

100 unemployed workers attended the first meeting of Harlow Unemployed Workers' Organisation. Set up by the local Trades Council, HUWO is helping to organise a fightback against the Tories.

It's the first time a 'new town' such as Harlow has been hit by mass unemployment. In the last year the number on the dole has more than doubled to 3,558 and vacancies cut by a third to 93.

At the HUWO meeting, speaker after speaker told of the frustration, misery and despair which accompanies being sentenced to the bosses scrapheap. One man, applying for a position as a part-time driver, was told he wasn't suitable because he didn't have a job!

But there was also a

determined spirit present and it was emphasised that the fight back centres around the removal of the Thatcher government and her vicious policies.

This determination was soon put to the test when we were given a week's notice that Maggie herself would be visiting Harlow. (Militant 30 January). Within a matter of hours, 2,000 leaflets had been printed backed up by factory visits. This activity resulted in a demo of between 500-600 people.

We aim to build upon this success and are hoping for an even larger contingent on the February 14th march and rally called by the Labour Party and the Young Socialists against unemployment and the cuts. We see this protest as part of the campaign to drive the Tories out of office.

By Tom Taylor

Kick out the Tories

South East London LPYS Demonstration.
Youth March Against Unemployment 21st February.
Assemble 12 noon Welling Corner [Near Welling BR station].
March to Woolwich, General Gordon Square.
Leading trade union and LPYS speakers.
Bring your banners!

Harlow
March and Rally against Tory policies.
Assemble 10.00 Swimming Pool Car Park.
March to Rally West Square [near Odeon] 11.30 am.
Speakers:
Reg Race MP,
Stan Newens MP
Andy Bevan
Danny Purton [Secretary Harlow Trades Council]
Ernie French
District Secretary AUEW
Saturday Feb. 14th
Organised by Harlow CLP, Young Socialists, Trades Council, AUEW.

Demonstrate against Thatcher!
Eastbourne Labour Party and LPYS are organising a demonstration when Thatcher visits the Young Conservatives' conference!
Be there—bring your banners!
Saturday 14 February, 11.30 am, Congress Theatre, Eastbourne.

Campaign against Social-Democratic wreckers

It is vital that the Labour Party fights back effectively against the social democrats who are trying to prevent future Labour governments.

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ness and support from the media.

Clearly the objective of such a 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.

We resolve that the Labour Party must 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 believe that the best way of combatting any 'social democratic' party split will be by the party organising a massive propaganda campaign to explain to Labour supporters the real reasons for the split, and for the party to organise a massive recruitment campaign including leaflets, public meetings and TV broadcasts, on the need for

socialist policies to defeat the Tories.

In London this can be especially served by every section re-doubling its efforts to make sure the Greater London Council election campaign sees a massive swing to Labour, based on support for the manifesto, to remove the Tories from County Hall. We call on the National Executive Committee to carry this out nationally.

We condemn the hypocrisy of those who are suggesting standing in local government elections in

May as 'Labour' candidates and then splitting to form a new party. This shows their complete lack of confidence to win support for their pro-capitalist ideas.

We believe that every Labour candidate should be asked to personally endorse Labour's manifestos [as is already the case in London], and pledge their allegiance to the Labour Party. Those that are not prepared to fulfill this elementary condition should be immediately removed, or not endorsed as Labour candidates.

LPYS Week of Action Dynamism gets results

Dave Skirbic, unemployed, recently joined Leicester South LPYS. The electricity at his home had been disconnected since November because he couldn't afford payments.

The LPYS took up his case, contacted local Labour MP Jim Marshall and the press, and told the elec-

tricity board that we would picket their showroom if something wasn't done. He's now been reconnected and is saving up for lightbulbs!

In Leicester, formerly the 'second richest city in Europe', there are another 3,540 teenagers on the dole

facing Dave's plight. With only 79 jobs on offer, the odds of getting a job are 44-1 against.

Even the armed forces have filled their recruiting quotas in the area, and are now telling youth to wait till summer—but Leicester LPYS branches are going to the dole queues with a

different message: join us now—join the LPYS in the fight to change society.

During the week of action (14-24 February) we've managed to pin down that ever rarer breed, the Young Conservatives, for a debate on Radio Leicester. In addition we are conducting a campaign at Leicester City

Football Club for half-price admission for the unemployed.

We've already been down on a number of Saturdays with a petition, placards, and a megaphone. So far the only response we've had from the directors is a letter saying they "regret it is unworkable", but we intend to carry on campaigning until they are forced to

change their minds.

Nowadays there is no shortage of unemployed young workers looking to join a fighting socialist youth organisation. It's up to the LPYS to get out and find them—we put a few recruitment posters up with a phone number on and within 24 hours, four people had phoned up wanting to join.

By your friends may you be known

The supporters of the 'Clause 4' group at University College in London have used the methods of the gutter press against 'Militant' supporters in the Labour Club.

'Clause 4' claims to be a left group which defends clause IV of the Labour Party constitution—yet one of its main criticisms of 'Militant' is that we demand the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, which is really the implementation of clause IV in practical terms.

In the Club's recent elections for delegates to NOLS conference, rather than use political debate alone to win support for their aims, Clause 4 supporters resorted to circulating photo-copies of the recent 'Sunday Times' articles on 'Militant's' finances to every club member before the election!

That 'The Times', the champion of big business and spokesman for the bosses' class, should write scare stories about 'Militant' as our influence grows in the labour movement, should come as no surprise. 'Militant' has answered all the allegations and insinuations 'The Times' has made.

But for a group of so-called socialists to take their lead from the bosses' press must set labour activists wondering!

Not content with this the 'Clause 4' group also issued a leaflet repeating many of the lies and slander put out by the Tory press at the height of last year's at-

By Robert Lewin
(UCL Labour Club)
and Alan Watson
(NOLS National Committee,
personal capacity)

tempts at a witch-hunt against 'Militant'.

The leaflet begins: "Year after year genuine Labour students fight a battle with 'Militant', a particularly degenerate Trotskyist sect, for control of the National Organisation of Labour Students."

Rather, 'Militant' supporters, who have the support of the majority of students active in Labour clubs, year after year have to fight a battle against every conceivable kind of bureaucratic obstacle put out by NOLS' 'Clause 4'-dominated executive to get the delegates to which they should be entitled!

It says "apathy" is the only reason 'Militant' supporters from UCL were elected to NOLS conference last year. In fact, when 'Militant' won a majority in the club last year, it was larger and more active than it had been under the years of 'Clause 4' control.

Indeed, 'Militant' supporters have twice been elected as delegates to NUS conference from UCL, showing the growth of the Labour Club's influence.

Taking a lead from well-known witch-finder general Lord Underhill, the leaflet prattles on about "entryism", and that the Labour Party Young Socialists, in which 'Militant' supporters are by far in the

majority, is the "smallest youth section of all the West European socialist parties", which, to put it mildly, is an outright lie.

The leaflet goes on to bandy allegations of 'Militant' being 'sexist', 'against gays', opposed to 'Legalise Cannabis' campaigns, etc. etc. 'Militant's' other major crime was not to support CAYU (whose 'broad-based' national demonstration last year only mustered 150!).

They use these allegations of no substance as a substitute to answering 'Militant's' socialist policies.

Not surprisingly, the Clause 4 supporter responsible for these witch-hunting attempts did not get elected as delegate, coming very low in the poll.

But this is not the first time 'Clause 4' have indulged in such tactics. At last year's NOLS conference, the photo-copies of 'Times' reports were once again doing the rounds. These comrades should save their money on photo-copying—if the new owner of 'The Times', the anti-labour movement millionaire Murdoch knew of these comrades' attempts to further the bosses' scare stories, he would no doubt send them free copies!

These latest tactics by supporters of 'Clause 4' show the desperate measures they are resorting to in order to keep control of NOLS.

But they will disgust any honest Labour students—compare these antics with the role played recently by the LPYS representative, a 'Militant' supporter, on the Labour Party's executive, when he battled with the right wing to get a substantial increase in funds for NOLS.

Labour Clubs should call on the NOLS National Committee to condemn any attempts at witch-hunts within NOLS, and disassociate themselves from these actions of their supporters at UCL.



Ballymena Young Socialists on the November 29 march in Liverpool

UDR harass 'Militant' sellers

In Ballymena, the Young Socialists have now come under the harassment being dealt out to other branches in Northern Ireland recently.

By Ken Aiken
(Ballymena LTUG)

the wall that all my weight rested on my arms. I was kept like this for twenty minutes (try it yourself sometime and find out what its like).

The contents of my pockets, including a diary and private letters, were examined and notes made of their contents. Everything was thrown in a pile at my feet. Still against the wall I was questioned about paper sales, my nationality (i.e. whether I considered myself Irish or British), what courses I had taken at University and other burning questions of national security.

Next week, as we again sold 'Militant', the UDR returned and lifted everyone they could. The YS chairman refused to tell the UDR patrol leader where we held our weekly meetings and was thrown into the back of a Land Rover and told he was being taken to

the barracks for questioning.

As it turned out a member of the patrol was personally known to the comrade. The UDR man began to talk to the comrade in a friendly manner and said he couldn't understand why all this was going on; we didn't have the time to explain the answer to him.

We can of course make an official complaint about the UDR, but you make the complaint to the RUC. We could write to our local MP—but that's Ian Paisley!

The actions of the individual terrorists have given the state the excuse it needs to put its armed men on the streets and to bring in the repressive laws that they now use on the labour movement. But the Ballymena YS do not intend to be intimidated by the UDR or anyone else.

We will be back putting socialism among the working class through our newspaper, the only difference is that the next time there will be even more of us.

NEWS... NEWS...

BLACKBURN

Over 30 people attended a LPYS meeting on India in Blackburn including representatives from the Indian Workers' Association and local Asian youth. Ankhil Anand [one of two Indian Marxists currently touring Britain] opened the meeting taking up the decay of capitalism in both India and Britain. Gurumirthi Hegde, the second Marxist speaker, went on to vividly explain the developments in India itself. He stressed the need for trade union and class unity, united around a programme to end capitalism and abolish landlordism, not tinker with it.

ST ANNES

Like their comrades in Ware [see last week's 'Militant'] members of Blackpool LPYS took on another Tory stronghold for a paper sale. They stood outside a job centre in St Annes [which has a Tory majority of 32,000!] and within an hour sold 35 papers and collected 100 names for a petition

calling for an unemployed centre. However, they obviously upset local Tories, as before long the police arrived, acting on a complaint, and circled the sellers. After being told they could be 'locked up' for selling without a permit and that they would be arrested even if they sold in an 'unobstructive manner' they decided to move on, until another day.

CARDIFF

"Our task is to ensure that the labour movement is equipped with a programme and leadership that displays the same ruthlessness in defending the workers as the Tories demonstrate in defence of the rich." So Keith Dickinson summed up the discussion at a recent 'Militant' Readers' Meeting in Cardiff. Also speaking was Ray Davies, a Labour councillor, and member of the Llanwern Steel Action Group. Over 40 attended the meeting and a fantastic £450 was raised for the fighting fund.

CAERPHILLY

At a readers' meeting in Caerphilly, Brian Ingham, industrial editor of 'Militant', spoke on 'Which way for Labour'. He took up the defeat of the right wing of the party at the recent special conference. Forty people attended and more than £112 was raised for the fighting fund.

BRISTOL

The South West Region Youth Campaign Against Unemployment held a picket of a local job centre in protest at the latest unemployment figures recently. This was followed by a public meeting which explained the policies with which to fight back.

Reports by Kay Wright, Pam Smith, Brian George, Tim Harris and Brian Muller

LIVERPOOL—shop stewards unite

"The task of this meeting is to raise the consciousness of the working class, to show the working class the power they possess through their organisations. To this end the General Council of the TUC should prepare for the calling of a one-day general strike."

Tony Mulhearn, vice-president of Liverpool CLP won the greatest round of applause for his contribution to the second Merseyside shop stewards' conference when over 400 activists crammed into Transport House, Liverpool.

The meeting heard contributions from several leading trade union and Labour Party members. The mood was electric after the magnificent success of the Liverpool demo; the call was onward to Glasgow.

Several of the speakers drew out the need for a

By
Richard Knights

programme and a leadership to fight the Tories. Kevin Ramage, National Chairman of the LPYS, won support for his call for a 35-hour week and a programme of public works to mop up unemployment.

However, he pointed out that a future Labour government would have to take over the commanding heights of the economy if it was not to repeat the failings of the last Labour government.

Tony Mulhearn developed the point on the need for leadership from the TUC. He cited the recent victory of the Liverpool dockers over redundancy. Tony finished by moving full

support to the Seamen, a call which was enthusiastically endorsed by the meeting.

Ray Williams of the NGA called on all trade unionists to join the Labour Party, so the experience of the 1974 Labour government could not be repeated.

On a practical note, Ray informed the meeting of the establishment of a local unemployed chapel of his union. Bobby Owens, Regional Chairman of the T&GWU stressed the need to recruit unemployed workers to the general unions.

The setting up of the shop stewards' meeting has been a great success. This is also backed up by an executive made up of full-time officials of trade unions and Labour Party members. In the coming battles on Merseyside, this organisation will have a key role to play.



If you are in London in May, perhaps obeying Thatcher's order to move in search of work, you could wander over to St Paul's Cathedral, where a special service 'for industry and commerce' is planned. Sir Terence Beckett, director general of the CBI, will be joined by TUC general secretary Len Murray to take part in a service of 'thanksgiving and intercession'. The unemployed, according to one scheme, will be represented too: by 2.4 million grains of rice, to be poured symbolically into a giant bin.

Might be a job there for someone, counting out how many bags of rice make 2.4 million grains, and topping it up as the CBI bosses and their Tory sidekicks send more of us to join the dole queues.

Keith Jenkinson is 18, unemployed and broke. When he walked past a sweet shop with the window broken—a common enough sight in London's East End—he reached in and took a nine-pound jar of Smarties. "If I had been working I would never have done it," he said. "It was only because I could not afford a Christmas present for my sister..." Keith has now been remanded by a magistrates court. Government minister Willie Whitelaw thinks kids like Keith need a 'short sharp shock'. The Tories and their ermined friends in court don't think walking the streets, jobless and penniless, till next week's dole money is brutal shock enough. But then they've never had to do it.

The Russian trade unions "exist to protect the workers...and immediately the question arises: from whom and from what?" asks 'Soviet Weekly'. To a socialist the answer might seem obvious: from the bureaucratic clique which rules and abuses the power and wealth created by the Russian working class, trampling on the traditions of workers' democracy and distorting the name of the Russian Revolution and of Marxism. But it's not as simple as that, as the Polish workers have discovered.

'Soviet Weekly' boasts that the Russian 'trade unions' have won government approval for increased expenses and hotel bills "when on a business trip to the countryside." Which isn't very often for the average Moscow worker. But expenses are very useful to the bureaucratic elite who control the official, state-run unions, as well as industry, the 'Communist' Party and all the state machinery. Only when the workers of Eastern Europe take power into their own hands and dismantle the whole apparatus of the regime, riddled with corruption and ineptitude throughout, will the load be lifted from their backs and workers' democracy produce healthy socialist planning in Eastern Europe. Then 'Soviet Weekly's' question might have some meaning.

Roy Jenkins, after a short breathing space between jobs, now earns £200 a week for 'advising' his merchant banking pals two days a week. That's on top of his tax-free £90,000 pay-off from the EEC, and whatever he managed to put aside from the £60,000 a year plus £270 a week expenses he got in Brussels. But he's watching the pennies.

When the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris asked him to address them, they thought that in return for the free publicity he'd manage to find his own fare [you can do the journey for about £30]. Roy, however, demanded his return fare, and VIP treatment at the airport, though he's not officially entitled to it any more. Understandable really—he has his reputation to think of. After all, he's the man who's going to realign British politics, who understands what ordinary Labour voters want... isn't he?

BBC censored:

NO NEED TO KNOW

Just occasionally the BBC's programme-makers investigate a sensitive, secret aspect of the state power.

But when they do, they are immediately censored by the powers that be!

This is clear from the decision to drop the screening of a special inquiry into the work of the British secret service, after several key scenes had been vetoed by the Director General, Sir Ian Trethowan.

The programme, called "MI5/MI6—The Need to Know", was made by the Panorama team, hardly known for its radicalism. It was approved by the head of BBC1 and the head of BBC Current Affairs.

But "Sir Ian [according to a Press Association (PA) story, not published in many British papers!] banned a number of sequences, including a description of how the Special

Branch passed false information to a woman's employer, and claims from a former agent that he arranged illegal telephone taps for MI6—something the British government denies takes place."

There is nothing very "unusual" about these "claims".

Documents found by the workers at BSC's Greenwich Reinforcements plant during an occupation showed the intervention of undercover intelligence agents against trade unionists on behalf of the bosses.

Labour leaders like Lord George-Brown and Harold Wilson, have themselves pointed to the intervention of the secret services in the labour movement.

The state, however, is clearly determined to cover up as much as possible the unscrupulous activities of the under-cover agencies, which are not subject to even minimal democratic checks.

Indeed, Harold Wilson himself once claimed that as prime minister he had no idea what was going on in MI5.

"The programme [continues the PA story] also features allegations of MI5 involvement in the downfall of a peer, Lord Lampton, a former government minister, in a sex scandal. Other investigations included the Profumo affair and the alleged recruitment of criminals by MI6, highlighted by the Littlejohn affair when two brothers claimed that British intelligence hired them to raid a Dublin bank."

Not only is there evidence that secret agents were involved in bank robberies, but there is strong evidence that they were also responsible for bombings in Dublin which provided the Irish government with an excuse to rush through extraordinary "anti-terrorist" legislation.

Recently, the BBC also banned one of Ludovic Ken-

nedy's series on Lord Mountbatten. The sensitive episode revealed the cynical manoeuvres and blunders of the Tory government over the invasion of Egypt in 1956. It included Mountbatten's admission that the log books of warships and other records were removed, falsified, then put back in order to "cook the history books".

A little bit of investigative journalism and exposure is all very well to maintain the credibility of the BBC. But when it comes to the secret intelligence service a line is drawn.

The blatant censorship of this Panorama programme shatters the myth of the "independence" and "impartiality" of the BBC.

On issues like this, the BBC is not a medium of information, but a medium of disinformation and concealment.

By Lynn Walsh

Bowled out Underhand

A sleeper who was for many years buried deep within the heart of the Labour Party's own machine has finally decided to reveal his hand in public.

"Throughout my fifty years' membership of the Labour Party," he wrote to 'The Times' and 'The Guardian' (27 January), "I have consistently refused to link up with any grouping." But the adoption of the 30-30-40 formula for the election of the leadership has finally persuaded him that it was time to come out into the open.

His fight against this reform was nothing to do with "a struggle between 'left and right', but a matter of democracy and common sense."

This eminent sleeper is none other than Lord Underhill, formerly plain Reg Underhill, the Party's National Agent.

In that position, Reg frequently produced voluminous reports alleging "Trotskyist entry" into the Labour Party. He particularly has a bee in his bonnet about 'Militant'.

Disappointingly for him, the National Executive Committee repeatedly rejected his reports and refused his invitation to launch a witch-hunt against the Marxists in particular and the left in general.

Elevated on his retirement to the peerage, Lord Underhill has been invaluable to Fleet Street. Whenever the hacks need a quote denouncing 'Trotskyists' or 'entryism', or any other form of 'left-wing conspiracy' in the Labour Party, he is on hand to provide some choice phrases.

Before, Reg always claimed to be a sort of Labour Party "civil servant", neutral and above the struggle of factions, considering only the interests of the Party.

Now, everything has changed: "It is my intention to now associate in my parliamentary work with the Manifesto Group and outside with the Campaign for Labour Victory on the understanding that it will work within the Labour

WELL KNOWN CLASS FIGHTER LORD UNDERHILL PUTS HIS CASE TO THE LOCAL BRANCH...



'I ASK YOU BROTHERS AND SISTERS, DO WE WANT THESE MILITANT TYPES IN OUR RANKS?'

Party to reverse the present position, as it has every right to do so."

Ironically, Reg has declared his hand just before the Campaign split up. On 4 February its steering committee liquidated the Campaign, as many of its followers, including its organising secretary, declared their support for the Council for Social

Democracy.

In other words, the misnamed Campaign finally revealed its true nature—the Campaign for Labour Defeat.

Where this leaves Reg remains to be seen.

But in any case, we are pleased that at long last Lord Mole-Hunter has broken cover and come out into the open.

Forging the South African revolution

From within the South African revolutionary movement comes an excellent new publication 'Inqaba ya Basebenzi'. Published by the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress, this quarterly magazine combines the experiences and struggles of activists within South Africa with arguments for clear socialist policies.

In its first edition, 'Inqaba ya Basebenzi' (roughly translatable as 'Workers' Fortress') focuses on the 1980 strike wave, and draws out the lessons of the black youth movement. It features articles by a former prisoner on Robben Island, and from a trade-union activist in the garbage workers' strike in Johannesburg.

As the mass of oppressed working people move into action, clear directions and clarity of ideas for taking the movement forward are essential. To help in this Inqaba Ya Basebenzi publish a theoretical supplement, which this month includes an article by Engels on 'Principles of Communism'. Another article on linking the trade union struggle to the whole South African revolution takes up a recent analysis of the same subject by the South African Communist Party.

Struggles of workers throughout the world are given prominence, with articles on Poland, Sri Lanka and Britain. Although written for and by workers in South Africa, any activist within the British or international labour movement who wishes to deepen their understanding of the Southern African revolution will find this new magazine invaluable.

Subscription: 4 issues, £3.20 [inc. p&p] from Inqaba ya Basebenzi, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX

Photo: MILITANT



There's a lot of it about.

What is the difference between a National Health and a private hospital? I've recently experienced both.

I've just been in Chesterfield Royal Hospital for six weeks, following a car accident. It has been a dose of my own medicine because I'm a doctor. The ward I was in was typical of the many that I've worked on, dating from the early 'thirties.

Soon after my discharge, I got myself shown round a brand new private hospital. I'd never seen anything remotely like it in all the hospitals I've been in.

The 96-bed Clemantine Churchill Hospital (CCH) in Harrow opened in August last year. It is owned by American Medical International (Europe), who also operate a private ambulance service, a medical laboratory and a nursing agency. They are planning a new £7 million hospital at Cheadle, outside Manchester.

The first thing I noticed, walking up to this station, was three Jags in the consultants' car park and a Rolls in the visitors' car park. The glass double doors opened into a modern luxury hotel—or so it appeared. No hospital smell of cabbage and disinfectant, stone staircases and peeling plaster.

Instead a carpeted reception area with potted plants, leather chairs and piped music! All very relaxing. A discreet sign pointed to Consulting rooms (not out-patients), and other departments—the only indication that it was a hospital after all.

Two or three ladies bedecked in fur coats came through the lobby in the next half hour. The crowded waiting rooms of out-patient and X-ray departments up and down the country seemed a million miles away.

I have been at diabetic clinics and fracture clinics where 120 patients have passed through in a morning. It's like a cattle market. Some have to stand for hours because there aren't enough seats; then a couple of minutes with the doctor and off out again. It is exhausting and frustrating for everyone.

But at CCH, time seemed unlimited.

By John Dale

(Bolsover Labour Party)

When I was brought into the Royal I was taken down to X-ray. It was 7 am and cold enough there to make me shiver. Lying on the X-ray table as dawn broke, the dingy grey walls and high ceiling made me feel I was already on the mortuary slab.

What a contrast at CCH! The X-ray department was warm, carpeted, brightly lit, and fitted with the most modern equipment.

From X-ray I was admitted to the ward. There was no problem about being cold here, because my bed was right next to a radiator and I was soon sweating away. Air conditioning had obviously not been invented in the 'thirties, nor installed since.

The 47 year old man in the next bed, told me he had been a patient in the ward as a boy. It was exactly as he remembered it, except that the ceiling had been lowered and then the majority of patients had TB and were put out on the balcony for fresh air.

It was quite uncomfortable to sit up in our beds (cost £590). Lying flat for too long can cause chest infections, bed sores, and thrombosis, so it's important to sit up but the beds' design didn't help at all.

There were also three old, heavy iron beds still in use. They should have been scrapped years ago. To raise the foot of the bed, two nurses struggled to lift it whilst a third pushed a

CATTLE MARKET OR LUXURY HOTEL Tale of Two Hospitals

stand under. The strain showed in their faces and they risked trapped fingers, back and other injuries.

Boredom is obviously a problem for a hospital patient but radio and TV can help relieve it. In the Royal every bed had a radio and there was a TV at the end of the ward. The bad news was that very few of the radios worked at all. Those which did only received one station—which could just be heard by holding the set next to the ear. The TV worked perfectly—but three quarters of the patients couldn't see it!

How do the facilities in a CCH ward compare? Firstly all the rooms are single. The floors are carpeted, walls papered and windows tinted. Each room had its own toilet, sink and shower.

The beds (cost £1,000) were electrically adjustable at the touch of a button by nurse or patient. They folded in two places to convert into a chair. There was a two-way call system and a special alarm system to call assistance when required. Each room had its own telephone (no waiting for a nurse to bring the trolley phone and no running out of 5p pieces).

The TV (with "Ceefax"), radio and all other gadgets were controlled from the bedside. Each room had piped oxygen—whereas on our ward the nurses had to carry heavy equipment to any patient needing it.

The food in the Royal was pretty fair on the whole,

apart from the revolting powdered eggs and powdered potatoes. I didn't eat anything at CCH but the Director boasted to me about the "brigade of chefs", all hotel trained. (The premises were also licensed so that patients and

Fortunately, no emergency occurred.

Another evening at about 8 o'clock the night nurse phoned in sick. Frantic phoning around the hospital produced frightening information. In a 400-bed hospital, there would be five trained nurses that night!

Learners and untrained auxiliaries were running most of the wards. How could they have coped if there had been a pile-up on the M1 a few miles away, or a major accident at a local pit? It doesn't bear thinking about.

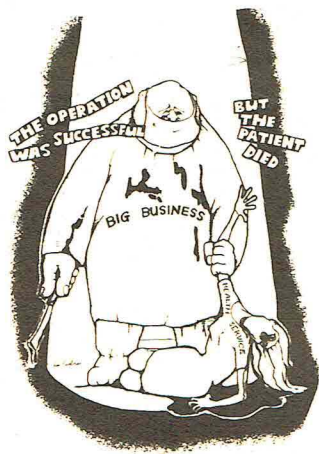
No such problems exist at CCH. (They have no casualty department for a start.) If a nurse is off, an agency nurse replaces her. There are no trainee nurses; they've all been trained by the NHS, at the taxpayers' expense (like the doctors and paramedical staff who work there).

The NHS should have its own 'nursing bank' to cover absences. Yet two pupil nurses on our ward, who had just completed their two-year training, were losing their jobs. The District Health Authority had only offered posts to six out of their class of fourteen.

This, then, is the "freedom of choice" the Tories so proudly champion. Either a luxury 'hotel hospital' with every modern gadget and comfort, and a full complement of nurses, or a service starved of money, crumbling at the edges, whose workers are battling against the odds to keep it going.

There is also the "freedom of choice" to join a waiting list with over 600,000 others or to be treated straight away. And we all have the "freedom of choice" to pay £92 per day plus fat fees for consultants, X-rays, laboratory tests and other extras. My six-week stay would have cost nearly £6,000 at CCH. Some choice!

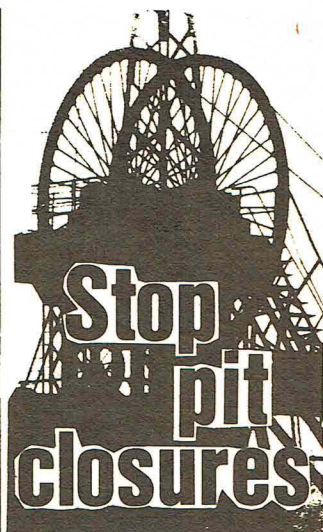
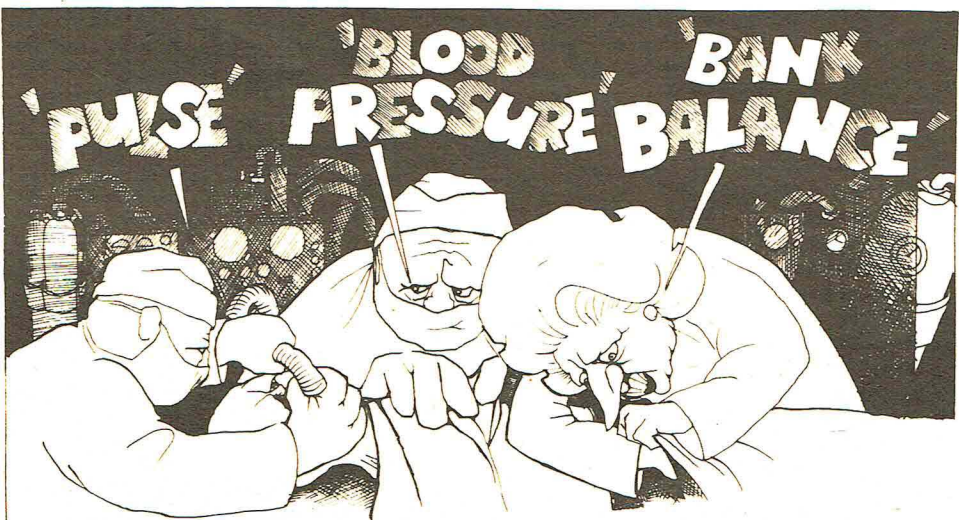
The next Labour government must abolish private practice, integrate private hospitals into the NHS, and put in the cash to give every patient the facilities this private hospital provides to a privileged few.



visitors could buy alcohol.)

Of course, the most important thing for a patient is the standard of nursing. The nursing level on our ward looked quite good, although the majority were learners. They were cheerful, friendly, and worked hard looking after us all.

If any were off sick, however, it threw an extra burden on to the others. One early evening, there was just the sister and one student to look after over twenty patients, give out wash bowls, serve tea, drugs and do all the other tasks.



Miners in Durham are facing the same problems as those in South Wales, which Meirion Evans reported about in 'Militant' [16 January].

Through the years of weak right-wing leaders, our great coalfield, one consisting of something like 150-200 pits with approximately 200,000 working miners, has been whittled down to 19 pits and 16,000 members of the National Union of Miners (NUM). Last month another pit in the county was told it must close because "it is not profitable to work the reserves of coal that are in reach of the colliery."

The Board's reason is that for every tonne of coal produced, 28 tonnes of water has to be pumped away. This and another eleven impending closures in the Durham Coalfield means that just like our comrades in Wales, we are experiencing a total block on recruitment in the area; even sons of working miners are being turned away from the pit gates.

As comrade Evans stated in his report, young men are being put on menial jobs in the mines for anything up to four years. I myself have waited for 3½ years to get the required training and have now been told I may have to wait a further six months.

In July at the Durham Miners' Gala, Arthur Scargill warned us that 12 pits were going to close in the Durham region. This was denied by our local leaders, based, they said, on promises from the Board.

Now we all know what the Board's promises are worth and we must force our leaders to tell the Board that we are not prepared to allow Ezra and Company to 'do a Robens' and further decimate our industry.

We must fight with a clear alternative: if there is not enough work for all the unemployed miners we must share out the work available and work a 30-hour week with no loss of earnings. All overtime must be banned, the retirement age must be brought down to 50 years, men over the age of 45 should be allowed to go on lighter work again with no loss of earnings.

Our industry must be expanded not contracted. The only way we can do this is to unite with our comrades in all the other areas of the British coalfield, and let them know that the time for back-peddalling is long gone; from now on we must be on the attack fighting for a socialist alternative based on the historic struggles of the distant and not so distant past.

By Alan Mardghum

(Monkwearmouth Lodge NUM, Durham)

From reforms to attacks on workers

The Attlee government of 1945-51 is often seen by activists as a radical, reformist example to be copied today. The 1950 Cabinet papers, now released under the 30-year secrecy rule, tell a different story.

In September that year ten gas workers were sentenced to jail for a month [later commuted to fines] under wartime Order 1305 for going out on strike.

By Derek Gunby

The Labour cabinet were discussing a bill to make strikes illegal in a wide range of industries, and to make permanent wartime regulation 1305. This would have made all strikes illegal unless 21 days' notice was given and there was a strike ballot of all members.

In a close alliance with American imperialism in the Korean war, the Labour Cabinet discussed whether or not to make the Communist Party illegal.

It was a far cry from the heady, confident reformist days of 1945. How was it, then, that a Labour government which had been swept into power by a massive majority demanding fundamental change had come to such a position by 1950?

From its first days the government had to decide whether it would link its reforms to the socialist transformation of society, or whether to operate within the framework of capitalism. They chose the latter course of compromise with British and American bosses.

Many of their 'radical' measures, such as the nationalisation of unprofitable industries were not unwelcome to some capitalists; their opposition to these measures

was more a concern that it could become a precedent to take over their profitable heartland.

The aspirations and pressure of the working class for basic change resulted in important reforms in the early years of the Labour government. But because they stayed within the framework of capitalism, the bosses were able to chip away at these reforms to help pay for their system. The 1950 Cabinet papers reveal discussion on cutting back on the National Health Service to provide finance for the imperialist war in Korea.

Troops used against dockers

Compromise turned into retreat. Three years earlier, in 1947, during a docks dispute, the government declared a State of Emergency and used troops to break the strike.

In 1948 in agreement with the TUC a wages freeze was imposed.

In 1949 (and again in 1950) a ban on all processions in London prevented the traditional May Day marches from taking place. Within the Labour Party and trade unions various members were expelled as "communist sym-

Attlee speaking at the 1945 TUC Conference

pathisers", including three Labour MPs. In 1949 the government introduced a ban on employing fascists and communists in the civil service and proceeded to sack known communists.

In seeking to take on the communists and other militants rather than the capitalists the Labour government played straight into the hands of the Tories. Their confidence, and that of the class they represent, grew. A flood of propaganda was unleashed—notably by Tate and Lyle—to persuade the public to reject Labour and opt for the Conservatives at the next general election.

Labour went into the February 1950 election on a limited reform programme which included the nationalisation of sugar, cement and industrial insurance. In fact the Labour leaders had no stomach for pursuing even these limited measures and promptly dropped them when they returned to office.

In a self-fulfilling way, which will be familiar to present-day activists, the failure of the Labour government to show a firm way ahead on the basis of socialism led to growing disillusionment. This

was then interpreted by the Labour leaders as justification for their weak and hesitant approach.

In fact the election result showed that the vast majority of workers remained loyal to Labour. The vote for Labour reached record levels. But the share of the total vote went down and Labour lost eighty seats and saw their majority reduced to seven.

Unofficial strikes

The response of the right-wing labour and trade union leaders was to intensify the attacks on the Communists and the left. The mood of the rank and file grew increasingly restive. In a series of unofficial strikes, dockers, busmen and gasworkers sought to regain some of their losses sustained in the period of wage freeze.

In 1949 the TUC conference, against the advice of its council, voted to end the wage freeze. The right-wing leaders of both wings of the movement chose to see in this and all discontent the hands of an international communist con-

spiracy.

The Cabinet papers show discussion on how to suppress the Communist Party, and more generally how to limit the right to strike. In the end they abandoned the idea of suppressing the Communist Party and limiting strikes because it was "impractical" (i.e. it would have aroused major opposition from within the labour movement, making it almost impossible to implement).

But Home Secretary Chuter Ede did impose a secret ban (which these papers reveal for the first time) against giving known communist immigrants British naturalisation. Several foreign communists were also expelled and visas refused to visiting communists or sympathisers.

Abroad the Labour government in 1950 supported the American-backed military regime in the Korean war. This support led to a major rearmament programme, which imposed a heavy burden on the British economy. The Treasury with the support of right-wing Labour ministers sought to place this burden on the working class by attacking the new welfare system.

Cuts were demanded in the National Health Service. According to the Cabinet papers Ministers actively considered imposing a weekly 'hotel' charge on hospital patients. Aneurin Bevan, the sole left-winger in the cabinet, fought against such a proposal but was forced to agree to 'economies' in the NHS.

This compromise lasted for one year but the following year the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Gaitskill, introduced charges for dental and eye treatment. This led Bevan to resign together with two other government members, Wilson and Freeman.

The Cabinet papers for 1950 confirm the experience of more recent, right-wing led Labour governments, who, faced with the difficulties and problems of a declining economy, turned to traditional Tory solutions. The particular lesson of the 1945-51 Labour governments is that even a radical government is forced to adopt a reactionary position unless it links its reforms with the socialist transformation of society.

HOW THE POEU VOTED AT WEMBLEY

The Post Office Engineering Union [POEU] at January's Special Party Conference fought a rear-guard action on behalf of the Parliamentary Labour Party's claim to the decisive say in the election of the Party leader.

The delegation meeting opened with a spirited defence of the union Executive's proposal for a 50% vote to the PLP, with individual ballots

in CLPs and votes cast by post from the unions.

In the conference, Bryan Stanley argued that there should be an electoral college, but it should decide on the leadership not in the "hot house" of conference, but through a system of postal balloting. This, he said, combined the advantages of the college with the safeguards of the postal system.

The POEU's Political Officer, John Golding MP, did, however, state that the delegation should not flagrantly fly in the face of the views expressed by branches in

response to an Executive letter.

But he claimed that there was no clear majority for any one formula, although he recognised that there was some support for what he disparagingly called the "Militant/USDAW" policy of a 40% union vote with 30% each for the CLPs and PLP.

Broad Left

The right said there was nothing in the letters from branches criticising the postal

ballot idea system. Later, however, it became clear the Broad Left's position was more in line with the views expressed in the branches' correspondence.

As there was only a few minutes to read through a sheaf of letters from forty branches, John Golding's claim was initially taken at face value—especially as many letters put forward similar formulae, but with minor variations and reservations.

But a compilation around the broad principles gave the following breakdown:

1. The one-third formula... 4
2. 40% to the unions... 16
3. 40% to the CLPs... 2
4. At least 30% to unions... 4
5. 40% to the PLP... 2
6. 50% to the PLP... 6
7. A ballot of all party members... 6

Assuming (generously) that all the branches in the last three groups would have tactically supported the PLP's 50%, there was still a clear 26 to 14 majority for either a "40%" or "one third" formula—both of which effectively destroy the PLP's monopoly of power.

But the right-wing majority

decided that it really did not matter what these branches thought and that we should continue to push the PLP line. One NEC member actually suggested that perhaps only the "disaffected" branches had replied and that the majority of branches (whose views were not known) would probably support the POEU leadership policy.

That remains to be seen. But POEU members will be interested to know that their delegates, once again, continued to vote for as little change as possible.



The worst blitz of all - a blitz on jobs

Photos by Julian McKittrick

Left: Keith Baldessara with the old UCS shipyard in the background
Right: Howden workers talking to Bob Wylie.

MARCHING FOR A FUTURE

Bitterly angry at Tory policies, shop stewards and unemployed workers explain why they will be supporting the Labour Party's demonstration against unemployment in Glasgow on 21 February

"THE WORKERS ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY MORE"

Clydebank has been blitzed three times in the last forty years. The industrial heartland of Clydeside, it suffered from severe bombing during the second world war.

In the 1950s and early 1960s it was the planners' bulldozers doing the job. The results linger on in the rubble-strewn, vacant sites throughout the town.

Since then there has been the worst blitz of all: a blitz on jobs.

The Singer Sewing Machine factory in Clydebank used to be the town's biggest employer. At its peak 20,000 workers were employed there.

The last 3,000 went 'down the road' last June.

Sewing machines and ship-building were the town's lifeblood. The Clydebank coat of arms contains a sewing machine and a ship—now neither are produced in the town.

Thousands upon thousands of jobs have been lost in the last decade.

Clydebank has become one of the Tories' "enterprise zones". A special "task

By Bob Wylie

force" under the Scottish Development Agency has been set up to try to cut the burgeoning dole queues.

Speaking in big business jargon, Stuart Gulliver of the Scottish Development agency, told the 'Financial Times' recently:

"The total mixture of incentives plus the availability of skilled labour is such that if we cannot attract private capital here then one must question the whole approach of UK regional policy. The alternative is that people have to go where industry wants to be."

Stuart Smith is nineteen and unemployed in Clydebank. The traditions of redundancy have made him cynical about big time promises. "The task force won't do anything. It will be another big con job. What has Thatcher done for Clydebank up till now?"

He'll be demonstrating on 21 February. So will his mates Andrew Holland and Terry Ross.

Terry insisted that they want real jobs and not the cheap labour of job creation.

Andrew complained about the lack of things to do: "Because there's nothing to do we hang about the streets. But if you're not in by half nine then you have to watch it or you'll get done for loitering."

Brian Smith said he didn't know much about politics though he might join the Labour Party Young Socialists. But he had this to say about the Tories: "They've done a lot of things for the higher classes, but nothing for the likes of us."

Keith Baldessara is one of the founder members of Clydebank Young Socialists. He is twenty-four, married with three kids.

To use the words of the man from the Scottish Development Agency, he has already tried to "go where the industry wants to be." He should be one of Mrs Thatcher's model stories. Instead he is living proof of Tory lies.

In February 1979, after being on the dole for nearly a year, he went to Burnley, in England, to a job in a plastic bag making factory.

Five months later he felt secure enough to bring his family down to Burnley to stay. They left their roots and moved into a spanking new council house in July, 1979.

The "good life" was within their grasp. Keith was taking home £140 a week.

In November 1979, however, the factory went on short time. By April 1980 Keith's earnings were down to less than £60, and they weren't making ends meet any more.

The two-day week arrived in May, and in desperation Keith and his family returned to Clydebank.

They couldn't get decent council house accommodation when they came back and have been forced to squat in a tenement ready for demolition.

Keith Baldessara is rightfully bitter: "We went in search of the good life. Now we've come back to squatting."

All this made Keith think. He knows where he is going now: "I'll be marching to show my anger against the Tories, to fight back. The working class are not going to take any more of the system which is being imposed on them just now."

Below: Howden workers leaving the factory for lunch-break





'SOCIALISM IS EITHER THE LOT, THE WHOLE WAY, OR YOU'RE PLAYING AT IT'

When you look at the factory from the outside you wouldn't think it was anything special.

It's old, grey, and the paint is flaking. The road outside it is cobbled and full of oily puddles. It smells like any other engineering factory.

Opposite the factory is the standard issue vacant lot, with four oil drums for goalposts, where the workers play football at the dinner break in summer.

We went there first to sell papers late in November of last year. It was biting cold. The first group passed, it seemed, without noticing. So did the second and the third.

Then Harry Murphy, the ex-shop stewards' convenor arrived. "Cold day for this game boys. C'mon inside the front door, you can stand beside the heater. I'll get you some tea."

We knew we were home and dry. The tea was good and so were the sales—eighteen in all. Jim Nelson, the present convenor of shop stewards, promised a regular order if we gave him some time to organise it.

He takes a dozen for his regulars now. It's been like that, tea and good sales, ever since.

So we asked Jim Nelson to give us an interview about the demo on 21 February. "Nae bother big yin, nae bother at all."

Only one way to go...

On the day, he arrived, as they say in Glasgow, "team-handed" with five fellow workers—May Hamill, John Watson, John McCracken, John Higgins and Harry Murphy. They treated us to a pie, a pint and some straight talking.

Jim Nelson calls a spade a shovel and Dr David Owen a "bampot".

They all know why they're marching on 21 February. They're marching against unemployment and the shadow of the dole that is hanging over their own fac-

Workers at Howden's engineering factory tell 'Militant' why they are marching

tory.

John McCracken was quite clear: "Do you know what my take-home pay was 15 years ago, in 1965? It was £49. Do you know what it was last week with short-time working? £49! What chance have you got?"

"There's no job security now for anyone. They can send for you next week and tell you the place is closing," added Jim Nelson.

But they are marching for more than one reason. They want to show their leaders that they want to fight.

May Hamill put it simply: "When you are up against the wall there is only one way to go."

"Where is the leader of the TUC?" demanded Harry Murphy: "Is he dead? He went on holiday, and we have not heard from him since."

Jim Nelson was determined when he said that you could never win anything by appeasement. He reserved irreverent comment for Sir John Boyd, one of the leaders of his union: "Look at Sir John, the Salvation Army man. He must be more interested in saving souls than saving jobs!"

So they are marching for a fighting leadership in the trade unions. They are marching for the same in the Labour Party.

"Do you know what the breakaways are breaking away from?" John Higgins asked. "They're breaking away from socialism, that's the fact."

"Whoever heard of moderates in a socialist party?" Harry Murphy chipped in: "It's not real."

May Hamill argued that the Tories had only got in because of people thinking "What difference does it make? They're all the same."

Jimmy Nelson finished off the "Gang of Three" and their cronies with the declaration: "Owen might think he's a socialist but he's not kidding us on. You cannot have a percentage of socialism. It's either the lot, the whole way, or you're playing at it."

They're marching for jobs, they're marching for a fighting leadership, and they're marching for a future.

"British industry will never recover. Factories are closing which will never open again. We are the pawn shop of the industrial world," said John McCracken.

John Watson added: "It's going to get worse and worse. There's no future in engineering now. Take washers for instance. When I was a boy they ordered them in thousands. Now they buy them in dozens."

At the end of the day ordinary workers will rally round and we'll win!

By the time we'd covered all this ground time was running out and we finished on the Labour Party and the 1980s. Some of them were optimistic, some were more pessimistic.

May Hamill was worried: "I get depressed, you know, thinking about the future. Everyone is restless now. I'm pessimistic unless there is a revolution."

Harry Murphy capped the discussion: "I'm hopeful, because if you read Marx he says one step back, two forward. The gauntlet will be down for the rest of the 'eighties. It's going to be a long fight, but at the end of the day I believe the ordinary workers will rally round and we'll win."

We went back to the factory in high spirits. It was still grey, the paint was still flaking, and it still smelled of oil.

But half an hour talking with Jim Nelson and Co. made us realise that this state of things won't last forever.

LOTHIAN:

WIN WORKERS' BACKING FOR COUNCIL'S FIGHT AGAINST TORY CUTS

In the front line of the fight against the Tory government stands the Labour controlled Lothian Region Council. For three years they have refused to cut vital services.

This Saturday (14 February) the Regional Labour Party has convened a conference of representatives of Labour Party branches, trade unions and tenants' organisations to rally support for the Labour councillors.

The Tories have been enraged at policies which have resulted in the best teacher/pupil ratio in Scottish schools, no increases in bus fares for five years, no reduction in social workers, nursery staff and home-helps, and many other benefits to working class people.

The government is now pushing through Parliament legislation to give the Secretary of State powers to force councils which incur "unreasonable and excessive expenditure" to toe the Tory line.

The stage is set for a confrontation. Already, the government's Rate Support Grant has been drastically cut back in real terms.

Faced with Tory threats and blackmail, the Labour councillors have rightly taken a firm stand. Their only "crime" is to carry out the manifesto on which they were elected.

The Regional Labour Party have set an example to the movement by convening Saturday's conference to mobil-

By Marjorie Bain

(East Edinburgh Labour Party)

ise support. In particular the Labour Party Young Socialists have taken the issue to the factories and pits to explain the arguments and get delegations to the conference.

It is now up to the conference to hammer out a programme around which the fight can be carried through to a conclusion.

First and foremost the issue has to be taken to the mass of working class voters to convince them that the council deserve support. Ironically, because people have been protected from the cuts, there has not been the upsurge of anger which has erupted against Tory councils who have implemented them.

A drive to win support is all the more necessary because of the hysterical campaign being waged by the Tories, businessmen and ratepayers' groups against the Labour council. This has concentrated on the big rates increases which the council has imposed.

The Tories' attempts to whip up hostility about rate is utterly dishonest. Cuts on the scale they demand would mean teachers sacked, nurseries closed, fares up and social services axed.

They also exaggerate the extent of the increase—last year the 41.5% rise was the

same as neighbouring Strathclyde's, and only 2% above the Scottish average.

Nevertheless, rate rises have imposed a burden on working-class as well as middle-class people. A similar rise this year, added to an expected rent rise of £2-£3, could mean as much as £6 a week extra for council tenants.

The Tories must not be given a propaganda weapon to use against the council. Already some companies have used rates rises as an excuse for closing down their factories or threatening redundancies.

The more the rates rise, the harder it will be to convince workers that the council deserves support.

It will mean workers, as ratepayers, being asked to shoulder the burden imposed by the Tory cut in the Rate Support Grant, and the £42 million that was allocated last year for interest repayments.

In any case, it is clear that the government will use its new powers to limit rate rises. Soon the council will be faced with the stark choice: cut the services and sack staff, or defy the government!

The conference must adopt a clear programme of:

- ★ No cuts
- ★ No redundancies
- ★ No massive rates increases

This would be the launching-pad for a mobilisation of the whole movement so that the Labour councillors are not left to stand alone and suffer legal action when the time comes to defy the Tories.

What must flow from this conference is such a tidal wave of protest against the Tory cuts, and in support of the council, that the government will not dare to penalise the councillors and will be forced to back down.

Such a movement would not stop at that. It would become part of the national movement to drive this reactionary government from office and replace it with a Labour government pledged to implement a socialist programme.

A socialist programme would not just reverse the cuts, but lead to a great expansion in services for all sections of the community.



Bosses sabotage Nicaragua

"The revolution guarantees private property and a mixed economy, but a clearly defined rule is that it should serve the traditionally oppressed and exploited majority."

The deputy Minister of Work in Nicaragua, Edgar Macias, who was a member of the country's employers' federation, COSEP, before the revolution, typifies in this statement the conflicts in Nicaragua eighteen months after the hated dictator Somoza fled following a mass insurrection.

Decades of neglect of basic needs of the economy and two years of civil war had united many different bodies against Somoza, from business executives to the workers and landless peasants who were the guerrilla fighters prior to the victory of the Sandinista "Government of National Reconstruction".

But cross-class alliances, which can be cemented together for a time by a common enemy, fall apart when deep problems face the country.

Alarm bells are ringing in the minds of Nicaraguan businessmen, who are protesting that the revolution has gone too far. Plots are being hatched to stop "the slide into socialism", backed by the new Reagan government in Washington.

The government has enormous reserves of popular support. Last year saw a growth rate of 17% in the economy. Unemployment has come down from 37% to 13%. Illiteracy was once, at 50%, one of the highest rates in Latin America. It has now fallen to about 12%, second lowest outside Cuba, as revolutionary literacy teachers have travelled the countryside and the urban slums.

Subsidies to private industry

But 70% of the economy still remains in private hands, and the ex-COSEP member, Macias, in the government accuses his fellow business chiefs of opposing moves in favour of the people.

"They are trying to decapitalise industry, commerce and agriculture even though the government has invested \$350 million in these sectors while they hadn't invested any of their own money.

"If the government wanted to be a demagogue they could have channelled that money into the infrastructure of peasants and workers."

Big fruit plantations and certain coffee interests who had been boycotting pro-

By George Collins

duction have been taken over but the main plank of policy has been subsidies and low interest credit.

But the businessmen and landlords fear the result, in a country which capitalism has left to rot and where land is in the hands of a few landowners. Government threats to take over idle land which owners refused to let to peasants because rents had been set too low, was one reason for COSEP and the small capitalist parties leaving the council of state.

Crucially, the ex-guerrillas have the monopoly of arms, which terrifies the capitalists. The Reagan administration is openly encouraging right-wing opposition groups, and trying to form a new counter-revolutionary army from the remnants of Somoza's old National Guard who periodically invade rural areas.

Destabilising the government

All measures aim to destabilise the Sandinista. Military intervention in Central America is also part of the US strategy.

Already US economic aid has been stopped on the pretext that Nicaragua are "spreading insurgency", even though 60% of the aid was for private industry. At the same time Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are used as bases against Nicaragua with US government encouragement.

A report in the 'Guardian' describes a meeting addressed by agriculture minister Jaime Wheelock of 100,000 people:

"He tried to explain that, if it had not been for the discipline and the political loyalty which the Sandinistas can command, there would have been far more land and factory occupations by the workforce.

"Making his point he told his audience it would cost nothing to declare 'All the farmland and all the factories are yours—put them into production.'

"At that point he was interrupted by a tremendous ovation, and he had to add hastily that, No, the means of production would not be nationalised."

There would be overwhelming support for an attack on capitalism and landlordism in Nicaragua. The constant sabotage of the gains under the present government can only be prevented by full mobilisation of that support.

CLASS MOVEMENT BIGGEST FOR DECADES

Attempts by the capitalist class of Belgium to solve their burning problems at the workers' expense are meeting a defiant response.

On 5 February a 24-hour strike brought most of the country's public transport to a halt and major industrial firms particularly in the South were hard hit.

By Roger Shrives

Belgian workers already suffer the highest unemployment rate in the EEC, over 12%. Now, the Christian Democrat-led government of Wilfried Martens want to impose a wage freeze, keeping increases to the official cost of living index, unless there is a voluntary arrangement before 15 February.

The 24-hour strike was just part of a wave of anger. Steel workers in Charleroi and Liege were the first to come out on strike against the government plans to merge Belgium's biggest steel making concern and add another 2,000 to 4,000 to the dole queues.

Groups of textile workers have even been on hunger strike because of threatened plant closures in the depressed French speaking South. Other textile workers have been causing havoc to domestic and international travel by blocking road and rail links.

The freeze has added fuel to this bitterness. About 100,000 trade unionists (out of a population less than a fifth of Britain's) demonstrated against the bill in January.

Some union leaders have demanded that wage rises already negotiated should stand this year, and a freeze be introduced next year. However, the strength of the unions (70% of Belgian workers are unionised) will make any such attacks difficult to carry out as Martens' government are finding.

The high unemployment has been used by the government to cow workers. They hoped that examples like British Leyland's closure of an assembly factory would add to the demoralisation.

Instead it is causing crisis within the government coalition which includes the Socialist Party.

Last month André Cools, Socialist Party president, said he would not stand for re-election after constant arguments with the left of the party and with the socialist trade union organisation FGFB. Several Socialist MPs voted against the pay policies.

More attacks to come

The problems are not over. High unemployment and frozen wages, coupled with tax relief for business, will lose tax revenue. The government, aware of a very large public spending deficit, will be looking for large scale cuts in services and benefits.

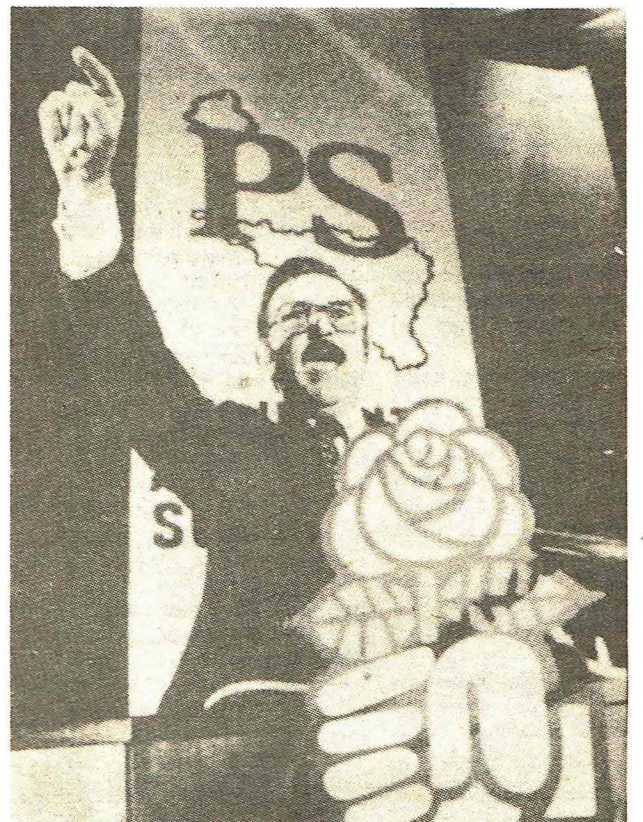
Profits are being squeezed in Belgium. Productivity rose in the '70s higher than in any other EEC country but mainly due to producing the same goods with fewer workers. Production has been increased only slightly while profits have almost halved in ten years.

Class conflicts are reaching a new pitch. French speaking Wallonia was the first centre of the industrial revolution on the continent. The coal industry was virtually eliminated there in the 1950s.

Steel has increased productivity due to redundancies—but is still unable to compete with Japanese steel. The industry is being murdered and the area has over one in five out of work. Throughout Belgium, the working class are angrily starting to fight back.



PHOTOS: Above: Prime Minister Martens
Below: Socialist Party leader Cools. Attacked by the unions and party left.



INDIA: Tension grows in Bangalore strike wave

Since 26 December, many workers in Bangalore in the public sector engineering industries have been on strike. The firms include Indian Telephone Industries Aeronautics Ltd., Bharath Electronic and BEML.

In 1978 management signed an agreement with public sector employees saying that if wages were revised in any other public sector engineering industries, wages in other public sector undertakings would

be improved accordingly.

Wages at Bharath were raised in January 1980. Workers here are just demanding that the government should honour their own written commitment, but the government have ignored all the strikers' demands.

The strike is, at the time of writing, in its fifth week. There was a hundred percent bandh in Bangalore city on 21 January, and there is picketing of govern-

ment offices. In one area workers were fired on, and two people died.

There is a tremendous tension in the city. The protracted strike is indicative of the mood of the workers. Not a single lathe is working in the factories. No negotiation is in sight as the government is determined to break the strike and demoralise the workers.

On top of this a further 90,000 loco workers have served notice of strike action

and the mood of opposition in the population is seen from the joint demonstration by workers and farmers planned for 5 February when 300,000 are expected to march to the State Legislature to protest their grievances.

By our Indian correspondent

"THE PAST WE INHERIT THE FUTURE WE BUILD THROUGH SOCIALISM"

Barbara Humphries reviews "The Fed"—a history of the South Wales Miners in the Twentieth Century by Hywel Francis and David Smith.

Published by Lawrence and Wishart. Price £6 including postage. Obtainable from World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

"It was as if the authorities deliberately stood to one side and seemed temporarily to allow the mining communities to carry on much as they wished..."

"Not one miner is said to have been arrested, although there was much illegal action. It was not so much a question of 'dual power' as almost one of transference of power in some valleys."

"In such villages as Bedling and Mardy, the miners through their strike committees and councils of action virtually ran their communities unchallenged."

This was South Wales in the nine days of the general strike of 1926. The Baldwin government was intent on smashing the working class movement, and had introduced the "Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies" to defeat the strikers. These hated strike breaking provisions hardly dared operate in the mining valleys.

In the mining communities of South Wales the Miners' Federation, known as 'the Fed', together with other working class organisations, dominated local life.

It was more than a trade union, it was a social institution providing assistance to local people on most of the problems which could arise 'from the cradle to the grave'. It ran choirs, football teams, libraries and other social activities, all of which gave the mining villages a sense of independence from the ruling class which saw its highest expression yet in 1926.

The strike itself polarised the classes—teachers, shopkeepers, and ministers of religion looked to the miners.

The organisation of communal kitchens boosted morale during the strike and the subsequent lock-out. Women and children were involved in demonstrations and meetings, embarrassing the police who had the task of clearing the streets.

This book, a welcome history of an important section of the working class

in this country, traces the struggles of the South Wales miners from the early days through to their victorious strikes against the Heath government.

The strong class consciousness which developed in the mining communities meant there was, from the beginning a strong Marxist influence in the South Wales mining valleys. It was the natural home of the Communist Party-backed National Minority Movement.

During the General Strike money was sent to the miners by Russian trades unions and links were built up which gained Mardy the title of 'Little Moscow'. CP members had influence in the town through the lodge and institute. Children joined the 'Pioneers' and 'Red-lets' instead of the boy scouts, secular funerals were held with wreaths made in the form of a hammer and sickle.

When, in 1928, the Conservative Club organised a tea party for Empire Day, Arthur Horner led other children in a counter-demonstration, claiming that those at the tea party had been "secured by tyranny, intimidation, bribery and corruption that was as corrupt as the Empire itself!"

During the general strike, the lodge committee became the executive power in the village. Grocers were called to this committee to agree rationing and the prevention of bulk-buying.

The lock-out ended in November 1926 with a defeat for the miners, due to the capitulation by the General Council of the TUC. The defeat was to mean wage cuts for all sections of the working class.

In South Wales, there was widespread victimisation of militants. Oliver Powell of the Tredegar lodge committee was blacklisted by the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company for 22 years! Trades Union activists were isolated in the union and 'blamed' for the set-back of the strike.

Those who did get their

jobs back, returned under atrocious conditions, which included mechanisation—the introduction of the conveyor belt system, which was to lead to fatal accidents.

The membership of the SWMF fell from 136,250 at the beginning of 1927 to 59,858 in 1928. At a new pit in Taff-Merthyr attempts were made to set up a 'scab union'. This union, called the South Wales Miners' Industrial Union, was set up by W A Williams, the secretary of the Nelson Conservative and Unionist Association.

It claimed to be 'non-political'! Members who raised political issues at lodge meetings were to be expelled. The SWMF conducted a struggle against 'company unionism' until 1934, when despite encouragement from the employers, the SWMIU folded.

In the aftermath of the 1926 defeat the SWMF had to contend with mounting unemployment, as the recession held the coalfield. Ex-miners drifted to London, finding jobs at below the union rate.

The Communist Party also adopted an ultra-left

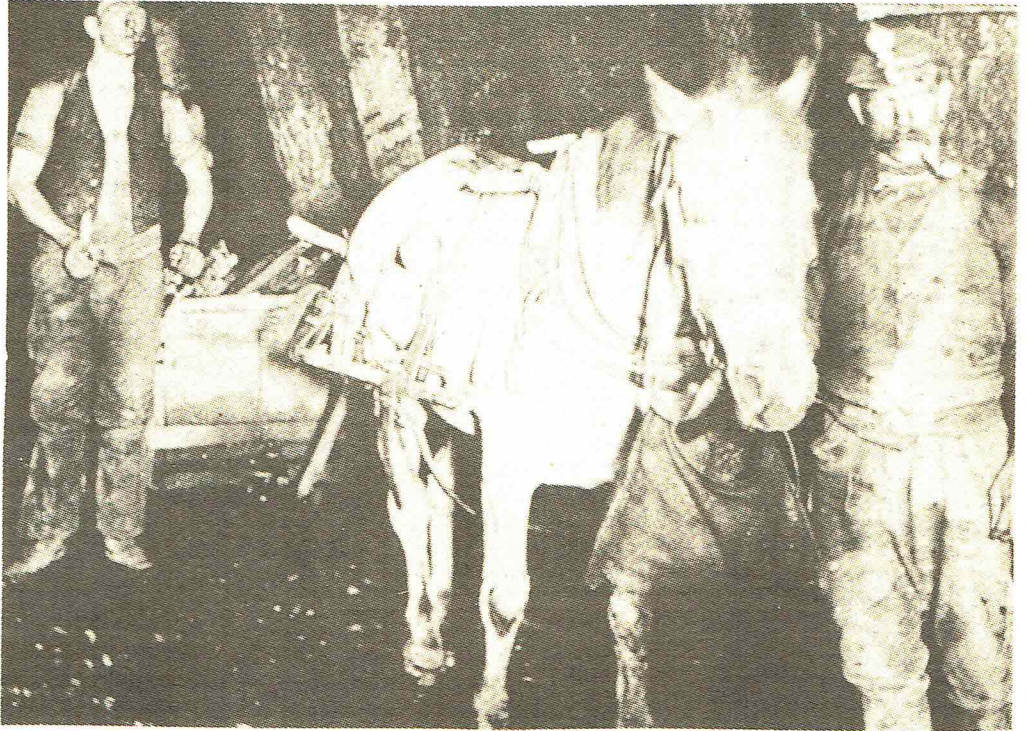
policy to the traditional organisations of the working class, which hindered the unity needed to rebuild the movement.

This was at the behest of Moscow, where the Stalinist bureaucracy in the so-called 'third period' scorned work with 'social democratic' organisations.

In the 1930s the SWMF began to recover its ground. Company unionism was finally smashed by a series of 'stay-down' strikes (pit occupations) which had the support of whole communities.

Serious attempts were made to organise unemployed miners into the SWMF. Hunger marches, involving hundreds of thousands of people were organised, and local committees of action, involving all working class organisations were set up.

The issue of fighting fascism was taken seriously at home and abroad. At home defence groups were set up. Internationally the main issue was the Franco rising in Spain.



PHOTOS:
Top: conditions in the pits in 1906.
Below: South Wales hunger marchers on their way to the TUC in 1931



The SWMF had a history of support for the struggles of workers in other countries. During the Spanish Civil War they sent recruits to the International Brigade, they prevented the importation of coal to Asturias, and collected money for the Spanish workers, despite their own poverty.

The SWMF campaigned against the government's policy of 'non-intervention' in Spain (i.e. not supplying arms to the Republican side) and there was growing support for industrial action on the issue from the lodges.

This, however, was opposed by the leadership of the SWMF and also the CP who wished to court an alliance with the Liberals—the policy of Popular Frontism, which was leading to the defeat of the Spanish revolution. Links with illegal unions in Spain were maintained until the 1970s.

This comprehensive history of the SWMF offers many lessons for the labour movement, which can be drawn from the events in the past. The new area banner (of the NUM) reads, "the past we inherit, the future we build through social-

ism."

Nationalisation of the mines was seen by the founding conference of the NUM as one aim but not the final aim, which was the abolition of capitalism. Under the National Coal Board the miners have seen pit closures, the continuation of low wages and dangerous working conditions.

The strikes of 1972 and 1974 against the Heath government marked a watershed for the miners and for the working class as a whole. The authors write of 1970-74, "The vanguard and extra-parliamentary role played by the miners... in this confrontation was a throw-back to the inter-war period, except that the miners had the sweet taste of revenge in 1972 and 1974 for the humiliations of 1921, 1926 and thereafter."

The spirit of 1926 was revived in the Salltley depot picket of 1972. It will be felt again in the future.



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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Labour 'democrats' lose the vote

Comrades

The Labour Party has settled the issue of the new method of electing the leader and deputy leader of the party.

The success of the USDAW resolution (30% to PLP, 30% to CLPs and 40% to unions and other affiliates) means that all sections of the party will now have a say in what has hitherto been the PLP's preserve. Those who still argue that this is a bad thing, that the conference at Wembley should not have received such a decision, do the party no good.

It is ironic that those in the party so hostile to the NEC one-third principle have in fact fared much worse than they would have done had they supported the NEC. However, these people—"filled with their own self-importance"—are so inconsistent that nothing they say or do surprises anyone any longer.

On the one hand, Dr Owen and his fellow travellers decry the idea of an electoral college on the grounds that it takes away from the PLP some of its power to be the sole decider of the party leader and deputy leader. They call the taking away of such power an attack on the parliamentary system.

Yet their own proposal—one member one vote—would have taken all power away from the PLP.

There are many in the party who remember the days when the block votes of the unions were used to support the likes of Owen, Williams, Rodgers and their policies. Where were the complaints then about the use of such votes? Indeed, union leaders lining up behind the right wing of the PLP with their block votes in their pockets were hailed by those people as defenders of common-sense and fine, upstanding democrats, to be rewarded with cabinet appointments and peerages.

How things change! The so-called "Gang of Three" don't object to the block vote when it is used in their favour—only when they don't like the decision. That is their idea of democracy.

If these people don't like the way the party is going, then the answer is not to hold meetings with new arrivals at merchant banks or to set up 'colleges'. They should get out of the party now and leave those of us who want to unite behind Michael Foot and get on with the real task facing the party—to fight against the Thatcherite destroyers of British industry.

Those who make threats against, and demands on, the party, have no place in that fight.

Let us all in the party stop giving them the attention they crave. We will get on with the real fight while they can slip quietly away into the dustbin of history, like so many before them.

Fraternally
Joe Marino
General Secretary
(Bakers' Union)

Greetings Comrades

I see there is to be a new centre party, formed by the Gang of Three. They did quite well as Labour Party members; they were MPs, then ministers of state; Roy Jenkins had a plum job at the EEC. Now they want to split the party and bite the hand that has fed them.

David Steel has a cheek to expect a new party to join hands and become a satellite of the Liberal Party. The same Liberals pulled down the last government, hoping to gain. Instead they lost. We are now enjoying the consequences.

Loyalty is in short supply.
Yours fraternally
C Taylor
Axbridge, Somerset

Computerised conscience?

Dear Comrade

Alan Hartley's enlightening little article on Class Contrast ('Militant', 23 January) overlooked one small point, viz: The semi-skilled man, after 7½ hours' overtime, was paid £100.10. After stoppages of £23.29 he took home £78.81 which, if my arithmetic is anything to go by, means that he was overpaid £2.00. Could this mean that Reckitt & Colman have a computer with a built-in social conscience?

Yours fraternally
Bryan Bush
Vice-chairman,
Burngreave Labour Party
Sheffield

Small town blues

Dear Comrades

Life today is unbearable if you are on the dole, but if you are unemployed in a small town or village the situation is worse.

I was born in a small town and this is my third time being on the dole and by far the worst.

When I lost my £85 a week job last September I knew nothing about the Young Socialists and just walked the streets or played records all day. Since meeting the LPYS my life has changed.

Last November I left Littlehampton for the first time in two months to go to the Liverpool demonstration. That was my first demo and by God I enjoyed every minute of it.

When the county council elections come up in May we must fight to the bitter end to win every seat, especially if Thatcher's idea to give businessmen an extra vote comes about.

Then the Labour councils can help the unemployed by giving us a youth club we can go to and fighting for cut price bus and train fares, so that we can afford to go for job interviews.

Yours fraternally
Graham Padbury
Littlehampton LPYS

Artists face stark choice

Dear Comrades

I think that Alan Huyton's letter (last week) misses the point that Cde Bough (16 January) was trying to make in her article about the Tortelier concert.

To say that "we shouldn't begrudge an artist's skills or rewards" falls into the easy trap of thinking that artistic skills are "God-given" and somehow outside society

and social relations. It is not a question of "begrudging" talent, but recognising that Tortelier and Co. are the end product of a strict and exhaustive process for particular skills, no different from the selection process that a skilled artisan goes through.

The results are a product of capitalist society—perhaps the most worthwhile product of that society, but still a commodity to be bought and sold.

Certainly we should "begrudge" the rewards that these "international artistes" manage to amass, just

as we should "begrudge" the salary and perks of a "highly skilled" company director or manager; not for any "moral" reason but because of the system which produces one highly-paid cellist means that ten thousand or more children who wish to learn music for their own pleasure will be crushed underfoot.

Any artist has a responsibility for their role in society, even when involving an abstract art-form like music. Some of the best of the virtuosi, like Menuhin, recognise the contradiction and try to resolve it in "good

works". Many others accept their position and revel in their distance from the 'common herd'.

The less abstract and more concrete the art, the more starkly the question is posed. At a time of revolution the artist, like anyone else, has a choice: to stand with reaction or to put his or her skills at the service of the working class, which may well mean destroying those very skills for which he or she was most prized by "culture" in capitalist society.

Yours fraternally
Geoff Jones

Corrie visits South Africa with eyes shut

Dear Comrades

Reading Ron Brown's important report on Afghanistan ('Militant', 30 January), a sentence sparked off an interesting comparison for me. "If we had gone to perhaps Pakistan, or Chile, or South Africa, nothing would have been said!" How true!

My local MP John Corrie (we hope he won't be again) has just returned from a visit to South Africa and Namibia in his capacity as a private parliamentary secretary. No press outrage—all expenses paid and no suggestion of South African public relations.

He gives an illustrated talk to the Women's Section of Largs Conservative and Unionist Association on his return and tells them he is very impressed.

I quote from the Largs and Millport Herald: "Blacks came from the 'homelands' (Herald's inverted commas) to work in the mines. They must know 120 key words relating to mining before being employed but once in, everything is done for their welfare—living quarters, clothes, food all supplied. Conditions are excellent; the only drawback—separation from their families."

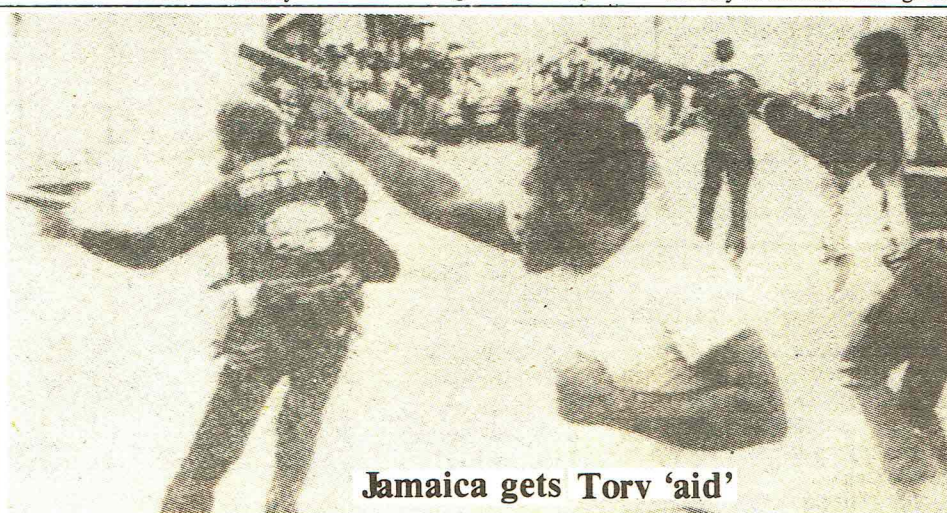
Appalling! And appalling in a wider sense, in that it reflects the same callousness behind the Tory/capitalist policy regarding working people: insensitive, no respect and so removed by privilege, so ill-informed by their own education system and media, that they believe that men and women and families can be shunted around like farmers' beasts.

Ron Brown's visit and report was objective and clearly courageous, as he would know enough to expect a hostile and devaluing press coverage.

John Corrie went to South Africa and saw the sun, didn't notice apartheid in the shadows and gained no conception of what it means to be a black man, hundreds of miles from family, working in a Johannesburg gold mine for a white capitalist system. So Corrie comes back to local cheers and a job well done.

It makes me angry and more and more determined to fight harder for socialism in this bloody bastion of powerful ignorance.

Fraternally
Jim Thomson
West Kilbride
Labour Party



Jamaica gets Tory 'aid'

Armed thugs of the US-backed, misnamed Jamaican Labor Party, during the recent election

Dear Comrade

No wonder the news that the Jamaican government of Michael Manley had been defeated by Edward Seaga's 'Labor' Party was met with such glee by the press both here and in the US.

Apart from putting the country in hock to the IMF Seaga, in defending the needs of the people who put him in power, has decided to buy £6 million worth of Land Rovers for his police force. Obviously just what

the Jamaican working class needed!

Our own Tory government were not slow to offer a loan to help purchase the vehicles, probably all too aware of the consequences of not ensuring one successful part of BL.

Not that production of Land Rovers is in itself a bad thing. These vehicles could be used more usefully, in a socialist society, to assist in developing all sorts of public projects.

Unfortunately the workers in Jamaica and in the BL factories in the UK have one thing in common: they do not control their factories or, therefore, the goods they produce and the uses they are put to. However, just as we are going to get shot of our Tories and their bankrupt system, so too will the Jamaican working class.

Fraternally
David Churchley
Glasgow Cathcart
Labour Party

Phone bill politics

Dear Comrades

It was reported in the newspapers on 20 January that telephone charges may rise in the summer for the third time in eighteen months.

With the last rise in November, the Post Office bosses could blame pay rises as well as cash limits for the price rises. This time they have to tell the truth: higher tariffs and the recession.

Government cash limits and the refusal to let British Telecom borrow money elsewhere for investment has caused great problems in keeping up with demand. It clearly demonstrates the craziness of Tory monetarist policies that to solve the problems of the industry,

aggravated by price rises, their answer is to raise prices yet again!

This is only one aspect, however. The Tories' attitude to British Telecom should also be seen as an attempt to scale down and discredit the public sector, to make way for their friends in the private sector to help themselves to rich pickings.

The next Labour government must stop the ruin of the industry by re-nationalising any sector hived off by the Tories, nationalising all the supply firms and ensuring adequate investment as part of a socialist planned economy.

Yours fraternally
Clive Walder
CPSA, British Telecom
Brighton

Sri Lankan teachers' appeal

Comrade

The Ceylon Teachers' Union is the biggest teachers' trade union in Sri Lanka. At the moment nearly 3,500 members of our union have lost their jobs after participating in the 1980 July general strike.

We're very anxious to study the international political situation. As you are aware, the capitalist news media gives a distorted view of world political affairs. Also their views are pro-imperialist and pro-capitalist.

Sri Lanka is a very poor country. Our economy is

totally exploited by the multinationals and the imperialists.

Our union publishes weekly newspapers in native languages viz. Sinhala and Tamil. Through our publications we're trying to give a real picture of neo-colonialism. And also through our publications we support the liberation struggles throughout the world.

Therefore please send us 'Militant' and other publications. In return we'll send our publications.

Yours truly
H N Fernando
President

Exiles

Dear Comrades

Mrs Thatcher and her pals are always telling us that in order to find work we should become mobile. But unemployment is nationwide and not just regional, so her words are just so much bull.

I know four people who are bricklayers, and because they cannot find work in good old Blighty they are all going over to West Germany, where, due to low interest rates (8%) the German government has got a massive building programme.

How much more mobile can you get? Having to leave wife, kids, and home for nine months or a year so you can earn some decent money.

In West Germany the rate for good bricklayers is between £200-£300 a week, as opposed to about £140 in this country, and incidentally, the Germans think that British workers are hard-working and conscientious, which is why they prefer to take on British bricklayers.

What is it the Tory press keep saying: British workers are idle, good for nothing, work-shy?

It's not the workers who should go into 'exile' to find work; the Tories and their capitalist society should be exiled, for good!

J Hayes
Poole LPYS

ads

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

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

Only £7.50 (same price as last year). Please book early as capacity limited. To book write/phone K Nicholson, 25 Grotto Road, Cliftonville Margate, Kent (0843-291293)

BIRKENHEAD Militant Public Meeting 'Labour's right prepare split—build a mass socialist Labour Party' Speakers: Tony Mulhearn (Vice-president, Liverpool District Labour Party). Wednesday 18 February, 7.30 pm, Birkenhead Labour Club, Cleveland Street.

SCOTTISH LPYS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hear: Dennis Skinner MP Speaker Northern Ireland Young Socialists
Venue: Partick Burgh Halls
On: Saturday 28 February—Sunday 1 March
Time: 10 am to 5 pm

GLASGOW public debate Young Conservatives v Young Socialists
★ Wednesday 4 March
★ McLellan Galleries, Glasgow
★ 7.30 pm start
All welcome

Militant Marxist Discussion Groups The highly successful Marxist discussion groups in Wandsworth are continuing. Those readers interested in participating should contact:

Bob McKee, 675 5184, for the Battersea group—at present discussing 'State and Revolution'.

Tim O'Donnell, 870 8324, for the Tooting group—at present discussing 'The Communist Manifesto today'.

TOWER HAMLETS Militant Readers' Meeting 'Labour's Future—left, right or centre?' Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E.2. (off Bethnal Green Road). Speakers: Peter Taaffe (editor, 'Militant'); Eileen Short (delegate to Labour Party Special conference, in personal capacity). 7.30 pm, Wednesday 18 February.

SCOTTISH LPYS Annual Conference MILITANT PUBLIC MEETING
Hear: Bob Wylie 'How to fight unemployment'
Venue: Partick Burgh Halls
Saturday 28 February 6.00 pm

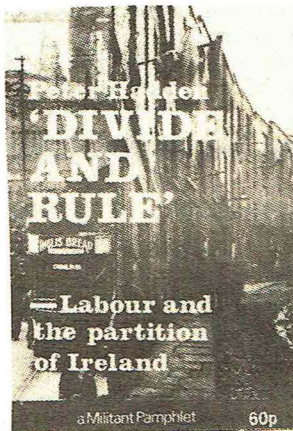
'Defend the Longbridge 8' conference.
Saturday 14 February, 2-5 pm. Dr Johnson House, Bull St., Queensway, Birmingham. Speakers from Longbridge & other victimisation struggles. Sponsored by Selly Oak LP. All welcome. More details, phone 021-471 1964.

'Militant' pamphlet

DIVIDE AND RULE

by Peter Hadden

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



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, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN. Price 50p + 15p p&p]

'LESSONS OF CHILE'

Read this Marxist analysis price 50p [+ p&p] from World Books 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Build Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 April	Target for year
Eastern	225		1775	7100
East Midlands	238		1375	5500
Hants & Dorset	290		1300	5200
Humberside	54		875	3500
London East	295		1900	7600
London West	295		1200	4800
London South	128		1375	5500
Manchester & Lancs	314		1450	5800
Merseyside	147		1650	6600
Northern	188		2150	8600
Scotland East	88		1100	4400
Scotland West	165		1875	7500
Southern	388		1775	7100
South West	245		875	3500
Wales East	106		650	2600
Wales West	62		1150	4600
West Midlands	194		2150	8600
Yorkshire	336		2250	9000
Others	23		3125	12500
Total received	3781		30000	120,000

Target for 11 April £30,000 Target for year £120,000

BE CONSTRUCTIVE BUILD MILITANT

Keep up our sales boom

A Nottingham managing director is giving up his £20,000 Rolls Royce after attacks by "vandals". "A Rolls is like a red rag to a bull in the present economic situation," he said.

By Steve Cawley

'Militant' has, of course, never advocated vandalism as a solution to capitalism's ills but certainly no one can be surprised that in a high unemployment area, people take exception to these signs that someone is doing very nicely, thank you, out of our exploitation!

'Militant's' alternative isn't destructive—it's constructive. Build the sales of 'Militant', build the influence of Marxist ideas and give us the resources to build a mass circulation socialist paper. Then we can fight for a society where everybody can have a decent life.

J Parkes of Walsall writes, "I enclose a contribution of £1 towards your fighting fund. In the past I have had my differences with 'Militant' and still have some! But after a considerable amount of investigation, I have reached the conclusion that 'Militant' is absolutely the best on the left. If I were not unemployed, my contribution would be much bigger."

J Hull, a CPSA member in Colchester, says, "Please find a cheque for £5 to the fighting fund. Kevin Roddy for President in 1981!" A Littlehampton supporter's

letter came with a cheque for £23 ("...We can see our contributions being put to good use in the continued improvement of the 'Militant', both in content and lay-out.")

These sentiments are obviously shared by members of Maghull Labour Party (Merseyside) who sent us £15, East Kilbride LPYS £35, E Edinburgh LPYS £7, Southern Region and London LPYS Conference collections over £100, including £30 from Folkestone LPYS and Wanstead & Woodford LPYS (London) £5.

Readers' meetings were also a good source of funds for us (is there one coming up in your area?). One of the best collections came from S E Wales, where nearly £100 was raised! Other meetings were held in

Bradford, Blackpool, Sunderland, Sheffield, Leeds (on the Marxist view of world war), and in Ferryhill, Co. Durham (on Poland). £135 came from these meetings and a further £23 from discussion groups in Manchester, Reading and Teesside.

Trade unionists' donations this week included POEU readers in Brighton (£10), sheet metal workers' union expenses (£13.70), TGWU 5/909 branch £20, and B Owen (AUEW Maesteg, for help by a comrade at an Industrial Tribunal) £10.

Other larger contributions came from M Richards (Leicester, £25), M Housby and fellow students (Newcastle, £20), tenners from H and E Cohen (Leyton), M Toher (Ealing), A Stratford (Canterbury NUR), a £7 "Kings Shilling" donation, and fivers from M Abrahams, N Jones (Abergele), T Reakes (SOGAT, Bristol) and P Giblet (NW London), B Mark (Edinburgh IRSF) and K McMillan (E Kilbride NUPE).

But we need much, much more than the £1,646 received this week to meet our annual target of £120,000 and to get to £30,000 by 11 April. But if we can count on every reader to help us with regular donations, we'll be able to expand the 'Militant's' news coverage, comment and analysis.

It's up to you! Be constructive! Please rush your donations into our office as soon as possible!

Recent developments in the Labour Party have provoked an enormous interest in 'Militant' and consequently our sales are climbing.

But they'll have to go through the roof if we are going to reach everybody who wants to find a way to get the Tories out! Here are just some examples of how our sellers are attempting the task!

In Hackney after a picket of the Town Hall protesting against racist attacks 35 papers were sold. Are there any pickets, protests, demos in your area? Wherever there are people in struggle that's where the 'Militant' should be.

In Blackburn our sellers established a 'Militant' record street sale; with a bold display of posters and a petition they sold 140 papers! Even in sedate Lytham St Annes our supporters sold 36.

A magnificent 250 papers were sold at the CPSA special conference, and in the Seamen's dispute, NUS members have bought papers to distribute to members on strike-bound ships.

But don't wait till you're in dispute, get a regular bulk order, sale or return, and sell to your workmates, like NUR members at London's Paddington station.

With rising unemployment, the Marxist programme of our paper is vital; in Leyton one of our unemployed comrades has established a regular sale of 20-25 per week outside her door office. Our sellers in Swansea cover the pits in their region. Are you sure that everyone who could in your area is getting the 'Militant'?

**THIS WEEK
£1,646**

Industrial

in brief

Dave Kennedy, who is a Broad Left candidate for the North West Divisional Council in the USDAW elections, says: "When talking to members two topics always come up—wages and redundancies. Our union still covers some of the lowest paid workers in the country—if elected I will fight every way I can to implement the ADM decision for a £70 minimum wage and a 35 hour week. These are the first steps in increasing the living standards of USDAW members. On redundancies, I will support any members who are fighting to save their livelihood and will support all attempts to mobilise the labour movement in united action to bring down the Tories."

The report on the Suffolk NUAAW conference in Militant 535 included an error. It said the farm workers had been offered an 11% wage rise by the employers. But this was the first offer—when the union returned to the employers for further negotiations, this had been dropped to 10.3%! This derisory offer must be fought by the NUAAW, whose members face the lowest wages of any of their European counterparts with the exception of Ireland.

Thurrock council have backed down from their plans to put refuse collection out to private tenders [see Militant 537]. The council employed dustmen rightly feared this could lead to redundancies and lower wages, and fought the proposals with a demonstration and lobby of the council. NUPE officer Dave Smith said, "We see this as an outright victory. But this is only a start. With unemployment running at almost 2½ million, we will be fighting any job losses, even if they are to go through so-called natural wastage."

Burroughs machine plant in Cumbernauld has announced 440 redundancies. But the unions have discovered the firm received £167,000 in regional development grants for their new factory in West Lothian. They have called on Labour MP Norman Hogg to raise the issue in parliament.

Redundancies at Seamen's Dairy in Ipswich have been accepted by the workforce. When management announced 84 jobs were to go, the union involved, USDAW, set up an anti-closure committee, with support from the workers to fight the bosses' plans. In January, a demonstration against the closure was held. However, management offered much improved severance pay, and although many workers wanted to hold out, the majority accepted the offer. Derek Leeks, shop steward, said, "Other workers ought to be prepared for similar situations in their own industries and learn from the experiences of places like Seamens."

NEW MOOD IN USDAW

The preliminary agenda for the USDAW 1981 Annual Delegate Meeting, just issued for branches, has shown an increasingly critical attitude towards the union leadership by the rank and file.

One of the most important debates at the ADM will be on wages. A majority of propositions call for a minimum wage of £80 for 35 hours.

The union members are becoming increasingly impatient at the lack of a firm lead by the Executive Council on this matter.

The demand, yet again, for a concerted pay campaign involving all levels of the union is made, and there will undoubtedly be much criticism of the EC for failing to deliver on this vital issue in 1980.

Other issues on the agenda, such as nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the EEC, defence of abortion rights, and support for the widened franchise in the election of the Labour Party leader, reflect an increasing politicisation in USDAW's ranks.

1981 is also a rules revision year. The most controversial amendments relate to the executive's right to appoint additional delegates to union delegations.

Before the TUC, for example, the right-wing executive appointed an additional 19 delegates to

By Tony Loftus

(Broad Left candidate, Standing Orders Committee, USDAW)

the delegation, thus swamping the Broad Left supporters. In the 1980 Labour Party delegation, the composition between left and right was quite evenly balanced, but the executive appointed an additional 17 on top of the 18 which were elected. These actions have outraged many USDAW members who feel that the rule which permits this 'swamping' makes the democratic elections to these delegations a complete sham.

To this end, there are numerous amendments which propose to increase the size of the elected delegations to the TUC and the Labour Party by 50%, and limit the EC additions to a maximum of five. Clearly, these proposals must be supported.

Other important amendments being proposed are for the General Secretary (elected for life) and the Deputy General Secretary (appointed by the EC) to be elected every four years and



two years respectively. By passing these amendments, USDAW members will ensure a continuous accountability of the union leadership.

Similar support should be given for an amendment calling for decisions regarding union support for TUC general council candidates, and Labour Party NEC candidates nominated by USDAW, to be voted on at the union ADM. Another amendment permits the general secretary to 'employment' outside the union (with EC permission), provided all money or payments accrued are returned to

central funds.

This amendment would entitle the general secretary to seek a parliamentary seat, thus giving the union political representation. This raises fundamental political principles for the membership to discuss, but if passed would be a progressive step for the union.

But while the preliminary agenda shows that USDAW members want greater control over the union, this alone is not sufficient.

It is necessary to elect representatives who will attempt to fulfill these aspirations. That is why it is

imperative, in this year's elections, to vote for the USDAW Broad Left candidates for the Executive and Divisional Councils, TUC and Labour Party delegations, and for Standing Orders Committee.

Most importantly, it is the successful election of Audrey Wise as president. By electing these candidates, the USDAW members can ensure the transformation of USDAW into a democratic fighting union, committed to defending and improving their living standards.

Ansell's

The owners of Ansell's brewery in Birmingham, Allied Breweries, have announced they will close the plant where the 1,250 workers have been on strike for a month over loss of pay due to lay-offs.

The bosses say the closure is because of "recurring industrial conflict"—this is an outright lie; over the past 11 years there has been only one other strike.

Rather, the bosses are trying to cower the workers into defeat. The action must now be escalated to other Allied Breweries' depots to force the bosses to back down.

Comments from pickets (taken before the announcement of the closure) show the angry and determined mood of the Ansell's workers.

"We are not going anywhere, these are our jobs and we are stopping here till we get them back."

Prior's picket code has been ignored with at least 60 (not 6!) on the line.

Matt Folarin, vice chairman of the T&G branch, said, "Ansell's have tried everything to break the solidarity of the workforce;

all they have done is to strengthen it.

"Now our brothers and sisters in ACTSS, the staff and also middle managers of the company have pledged their total support."

Both M&B and Courage's have indicated they will not supply Ansell's pubs. This puts a spanner in the supply of beer to managed and tenanted houses which have been unprecedentedly released from their ties by Ansell's.

Ken Bradley, branch chairman, said, "We have allowed Allied in the past to pick off smaller branches one at a time."

"Now with a strong branch they have come unstuck. When you get phone calls from Devon saying they will help us to win the dispute and co-operation from the Liverpool dockers, it is a good sign."

Although sacked there is a high morale and spirit, a confidence that should mean victory.

By Brian Debus

(Erdington LP)

Lister

By R Hunt (AUEW shop steward, Lister)

The action of the 500 workers at Lister, a Swindon engineering firm, has proved an excellent example of union solidarity, despite the vicious propaganda of the local press.

The 'Evening Advertiser' accused stewards of 'Bully boy tactics' over their members (see last week's 'Militant').

The stewards and the members carried out a full investigation of the allegations, which were dismissed as untrue.

The evening before a mass meeting the Advertiser suggested that the dispute was to end because "The members feared for their

jobs."

The mass meeting proved that this suggestion, like the others, was really totally unfounded; the rank and file voted to carry on our action by a majority of well over 2-1.

This forced the Advertiser to retract its previous article with a tiny paragraph saying, "After yesterday's suggestion that some workers feared for their jobs, a vote this morning supported the shop stewards in their campaign to improve the company's offer."

The 24-hour picket is still having 100% success in stopping movement of goods in and out of the factory.

The AUEW workforce are fighting for a 30% pay rise after being insulted by a derisory pay offer of 7%.

Theirs is a struggle against Hawker Siddely, a giant multinational of which Lister's is a subsidiary, which has a huge profit potential. Lister's workforce will not have the wool pulled over their eyes. They have seen through the capitalist press and the bluff of big business.

The strikers deserve all the help they can get as we enter our third week of hardship. Please send all donations to: **D Boorman, RAL Strike Fund, 161 Whitbourne Ave, Park North, Swindon, Wilts.**

KTM

The strike at KTM Brighton came to an end when a mass meeting last Thursday voted by 250 votes to 174 for a return to work.

The management the day before had carried out their threat and announced 110 redundancies with more to follow in August. Having been advised they would lose

their legal entitlement to redundancy pay by remaining on strike, the majority broke.

The immediate prospects do not look bright, with engineering being decimated in this area. A return to work is a setback, and a victory for management.

But the fact that 174 were prepared to fight on, when all the odds seemed stacked

against us is a sign of what is to come and gives us confidence for the future.

Many thanks from the lads for the efforts your readers made on our behalf. We only wish we could have held out and won. We lost a battle, as we have been lost over the last 18 months, but together we will win the war.

Reports

National Union of Seamen STICK TO FULL CLAIM!

By Wayne
Jones

The seamen's strike is now entering a crucial stage. Lengthy negotiations at the weekend with the ship-owners failed to provide a solution.

The NUS leaders must now escalate the action and bring all the members out on strike.

The action up to now has been fully supported by the union membership, stoked up by years of resentment at the long hours, low pay and danger so that shipowners like the millionaire Thatcherite Victor Matthews can line his pockets.

The seamen's reasonable claim is for 16% on the basic rate, plus the payment of overtime at time and a half, instead of the present rate of time and a quarter. At the moment seamen are forced to work an average of over 24 hours' overtime each week.

The employers are pleading poverty and that a rise in wages will mean ships going out of business because they will not be able to compete

with overseas rivals.

Quite correctly the NUS leaders have ignored these sob stories and argue from the standpoint of the needs of the members.

Loss of markets and contraction of the British shipping fleet stem not from inflated wage packets but the incompetence of the shipowners or their 'costly mistakes' as the FT revealed recently combined with the world-wide crisis of capitalism with its falling production, mass unemployment and falling markets.

But even then UK ships are among the biggest 'invisible' earners. In 1978 they earned revenues of £3.2 billion. Some poverty!

The bosses are on the run. This solidarity and determination of the seamen remains firmly intact, whilst the shipowners are clearly split.

All-out action must now be taken to ram home this message. Undoubtedly this would receive enthusiastic support from seamen everywhere: this week, at a mass meeting in Blyth, 400 seamen voted for an all-out strike, with one member voting against!

The shipowners have now offered to take the claim to arbitration. This has been turned down by the union. As Jim Slater angrily pointed out, "That's what we have been asking them to do during the whole five weeks we have been on strike."

STOP PRESS

As we go to press, the dispute has gone to arbitration. To use the union general secretary Jim Slater's own words, the union leaders must not "settle for any shabby compromises." The union leaders must stick to the full claim and call out their members in all-out strike action if necessary to secure victory.

Belfast seamen are now taking all-out strike action after the shipping owners refused to pay back-pay [see last week's 'Militant']. Since Sunday night all passenger services—Townsend Thoreson, P&O and BR—have been stopped, as well as all deep sea vessels.

The occupation at the Euroweld factory in East Belfast is continuing [see last week's 'Militant']. The Belfast Labour and Trade Union Group have organised a public meeting for this Thursday, to discuss how the local labour movement can help the occupation, as well the Belfast seamen involved in the national dispute. Speakers include shop stewards from Euroweld, and Bro. McGee of the Belfast NUS disputes committee. Belfast Trades Council raised £60 at its last meeting for the two disputes, after a call from the LTUG.

week.

Still management say they'll be back on a 5-day week in March, but most of the men expect further job losses then!

"What's needed is action by the leaders of our union to fight closures, and to bring down the Tories. I don't think she'll get in next time, no chance!"

Keith's helping make sure by buying the 'Militant', selling it to his workmates and (along with his wife) joining the Labour Party Young Socialists!

Reckitt & Colman

The strike at Reckitt and Coleman Ltd, Hull, of 1,700 T&G workers over the introduction of new technology is now entering its second week.

A sister plant in Batley, Yorkshire, has come out in sympathy, and they face similar problems of job losses.

Despite the attempts of Ron Todd, the national officer of the T&G when he came to Hull last week for talks, the dispute remains deadlocked as management refuses to give any guarantees over job losses arising out of the introduction of new technology.

This is a do or die situation for the workforce, and now they are desperately seeking support from

other plants in the Reckitt group, and the wider labour and trade union movement.

The shop stewards' committee have responded to the call for dispensation for the important drug Etilim, used for epilepsy. The shop stewards have given dispensation despite attempts by the management to use the press to damage the reputation of the strikers.

All workers in the Reckitt group should seriously consider giving physical and financial support. All messages of support and donations should be sent to 10/145 A Branch Secretary, Mrs W Rands, c/o T&GWU, Bevin House, George Street, Hull HU1 3DB.

Vauxhall

"I knew it was inevitable. The short time work was supposed to be 'temporary', so it shouldn't have surprised anyone."

So Dave, an AUEW member at Vauxhall, described how the workforce received the news that Vauxhall want to axe 3,000 jobs in an area already decimated by unemployment.

"I don't think they'll get the 3,000 volunteers they want in our place. The company are just trying to make themselves appear more reasonable first, before they try to enforce redundancies.

"One or two blokes are talking about volunteering—but they're of the age for early retirement. I don't think anyone would be stupid enough to volunteer.

"For me, severance pay would be 7 or 8 weeks' pay. What good is that when you're not likely to get a job? The government is providing about 41% of the money—that's the only reason Vauxhalls are even offering it.

"In the area there's no

prospect of employment. If I was made redundant, circumstances being as they are, there's not much chance of permanent employment again, despite the promises of a boom. I know friends who've been on the dole for two or three years—in Birkenhead, in Bebington, and in supposedly wealthy Chester.

"A joint stewards' committee to fight these redundancies is a good idea, if it can stretch at least nationally, and hopefully internationally. There's a general mood of bitterness towards the southern plants amongst many Ellesmere Port men about the last strike [when Luton and Dunstable went back before Ellesmere Port].

"The dangers in this are that disunity won't help the fight for jobs as they exist. Unity between the UK plants, at the very least, is needed. The workers in all the car industry could try and formulate a plan of action for themselves, as opposed to seeing themselves as separate units."

Longworth

The occupation of Longworth Hospital for the elderly is about to enter its twelfth week.

Despite family commitments, pressure from Oxfordshire Area Health Authority (AHA) and incredible press bias the determination of the workforce remains strong.

Without any history of trade union militancy behind them the predominantly part-time female workforce have conducted a magnificent struggle to save geriatric beds.

Relatives, visitors and the local community have been petitioned. Occupation committee meetings are held weekly and when necessary. Links with the local movement have been established and support gained.

COHSE Region No. 6 at its conference supported the occupation and demanded that the general secretary, Albert Spanswick, make an immediate personal investigation into the dispute and

ways of developing support within the region.

Both he and the regional officials must now reflect the wishes of the local membership.

The AHA has demonstrated that its only interest is in balancing the books and not in providing patient care.

Significantly the role of the local Royal College of Nursing representatives has been even more vicious, demanding the AHA break the picket at once.

Patient care has been maintained despite the AHA refusing to advertise posts vacant. It is essential however, that the union leadership backs up its policy of occupying threatened hospitals by making Longworth part of a national campaign.

By Peter Hawkworth
(Secretary)
and John Hicks
(Assistant Secretary,
COHSE 643)

Fight the 6%

By announcing that we will only be offered 6%, the Tory government are throwing down the gauntlet.

A 6% limit will mean very real hardship to civil servants, 75% of whom earn below the national average wage.

In cash terms it will entail a paltry rise of £2.20 a week for those at the bottom—even a Clerical Officer with ten years' experience only receives £3.40 a week.

Indeed we will not be receiving 6% but 4.6% because NI contributions are to be raised for all workers from the same date!

In order to clear the way for the imposition of this ludicrous pay offer, the government suspended the Pay Research Unit. Undoubtedly it would have provided evidence of the wage rates in outside industry being 15%-19% ahead of the civil service. But the offer can still and must be fought.

Both the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) and my union, CPSA, have just held special pay conferences at which the 1981 pay claim was debated and future pay strategy agreed.

Contrary to expectations the CPSA did not pull out of Pay Research on a permanent footing. The motion to do so, moved by a 'Militant' supporter, was lost by a mere 5,000 votes.

It is likely that it will be events outside of CPSA's control that will determine if we remain with Pay Research. If we fail to retain it for next year it is extremely unlikely that our leadership will be able to retain any credibility in the system.

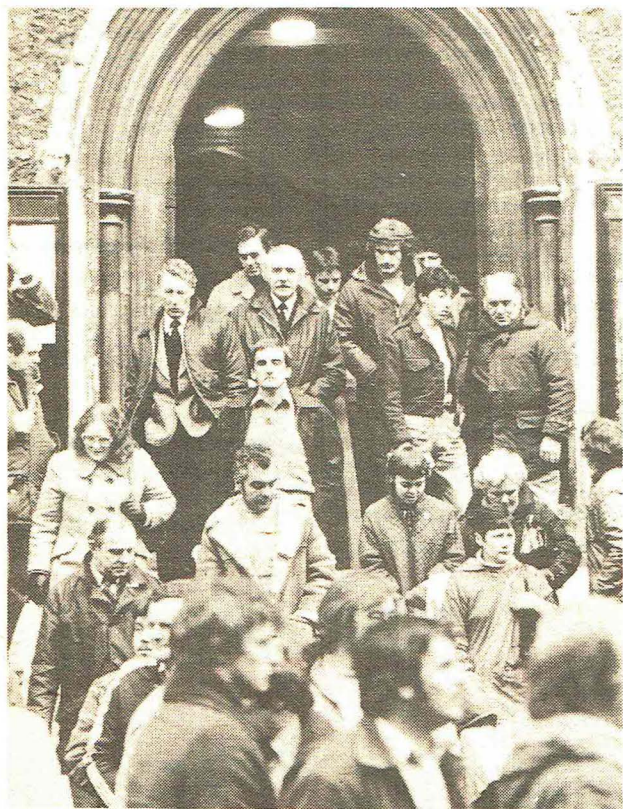
However, 'Militant's' strategy on the 1981 pay claim was agreed; a 15% increase with a minimum of £10 backed up by industrial action based on general action leading into selective strikes financed by a membership levy.

Since the two conferences the council of civil service unions have met and unanimously agreed this pay claim and the action needed to achieve it.

The first hurdle to clear will be the ballot that is to be held of all CPSA members on the claim and the industrial action.

This consultation exercise must be used enthusiastically by representatives throughout the country to build up support for the forthcoming struggle. A massive 'yes' for action will show management we are prepared to fight.

By Pat Byrne
(CPSA DHSS,
SE London)



Seamen leave a union meeting in Dover at the outset of the dispute. The seamen have shown their willingness to struggle—this must be backed by a firm action from the NUS leaders.

Raleigh

By Allan Stripp
(East Notts LPYS)

Workers at the TI Raleigh factory in Nottingham were barely back from their Christmas holidays when management announced 650 redundancies and short time working for the rest of their employees.

This week redundancy notices were sent out after the bosses' earlier "request" for volunteers to take early retirement.

Keith Foster, who's been

working there for three years, told me about the reaction to the proposed sackings.

"Worried, most of the blokes have got kids to look after." Keith himself has a wife and two children to support. Even with the government's Temporary Employment Subsidy (recently cut to 50% of basic pay), he only takes home 80% of basic for a 3-day

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NATIONALITY BILL-

KICK OUT 'DIVIDE AND RULE' LAW

The Tories' proposed 'Nationalities Bill' will put into question the status of thousands who have lived and worked in Britain for years.

It is based on blatant discrimination against black people, particularly black women, and will make some of their children stateless. It will deprive millions abroad of their assumed British nationality.

The plans for increased internal controls and work permits will expose trade union activists to the threat of harassment and arbitrary deportation.

Above all, this reactionary Bill is a new attempt to throw onto black and Asian people the blame for all the social and economic problems now afflicting working people as a result of the crisis in British capitalism.

Racialism is not just a threat to blacks and Asians. It is a deliberate weapon, based on "divide and rule", aimed at confusing and splitting the labour move-

By Margaret Manning
(Secretary, Manchester
LP anti-racism cttee)
and Javed Iqbal

ment. Manchester City Labour Party has joined the growing chorus of opposition and taken the initiative of organising a major demonstration in Manchester on 14 February. In the publicity material distributed, the Party has expressed its total opposition to racist laws and pointed to the need for maximum unity to defeat the onslaughts of Thatcherism.

It will be well supported by local Labour Party and trade union organisations, and is gaining significant support from a wide variety of ethnic organisations, including the Kashmiri Workers Association.

The Party in Manchester has also been involved in local campaigns against the

cruel results of existing laws and rules. In particular in the case of Anwar Ditta and Nazira Begum, the Party has played a role with other ethnic and labour movement organisations.

It is not only the 'institutionalised racism' that is of concern, but the growing evidence of intimidation and racial violence in the area.

The Joint Committee Against Racism has produced detailed evidence of over a thousand serious attacks on members of minority communities or their homes and shops over the last eighteen months, and the real total is undoubtedly much higher.

In response to this evidence, Whitelaw has indicated the Home Office will begin an immediate study of racist organisations. Whitelaw says he will discuss with police chiefs the feasibility of setting up special police units to monitor and investigate racist attacks.

But this 'initiative' looks like a pious gesture, designed to appease the governments of India, Nigeria, and other black and Asian states now mounting increasing pressure against the Tories' discriminatory legislation and policies.

It is already quite clear what the racist and fascist



Photo: MILITANT

The Nationality Bill will increase the harassment of blacks and Asians. The labour movement must fight the new law

groups represent, and if Whitelaw really wants information and evidence, the labour movement can supply it. Special police units will hardly be a solution. It is the police who refuse to recognise the racist nature of these attacks, and show little or no inclination to bring the thugs responsible to book.

Working people can rely only on the strength of the labour movement's own organisations to counter the vile propaganda and violent attacks of the racist and fascist groups, and to defend the movement and protect individual workers and their families.

The NF are currently attempting to establish a paper selling pitch in the centre of Manchester—a move that is being countered by the Labour Party and the LPYS. NF 'paper sellers' are preceded by LP members distributing leaflets exposing the nature of the NF and discouraging the sales of their literature.

All these activities are linked. As the so-called "mixed economy" plunges deeper into crisis, 'scapegoats' are needed. The Labour Party decisively rejects this and is seeking to build a strong, united movement to overcome Thatcherism.

Bus workers

CONTINUED FROM
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pany will most likely be forced to back down on their threats.

The bus workers' campaign has got widespread support, with over 50,000 signatures collected in three weeks against fare rises and cuts. There will be a TGWU-organised demonstration on 21 February in the city.

In a joint protest against the cuts, bus workers and NALGO members lobbied the Tory Avon council. Labour-controlled Bristol council are discussing the issue on 10 February with bus workers demanding the takeover of the bus operation.

Such a campaign should be supported, but not at the price of massive rates increases to finance the service, which would be a cut in another form. Bristol council should mount a massive campaign for government finance to enable the council to run the buses.

This would hold out the only possibility of winning this hard struggle, linking up with unions representing busmen and other public sector unions

The National Bus Company and the Tories have flung down the gauntlet and the bus workers are prepared to pick it up. As their full time official challenged the bus company, if they cannot run the bus company "we will run it for them—we've got the expertise."

If their determination is matched on a national level then the Tories' days are numbered. The working class can win the struggle against Thatcher and her government.

Labour Party public meeting. "Support Jaswinder Kaur". Speakers include Jaswinder Kaur and Raghvir Virdee [Indian Workers Association]. Monday 16 February, 7.30 pm, Harehills Community Centre, Harehills Road, Leeds 8

Poverty-The Tory Growth Industry

The Tory leaders, we may be sure, belong to the "top fifth" of households, along with the board-room barons, the financiers, and the top professional people they speak for.

These people, always preaching acceptance of "austerity" in the "national interest", take a cool 45.2% of total income before tax. Even after allowing for tax and benefits, they still take

38% of all income. At the bottom of the pile, however, the lowest fifth—always the first victims of austerity measures—get a mere 0.9% of pre-tax in-

come. The bottom fifth, as might be expected, includes many people who are retired, sick, unemployed, or single parents. But even after allowing for the effects of cash benefits [state pensions, unemployment and supplementary benefits] and benefits in kind [such as education, health, housing subsidies, and free school meals and milk] the bottom fifth still get only 7.1% of total "final income".

The top fifth of households, however, even after tax [and allowing for the benefits they too receive, notably education] they still have 38% of all income.

This gross inequality of income is revealed by the latest "Economic Trends" [Central Statistical Office], reported in 'The Times' [5 February].

In absolute figures, the average pre-tax income of the top ten per cent of households in 1979 [the year analysed] was £14,040 [still £9,860 after tax]. The

average income of the bottom thirty percent was only £557 [still only £2,326 "final income" after including all benefits].

These figures completely shatter the Tory slanders that the old, the low-paid, the sick and the unemployed are living a life of luxury at "the state's expense"—and to the detriment of the rich.

Clearly, if state benefits were cut, the bottom fifth would be plunged into deperate, hopeless poverty.

But the Tories are cutting services, and they are holding benefits down below the level of inflation. Thatcher and Company do not believe in equality, or anything remotely approaching it.

In their ideal society, the bottom fifth would make do with its 0.9% share of income. And the money saved by the cuts would be pocketed by the rich, the "upper fifth" who even now take a lion's share of the wealth produced by the labour of the working class.

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