

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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Two years of Tories

TWO YEARS TOO LONG

Photo: Carlos Augusto (IFL)

Thatcher's victory in May 1979 was a good day for the rich. Share prices zoomed up.

Big business had backed the Tories with millions of pounds. The City was well aware of Thatcher's real policy: to boost profits at the expense of working people.

This of course was not what the Tories told the electorate. Life was going to be marvellous under a Thatcher government.

"Lower taxes on earnings and savings will encourage economic growth," they said. Pull the other leg. The first Tory budget cut direct taxes—which meant peanuts for workers but massive handouts for the rich.

The wealthy handful in Britain laughed all the way to the bank—which is precisely where their money has stayed.

They certainly haven't invested in industry. There's not enough profit in that, so in 1980 there was a 15% drop in manufacturing investment. Manufacturing output—the production of real wealth in the form of goods to meet people's needs—is now 6% below the level of spring 1979.

This is the biggest drop for 60 years!

Taxes as a whole have risen, especially indirect taxes like VAT. Howe's March budget has pulled another £6,000 million out of our pockets.

The "tax-cutting" Thatcher government has pushed taxation to an all-time high. Yet vital services and benefits to workers have been savagely cut back.

Peter Walker told an audience in Harrow in April 1979 "The incoming Tory government must dedicate itself to abolishing unemployment by the creation of a competitive and expand-



The People's March for jobs leaves Liverpool 1 May, protesting at post war record level of unemployment.

ing economy."

In reality, the Tories' first two years have been 'dedicated' to abolishing jobs and expanding the

dole queues. Unemployment has nearly doubled.

1980 broke numerous records—none of them worth boasting about!

The highest level of unemployment for nearly half a century, the biggest rise in the dole

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**LABOUR TO POWER ON A
SOCIALIST PROGRAMME!**

NORTHERN IRELAND

Class action against repression

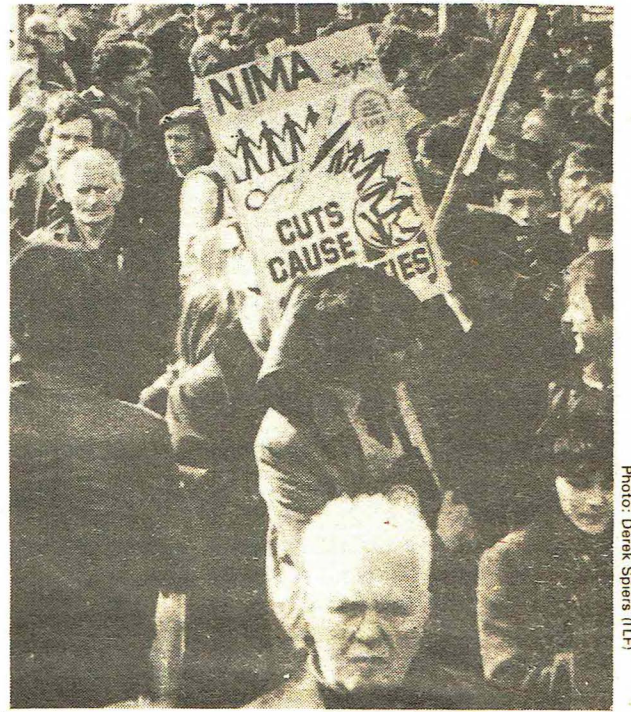


Photo: Derek Smeets (ILF)

Workers demonstrate against Tories April 1980. The labour movement must fight repression and sectarianism.

Shortly after 1 am on Tuesday morning the Catholic areas of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere resounded to the rattling of bin lids and the sound of loud-speakers.

This was how the news of the death of hunger striker Bobby Sands was spread. Since then there have been outbreaks of intensive rioting, and streets have been barricaded in many areas.

Three other prisoners are still on hunger strike. One of them, Francis Hughes, cannot have many more days to live. A further seventy are reported to have volunteered for hunger strike, and the possibility of another group being selected to begin a further fast cannot be disregarded.

Bobby Sands is dead because of the brutal poli-

By Peter Hadden
(N Ireland Labour & Trade Union Group)

cies of Thatcher and the Tories. Towards the demands of the prisoners, the Tories have refused even the slightest concession.

Last year the NEC of the British Labour Party supported six demands for prison reform in Northern Ireland. Among these were calls for prisoners to be allowed to wear their own clothes and to negotiate a choice of work, training and education. The implementation of these simple concessions to all prisoners would have made the hun-

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Workers Arrested

Ann Hope, Secretary of Belfast Trades Council was arrested by the police during the May Day parade in Belfast on 2 May.

Members of the Trades Council and of the Labour and Trade Union Group [LTUG] who picketed Musgrave police station in protest were kicked, punched and shoved by the police.

The May Day march itself drew over a thousand trade unionists. This was a magnificent turnout, given the tension in Belfast as the H-Block hunger strike reached its climax.

A small group of H-Block protestors attempted to organise a demonstration during the meeting by unfurling a banner and shouting slogans. One protester stood in front of the platform shouting through a megaphone.

These activities were stopped by the police who brutally hauled the H-Block supporters out of the crowd.

Later as the parade was marching peacefully through the streets of Belfast,

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Militant

Labour's deputy leadership-

SOCIALIST POLICIES AT STAKE!

1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Tony Benn enjoys the overwhelming support of the active workers in the Labour Party and trade unions in his campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

This has been expressed in a number of recent meetings and demonstrations where he has received huge support.

Even at the USDAW conference, his support was about 40% of the delegates present and would have been more but for the fact that many delegates were mandated to support Healey.

Moreover, the conference of this union, formerly a bulwark of the right wing within the Labour Party, voted overwhelmingly in defence of the 40, 30, 30 formula for the election of the Labour leadership.

The executive of this union has a 12-4 majority for the right wing yet voted by a majority of one to recommend support for the motion.

This can be taken as an endorsement of Tony Benn's campaign. This has not been a personal campaign but a defence of the Wembley conference decisions and of the desire of the rank and file to see the im-

plementation of socialist policies.

By the same token, this has brought down upon his head the abuse, not only of the capitalist press, but of the right wing of the Labour Party and their allies in the trade union leadership.

Peter Shore, allegedly in the "centre" of the Labour Party, in a highly personalised fashion lashed Tony Benn as: "A man on a white horse; a sea-green incorruptible, a contemporary

Robespierre, of single-minded faith, purpose and resolution."

But it is to Tony Benn's credit that he has attempted to analyse the reasons why Labour not only lost the election but retreated on the radical manifesto of 1974.

In a recent speech he declared: "Declining British capitalism can no longer offer full employment, free trade unions, or the welfare state. Mrs Thatcher is being forced by the system in which she believes to withdraw the right of people to work."

In other words, capitalism is no longer capable of guaranteeing even the minimum of a job, democratic rights, social services, etc.

Even if a new Labour government should come to power, it would be faced with the choice of two roads.

On one road, the capitalist road, further retreats—even worse than 1974-79—are inevitable. The other road is a complete socialist transformation of society. That is the logic of the analysis of Tony Benn.

Concretely, it would mean the implementation of Clause IV, part iv, of Labour's constitution. This in turn would involve a Labour government taking over the monopolies with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need, and the implementation of the worked out socialist plan of production.

Tony Benn and the Tribune left who support him are not prepared to go that far at this stage. However, his election to the deputy leadership of the

Labour Party would give a big push towards the left. This is why his campaign has engendered such enthusiasm.

It is not excluded that support for his candidature could come from unions which hitherto have been a bastion of the right wing. Gone are the days when right-wing general secretaries could lay down the law to LP conference delegations.

It is the fear of such a development that explains the hysteria of the right wing.

They couple their campaign against the decisions on democracy and "to stop Benn" with another attempt to witch-hunt the 'Militant' out of the Labour Party.

Their pressure has succeeded in forcing Michael Foot to make further attacks on 'Militant'. He recently asserted that 'Militant' is "neither Marxist nor politically mature"; and dismissed 'Militant' as "infantile leftist". ('Guardian' 27 April).

We eagerly await Michael Foot's definition of what really constitutes Marxism!

We have also been accused of "sectarianism" by Hattersley and the supporters of the mis-named "Solidarity" organisation. However, what is noticeable in the series of attacks which Michael Foot, Hattersley, and company have made, is that nowhere are the real policies of 'Militant' discussed.

Is this because he is incapable of answering the arguments of 'Militant'? We would welcome the opportunity of debating and discussing our programme

with him or any leader of the labour movement in meetings, in debates and even in the pages of our paper. The theme of "What is Marxism and its relevance to Labour" would be a good one.

However, the right wing of the Labour Party is not interested in discussion of ideas. In such a debate they inevitably lose out. This is why they are not satisfied with mere verbal denunciations of 'Militant'.

According to 'The Sunday Times' (26 April), "They want him [Michael Foot] to go beyond verbal attacks on the Militant tendency by seeking the expulsion of some of its leading members from the party."

They correctly see 'Militant' as the backbone of the campaign of the left for democratisation of the Party and the adoption of real socialist policies.

They imagine that by removing 'Militant' or some of its leading supporters our ideas and the programme would magically disappear from the Labour Party.

But organisational methods are incapable of destroying correct ideas. Marxism is a part of the Labour Party, and it will be impossible to eradicate its influence by expulsions and proscriptions.

Moreover, given the sharp shift towards the left, both within the Party and the unions, an attempt to expel 'Militant' supporters or proscribe our newspaper will be fiercely resisted by the overwhelming majority of the rank and file.

It is not 'Militant' but the right-wing parliamentarians

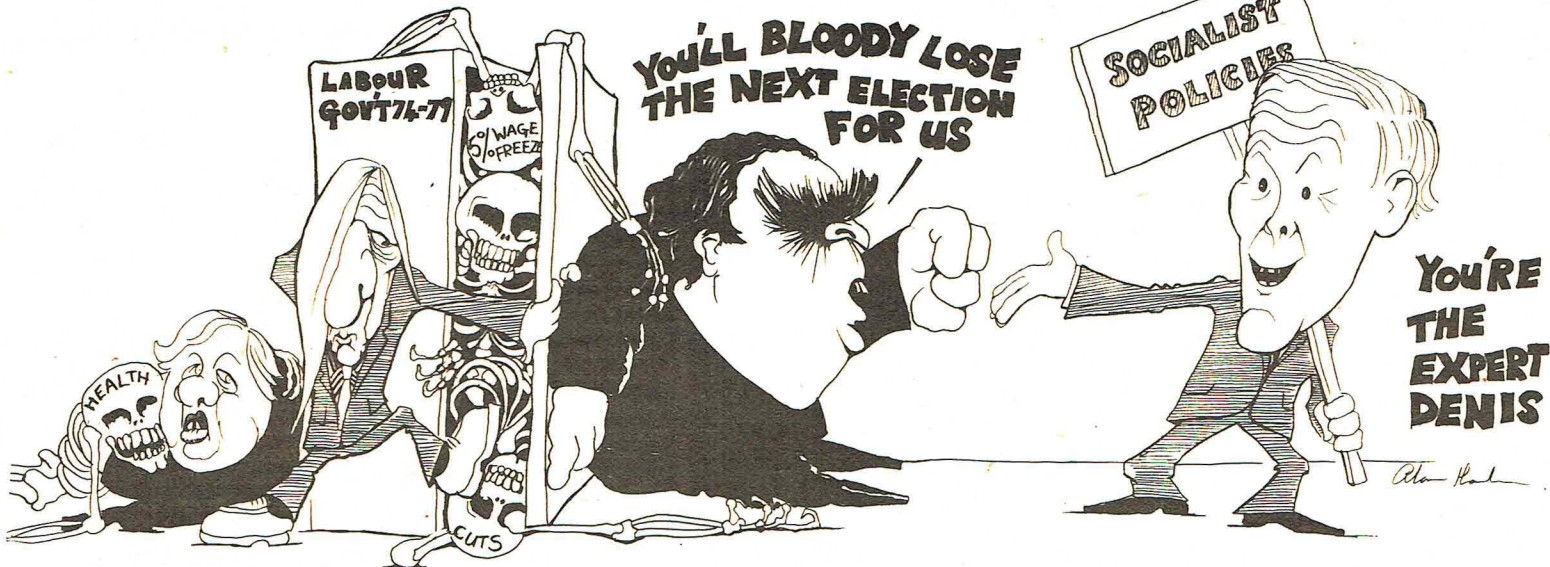
who represent the biggest danger to Labour's future. They are a "social democratic" Trojan Horse within the Party.

If Labour campaigns on a fighting socialist programme, given the enormous unpopularity of the Tories and notwithstanding the attempts of the Social Democrats to undermine Labour, a Labour government with a massive majority could be returned in the next elections.

However, unless that government carries through the fundamental socialist transformation of society, it will face ship-wreck. The right wing who will probably be a majority in a future Labour cabinet will play the same role as Ramsey Macdonald, Philip Snowden and Thomas during the Labour government of 1929-31.

They would become the sounding board for the pressure of the capitalists on the Labour government. Moreover, at a certain stage, they could stab the Labour government in the back and go over to a national government.

It is to avoid such a catastrophe that the campaign for democratisation and for a socialist programme must continue. Despite our criticisms of the deficiency of his programme, a victory for Tony Benn in the deputy leadership election would represent an enormous step forward. It would give a further push to the campaign to fully democratise the labour movement and for the adoption of a socialist programme.



Repression

(Continued from page 1)

ger strike unnecessary and spared the life of Bobby Sands.

The National Executive of the British Labour Party last summer urged consideration of these demands, which have strong support among Labour's ranks. Yet both Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman, Don Concannon, and Party leader Michael Foot, have publicly supported the Tories on this issue.

The NEC and the Party as a whole must see that its parliamentary representatives advocate an independent, Labour position, and take a clear stand on this issue. They must immediately press the Tories to

implement the necessary measure of prison reform.

Beyond this, the labour movement in Britain and Ireland must set up an inquiry into the system of so-called "justice" in Northern Ireland. It must campaign for the scrapping of non-jury courts and the repeal of all the repressive laws.

The labour movement must also review the cases of those convicted during the Northern Ireland troubles to establish who is and who is not a political prisoner.

Sands' death has underlined the futility of the methods of the Provisional IRA and the INLA [Irish National Liberation Army]. Their military campaign has given the British ruling class the excuse to step up repression. The prisoners and the occupants of the

Catholic ghettos are the people who suffer most.

The H-block committees, which are closely associated with the Provos, have campaigned in a totally sectarian manner. Bernadette McAliskey, for instance, has called for "Catholic unity" against the British. Such sectarian appeals have divided workers in Northern Ireland and have weakened the opposition to the H-Blocks.

Yet even now the potential for unity of workers, Catholic and Protestant, against repression and against the poverty and unemployment is being shown.

Last week there was a united demonstration of women from both Catholic and Protestant estates in West Belfast against rises in Housing Executive rents. There were strikes in the

Harland and Wolff shipyard and the Royal Victoria Hospital. Civil servants are continuing to support their unions' campaign of industrial action throughout the North.

Trades Councils, or organisations based on trades

councils, are going ahead with their decision to contest the local government elections on 20 May in four areas. Derry Trades Council will have five candidates standing on a programme of class unity and socialism.

Such actions represent

the way forward. United action by the working class, independent of all sectarian groups and all sectarian ideas, is the only way to end repression and prevent a new escalation of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

Workers Arrested

(Continued from page 1)

armed police moved in picked out and arrested individual marchers. In all over thirty people were arrested, eight of whom have subsequently been charged.

When Ann Hope went over to a group of policemen kicking a girl and tried to protest, she was arrested.

The attempt of the H-Block supporters to disrupt the traditional May Day

parade is to be condemned. But far more serious were the brutal actions of the police in manhandling and arresting trade union activists, and in attacking members of the LTUG.

The police have shown that the repressive methods used against para-military groups can also be used against the labour movement.

Trade union parades should be stewarded against disruption, but they should be stewarded by trade unionists not by heavily armed police. If necessary the role of such stewards would be to protect trade union members from arbitrary arrest in the manner of last Saturday.

This demand—for trade union stewarding of workers' demonstrations will now be raised very seriously within the movement in Northern Ireland.

Support Labour Movement Inquiry

Defend Brixton

Photo: Militant



Where are the marchers? Labour's traditional May Day march, the only demonstration allowed in the capital during the month's ban, was swamped by a massive police presence.

“Our campaign cannot be just for legal defence. Unemployment is rising four times faster among blacks than whites.

By Clare Doyle

“There is a policy of mass deportations, raids on factories and hotels and people are living in rat-infested holes. How can you say this has nothing to do with the Tories?”

This was how Bob Lee (PNP black socialist youth) took up questions from the floor at the second Labour Party Young Socialist public meeting in Brixton since the weekend of rioting. Over a hundred people heard Tony Saunois, LPYS representative on Labour's National Executive, explain what was to blame for the explosive events of 11/12 April.

The police presence in Brixton was a major issue. How can the police be brought under democratic control, was one point raised at the meeting.

John Bulaitis took up the question, explaining the London Labour Party's election pledges for the Greater London Council elections: to set up an elected police authority, with control over the appointment of police officers up to the rank of chief superintendent, and scrutiny of the day to day affairs of the force.

The manifesto says: “An independent complaints procedure should be established. The proposed police committee we will set up will in the meantime investigate complaints against the police and publish reports. The Special Patrol Group, Special Branch and Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit should be disbanded.”

Examples given from the floor illustrated the growing

police surveillance and harassment of political and trade union activists.

One Young Socialist had been stopped delivering leaflets on an estate in Lambeth and told she was “hawking”, which was illegal!

In Birmingham, LP Young Socialists organised a public meeting about Brixton, but the police stepped in and told the pub landlord, who was providing the meeting room, that he should “call it off, or lose his licence”! (An alternative venue was hastily arranged, but was too far for many of the black youth who had arrived for the meeting.)

This underlined the urgency of John Bulaitis' message, that pressure must be put on Labour GLC members, to ensure their manifesto policies for democratic control over the police were put into practice as soon as possible.

What are the LPYS doing to defend those arrested in Brixton? Questioners wanted details of the work being conducted by the ‘Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton’.

Bob Lee explained that the 270 people arrested needed not just financial assistance, but the best lawyers possible. Without this, the police and the courts would have a field day, taking their revenge on the people of Brixton. Volunteers were asked to help in ‘observing’ at the courts when the Brixton defendants appear.

Marie Walsh, of Streatham Labour Party Young Socialists, told of visits to local workplaces, to explain to trade unionists that those

arrested were not ‘criminals,’ and to build support for the defence campaign.

The LPYS were urging workers to support the call for all charges to be dropped, and for an independent labour movement inquiry. There was, Marie said, much work still to be done.

Tony pointed to the special problems of Brixton: parts of the area around Railton Road were due for redevelopment in 1928! Meanwhile, the Tory Greater London Council started the grand total of six houses throughout London in 1979/80. For every pound they took in rent, £2.80 was paid out to the rich City money lenders.

On top of that, in Brixton there is constant police harassment. “The Tory government needs to be brought down and driven out! We can't afford to wait another three years!”

Young Socialists appealed to everyone to join the LPYS and the Labour Party, to help commit the party and its representatives to the socialist policies essential to all working people: a guaranteed wage of £80 a week for all, a real fight for a 35-hour week to create more jobs, the taking over of any firm threatening workers' jobs.

The two hundred big companies, which between them account for nearly nine-tenths of all industrial production, must be taken out of the hands of individuals, Tony said. “They must be placed at the disposal and under the control of workers themselves.”

As Tony Saunois concluded, it was not a question of fighting each other, but of a fight by the working people—black and white—to reclaim their party. Potentially, power rests in the hands of the trade union and labour movement. It would only be successful in establishing its power if it rallied to the programme of Marxism.

£75 was raised at the meeting to help the work of the Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton (LCDB) which met the following night and drew up further proposals to rally support for a labour movement inquiry, and to gather information for such an inquiry.

Plans were made for contacting the whole of the local labour movement, tenants' associations and black organisations, and for more concrete help, in conjunction with the local law centre and other organisations, to defend and help those arrested during the stormy events in Brixton.

Inquiries about further activities of the LPYS in the area should be directed to V Seal, Lambeth Central Labour Party Youth Officer, Tel: (01) 674 3250.

Further information about the LCDB and offers of help should be directed to that body: care of M Boyle, 167 Railton Road, London SW2.

Police Challenged at Deptford Fire Inquest

At the Deptford fire inquest last week, a stream of witnesses disputed police statements, claiming they were only made under pressure.

By Eileen Short

“They were sort of shouting and telling me that if I didn't tell the truth they'd put me in a cell...they asked a lot about the fight. I said there wasn't any fight. They said I was lying. They asked me the questions and answered them themselves.”

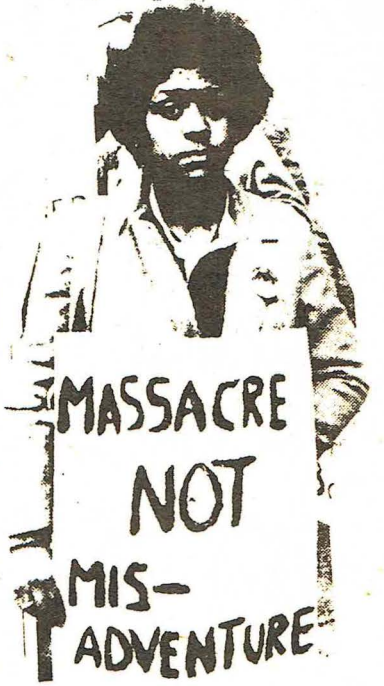
This is how Denise Gooding, eleven years old, whose brother Andrew died in the fire, described her interview with the police. Her father, who was at the police station with Denise, said she was shouted at and told she was a liar by the police. “When I signed (as witness to his daughter's statement) I just signed to get away, I felt so bereaved and depressed.”

Thirteen young black people died in the fire on 19 January during an all-night party at 439 New Cross Road, South London. The police view was that the fire started as a result of a fight over a girl.

This was based on statements from witnesses such as Denise, who were at the party. But throughout the inquest last week, witness after witness disputed and denied statements given to the police, despite fierce questioning and accusations by the coroner that they were lying.

The Coroner, Dr Arthur Gordon Davies, who was clearly reluctant to believe allegations of police threats and intimidation, warned one witness, Wayne Downer, that he could be prosecuted for perjury. Wayne was insisting that the statement he had signed after being in Greenwich police station for three nights and two days, was made under pressure.

“They weren't asking me things, they were telling me,” he said. “They showed me the statement of this witness in the case...they told me other people had been telling them things. I was told I wasn't coming out of the police station until I told them what



Part of the daily picket outside the Coroner's Court

they wanted to know.”

Another witness, fifteen-year-old Errol Williams, told the inquest that police came to his door early in the morning when his parents were out, and threatened to kick it down if he didn't let them in.

The police had told him, Errol said, that if he didn't admit that he and other boys were in the room when the fire started, he would not be allowed to go home.

For the young people who escaped death in the fire itself, the inquest has often seemed more like a trial. The intensive cross-examinations and the coroner's interventions, accusing witnesses of lying, have provoked uproar.

There were gasps of disbelief from the public gallery when Dr Davies actually said, in one exchange, “Let's call a spade a spade.”

A police spokesman announced, shortly before the inquest began, that “as far as I know it has been ruled out that there were any suspicious circumstances,” behind the fire. Evidence of an incendiary device found in the front garden of the house after the fire has been dismissed by some police officers as a “red herring.”

The attitude of the police and the conduct of the inquest are hardening the belief of the black community that evidence of a racist arson attack is being ignored.

PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR JOBS —WHAT'S ON

May:

7-1pm Rally at Cringle Fields, Heaton Norris

3pm Rally at Hollywood Park, Stockport

10-2pm Rally at Red Bull Traffic lights, Kidsgrove

11-12.30pm Rally at Stoke on Trent, Kingsway car park

12-4.30pm rally at Rowley Sports Stadium, Stafford, including a YCAU speaker

14-3pm Rally, St. Peters Square, Wolverhampton

15-10am rally at Bilston Steelworks, Wolverhampton

16-9am assemble for supporting march at Wood Green High School Playing Fields, Wednesbury, meet the march at 10am

1pm rally at King George V playing fields, Sandwell

18-Supporting march meet at site of old Regal Cinema, Soho Road Birmingham, 10am

Rally Chamberlain Square, Birmingham

1.30pm

19-Rally at Riversley Park, Nuneaton, 4.30pm

20-Rally at Broadgate Precinct, Coventry,

1pm

Rally at Brandon Speedway, 6pm

21-Rally at Rugby recreation ground 2pm

Rally at Kilsby 6pm

22-4.30pm onwards marchers from Yorkshire and North West marches arrive at Guildhall, Northampton for a rally

23-Rally at Bedford Corn Exchange 3pm

24-Rally at Letchworth Town Centre 3pm

25-Rally at Moor Park, Luton 3pm

26-Rally at Hemel Hempstead Civic Centre 3pm

27-Rally at Rolls Royce, Boot Hill, Mid-day, Rally at Watford Town Hall at 3pm

28-Rally at Brent Town Hall 3pm

29-11.30am St Bernards Hospital join Hounslow Trades Council march to Southall Town Hall 2.15pm, join Hillingdon Trades Council march, rally at Southall Community centre 2.30pm

30-Carnival Against Unemployment, Brockwell Park, Lambeth 2pm-7pm. Will include speakers and leading rock bands.

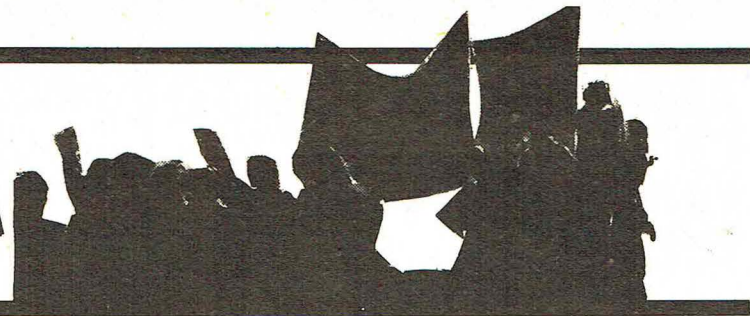
31-March and Rally, assemble 12 noon, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, March moves off 1pm, rally at Trafalgar Square

June:

1-Workplace meetings and farewell rally at York Hall, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green.

7.30pm

WORKERS IN ACTION



PREVENT VICTIMISATION BY LABOUR COUNCIL

Marxists in the Labour Party and the trade unions have consistently argued that Labour Councils should stand firm against the Tory government.

If they do not fight against public expenditure cuts they end up doing the dirty work of the Tories and become increasingly difficult to distinguish from them.

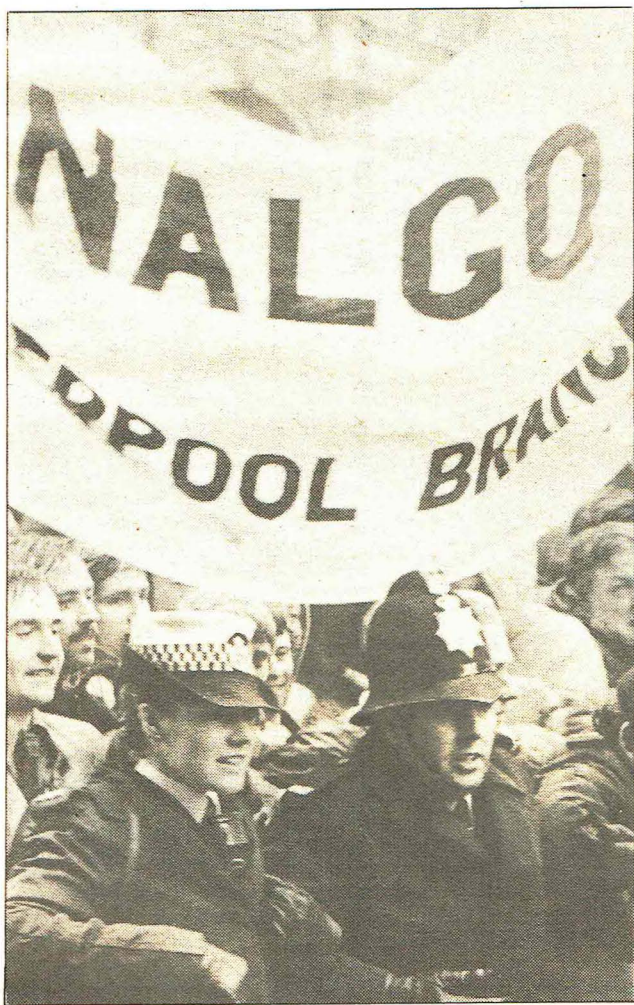
This is virtually what has happened to Labour controlled Knowsley Borough Council on Merseyside.

In 1979 despite being lobbied by local trades unionists and Labour Party members the council approved a 5% cut in its budget. The resolution putting this into effect was moved by the Leader of the Labour group and seconded by the leader of the Tories. Not one Labour Councillor's hand was raised against this disgraceful act.

This policy of cuts has met with vigorous opposition from the local authority trade unions, who formed themselves into the Knowsley Joint Shop Stewards Committee to effectively co-ordinate the campaign. It was rightly recognised that a Labour council, albeit a right wing one, was substantially different to a Tory and the Joint Shop Stewards Committee has campaigned for all stewards and members to join the Party in order to counter the influence of the right wing councillors in favour of social-

By Roger Knight
(Chairman, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Knowsley NALGO)

Merseyside local government workers lobbying council 1979 against cuts
Photo: MILITANT



ist policies.

Moreover the local NALGO branch has on several occasions approached Knowsley Labour Group with a view to forming a joint alliance of

Labour council, Labour party and local authority trade unions to oppose the Tory cuts. Sadly the group has refused to unite with its employees and the rank and

file party activists in this way.

So the cuts have continued, posts have remained unfilled, services to the aged and the infirm have been drastically attacked and local workers have been forced to enter into a series of major and minor industrial disputes in defence of their jobs and living standards.

The council have responded by an unprecedented attack on local trade union activists in an attempt to force workers to timidly accept the cuts.

Currently six members of the education department have disciplinary sanctions hanging over them for the heinous crime of taking bona fide sick leave. A branch officer of the local government workers' union, NALGO, has been suspended pending dismissal.

A senior steward is also suspended from work, and a NALGO branch secretary has a disciplinary hearing coming shortly. In the recent past, members and stewards have been suspended for abiding by officially backed industrial action.

But the most alarming development has been the warning given to NALGO branch Chairman, Derek Hatton, himself a Labour councillor on the neighbouring Liverpool council. Derek has been told that unless he spends less time on council and trade union duties, he will be dismissed from employment.

Derek is a supporter of the Militant and a leading figure in the anti-cuts fight in Liverpool. In its 'generosity' Knowsley council allows Derek only one and a half days off work a week for council and trade union activity.

The labour and trade union movement on Merseyside has responded tremendously to the threat and passed resolutions pledging support to Derek in the struggle. It is vital for all activists that backsliding Labour councils are reminded in no uncertain terms which way the movement as a whole expects its representatives to treat workers.

If Knowsley council get away with this onslaught think what Tory councils will get up to. *Resolutions of support from wards, constituencies and union branches should be sent to Branch secretary, Knowsley NALGO, 16 Admin buildings, Kirkby, Merseyside.*

LINK WITH N.IRELAND TRADES COUNCILS

A delegate meeting representing every section of the Scottish membership of the National Association of Local Government Officers decided unanimously to support current initiatives to twin UK trades councils with those in Northern Ireland.

The amended resolution also called upon the National Executive Committee of NALGO at this year's conference to actively encourage and support branch visits between NALGO and its sister union in Northern Ireland, NIPSA. Exchange visits between shop stewards should be held to allow full discussion on all aspects of the political situation in the North. In moving the amendment, the Strathclyde delegate highlighted the common problems public

sector workers faced in N Ireland and Britain from the effects of Tory policies.

The growing need for an independent non-sectarian working class political lead was clear, particularly in areas like Fermanagh, where the trades council has decided to stand a candidate in the district elections. The decision of a number of trades councils to stand 'Labour' candidates showed not only a way out of the impasse facing workers but also a clear lead for the movement in the UK also.

We must show our class solidarity and give them full political and financial support. (See article next page)

By David Churchley
(Strathclyde NALGO)

Stop racist attacks

In Coventry black workers have been subjected to a spate of vicious, racist assaults culminating in the murder of an Asian youth on 18 April.

In the main immigrant area of Foleshill, youths and older workers have been attacked. In Lower Stoke an Asian woman was slashed with a knife.

An LPYS member who tried to prevent a black youth being beaten up got a black eye for his trouble. Many incidents go unreported because the black community have little faith in the 'due process of the law'.

Not surprising when you consider that it took eight months for one case to come to court. In another case the victim had to suffer the humiliation of seeing his attackers turn up at court giving Nazi salutes. To literally add insult to injury, they were merely bound over to keep the peace.

The mood among Asians and blacks is of fear and anger about the attacks. The community feel some practical action should be taken, not just lip service. In the past the self-appointed right-wing community leaders have put their faith in cosy meetings

with the police and other officials. This, predictably, has not prevented the recent events and has no better chance of working in future.

If it is black workers under attack today it will be white workers, on the picket line or in the union meeting, tomorrow. We recently saw the example in Birmingham of an attack on an Asian being followed by an attempt to burn down a socialist bookshop. Also LPYS paper sellers have been harassed by fascists. The only way to stop these racist attacks is for Asians and blacks to turn towards their natural allies in the trade union and labour movement. It is necessary to mobilise support so that democratic street committees are formed in all immigrant areas.

The Labour Party Young Socialists calls for:

- ★ A campaign based on working class organisations to expose and counter racialism.
- ★ A conference of trade unions, Labour parties, black and Asian groups to organise defence activity.
- ★ A mass demonstration as soon as possible against racism to drive the fascists off the streets.

HEALEY'S PARTY REJECTS WITCH-HUNT

At its last meeting [3 April], the General Management Committee of East Leeds Constituency Labour Party discussed the Labour Party news release, which was circulated by Ron Hayward, about the defection of the Social Democratic Party. The point most discussed was the statement by Hayward that the SDP was not expelled: the Labour Party was a tolerant party and had time and again rejected witch-hunts, either against left or right.

Some GMC members were angry that right-wing MPs including Denis Healey

(who wasn't there, but was mentioned by name) were publicly announcing that they wanted the expulsion of "left-wing extremists." A motion moved by an old member was convincingly carried, saying that the news release should be circulated to MP's to remind them that the Labour Party rejects witch-hunts.

This CLP is noted, even in Leeds terms, for being right-wing. For example, they mandated their delegate to the Wembley conference to vote for the Parliamentary Labour Party alone to elect the Leader.

Support for Benn grows

On Friday 26 April the Harlow Labour Party's General Management Committee overwhelmingly endorsed the candidature of Tony Benn for the deputy leadership. Only four delegates out of up to seventy voted against the resolution.

The surprising feature of the decision was that it was passed against the advice of Harlow's MP Stan Newens. Stan had called on Benn not to stand as he felt it was badly timed, and would alienate some of Labour's traditional vote. He likened the period to the early thirties when Trot-

sky warned the movement not to go ultra-left.

But Stan got his reply from Labour Party members who told him: "There is under the surface enormous anger, all that's missing is a clear lead. Benn is one of the few leaders of the movement prepared to give a lead. Those trade union leaders who have come out against Benn have done it on their own back. Just see what happens when the question is put at the spring trade union conferences.

"At Wembley the whole movement decided on the new election procedure, for it not

to be used would be idiotic." The chairman of the party felt it a pity that the MP hadn't consulted the officers of the party before speaking against Benn's candidature at the Tribune meeting—although it's the MP's right to make his own decision.

The GMC is not only sending a copy of the resolution to Labour's National Executive Committee but also to Benn's Labour Party.

By Bob Edwards
(Harlow Labour Party)

MILITANT IRISH PAMPHLET
60p (plus 15p p&p)
Order from World Books
1 Mentmore Terrace
London E8 3PN

Shopworkers union continues move to left

The shop-workers' union, USDAW, at its annual conference (26-30 April) voted to support the current Labour Party electoral college of 40% for trade unions and 30% each for constituencies and MPs.

This historic decision was taken despite strong opposition from the right wing. In a debate on what kind of electoral college USDAW should support and who it should vote for as Deputy Leader at this year's Labour Party conference, delegate after delegate urged the conference to support socialist policies, and vote for a socialist leadership to carry them out.

This was the first USDAW conference to discuss such issues at length for many years and represented a growing politicisation of the USDAW ranks. USDAW, for many years regarded as a right-wing union, with a leadership and membership pursuing a 'moderate' line, is now at rank and file level becoming increasingly radical, and is looking for an alternative to the weak leadership which has resulted in continued low wages.

This was demonstrated when the vote was taken and despite an appeal from Michael Foot that MPs should have 50% of the votes at the college, delegates decided to endorse the 40-30-30 proposals. Even in the vote for deputy leader, right winger Denis Healey only won by a 60-40 margin. This fairly narrow result is a strong indication of how the union is changing, and how the members are pushing the Executive Council into supporting socialist change.

On other issues too, the EC was forced to abandon its right-wing position. The conference voted overwhelmingly to withdraw from the EEC, and supported unilateral disarmament against the EC recommendation by 109,548 to 87,107 on a card vote. Again there was an overwhelming vote for an £80 minimum wage and a 35-hour week, "to be pursued with a vigorous campaign" by the Executive Council.

The membership undoubtedly will be watching the progress made on this policy over the year. The leadership have repeatedly offered excuses for not attaining the previously set wage policies, bemoaning the 'economic climate' as being

By George Williamson
(London Metropolitan branch)

Photo: C. Davies (Report)



Conference called for a vigorous campaign to ensure an £80 minimum wage and 35-hour week for all shopworkers [above] and USDAW members

'unfavourable', with companies unable to pay a living wage. USDAW members are becoming increasingly sceptical of the leadership's acceptance of the bosses' propaganda.

A concerted campaign involving the whole membership of USDAW is absolutely vital if our members are to be set free from the vicious circle of low wages and long overtime. There is no doubt that the rank and file would be prepared to wage such a struggle, but unfortunately the determination of the members is in no way matched by the leadership. For these reasons the pressure must be intensified on the EC.

This year's ADM was also a rules revision year, and there were many demands from branches to extend union democracy. One demand was for the regular election of the deputy general secretary of the union. In summing up this debate, the USDAW General Secretary launched into an attack on the supporters of the *Militant*, and on the pamphlet, "A fighting socialist programme for USDAW". He quoted two demands from the pamphlet; right of recall over officials; and regular

election of all full-timers, which, he said, "this union needs like a hole in the head". He went on to attack the "mysterious group" known as the "USDAW Militant supporters" who had published this pamphlet.

In his reply to the debate, the mover of the proposition, *Militant* supporter Jeff Price of Newcastle branch, said to loud applause that he was disappointed that the debate had to be reduced to such a low level, in order to oppose the extension of democracy.

The Executive were defeated in one small but important proposition which called for the decisions of USDAW delegations to the TUC and Labour Party conferences to be circulated to the branches giving explanations as to why they took such decisions. The Executive strongly opposed this, but were heavily defeated on a card vote by 173,000 to 91,000 votes.

The conference had three important fringe meetings. The Broad Left organised a meeting with Tony Benn and Audrey Wise speaking, which attracted some 600 delegates and visitors, many of whom were attending their first ever

political meeting. The meeting demonstrated the huge support which Tony Benn has in USDAW and confirmed the correctness of the USDAW Broad Left in trying to get the union to support Tony Benn's candidature for the Deputy Leadership of the Labour Party, despite the dire warnings of disaster from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy who did not wish to see the matter discussed at the conference.

The right wing meeting organised by the "Mainstream" and "Progressive Labour Group", two so-called 'moderate' organisations within USDAW, attracted 200 to hear a tirade of abuse on the left by Peter Shore.

There was a Militant Readers' Meeting, which (apart from a television crew) was attended by 60 people, the highest number ever, to hear Chris Ridge of Nottingham West Labour Party, speak on the policies of *Militant*. The meeting was a huge success, confirmed by the collection of nearly £135 (before additions of television fees!) which compares favourably with the collection at the Broad Left meeting of £212.

This year's ADM confirmed the crucial role that the supporters of *Militant* have played on the left in securing the advances won for the wider movement. The shopworkers' union is steadily radicalising, though this has not yet been borne out in the election results.

The right-wing officials successfully organised support for 'moderate' candidates in the elections, with the result that Audrey Wise was decisively defeated by the incumbent Syd Tierney, who has been re-elected for another two years. The Executive Council did, however, move slightly to the left, though the right still have a 12-4 majority. Similarly in the delegation for the TUC and the Labour Party conferences the right have a majority.

These results in no way reflect what is happening within USDAW. The rank and file, the shop stewards, and the activists are increasingly questioning and criticising the leadership. As the crisis of the British economy deepens, and living standards are further eroded, the membership will more and more strive to find an alternative to the present ineffective and compromising leadership.

The Broad Left in actual numbers continues to grow, and its influence increases. The *Militant* supporters will play a full role in these developments, and will fully support the membership's efforts to transform USDAW into a fighting, socialist organisation.

VOTE FOR WORKERS CANDIDATES IN DERRY



Derry Trades Council

Photo: Derry Community Mirror

The decision by Derry Trades Council to stand candidates in the local elections means that every voter in all parts of Derry will have a chance to vote for working class representatives on 20 May. Recent events in Derry have shown how important this is.

Young people have been rioting nearly every night. Capitalism gives these young people no future. All it offers is unemployment and bad social conditions. There is not even anywhere to emigrate to.

Derry City Council which represents one of the most deprived areas in Western Europe does not bother too much with the profane matters of this sinful world. But during all the current events they did manage to hold a meeting, to waste their wisdom on the city.

They held a long discussion on whether they should "support the security forces" or "support the concept of im-

partial security forces". They decided to support a concept. This provides no answer for the problems of Derry.

Much of their time recently has been spent discussing a Gaelic football pitch in the Waterside area. But this is not due to any concern at the facilities for young people in Derry; it is an attempt to keep sectarian tensions simmering during the elections.

The council have descended to come out with some platitudes against the cuts, but then so have some Tories in Britain who felt their local support was unsure. Their "solution" is Tory, to transfer the cuts somewhere else, not to end them.

Derry Trades Council's campaign has plenty of support. A Young Socialists has been set up by young people enthusiastic at the election campaign. All Derry needs is cash. Dig into your pocket, raise it at your local Labour Party, Young Socialists, trade union branch. Rush your donation to: John Duffy, Election Treasurer, 6 Nicholson Square, Derry.

By Anton McCabe

MILITANT READERS MEETINGS

CANVEY ISLAND 'The Socialist Way Forward'. Debate with Communist Party. Speakers: Danny Purton (Sec. Harlow Trades Council, personal capacity) for *Militant*. Ian Jackson (CP District Organiser). Thursday 14 May, 8.00 pm, at the Labour Hall, Lionel Road, Canvey Island. All welcome.

MANCHESTER Militant Industrial Forum. 'The Fight Against the Tories'. Monday 11 May, 8.00 pm. Star and Garter, Fairfield Street, Manchester. Speaker: Bill Mullins (ex-T&GWU senior steward, Rover, Solihull).

BRISTOL 'The Labour Party: For Social Democracy or Socialist policies?' Speaker: Bryan Beckingham (Militant Editorial Board). Chairman: Pete Hammond (Bristol City Councillor). Friday 15 May, 7.30, Room A, Shepherds Hall, Old Market, Bristol.

BIRMINGHAM Workers' Marxist Education Classes.

Lecture 1 - "Marxism and the State - can Socialism be achieved peacefully?" Speaker: Jeremy Birch.

Thursday 14 May, 1981, 7.30 pm, Room 3, Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.

£39.50 for 53 hours!

Charles Wright, a seventeen year old, was recently sacked from his job in an Edinburgh fish curers, for, he believes, an attempt to unionise his fellow workers.

He told me first about the terrible working conditions at Kelly's. New employees were issued with "protective clothing"—aprons which in general were old and torn, a pair of wellies and a pair of thin gloves which again were usually ripped to the point of uselessness.

These provided little protection for clothes. Only after working for six weeks were overalls issued to the new employees.

The work was dirty and smelly, but the washing facilities were totally inadequate—one shower which was broken and never worked and not enough basins for washing.

Workers under the age of 18 were paid a basic wage of £36 plus £3.50 as a bonus, for a 53 hour week. Overtime was compulsory and the bonus could be lost

By Norma Craven
(Dundee LP)

for being late on Saturday mornings.

At 18 the basic rate was still £36; only the overtime rates changed. The hours worked also seemed to be flexible from the employers' side. Hooters were not turned on until a "full quota" of work had been finished.

Charlie described what happened when he had an accident with one of the machines. His hand was stuck in one of the machines which was not fitted with safety guards. His wrist was broken and he was badly cut.

He was unable to work for six weeks and still has the scars. He then claimed compensation, but when an inspector came to check the details of the claim, the machine had had guards fitted!

It was against this background that Charlie tried to organise a union. This was not the first time an attempt to organise the workers had been made. The first time the attempt ended with twelve workers being sacked.

Charlie got leaflets from

the T&GWU. The other workers were sympathetic, but unfortunately the boss got hold of one of the leaflets. Charlie was threatened with the sack, but he continued to try to organise the union.

Shortly after this Charlie was sacked. The reason given was his refusal to do certain work. The work was actually to put fish guts which had been left out overnight and were beginning to rot into the freezer. Charlie and the local LPYS, however, believe he was sacked for trying to organise the union.

The LPYS are going to try to keep up contact with the workers who are left, although unfortunately they are now frightened.

Charlie and the other workers were not asking for much—decent working conditions and a living wage. Kelly's maintain the bad conditions, using the threat of unemployment to keep their workers quiet.

The question of Kelly's and other Victorian employers must be raised in the labour movement and a campaign started to unionise such shops. Only with the protection of the labour movement will workers like those at Kelly's be willing to struggle openly.

Leeds hospital mothballed

'Phase one' of the Leeds General infirmary is part of a £50m redevelopment scheme for central Leeds.

It will also include new law courts and, eventually, a new infirmary to replace the present large, mainly Victorian building.

'Phase one', which spans the city's inner ring road, was started in June 1977, and has room for 340 beds, Operating Theatres, X-ray, Maternity units, a Pathology Department and catering units.

As far back as November 1979 however, the Area Health Authority found out they had a £900,000 shortfall in funds for the project, due to inflation.

By Malcolm Richardson
(S E Leeds CLP)

The opening was put back a year to early 1983 and then it was stressed, 'economies' would be made elsewhere in the health service in Leeds.

Two years later it was found that £3 to £5 m was needed, just to open in spite of the top floor being 'lopped off' and the interior redesigned! So the A.H.A. decided to put 'Phase one' into mothballs until the summer of 1984!

As Peter Armitage, a NUPE officer said, "There is now a question mark hanging over the entire infirmary project. The old building cannot go on providing serv-

ices because it is deteriorating so fast."

The irony is the building when finished will cost an estimated £250,000 a year to maintain and keep secure just to stay empty!

Stan Cohen, Labour MP for South East Leeds and Joe Dean, Labour MP for West Leeds have appealed to the Tories for aid for the project, (to the very people who have brought about this situation).

But the only real solution can come from the labour and trade union movement locally forcing the Health Authority to proceed with the original opening date, and the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies which can redirect the wealth of society for need and not profit.

Unemployment still rising

Thatcher's government have been trying to snatch a few crumbs of comfort from the appalling April unemployment figures.

"The rate of unemployment in the last month was the lowest since last June" they boasted. Nonetheless for the first time since the 1930s dole queues have officially gone over the 2½ million mark. In reality, of course, they have been that high for a long time.

If you add all those, particularly women workers, who do not find it any advantage to register as unemployed; add on the 350,000 workers on 'job creation', 'work experience' and 'youth opportunities' schemes the real total is well over three million.

In April, the figures for job vacancies were the lowest for that month since they were first collected 20 years ago.

Just twelve months ago the jobless total crashed through the one and a half million barrier—so one million jobs have gone in a year.

If we leave it up to the Tories and their big business backers, the number out of work will carry on growing, even if the crisis is 'bottoming out' as it is elegantly expressed by the cabinet spokesmen. Sir Terence Beckett, director general of the Confederation of British Industry showed the pessimism of the bosses when he said that unemployment would be around three million by the end of 1981.

Two more reports out in the last few days predict more trouble for the British capitalist economy. Both



'Indefinite period' of decline say capitalist economists

ITEM, a body which uses the Treasury's own computer model of the economy, and the Cambridge Economic Policy Group foresee an "indefinite period" of economic decline, with adult unemployment climbing over 3½ million—all coupled with inflation in double figures.

In just one year the West

Midlands, 'the land of plenty', which attracted thousands of workers in the post war boom has doubled the length of its dole queues. It has now become a depressed area with as high a percentage out of work as Scotland. As long as the Tories are in this devastation will continue. Kick them out now.

Reviews•Reviews•Reviews•Reviews

'Mutiny. The story of the Calais Mutiny 1918' by A Killick. Price 20p

Killick outlines the war weariness and conditions that led to the strike by soldiers at the Valdelievre army camp, in which he took part, and how their organisation followed the

soviet model, calling themselves the 'Calais Area Soldiers and Sailors Association.'

'Socialist Forerunners' By B. Humphries, 50p

The aim and achievement of the latest pamphlet from

West London Militant supporters, 'Socialist Forerunners' by Barbera Humphries is to restore the historical thread that links the class battles today with those of oppressed classes in the past.

MAY DAY GREETINGS

Kent LPYS branches
1381—Peasants Revolt in Kent
1981—Forward to socialism
Canterbury YS
Rochester & Chatham YS
Thanet YS (East) Thanet YS (West)
Folkestone YS

Reverse the education cuts!
Expel the Tory wreckers! May
Day Greetings from
READING UNIVERSITY
LABOUR CLUB
Labour to power on a socialist programme

POOLE LPYS
May Day greetings to everyone fighting the Tories
Kick 'em out this year!

Fraternal MayDay
Greetings from
EAST KILBRIDE LPYS
Forward to socialism—
Tories out now!

SCARBOROUGH YOUNG SOCIALISTS say:
'Unionise Scarborough's hotels—support the blockade'
Socialism—wish you were here!

For an independent Labour Party and a socialist united
Ireland
CAMBRIDGE LPYS

WORKERS OF THE WORLD
UNITE
Gosport LPYS



West Pilton estate in Edinburgh, where the Tories threaten to demolish 200 council houses

Photo: MILITANT

A roof over your head

Britain's massive housing crisis is growing. Working people are paying a fantastic sum for a roof over their heads. Rents have virtually doubled in the last two years; mortgage payments have seen record heights.

At the same time there are fewer houses being built since the 1920s, the slums are not being cleared, and the numbers of homeless is rising.

**By Jim
Chrystie**

The devastation that the Tories and their system have wrecked is felt throughout the country.

At present the demolition of slums is so slow that it will take until the year 2241 for all pre-1919 houses to be demolished. The average London house will have to stand for 2,000 years on current trends, a report from the London Housing Aid Centre stated last month. The Tories have forecast that even if they built 320,000 houses a year until 1986 at least three-quarters of a million households would still be living in slums. But at present they are not even halfway to reaching this modest figure.

In Heseltine's own constituency his cuts have meant that the local South Oxfordshire Council are unable to rehouse people living in officially 'obsolete' prefabs, built before the Second World War.

The prefabs suffer from damp, so that clothes left in

cupboards acquire green mould and they require redecoration up to twice a year. The Tory council says that it can do nothing. To rehouse all those on the waiting list would mean building 1,200 houses; this year they plan to build 40! When they asked Heseltine for £5-£6m he only gave them £2.35m ie. 36%. So the families in the prefabs will have to go on paying £14 a week for such luxury accommodation, plus an average £20 weekly fuel bill. All this Tory government has to offer is the chance to buy them!

The Tories answer is to cut back on repairs and new housing. 75% of all government expenditure cuts have been made in housing. By 1983-4 they aim to have cut the housing budget from £5,732m in 1979-80 to £2,790m. This comes on top of the 50% cutback made by the last Labour government.

According to the Tory

controlled Commons Environment committee, Heseltine's plan means a virtual freeze on new house building, a sixty per cent cut in housing aid for Councils and a 16 per cent real rise in rents.

This would bring devastation to working people. Slums would not be cleared, the number of homeless would rise and those in council housing would face astronomical rents of up to £100 a week, with no hope of a full rebate.

Already whilst there is a massive demand for decent housing, new house building is at its lowest level since 1927. Last year building was started on only 152,000 houses, which is less than half the number of ten years before. Such is the crisis of British capitalism that even during the 1930s it was building more houses.

In the private sector the high mortgage rate arising from the Tories; monetarist attempts to squeeze inflation out of the economy through high interest rates, has cut the market for new home buyers. Such is the cost of mortgages, rates and repairs that one in six of those accepted by local authorities

as being homeless are now former owner-occupiers.

Private builders have sacked workers, so that we have the situation of 346,900 building workers unemployed whilst there are decaying slums and a desperate demand for new housing. This ludicrous situation is only possible under capitalism, where houses are produced for

Crippling interest rates

profit not need. The bosses get more money from office building or luxury contracts abroad; even by 1977 69% of Costain's turnover and 39% of Wimpey's were overseas.

These firms must be taken over and run under workers' control and management so that building can be done for need and not for profit.

In the public sector a combination of massive debt charges and government cutbacks have virtually destroyed local councils' housing plans.

Local authorities owe £320,000m; or £695 worth of debt to the money lenders

for every man, woman and child in England and Wales. 56 percent of all housing expenditure goes straight into the hands of the moneylenders. As the Table 2 shows £1,242m was collected in rents in 1978/9 but £1,942m was given to the banks in interest charges, the balance being made up by taxes and rates. After the interest charges were paid only £588m was left for repairs and £404m for maintenance, ie. 18% and 13% respectively. How this breaks down for individual areas is shown in the table.

These interest charge payments represent a massive transfer of wealth from working people to financial parasites. Instead of using this money to build new homes for the homeless and reduce the exorbitant rents, it is used to accumulate vast profits for the banks (£1,400m last year) who lend it to firms where it will get more profits from the labour of working people.

The next Labour government must cancel these debts and take over the banks and insurance companies so that interest free loans can be given to local authorities to build houses

and clear the slums.

The number of 'new starts' by local authorities was only half the 1971 figure. This year will be even worse, as last October Heseltine imposed a freeze on new building. As the director of the housing pressure group 'Shelter', Neil McIntosh explained: "By October the government had crippled the public house building. The moratorium represented a decision to kill it off altogether."

Whilst provision for housing remains in the market place, where profit rather than need is the guide, then the housing crisis can only get worse. If there was a socialist plan of production with the banks, insurance companies, building societies, construction firms taken over and run by working people then it would be quite possible to ensure enough resources were devoted to housing, so that 1 million houses were built every year.

All the Tories' system can offer is more slums, higher rents and mortgages. A decent cheap home is a basic right, but just to achieve it we will have to transform society.

HOUSING REVENUE 1978-79

Expenditure

(in millions of pounds)

	Greater London	Manchester	Liverpool	Sheffield	Gateshead	All local authorities	%
Debt charges	147	36.9	26.9	25.6	11.7	1,940	57
Management	37	8.7	5.0	5.4	2.9	404	13
Repairs	39	1.4	8.0	9.0	4.0	588	18
Income							
Rent, net after rebates (dwellings)	70	18.5	19.1	19.3	4.6	1,242	42
Government subsidy	110	23.8	21.1	15.9	9.8	1,323	43
Rate contribution	43	17.2	2.2	2.9	3.3	305	9
Rent rebates etc.	21	8.5	8.7	6.0	3.0	378	

Source: Chartered Institute Public Finance and Accountancy, 1 Buckingham Place, London SW1E 6HS. This report details all local housing expenditure and income and can be obtained from local libraries.



Demonstration, 20 September 1980, called by FRS, the Socialist Party and two of its splinter groups, as part of the election campaign. Photo: Carlos Augusto (IFL).

PORTUGAL

As bosses contemplate reaction, workers leaders must...

DEFEND GAINS OF REVOLUTION

It was the enormous power of the Portuguese working class which produced the revolution of 25 April 1974.

The radicalisation of the army reflected the breakdown of Caetano's degenerate dictatorship, embroiled in unwinnable wars in Africa and facing a mounting tide of opposition at home.

In its turn, the coup d'état of the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) triggered off a mighty mass upsurge of the working class. In a few months, the workers won huge gains in terms of democratic rights, extensive nationalisation, and land reforms.

The working class flooded into trade unions, and set up factory committees, and it has been their power which has prevented the capitalist class from moving quickly to dismantle their gains.

But underlying the political instability in Portugal today is the desperate crisis of Portuguese capitalism. This year the foreign debt is expected to be £530m on top of an outstanding debt of £3,200 million, which costs £300m simply in interest charges. The petrol bill will be £1,250m, accounting for 30% of the country's imports. As 'The Times' put it (21 January 1981) "In the present world depression it is becoming increasingly difficult to export enough to pay for imports—let alone to modernise the country for EEC entry."

At the end of last year, inflation was running at 20%, and this year opened with a vicious wave of price increases. On top of this unemployment is about 12% to 16%, and taking into account semi-employment a staggering 25% of the country's 3 million workforce are jobless.

Last year some capitalist economists were crowing about signs of recovery in the economy, and the government was boasting that workers were beginning to get a better deal. But this year there remains no doubt—any signs of recovery were superficial.

Tight monetarism has shattered the living standards of the masses, state spending was cut in real terms by 24% last year, pensions have been held below inflation, and the real buying power of wages is now well below what it was in 1973 under the Cateano dictatorship.

The collapse in consumer demand has forced thousands of small and medium sized businesses to close, while the monopolies have made a killing on profits. The ruling class is deliberately forcing down living standards in an attempt to solve the economic crisis.

Workers have taken a hammering over the last four years. Despite the strength of the unions, which won huge gains in the revolutionary struggles of 1974 and 1975, the leadership of the workers' organisations has not led a generalised and sustained struggle against the pressure of big business to cut living standards.

Real wages fell by 6% in 1976 under a socialist gover-

By Ed Bober

taken back by private owners, this is the thin end of the wedge to complete denationalisation.

There has been a long struggle over the length of the working week. One of the most important gains of the revolution is called "the English week", of 5½ as opposed to six or seven days, which has been established in the commercial sectors of the economy. But the bosses and the government have been trying to force the workers to accept increases in the legal working day.

There have been many bitter and bloody battles, some even resulting in deaths, to defend the land in the Alentejo province, which was taken over from the landlords by peasants and agricultural workers in the summer of 1975. The national guard and the police have been sent in to break up the new collective farms and return them to their former owners.

Another struggle has been over the power of the factory committees, which were set up by the workers to run firms whose bosses fled in 1974.

The government is attempting to destroy these committees, and to encourage the return of the former owners who fled to Spain, or Brazil's dictatorship.

The Democratic Alliance government is under continual pressure from big business to bring measures to curb strikes and reduce the power of the unions. The police are continually harrasing the labour movement, attacking demonstrations arresting militants and generally hankering after the old days under the dictatorship.

President Eanes has gradually purged the army, reducing it from over 100,000 to 35,000 and in the process getting rid of left-wing soldiers and officers and restoring many of the reactionary officers who were ousted from their posts in the revolution.

The government even aims to repeal the 1976 constitution, which commits Portugal to socialism. "Socialism" is not defined but they want it removed all the same.

The really outstanding question is how long democratic rights can remain. As 'The Economist' (14 June 1980) put it "The danger is of a lapse back into party infighting, unstable government, and a renewed tug-of-war between president and parliament. Right-wing (i.e. officers) might then lose their patience, stage a coup and set Portugal right back where it started from in 1974."

And 'The Times' (6 December '80) warned "ominously for Portuguese democracy the centre right coalition could now begin to fall apart...democracy is still comparatively young...and...cannot yet be said to be deep rooted."

Unquestionably a section of the capitalist class is watching and waiting for a chance to go in again with the jack boot. The continued existence of democracy is incompatible with the needs of the ruling class to force down living standards and dismantle the gains of the revolution.

But within the ruling class there have been continued conflicts and splits over the question of how fast to proceed with this counter-revolution. The reason is the tremendous strength, militancy and resilience of the working class. The workers' committees in the industrial centre of Lisbon, Setubal, Oporto and elsewhere have already made it known that they will resist any steps to curb trade union powers.

There was a very high level

of class struggle last year. Last May and the first fortnight of June there was at least one section of the working class on strike every single day. There were strikes in textiles, engineering, the breweries and the merchant navy. The merchant seamen set up a workers' general assembly to co-ordinate their action, which operated from a ship at sea.

Most of the strikes were 75%-90% solid, despite intimidations and anti-trade union threats from the bosses and the government. There was a slight downturn in the class struggle last Autumn, as the workers turned their attention to the two elections, governmental in October, and Presidential in December. But even during this period the railwaymen came out.

The conflict between the late AD (Democratic Alliance) prime minister Sá Carneiro and the president Eanes expresses the split and hesitation inside the ruling class. Sá Carneiro wanted to proceed rapidly with his programme of counter-revolution, but Eanes was in favour of caution, fearing that the working class could be provoked into a new upsurge of revolutionary struggle.

Eanes was heeding the lessons of 1974-75, when reaction attempted to organise to turn back the revolution three times, and on each occasion the workers poured onto the streets, took strike action, set up barricades, disarmed reactionary officers and through their own initiative pushed society in a leftward direction. This was the reason why the banks and most of industry was nationalised in March 1975, after an attempted, but abortive, coup to crush the revolution.

Before his death in an air crash on the eve of the Presidential polls last December Sá Carneiro had threatened to resign if Eanes won a second term of office. With his successor, Francisco Pinto Balsemão, the conflict continues. "The right wing Centre Democrats, and some of the more conservative Social Democrats of the Prime Minister's own party in the Coalition today began sniping at the President for 'interfering' with his striking call for Portugal's pluralist democracy to include a press and state-run television and radio free from government pressures." ('The Times', 16 January '81).

The argument is not really about policy, only the pace of its implementation. 'The Times' (9 December '80) reported "Eanes supports private enterprise, NATO and the EEC, he is in favour of abolishing the military council of the revolution...His ideas are not, in reality, very far from those of the Democratic Alliance." Eanes himself said on television, "The type of policies which I defend are not different from the AD, it is only the method of implementing them which is different."

Eanes is a popular demagogue who, in the absence of any clear opposition from the leadership of the workers' parties, represented loyalty to the constitution in the eyes of the masses, in contrast to his presidential rival Soares Carneiro (no relation to either Mario Soares or Sá Carneiro) who was correctly hated by the masses as a fossil from the fascist period who stood openly for the destruction of the constitution.

So despite the victory of the AD government in the October general election, due to the disillusionment of the masses with the experience of the Socialists in government,

previously, the sticking point came in the presidential election. Eanes' victory shows the deep hatred of the Portuguese workers and peasants of anything that smells of dictatorship.

Also there is a certain loyalty to the armed forces, because of their role in the 1974 revolution. And Eanes, to wide strata of the population, with the absence of any clear revolutionary leadership, represented the armed forces and symbolised the gains of the revolution.

Yet how is it that the ruling class, after believing that all was lost and capitalism destroyed in 1975, has been able to rekindle its confidence and begin to take the initiative once more, turning back the gains of the revolution? Unfortunately, the reason for this lies in the role played by the leaders of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

There have been numerous opportunities for the working class to take complete power in society, with a correct programme and leadership it would have been an easy task to destroy the last remaining toehold of the capitalists and landlords within the economy.

The combined left vote in April 1975 was 58%, and on top of this the Social Democratic PPD (Popular Democratic Party), under the heat of revolution claimed to stand for socialist measures and got 26% of the vote. Thus a total of 84% of the population voted for socialism.

But the CP and SP vote has fallen. The combined vote was only 48.9% last October. While the combined right-wing vote has gone up from 7.6% who voted for the CDS (Christian Democrats) in 1975 to 48.8% last year which includes the now openly pro-capitalist Social Democratic Party.

This is a measure of the disillusionment of the masses with the failure of the CP and SP leaders to solve the problems of society.

Yet the industrial workers are still determined to go onto the offensive again against the ruling class. Between January and August last year there was a mood amongst the UGT and CGT-P militants for a general strike to bring down the government. A bold lead in general strike action, linked to a political explanation of socialist policies could have rallied back to the CP and the SP all the disillusioned layers of the masses.

But the leaders of the unions and the workers' parties refused to call a general strike because they said it could threaten the unstable democracy of Portugal.

But in Portugal at the moment there is no stable basis for democracy. The very continuation of this big business government, with its remorseless encroachments on the gains of the revolution, is paving the way for an attempt at a certain stage, on the part of the ruling class to smash democratic rights.

The organisation of workers into trade unions and political parties is incompatible with the need of the capitalists to force down living standards. Only the tremendous strength of the working class has caused the ruling class to hesitate and draw back from a bloody showdown.

The SP and CP leaders fail to understand that any amount of restraint on the part of the working class cannot prop up this failing democracy. Only the consolidation of the revolution by nationalisation of the remaining sections of the economy, control of industry democratically through the workers' organisations, and the planning of production along socialist lines can provide a basis for democracy.

If the SP and CP leaders lead a struggle around these demands they could open the way for a great extension and flourishing of democracy in Portugal, which would become a beacon of attraction to the workers of Spain and the rest of Europe.

For the ruling class it seems as though a miracle has happened. Three headlines summarised it: 'The Times' 1975 "Capitalism is Dead"; 'The Economist' 1977 "A Revolution Tamed"; 'The Economist' 1980 "Almost There."

They have only been able to make this recovery by leaning on the leaders of the workers' organisations who have in turn acted as a break on the revolutionary aims of their membership.

This has led to a deadlock between the two sides in the revolution, and has enabled the ruling class to gradually begin turning back the gains of the revolution—first very cautiously and now at an accelerating rate.

Amongst the advanced workers there is not apathy but frustration because of the lack of decisive leadership. There is still an extremely militant mood and, after four years of counter-revolution by stealth, there is still a determination to defend every inch of ground against the capitalist class.

Amongst the more backward layers of the masses there is not apathy but confusion which has led to a decline in the readiness to struggle in support of and with the advanced workers.

This stems directly from the lack of a clear revolutionary leadership.

The desperate crisis of leadership inside the working class parties was shown by the confusion that existed over the presidential election. The CP, at the eleventh hour, was forced to run a candidate, who undoubtedly many militant workers supported given the lack of choice between the other candidates. Socialist party leader, Mario Soares, vacillated continually over whether or not to support Eanes.

This shows the pressure he was coming under continually from the ranks of his own party many of whom would have liked to have seen their own candidate. In so far as he did come out in opposition to Eanes, he undoubtedly got the support of the industrial workers inside the party, for example, the two shipyard branches, Lisbon's Lisnave and Setubal's Setanave socialist party branches.

The Socialist Party is divided between the left-wing 'Historicos' and the right wing 'Technocrats'. Soares is opportunistically attempting to straddle both wings. He supported the Historicos over the question of opposition to Eanes, but used the Technocrats' presence within the party as an excuse for not coming out decisively with an SP candidate himself.

In the end the SP gave its support to Eanes as "the best candidate to beat reaction."

Inside the Communist party there have been opposition currents developing against the existing leadership. In Lisbon CP workers have been accusing the leadership of being 'too moderate'. Also there is a 'Euro-communist' current consisting of teachers and other workers who are demanding greater democracy inside the party.

In the coming strike waves and battles many opportunities will exist for the advanced and thinking workers to draw genuine Marxist conclusions; and if a strong Marxist current is established within the working class the whole impasse of the Portuguese revolution can be broken, by winning the masses to a programme for the complete transformation of society.

Riot police separating an extreme right-wing demonstration from left-wing supporters of Eanes protecting their campaign headquarters, Lisbon 1 December 1980. Photo: Carlos Augusto [IFL]



After the white elections



Conditions for black workers and their families have not been improved by minor reforms to apartheid

Last week's South African elections (for whites only) hold up a mirror to the crisis facing the ruling class.

Called eighteen months early they were an attempt by Prime Minister Botha to remove opposition within his own party to proposals for reform. Botha and his group (the "verligtes") want to create a new basis for the capitalist cheap labour system.

The ruling class can no longer rule in the old way. They are threatened by the Black working class and

By Colin Barber

youth, who over the last ten years have waged a continual battle for freedom, and an end to all oppression.

Botha wishes to remove some of the privileges of the white workers and middle class. He has formed a President's Council removed from Parliament to provide a basis for strong rule. Coupled with this move towards dictatorship has gone an attempt to woo sections of the small Black middle class with minor concessions.

A minority of the ruling class (called the "verkrampes") have not accepted this new policy and have prevented it from being fully implemented. These open divisions are an indication of the crisis gripping South

African society.

The "verkrampes" have considerable support within the white working class and farmers who do not wish to see their privileges disappear. In last week's elections the party of the verkrampes, the HNP, saw their vote rise from 34,000 to 192,000 so that it is now a quarter of the ruling Nationalist Party.

One leading "verligte", P Cillie, commented, "This is a party that had no press support at all and no real organisation. It shows a gut reaction. It is not catastrophic yet but it is very ominous."

Botha's government was so worried about the response of white voters to the HNP's appeal that it issued an election pamphlet which ironically perfectly illustrates the misery of apartheid for the millions of Black, Asian and Coloured

people in S Africa.

"Did you know," it asked, "that whites have 1.7 million motor cars and all the other population groups have only 366,553? Did you know that 988 Rand a year is spent on a white child's education and only 111 Rand on a black child's? And did you know that a married black man with one or more children pays more tax on the same income than whites?"

"Also are you aware that while there is a shortage of 34,693 housing units for Coloureds, 11,275 for Asians and 160,000 for blacks—there is virtually no housing shortage for whites?"

The election shows the impasse of the ruling class. They can neither reform nor rule in the old way. In 1977 former Premier Vorster promised reforms and won the

support of many English-speaking middle class. No change was forthcoming. This time driven away by the "verkrampes" rhetoric many English speakers returned to the fold of the big business Progressive Federal Party.

This election has settled nothing. Botha's bid to remove the verkrampes has failed; instead many of his Cabinet Ministers will be looking over their shoulders at the HNP.

Health minister Munnik saw his majority slashed in half after he had said that (white) pensioners could easily survive on £12 a week. In King Williams Town the Nationalist Party lost the seat because they had said the town would be incorporated into the Ciskei Bantustan.

Yet all the indications are the future ahead will be stor-

my. After an artificial period of growth (because of the rise in the price of gold) the South African economy is slowing down as manufacturing struggles to improve its productivity. Inflation is currently at 20% and rising and the Budget has been postponed from March to the end of August.

Mass struggles will be on the order of the day as the ruling class faces the developing tidal wave from black workers and youth.

But against the attacks of capitalism in crisis, the only secure future for the white workers and white middle class lies in a joint struggle with the oppressed black population—a struggle for socialism.

This fight spells the death-knell of white privilege, and all privilege, but opens the way to a future of prosperity for all.

US miners—never justice, never peace

The unionised coal miners of America are now on strike once again in rejection of a contract made for them by their union president, Sam Church Jnr.

So far, the federal government has not invoked the notorious Taft-Hartley Act, as this has always failed to drive the coal miner back to work.

In an article written for the *New York Times* of April 21 1981, Paul J Nyden, gives us a graphic description of what makes the American miner tick.

Titled "As John L Lewis said: You Can't Mine Coal With Bayonets," he writes from Beckley, West Virginia:

"Here in the mountains of Southern and West Virginia, men and women work every day gouging coal from seams often no more than three feet thick. Miles from the portal, and 400 feet below the surface, many must crawl around in the mud and water.

"Breathing coal dust for 20 or 30 years slowly, but inexorably, strangles miners:

By Betty Traun

their hardened lung tissue no longer transfers enough oxygen into the blood.

Living this life develops the feeling inside a person that he should be permitted control over what he does. Miners harbour a strong sense of moral rights, transcending legal rights that legislatures and courts choose to grant them.

This deep-rooted sense is again generating confrontations, sometimes violent, during this year's United Mine Workers Strike.

In the wake of the methane-and-coal-dust explosion that killed 78 men in Mannington in November 1968, West Virginia's 45,000 miners struck in February 1969, demanding a stronger safety law.

State legislatures passed that law three weeks later. The enactment of new

Federal legislation that December further improved working conditions, especially in union mines. Since then, three major explosions have occurred, all in non union mines: 38 died in Hyden, Kentucky, in 1970; 26 in Scotia, Ky., in 1976, and 15 in Redstone, Colorado, last Wednesday. One of those 15 was laid off from a union mine near Beckley, West Va., and left for Colorado seeking work three years ago.

In 1975 and 1976, nearly every union miner east of the Mississippi joined wildcat strikes begun in southern West Virginia, protesting delays in resolving grievances. The 120,000 miners defied batteries of injunctions and fines; all were withdrawn.

The 111-day contract strike in 1968 was prolonged in the face of a Taft-Hartley injunction mandating a 60-day "cooling off" period. When not one mine reopened, the back-to-work order was quashed in a week.

Local strikes can spread

quickly because of the coalfield tradition of honouring pickets. The hated arbitration review board, established in 1974 by the UMW and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association as the final step in the grievance process, described this tradition in a 1977 decision: "One known union member standing at the entrance to a mine is sufficient to be as effective as a 30-foot gate patrolled by armed guards and police dogs."

The 2-1 rejection of the proposed 1981 contract on 31 March startled outside observers and union officials. But it surprised few in these parts. Miners were content with the economic components but believed that several new sections threatened the union's existence.

Anger smouldered in every little cement-block union hall and beer joint along the road.

Political issues and dissatisfaction over working conditions have sparked 93 per cent of all coal walkouts since 1970, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics; they caused only 31 percent in all

other industries. Coal miners have shown they will strike against Ronald Reagan or Federal courts almost as quickly as they will against the coal operators.

How can such men be controlled? In a December 1972 election ordered by Federal courts, a grassroots movement called Miners for Democracy ousted a union bureaucracy entrenched since 1919 with men fresh from the pits.

The organisation had been formed three years earlier at the funeral of Joseph "Jock" Yablonski, slain in a 1969 plot engineered by the incumbent president, Tony Boyle. Once in power, the miners made their union one of the few where rank-and-file members ratify all contracts.

Judges have often tried to assert control by imposing injunctions, or even dispatching troops to troubled coal towns. But John L. Lewis's quip—"You can't mine coal with bayonets"—is as widely quoted as proverbs in Bibles that sit on tables in most miners' living rooms.

Companies may dream of

achieving labour stability by weakening, or even destroying, the union. They have done it before. Today 75 per cent of all miners belong to the UMW but they produce only 44 percent of the coal. Yet, somehow, the union has persisted.

Mother Jones, the legendary organiser, 61 years ago offered her thoughts on why these mountains witness constant turmoil: "There is never peace in West Virginia because there is never justice. Injunctions and guns like morphia, produce a temporary quiet...The strike was broken.

"But the next year, the miners gathered their breath for another struggle...When I get to the other side, I shall tell God Almighty about West Virginia."

Labour peace is unlikely to dawn after a 36 percent or even 66 percent, increase in wages and benefits. Nor has peace ever been imposed for long by threats against the stubbornly defiant miners.

When miners feel they can exercise more control over forces that mould—and so often take—their lives, perhaps then some peace will descend upon these hollows."

Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Murderous 'advice'

Dear Comrades

No doubt the workers and peasants of El Salvador were delighted by the "good news" that, for the time being, the U.S. government would only send "advisors" to their country.

Some of your readers will have seen pictures on T.V. some years ago; pictures of people who had been imprisoned in South Vietnam.

People who were blind, or partially blind, because for years they had been kept in darkness; people whose legs were paralyzed because for years they had been kept in cages, in which they could neither stand nor lie and so on.

Naturally, these pictures escaped the attention of the "champions of human rights" in the U.S. and British ruling circles—well, anyhow, they made no comments upon them!

It was stated that many of these victims were really "political"; that they were simply people who had been indiscreet enough to grum-

ble about some aspect of life in South Vietnam; about the price of food, for instance. It was also stated that each of the prison-camps had American "advisors" attached to it!

Now, if these pictures had been taken *after* the liberation of South Vietnam, they might have been dismissed as "Communist propaganda". But they were, in fact, taken before the Americans pulled out.

Yours fraternally
Jim Parkes
Walsall

Congratulations

Dear Comrades

It was my great pleasure to attend the LPYS National Conference at Bridlington this Easter.

This is the first time I have seen and heard creative and progressive policies for Labour since I joined the party last year. These policies were debated openly, honestly, democratically and with genuine enthusiasm!

The fact that the press were absent (although News of the World scandalised the

event with typical distortions) was no surprise to any Labour supporter. Labour Weekly's coverage was a shock to me. 'Labour's own newspaper' contributed *half of page four* as if as an afterthought.

Many right wing members (and M.P.s) castigate publicly Young Socialists and in particular Militant supporters. My conclusion is that without LPYS and MILITANT the Labour Party would die a quick death.

Isn't it ironic that without the dedications of Militant supporters and LPYS members, right wing MPs who speak alarmingly of these

sections would never be able to look forward to the comfortable cossetted positions in government that all such careerists seek.

Congratulations and good luck to all Young Socialists and 'Militant' supporters.

Yours fraternally
K. Brown
Chesterfield C.L.P.

P.S. Compliments and best wishes to Ted Grant for the conference's best speech!

Socialism—the only real protection

Dear Comrade

The letter from Syd Bidwell MP (17 April) said that Bob McKee's recent article against import controls argued against wholesale protectionism but ignored the case for selective controls.

In fact the article deals clearly with selective import controls and far from being 'excessively theoretical' gave a straightforward account of the practicalities (or rather the impracticalities) of import controls.

Syd Bidwell says that unions are not offering selective import controls as the answer to British prayers, but this is precisely

what many unions are doing e.g. in the textile industry. Even if such protectionist measures were implemented as "partial" or "short term" they would still be ineffective.

Syd Bidwell seems to reject this idea. Unfortunately he is showing the same head-in-the-sands approach that many advocates of import controls display. At the recent London Labour Party conference, myself and other delegates who pointed to the problem of retaliation were met by jeering and groans of disbelief by some delegates!

It seems they are desperately trying to avoid coming to the conclusion that Militant's ideas are correct. Given the weight of evidence that rival capitalist countries would retaliate against tariff barriers put up by the British ruling class, they are

misleading the labour movement if they refuse to answer Militant's arguments.

On Syd Bidwell's last point. Instead of lobbying for controls on imported TV tubes from third world countries (which incidentally I always understood were to be excluded from control) he has the position as an MP to spearhead a campaign for the nationalisation of firms threatened by bankruptcy due to failure to compete with overseas firms.

In this way he could explain how we can really fight job losses rather than attempting to lead us up the blind alley of protectionism.

Yours fraternally
Ian Pollock

not as we would like it to be.

"War is the continuation of politics by other means." The danger of armed conflict arises directly out of 'peaceful' conflict between world powers for the world's resources, and for a greater share of the world market. To expect lasting peace whilst capitalism remains is utterly utopian. The quickest and only route to world peace is via the Socialist Revolution.

But Ron is not prepared to wait for socialism. Fortunately, the world working class, with the Polish workers at their head, are not prepared to wait for world disarmament before struggling for socialism.

The fundamental weakness in Ron's approach is that he does not proceed from the standpoint of the class struggle but from some abstract "universal brotherhood". He says: "we will

never have true socialism until we disarm."

But it is not 'we' who are armed. It is our class enemies, who, moreover, have not the slightest desire to see socialism! They will not disarm themselves. The working class must disarm them.

Ron concludes: "Does Militant only condemn force used by the capitalists?"

We condemn capitalist violence against the working people. But we have come to expect it.

We are in favour of a peaceful transformation, but the lessons of the past remain. Two million workers perished in the Spanish Civil War and the aftermath. The Chilean Junta made us pay with 50,000 comrades for their having dared aspire to socialism. That is why we are not Pacifists.

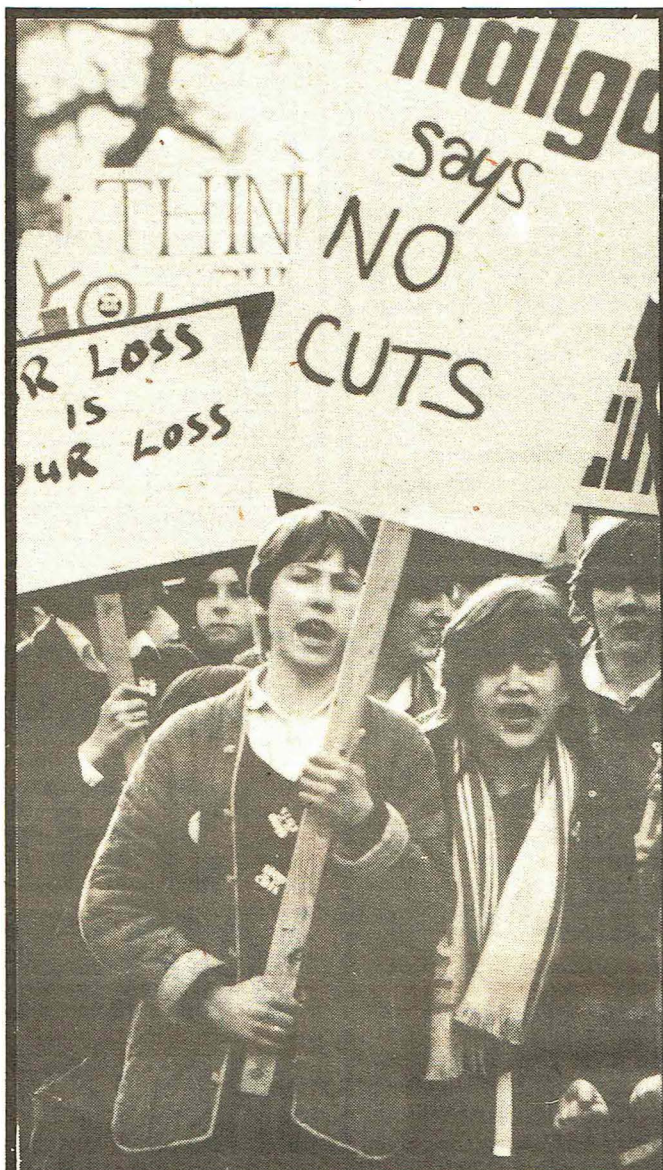
Greg Oxley
Bothwell CLP

War and the class struggle

Dear Comrades

The letter by Walsall CND member Ron Williams (17th April 81) in reply to a previous article by Rob Sewell gives a very good indication of the spirit in which the leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament are trying to educate supporters of its cause.

Ron considers that Rob Sewell is "misguided if he thinks we should wait for socialism before we disarm." We Marxists, like Ron himself, are anxious to remove the threat of nuclear annihilation at the earliest possible date. But if we are to succeed, we must examine the problem as it is and



School students in Solihull demonstrate against cuts, 3 February. Cuts in schools, youth clubs, facilities must be fought

Photo: MILITANT

Why should schools have to beg?

Dear Comrades

Last year, in our school, we had to find a way to raise money for a minibus. The government should have paid but the government, being tight-fisted, forced us to resort to begging off the parents of pupils.

Of all things to pick, the school decided to run a sponsored 'pick a stone'. So one afternoon we all had to go and dig up stones off the football field. A year later we still have not got the minibus. The schools finances are low and we have no hope in getting one in the near future.

We are from a new school and so most of the books are new—but they have got to last at least five years. What

sort of system is it where the state deprives its children the future of a decent education?

The school fund, which used to be used for luxuries is now used on necessities. School trips now have to be funded by parents. Education nowadays is suffering because of Tory cuts.

School students should organise and Labour councils should refuse to implement the cuts. Workers should organise and unite to force this hated Tory Government out of office and to put Labour in on a socialist programme.

There are teachers on the dole and there is money in the banks, why not combine the two?

Ian Shelley and Darren Snape
Stafford LPYS

Ammunition for the fight

Dear Comrades

Readers of 'Militant' may not have much in common with their local council leader but, assuming your council is Labour controlled, it is certainly worth inviting him/her along to your monthly GMC meeting.

At our last GMC, council-

illor Slater informed us that Sunderland council had a total revenue of £100m last year of which £26m went in interest charges.

Secondly, he announced that between Easter and Summer of this year some 4,350 school leavers in the town will enter the bourgeois world of opportunity but alas capitalist free enterprise has provided only 30 vacancies so far.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, councillor Slater offered no socialist alternative to enable work-

Don't despair—organise

Dear Comrades,

Unemployment has always been the scourge of the working class; and as it continues to go up, the effects become more and more blatant.

It produces cynicism, hopelessness and despair; it forces people to live in poverty and breaks up families; it breeds racial and sectarian hatred; and, all too often, it pushes people to suicide.

It is used as a deliberate strategy by the representatives of capitalism to divide the working class, so that the rich kids in society can hold onto their privileges a little longer.

The Tories are producing a generation of youth who don't have a job, have never had a job, and will never have a job under the present system. A whole generation of young people of many talents and abilities, who've been mercilessly thrown into the gutter of the capitalist system.

No jobs, a pittance of a benefit, no cheap leisure facilities, rising transport costs—all these factors and more force the unemployed into isolation, and its no wonder that so many jobless people have given up altogether and killed themselves. However, that is no way out, as one unemployed school-leaver put it:

"I have thought about ending it all—but what good would it do? We'll never get rid of the Tories by giving in to them so easily. I'm all for fighting those who are killing jobs, and not for killing myself!"

As long as our society is geared towards the pleasures and privileges of a few (ie the 196 businessmen who own and control society) and not towards the needs of the many, there will always be unemployment. We have to fight for a socialist Labour Party which would implement the policies outlined in the 'Militant', and for the overthrow of the bankrupt capitalist system. Forward to socialism in the '80s!

Fraternally,
Jackie Galbraith
Secretary, East Kilbride
LPYS

ers to overcome the anarchy of capitalism but at our next meeting we have a motion up which calls upon the Sunderland Labour Party to call a conference on the cuts—the aim of which would be to draw up a strategy on how to fight them (the Tories as well as the cuts that is!)

Rest assured we shall be using comrade Slater's facts and figures for ammunition!

Yours fraternally
Ray Physick
Sunderland North CLP

ads

MILITANT BACK NUMBERS Some copies of all issues 300-545 still available. These papers contain material no labour movement activist can do without! Only 25p per issue (including postage). Reductions for bulk orders. Cheques or POs to Dave Brandon, 29 Lime Tree Avenue, Peterborough, Cambs. Tel 67310.



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

SHEFFIELD PARK LPYS Public Meeting. Young Workers Against the Tories. Hear Pete Skerrett (Sec. Coventry AUEW Jun. Workers). 7.30 pm, Tuesday 19 May, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield

SHEFFIELD LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS Public Debate with Sheffield Young Conservatives. 7.00 pm, Tuesday 2 June, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield. All welcome.

Badges—"A woman's place is in the Labour Party" + logo. 20p each + s.a.e. Ardwick CLP Women's Section, 15 Cawdor Road, Manchester M14 6LG.

NEW YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT BADGE:

"LPYS—end cheap labour. Full pay on YOPS"
 20p each. 10 for £1.10
Also: "LPYS—SAVE JOBS—SACK THE TORIES"
 at same price
 Order from: YCAU,
 PO Box 104, London E9 5TP

MARXIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

Friday 26 June (evening), Saturday 27 & Sunday 28
 Book this weekend in your diary now and start organising a group from your Labour Party Young Socialists and Trade Union Branches.
 Write to 'Militant School', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN
 More details in future issues

May Day Greetings from BRADFORD TRADES COUNCIL to all workers fighting for socialism

Havant & Waterloo CLP
 send greetings to the labour movement on May Day
 —Forward to—
SOCIALISM

SOUTHEND LPYS
 Spring clean now: sweep out the Tories!

WIN A £500 HOLIDAY!

Coming soon—Militant Summer Holiday Draw!
 Other prizes include a music centre and four radio/cassette recorders!
 Tickets 10p each from your Militant seller next week!
 (All proceeds to Militant fighting fund.)
 Militant Supporters Association. Registered Promoter: D Smith, 73 Armond Road, Witham, Essex

'A Socialist Programme for APEX'
 20p each (plus 20p P&P)
 A must for all APEX members. Please order from B Murray, 260 Staple Lodge Rd, Northfield, Birmingham.

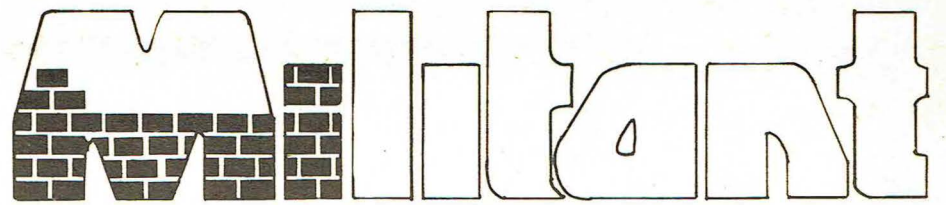
MARCH FOR SOCIALISM!

Mick Hogan and Sharon Blackhall of Walton LPYS on the 300 mile 'Peoples March For Jobs' invite you to sponsor them for the Militant Fighting Fund to build the fight for socialist policies to end unemployment.

Send sponsorships (make cheques payable to Militant Fighting Fund) to Lesley Holt, 48 Arkles Lane, Liverpool 4.

EAST END BENEFIT organised by Tower Hamlets joint council unions in aid of 1 June Day of Action against cuts. At St Hilda's Centre, Club Row, E2. Friday 8 May 7.30 til 2. Admission £2. Reduced for unemployed.

Build



Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target for year
Eastern	1427		3550
East Midlands	1292		2750
Hants & Dorset	979		2600
Humberside	591		1750
London East	1860		3800
London West	1118		2400
London South	1053		2750
Manchester & Lancs	1286		2900
Merseyside	1157		3300
Northern	1665		4300
Scotland East	919		2200
Scotland West	1430		3750
Southern	1654		3550
South West	748		1750
Wales East	619		1300
Wales West	791		2300
West Midlands	1285		4300
Yorkshire	1964		4500
Others	5405		6250
Total received	27243		60,000
			120,000

Target for July 11th £60,000 Target for year £120,000

STORM WARNING— INVEST IN MILITANT NOW!

THIS WEEK £1,208

"Lightning strikes Lady Diana's plane" wept the daily papers on Bank Holiday Monday, trying to extract all possible drama from an everyday incident.

By Steve Cawley

The storms that daily strike at ordinary working class people didn't concern the Daily Mails of the world, of course. "Lightning hits Consett" or "South Wales hit by thunderbolt" won't make it to the Sun's headlines.

But for the workers being hit by today's capitalist crisis, who are looking for an answer to the problems we face, Militant is providing not just the workers' headlines but the workers' solutions. More and more, workers are prepared to back us with cash.

The Militant readers' meeting at the shopworkers' union (USDAW) conference collected £135 from delegates and visitors. In Southport, APEX members donated £52 at their readers meeting together with £28 from sale of badges, rattling tins etc. at the conference.

Merseyside readers collected well over £300 at a recent meeting, including £100 from T&J Baugh

(sacked Vauxhall shop steward), and £50 from R Farrar. This amount should bring the area to the same total on our chart as at the same time last year. If our Merseyside supporters can carry on along these lines, they'll reach the half year figure—another £1850 required in 10 weeks, after counting this collection!

Briefly round the country, Eastern supporters have had two successful socials, we've a £10 donation from Basil-don LPYS, and Hertfordshire and Bedford readers collected £112.10, mainly at a Marxist Day school (£26) and a meeting in Stevenage (£78)! Further north, the Lancashire Easter Draw netted £114.75.

From Scotland the largest sums in were £60 (EETPU members, Edinburgh for skills rendered), £40 from J Campbell (CPSA, Edinburgh) and £56 after expenses from meetings addressed by Ted Grant in East Scotland, also £24 from

Stirling students, and £10 B. Brown (W Stirling LPYS) and £27 from an Edinburgh skittles night!

Yorkshire supporters raised £45 at a Sheffield meeting, and £20 from a POEU member, after a productivity bonus. This was supplemented by cash from smaller meetings and £5.50 from Bradford rock, and a tenner from a Leeds reader, part of football winnings. London readers to have contributed included H Kotecha (EMI steward) £10, D Ford (ASTMS) £5, P&M Dinsdale, Camberley, £7, C&P Mayes (both UCW members) £3 each, and J Baker £1.

Northern readers' contributions include Newton Aycliffe Marxist Discussion Group (£9), £16 Chester-le-Street LPYS members £16 and £8 meeting on Poland in the same area. Gosforth LPYS members £21.50 and £9 from Blyth readers, including hairdressing £4.

Elsewhere, £18 came from a Blackpool meeting the previous week, £4.60 from coach cakes (P Veer, Bristol), £16.80 W Coombes (also Bristol), £10 T Lewis, Coventry NW CLP (expenses), fivers from J Connolly

& V Millar (Eastleigh), Tony King (USDAW, Portsmouth), and D Cumberland (Warwick ULC) and £1s included those from G Gallen (Nuneaton & Bosworth LPYS) and J Collins (AUEW) and A&K Davies (LPYS) from Grimsby.

Contrary to the fantasies of the popular press, all our financial support apart from sales, and adverts, comes either from labour movement organisations, or from individual readers. We need £3,200 each week now to achieve £60,000 by July 11th. We appeal to all our readers to help us regularly.

Any amount, larger or smaller than those mentioned in the column, on a weekly or fortnightly or monthly basis helps us to budget for the future and to expand the scope and coverage of Militant.

Send us what you can, and if you've given us an IOU, send us the cash now, please, before you spend it! Protect yourself from the storms of the future! Build the sales and resources of Militant to fight for a socialist alternative to the Tories, big business, spivs and Royal idiots who run our lives at present.

Liverpool Kirkdale CLP WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

Rochdale Labour Party Anti-Racism Sub-Committee

& Royton and Wardle Womens Section

Welcome Anwar's children For workers' unity to defeat racism

Civil Service union conferences

CPSA Take dispute forward

The annual conference of the Civil and Public Services Association meets in the midst of the most serious industrial dispute in its history.

Discussions on how to go forward in this dispute will dominate that part of the conference dealing with issues affecting the Civil Service membership (three quarters of the union). Emergency motions are flooding into CPSA head office and one of these will undoubtedly lead to debate.

By Pat Byrne
(CPSA DHSS,
South East London)

other tactics, then there will be no alternative to indefinite all-out action. During such action (and during a limited stoppage of five days) an emergency service should operate in the DE and DHSS.

It is essential therefore that the union leadership begins a campaign throughout the membership for the need for more determined action than the one day and a half day walk outs which have been taking place so far.

If this is done, then we can be confident that the rank and file will respond to an all-out call, should it prove necessary.

Support shorter working week

There are other motions on the agenda calling for shorter hours and longer annual leave, as well as many other bread and butter issues. *Militant* supporters have been in the forefront of fighting for these improvements. If CPSA is to win the loyalty of its members it is essential that progress on these policies is made over the next twelve months.

The most important controversy of the main conference, beginning on the Wednesday, will undoubtedly be the election of full time officers.

The right wing national executive, who came to



Pickets outside Portcullis House, Southend, during the present battle with the Tories

power last year as a direct consequence of the new individual balloting system, are attempting to fill the top three posts within the union with their nominees.

If they are successful then the union would find itself with officials who could be in office for the next twenty years or so!

Last year, however, a motion from *Militant* supporters committed the union to the principle of regular elections of full time officers. This year's conference will have the opportunity to vote for a constitutional amendment which would subject the senior officers to re-election every five years.

In addition, there are motions calling on the national executive to submit constitutional amendments to next year's conference to subject national officers to a similar system. If we are successful in securing the two thirds majority required, then the senior posts will go out to ballot. This would be an historic step forward for democracy in the union.

However, if this fails, *Militant* supporters believe that the National Executive Committee nominees for the posts of General Treasurer and Deputy General Secretary (where there are

opposition candidates) should be opposed. We believe that Terry Ainsworth and Peter Thomson should receive backing of conference for the General Treasurer and DGS respectively, as they have shown themselves to be closer in touch with the general membership of the union.

Although conference has now been extended by half a day this major debate on the leadership of the CPSA could well swallow up the time for other motions. It is essential though that time is given to some of the other vital issues facing the union.

We support the motion proposing the idea of a merger with the Society of Civil and Public Servants. Indeed, the latest pay dispute has served to reinforce the case for the coming together of the main unions in the civil service into one organisation.

Such a united action should have built-in safeguards against intimidation of lower grades (i.e. separate branches for higher grades). If such safeguards were satisfactory, then we are convinced that one union for the main grades in the service would be a major step forward in the develop-

ment of the effective trade unionism in our industry.

Because we firmly support one union in each industry, we are against the right wing NEC proposal to try and bribe the Post Office group to stay in CPSA. We believe that the best interests of our 37,000 post office members lies with the other Post Office unions, and we would support the proposal for one Post Office union. Failing this, we believe that the best course for our members would be to join with the Post Office Engineers Union.

Debates will also take place on affiliation to CND, and to the National Abortion Campaign. We fully support these motions, but of course we will be trying to explain the crucial issues which are involved.

This conference could well mark yet another milestone for the development of the CPSA as a strong trade union, part and parcel of the wider trade union movement.

This is essential if we are to face up to the increasingly serious attacks on our jobs, pay, and pensions which are being launched by the Tories in order to solve the growing economic crisis at our expense.

North Derbyshire miners support Benn

The closer you get to the active rank and file of the labour movement, the more support there is for Tony Benn as the Labour Party's Deputy Leader.

The Area Council of North Derbyshire NUM passed a resolution supporting him, with no-one against and only one abstention.

At the Area's Annual Conference last week, Peter Heathfield, Area Secretary, urged NUM branches to get their full delegations to their constituency Labour Parties.

Since February, miners have been weighing up the lessons of the industrial action that has stopped the Tories' pit closure plans. Fraternal speeches, from Arthur Scargill and Emlyn Williams, showed that vigilance is still vital.

500,000 jobs lost since 1947

Pits the Coal Board wanted to close are now being starved of capital. Since 1947, over 500 pits have closed and over 500,000 jobs have been destroyed. In 1980/81 the NCB sales were down 7.3 million tonnes.

Arthur Scargill illustrated one of the Tories' reasons for expanding nuclear power at the expense of coal, by reading cabinet minutes.

"They're marked Top Secret, so I'll read it to you," he said.

It began, this would "take away the threat of industrial action presented by the NUM and the TGWU."

As well as demanding import controls on foreign coal—a demand that *Militant* has explained its opposition to—Scargill called for a four-day working week with no loss of pay, minimum subsidies to the industry of £10 per tonne.

He also demanded: no pits to close unless reserves are exhausted, sink 30-40 new pits, and expand mining to 200 million tonnes per year. Protection of earnings for workers move from underground to surface work, a wage of £5,000 per year, paid on a salary basis.

As for the adoption of incentive schemes foisted on miners by the right wing in NUM's leadership, the warnings of the left have been borne out. Deaths in the industry have risen 25%, and serious accidents 22%.

The need for a fighting leadership is becoming clearer every day. Arthur Scargill must be elected as the union's next president, and the left must fight for an executive committee committed to socialist policies, representing miners' and all workers' interests.

Report by
Tony Cross

CAA - all-out strike needed

The support from CPSA members in the Civil Aviation Authority to the programme of industrial action has been excellent.

The union's ranks have been virtually solid. Members fully realise that they are now involved in an important battle. The support for the strike among Air Traffic Controllers (IPCS), Air Traffic Engineers (AGSRO) and Communications Officers (CSU) has also been tremendous.

The unprecedented unity among workers and the trade unions in the CAA will

By Frank Bonner
(CPSA CAA
Prestwick Branch,
personal capacity)

bring lasting benefits.

The effect of the action has also been impressive. During the week 27 April-1 May, the morning shift strikes closed Heathrow, Edinburgh, Prestwick, Liverpool and Belfast.

The oil related airport at Sumburgh in the Shetlands was also closed as airport firemen, members of the TGWU, walked out in support. Airports at Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Gatwick and Aberdeen have

been severely disrupted more than once during the week.

The action has given a tremendous boost to the civil servants on strike. They have been fighting on our behalf; now we are also playing an active role.

The CAA Group's Annual Conference from the 11-12 May will be an opportunity for the Executive Committee and branch representatives to review the strategy. The Group executive have always favoured a total strike in the CAA, together with Customs and Immigration workers.

When put forward initially, the strategy did not receive support from the

other CAA unions.

However, CAA workers have experienced the battle and seen the deficiencies of the strategy at first hand. Work is resumed after a morning's stoppage. When members at an airport or ATC centre are on strike, their mates are working normally. This carries with it the threat of suspension if members black any service provided by strikebreakers.

The executive and a number of branches have submitted emergency motions to the conference calling for a total stoppage.

The most effective action would be for the CAA memberships to be called out on an indefinite basis. This would have tremen-

dous impact on the Government, both in the UK and overseas.

Joint membership meetings should be held addressed by national speakers to explain the need for such a programme and to counter the attempts which have begun by the Tory press to split off CAA workers from their Civil Service colleagues.

Trade and communications are important sectors of the economy. A total stoppage would be a decisive step towards winning the dispute.

★ For an all-out stoppage of CAA workers
★ For a 15% pay increase and the return of broken agreements.

Industrial

TRADE UNION CONFERENCES

The Tories are our enemies

The 1981 Biennial policy conference of the electricians' union, the EETPU, takes place at a time of unprecedented post-war capitalist crisis.

The profit system is a nightmare for the working class, with this recession being exacerbated by the monetarist policies of the Tories.

Resolutions seek to defend the interests of working people, and prevent the Tories and their big business backers from making working people pay for the crisis of their system.

Unemployment, a burning issue for workers, is dealt with in resolutions demanding a 35-hour week

with no loss of pay and work sharing to be organised by the trade union movement on a national basis.

The horrifying number of young people unemployed is also condemned, with calls for a campaign to involve them in the trade union movement and not let their despair attract them to fascism.

Unfortunately one resolution on the Tories' Employment Bill cannot resist the temptation to take money

for union ballots. Although understandable given the loss of membership and thus finance, delegates must resist this temptation. The object of the Bill is to smash the trade union movement as the only organisation capable of defeating the Tories.

This Bill seeks to "victimise" trade unionists as individuals and therefore must be bitterly opposed, for an injury to one is an injury to all. If lack of finance is the problem, then the correct method as trade unionists is to raise funds by a special levy from the rank and file.

But before raising the levy the issue of why it is necessary must be campaigned for by the leadership, shop stewards and active EETPU members in order to bring about the understanding of the Tories' strategy with their misnamed Employment Bill.

With the need for the trade union movement to defend public services, especially the National Health Service, from Tory attacks, the resolution from Bradford Electrical Engineers' branch must be supported.

It asks conference to call on the union executive to reverse the policy of

negotiating private medical schemes. The private health deal with BUPA was agreed within weeks of the last policy conference, which carried a resolution on the NHS and opposing private medicine!

Several resolutions draw the correct conclusion from recent events when they urge that the Tories be brought down, showing clearly the anger of workers at this reactionary Tory government.

The resolution from Brighton branch is to the point: "We call on the unions to unite with the TUC to bring down the government as soon as possible."

However, many resolutions recognise that the next Labour government cannot carry out the same policies as the last Callaghan administration. The next Labour government must be committed to socialist policies as the only alternative to capitalism. Wells branch calls on the Labour Party to solve unemployment and the present crisis by a more rigid application of Clause IV.

But one resolution is divisive and therefore must be totally rejected. It calls for a witch-hunt of the left and *Militant* in particular,

within the Labour Party and the EETPU.

The idea that a witch-hunt will resolve the serious problems facing working people is wrong. The resolution says there are 'infiltrators' in the Labour Party. But who are these 'infiltrators'?

Is it those who stand on the principle of a democratic Labour Party committed to socialist policies, or is it those who argue for a 'witch-hunt', yet are absolutely devoid of any policies showing working people the way forward?

Paradoxically, those people who last year screamed for a witch-hunt in the Labour Party, have now shown their true colours, with the formation of the Social Democratic Party. The role of this group is to stab the labour movement in the back.

This policy conference must reflect the views of our fellow workers and agree policies which will show how to defeat the Tories, the nightmare of unemployment and cuts in our living standards.

This resolution only seeks to deflect us from this fight against the Tories, and should be resoundingly defeated to show that we are a united movement.

National Union of Railwaymen

At the annual conference of Permanent Way, Signal and Telegraph, Canal and Overhead Traction Grades conference held last weekend many of the delegates criticised the national leadership over restructuring agreements between the National Executive and the British Rail Board.

The most vociferous criticism came from 'Permanent Way' delegates denouncing the restructuring proposals as divisive and attempting to force productivity deals upon the membership.

Delegate after delegate expressed complete opposition to the agreement arguing that the proposals had already been rejected by the 1980 National Conference and at the AGM.

It was also stated that amongst grass root members there was opposition and bitterness at the agreement, and the way the National Executive had handled the whole affair.

If and when the restructuring comes into force it would mean a complete break from the traditional working week, to the introduction of continental rostering and compulsory weekend working for many workers. Resolutions expressing criticism were passed by an overwhelming majority.

Russell Tuck (Assistant General Secretary NUR) came in for some acrimonious comments from various members. One delegate asked him when the union would be making a determined stand against these Tory attacks, and called for the Triple Alliance to be brought into action against the Tories.

Brother Tuck's unsatisfactory answer was greeted with audible dismay.

Richard Shepherd, a Bristol delegate and *Militant* supporter, condemned certain sections of the leadership who had been friendly with the recent batch of Social Democrat turn-coats, while berating the left wing of the Labour Party. Richard was received with loud applause for his comments.

The determination to fight redundancies was matched by the warm response to Robin Clapp, fraternal delegate from the Young Socialists, and by over £100 raised for the Old Oak Common dispute, and £40 for the occupation of Lee Jeans in Greenock, Scotland.

By Bob Russell
(NUR)

NUPE - unionise YOPS!

The National Union of Public Employees includes many members who are in the lowest paid jobs, in the health service, in local authorities and so on.

NUPE members have been right in the firing line of the public expenditure cuts over the last few years and the union, like many others, has seen its membership rolls decline as a result of growing unemployment. The overwhelming majority of the resolutions to this year's national conference point to necessary and justifiable improvements in wages and conditions.

But there is no doubt that the key resolutions and debates will be those that are in the final analysis the most important—those dealing with economic policies, with the Tory government and with the Labour Party.

All the resolutions on the Labour Party endorse the union's support for the democratisation of the Party, and some urge that the process be extended to the



Unemployed youth on a temporary employment scheme on Merseyside. These workers must be brought into the unions and fight for trade union rates of pay. Photo: Militant.

Parliamentary Labour Party itself.

The resolution from **Mid-derborough** urges that the union press its own policies more effectively in the Party, by encouraging membership of the Party, clarifying the role of political officers in the union and generally increasing NUPE's effectiveness.

Whilst the resolution from **Omagh** calls for more sponsorship of local government candidates, it is a pity there are no specific resolu-

tions that deal with the democratisation of the Labour Party structure at local level, where many NUPE members are fighting to protect their jobs and conditions.

Many of the resolutions point to the devastation created by the policies of the Tories—"Government of meglamaniacs" as one resolution describes it. There are several calls for a campaign by the TUC to bring down the Tories and force an early election.

Unemployment receives special attention. Motions call for the organisation of the unemployed, while others call for the unionisation of workers on the temporary employment schemes, like YOPS and STEP, with full rates of pay.

But improvement in the wages and conditions of NUPE members can only be based in the future on the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

The resolution from **Brighton**, No. 34, deals with that question, calling for a fight against redundancies, work sharing and a 35-hour week without loss of pay, a minimum wage of £80, a scheme of public works and the expansion of direct work schemes.

The success of resolution 34 would mean that NUPE could continue to throw its weight behind socialist policies at Party conference, as it has behind democratic changes.

Inland Revenue Staff Federation

The Conference of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (IRSF) meets during the most crucial test of our union in its history. Inland Revenue workers have proved capable of militant action against this vicious Tory

government.

This month is partly reflected in the Conference motions. The executive's proposal for a permanent strike fund deserves full support, and marks another step in the transformation of the union. Motions opposing the cuts and calling for trade union negotiation of "complements" (manning levels) are another sign of this.

But once again many ex-

cellent motions that would have committed the leadership to a real fight on pay, cuts, automation and other issues have been excluded from the Final Agenda. There is a crying need for a compositing procedure by delegates to prevent this being repeated.

In particular it is a scandal that not one of the many motions opposing job losses as a result of automation has been chosen for

debate.

Delegates must ensure that 'Motions of Urgency' on the Pay Campaign calling for escalation of the selective action and an all-out strike of at least one week are debated and carried if we win this vital dispute.

Socialists in the IRSF must explain that we cannot afford to be 'non-political'—the IRSF must back the fight to kick out

the Tories and affiliate to the Labour Party to fight for policies in the interests of its members.

The growing militancy and political awareness of civil servants is shown by the election of *Militant* supporter Ann Sylvester to the executive. The members are willing to fight—the union must give a lead!

By a delegate

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Reports

STOP REDUNDANCIES! in brief

United Glass

St Helens is a town built on two industries: coal and glass.

Over the years, most of the pits have been run down leaving the glass giants Pilkington, United Glass and Rockware.

At one time unemployment was virtually unknown in the town. Over the last five years, however, it has suffered along with the rest of Merseyside.

This determined the mood of workers at the United Glass factory at Peasley Cross who refused to accept eighty-one compulsory redundancies. Management were locked out and workers took over the running of the factory (see issue 550).

After four days management withdrew insurance cover for all members of the General & Municipal Workers' Union, the bulk of shop-floor manual employees, and the work-in was ended.

On the advice of the union's national executive, control of the factory was handed back to management on Friday 1 May, and the G&MWU members went out on official strike.

During the work-in, pro-

By Mick Slater
(Wigan LPYS)

duction increased by seven per cent!

The attitude of the company throughout has been consistent disdain. Negotiators cancelled meetings, back-pay was not paid in full to some workers, including union lay officials.

The GMWU members are determined to fight until the redundancies are withdrawn. The mood to fight is there—when the dispute began, workers at United Glass's other factory ten minutes down the road at Ravenhead walked out.

Unfortunately, union officials told them to go back, although a levy was agreed. The readiness of these workers to join the dispute alongside their brother workers at Peasley Cross should be tapped, and the workforce pulled out to escalate the dispute.

Also, members of AUEW and ASTMS are crossing

the picket line. A mass picket was held on Tuesday to persuade these workers not to cross, but the withdrawal of GMWU members still working safety cover should be considered, as these union members would not work without safety cover.

And the workers are keeping in contact with another dispute nearby at the Holman and Mitchell lead factory. Here, 50 workers are occupying against redundancies. 15 jobs were threatened, but were not accepted by the workers, and on 1 May, management sacked them. As the workers said, "What a day to ask us to give up our fight!"

This week, a delegation from the People's March visited both factories, to urge the workers on in their fight against redundancies.

Donations to the United Glass strike fund and messages of support to Alan Atherton, GMWU 120 branch secretary, GMWU district office, Tolver Street, St Helens, Merseyside.

Militant Readers' Meeting, 11 May, at GMWU offices, Tolver Street. Speakers Alan Atherton (G&M branch sec), Ian Lowes (G&M), Malcolm Clarke (LPYS National Committee).

Witton - James

Our dispute continues, despite efforts to bring about a satisfactory conclusion. The simple reason for this, is that the General Electric Company appear to be determined to continue to operate this company on a cheap labour basis.

On April 7, both management and staff accepted an offer by ACAS, the arbitration body, and attended their offices on an unofficial basis in an attempt to resolve the situation.

Management attended on this day despite their complete refusal to entertain previous suggestions in this direction.

The meeting lasted some four hours. It was quite apparent that GEC were quite dogmatic in their attitude on this issue. Suggestions by ACAS that we should go to arbitration were flatly refused by management.

It has now come to our attention that the company are circulating a letter

explaining their position. To say that this letter is misleading is rather mild!

They have the affront to suggest that any unemployment within closely related companies as a result of this dispute, is on the heads of the men involved. They have failed to mention the fact that they have created an impossible situation in an attempt to split the shop by creating two rates of pay within a single grade of electrician, which is totally unacceptable.

Please continue with your support, brothers, as this battle must be won. Our dispute is now over 3 months old. We still need financial support—send to Witton-James Strike Fund, c/o Alan Jenkins [Treasurer], 85 Hunters Grove, Kenton, Harrow, Middx.

By the Witton-James strike committee

DC Sommers Ltd.

On May Day last week, 200 workers at DC Sommers Ltd, contractors to Wales Gas, began in indefinite strike over conditions of employment.

Since the workers joined the GMWU six weeks ago, the union has been in conflict with the management over the number of shop stewards that the union can have to represent the South Wales area.

The issue, which angers

the workers most is the imposition of a new insurance policy for plant and equipment. This policy covers the company for £50 of damage caused to all company equipment, from lorries to road signs. Any cost above the £50 is deducted from the workers' pay packets!

Despite five blacklegs, the rest of the workers are determined to continue the strike and win the dispute.

Baird & Tatlock

Management at Baird and Tatlock Ltd, Chadwell Heath (laboratory equippers for the 'Merck Group') were forced to withdraw their plan to "improve the efficiency" of the firm's warehousing operations, following the threat of immediate industrial action by all 39 warehouse workers.

The plan would have involved the forced redundancy of 7 employees on top of which 2 employees are already due for 'natural wastage' retirement.

Sweeping rationalisation resulting in job losses within other sections of the Merck Group have produced a growing fear among all B&T workers, including office staff, that jobs are now in jeopardy.

With full membership backing warehouse steward, Les Barford, together with GMWU district negotiator, Derek Horne, have since ironed-out an agreement with management whereby, with the adoption of a new 'up-grading' system, no redundancies would take place.

Les said: "Management told us that they intended to expand B&T operations. But their expansion programme effectively meant increasing profits at the expense of jobs, and we gave them our answer."

By Alec Mitchell

Adamson Butterleys

Management at Adamson Butterleys, an industrial crane manufacturer in Telford, have been forced back by the workers' firm stand against redundancy.

Senior AUEW convenor Graham Morgan explained the situation to 'Militant'.

On 22 April, Adamson Butterleys, part of the Norcross group of companies, announced forty-three redundancies.

The shop stewards' committee believes that the membership must be kept informed and consulted at all stages. We called for a mass meeting the next day.

We would not accept compulsory redundancies and put it to the members that it would be better to share out the work than have no work at all, and to work with the management to introduce this. This was accepted.

But management refused to introduce work-sharing or short-time working. They intimated that they were going to go ahead and issue

redundancy notices, in breach of our national agreement.

We went back to the workforce for the original demands to be reaffirmed and also, now, to defend the national agreement.

The response of the workforce was magnificent. They reaffirmed the position of no compulsory redundancies, and added that if any notices were served there would be immediate reaction of strike and workers' occupation of the factory.

We expected redundancy notices to be issued on Friday, but none have been.

Since the Tories came to power the union leaderships have been in retreat. The retreat stops here. There is a growing reaction to the Tories. Workers are no longer prepared to accept the fact that they can sell their jobs at the expense of their children.

Messages of support to Graham Morgan, 12 Alma Avenue, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire.

By Jim Bell

Priestmans

"There are 2½ million on the dole, and it is us who decide who go, when they go, and what the ones left do whilst they are employed by us."

Such is the provocative attitude of Priestman's management at Priestman's (ACRO) in Hull, made to shop stewards two weeks before giving notice to the workforce of a 10% cut in jobs, no wage increase this year and the continuation of short time working.

An immediate all out strike took effect which is now in its sixth week. The latest mass meeting of the 600 workers involved decided to continue the strike, with only 12 votes against.

However, acute hardship is being felt by the majority as only the Transport and General to date have made the dispute official, meaning no strike pay has been forthcoming. Why are the other union leaderships involved dragging their feet? The management have clearly broken procedure and provoked the strike, by failure to follow up their "redundancy policy agreements."

The strike committee are demanding the following; that all redundancy notices be withdrawn; a redundancy agreement including full

consultation and no forced redundancies; and negotiations to begin on a realistic wage increase.

Priestman's replied that they will withdraw the original notice if the unions agreed to six weeks' 'cooling period' whilst discussions take place.

In short, they offer nothing but six weeks waffle with no guarantee of saving jobs and no guarantee of a wage settlement or the money they owe the workers.

Support in the area throughout the ACRO combine is growing as well as support locally.

Shop stewards from Gardners, following their occupation, have supplied the Priestmans strike committee with a list of all the sections of the movement that gave them support, (so look out for a letter coming to your factory or union).

Support is even coming from local shops with offers of discounts for the families of the strikers. One chip shop keeps the pickets going with half price fish and chips!

Please send a generous donation urgently to: Priestman's strike committee, 78 Beverley Road, Hull.

By Alan Hartley

Strikers at Ansell's have been outraged by an attack on one of their brothers. The front room at his family's home was burnt out, and the slogan 'Get back to work you bastards' was scrawled on his front wall. But this has only strengthened the resolve of the Ansell's strikers.

Meanwhile, around the clock picketing at Ansell's Burton-on-Trent strike has caused disruption for management, and they have been forced to re-route supplies and change deliveries. However two pickets from Aston Cross were arrested at the site last week. Also a team of negotiators and pickets are presently visiting Allied Breweries' Romford brewery in Essex to talk to workers there.

A 24-hour strike planned for last week by railway workers in Glasgow was called off after British Rail management gave assurances over the future of the Eastfield depot and jobs at Glasgow Queen Street station. Union proposals about the closure of the Sighthill Freight yard are to be 'looked at' by management too.

As we go to press, workers at the Moores Bakery in Salford are meeting to decide on what action to take over 43 threatened redundancies. Last week while union representatives were meeting management, redundancy notices were handed out! However, the workers, members of the Bakers Union, realise if the 43 jobs go, conditions at the factory will worsen.

Broad Left supporters within the AUEW nationally should attend a national conference, called by the 'Engineering Gazette'. The conference will be held at the AEU Club, Mather Street, Eccles near Manchester on Sunday, May 17, from 11.00 to 3.30.

The announcement of 170 redundancies at Storeys of Lancaster and immediate enforcement of new manning levels has forced 1,000 workers to take strike action. Storeys shock news immediately led to the shop stewards recommending an overtime ban and a work to rule, but the escalation to strike action only came after management ordered three men to operate a machine instead of four. The men, on advice from the stewards, refused, and were informed by management that they would not be paid. This soon led to a walk out by all shop floor staff. The general insecurity felt by all workers throughout Britain under Thatcher's reactionary rule is as apparent in Lancaster as in many other places. As one local IGWU official has said "It's a complete disaster for Lancaster."

UNITY: voice of the Militant in the CPSA

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**Peoples
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MARCHING FOR OUR FUTURE

Photo: Carlos Augusto (IFL)

The People's march for jobs got a tremendous send-off. Working people in Liverpool turned out to cheer marchers on their way. They all agreed that Thatcher must go.

Throughout the North West it's been hard to pass by for people wanting to shake your hand. Shop stewards and pensioners have donated to the funds: pounds and fivers have been flowing in.

But not everyone was pleased to see us. The Tory council in Warrington refused to let us use municipal buildings, in a piece of last-minute sabotage.

The local trades council and shop stewards found us alternative accommodation, literally at the eleventh hour. It was a stark lesson: we'll get no support from bosses and Tories—only the labour and trade union movement are ready to fight.

"Every marcher represents thousands of people," said Cathy Deer, of Stretford LPYS. With two and a half million officially unemployed, Cathy and each of the other marchers represents at least ten thousand on the dole.

Then there are the hidden unemployed—like the

Reports by Mick Hogan, Sharon Blackhall and Mike Harkness on the march; Jerry Cope (Bootle LPYS)

group of girls who greeted us in Halewood. Their YOP schemes, they said, are only hiding the true length of the dole queues.

They want to set up a local branch of the Labour Party Young Socialists, and judging by the mood on their estate as we passed, there's plenty of potential.

The march is not just about 'U'-turns: the Tories must be kicked out. As Tony Benn and other speakers declared at the start of the march, Thatcher's government must be replaced by Labour.

Tony Mulhearn, President of Liverpool District Labour Party, took it a step further, when he called for a twenty-four hour general strike as the march reaches London. That is the way to get rid of Thatcher!



People's March in Liverpool on May Day

When Labour MP Allan Roberts, welcoming us to Widnes on the second day of the march, called for measures to "get rid of the system for the rich few," there was rapturous applause.

The speaker from the United Glass workers sit-in at St Helen's (see page 15) won cheers for their struggle to save jobs. Their management are demanding compulsory redundancies, along

with overtime work.

Hopefully, at other meetings along the route, the organisers will allow the marchers to speak from the floor. For there is much to discuss.

The next Labour government must take up policies to end unemployment once and for all. Millions of working class people are looking to this march. We must provide them with fighting socialist demands:

- ★ Unemployed and workers unite and fight—trade unions must organise the unemployed
- ★ A 35-hour week for all
- ★ An £80 minimum wage
- ★ For a socialist Labour government to nationalise any company threatening redundancies
- ★ Sack the bosses—nationalise the top 200 monopolies

Jobless Wanderer

The marchers' stories are more eloquent than thousands of grim statistics.

Ian Harding left school last June. He's the 'thirties jobless wanderer—in 1981.

He moved to Brighton, where he got a job unloading furniture vans and selling wardrobes, for £28 a week. But his doss house with leaking roof and damp, flickering lights, took £25 of that—for two meals a day; only one on Sunday.

Ian got another job, but when he turned up to start they'd given it to someone else. On the dole again, he tramped the country: back to his home town, Bridgewater, to Edinburgh, Oban, down South again.

Then he heard about the People's march and raised enough cash for sponsorship by collecting door to door.

But he was determined to find work. He hitched for three days, penniless and starved of food and sleep, to get to a farm in France.

The farm 'job' was more like slavery: no running water or electricity, and no wages. So he came back for the march.

Ian doesn't really think about the possibility of permanent work—there isn't any. He reckons the march can only create jobs if those in work fight with the unemployed. "The bosses and the Tories will have to take notice if we're united."

Ian is sixteen years old.

Two years too long

(Continued from page 1)

queues since the '20s, and the highest rate of business bankruptcies ever.

The hard-nosed bosses and the Tories can view with equanimity the misery of life on the dole for millions of workers and the desperation of young people leaving school with little or no chance of a job. Their only fear on this score is that it could encourage mass anger directed against them and their system.

What does worry them is the total collapse of industry. Car production is only just over half the 1970 figure. All the basic industries like iron, steel, textiles, have declined rapidly under the Tories.

But some promises the Tories have kept. To the applause of the bosses, who

clamoured for cuts in 'wasteful' public expenditure, the Tories have viciously cut health, housing education, and other essential parts of the 'welfare state'.

Even all these attacks have not halted the terrible decline of British capitalism. Quite the reverse. Deflationary policies have only cut the market for the goods produced by British industry.

In addition, even the pittance paid in dole money, to 2½ million unemployed, has added billions to the national debt. So have the high interest rates.

The result has been unprecedented splits in the ruling class and in the Tory Party. In public too, not the usual behind the scenes back stabbing! The CBI have demanded important changes from the govern-

ment they got elected two years ago.

The Tory 'wets', afraid of social revolt and the loss of their precious parliamentary seats have also demanded a 'U-turn' from Thatcher.

In reality, they too have no solution to the problems we face. What answer have the bosses ever had to a crisis of capitalism except more exploitation? The CBI, for instance, want real wages to be cut savagely to boost their profits.

What is more, their own advisors warn them that their reflationary policies will only lead to a further bout of inflation.

The organised working class has enormous potential power. The miners merely threatened action this year and the government had, at least temporarily, to change their course. If this strength is mobilised

by the leaders of the movement, it would be possible to ensure the downfall of the Tories and the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

If the Tories are allowed to stay in office, what would be the result? If they can destroy so much in two years what could they do if they were allowed another three?

Don't let it happen. Build up the movement to kick out Thatcher and her cronies now!

By Roger Shives

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