

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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## Tories hammered in council elections:

# GENERAL ELECTION NOW!

The Tories have been thrashed in the county elections. The results of last Thursday's polls are a devastating vote of no confidence in Thatcher's government.

Throughout the country, but especially in the working-class areas of the big cities and industrial towns, angry voters came out decisively against mass unemployment, slashed living standards, and cut after vicious cut in education and vital services.

Labour won control of 14 councils, and the Tories lost overall control of another eight. All six big Metropolitan Counties, together with the Greater London Council, are now under Labour control.

The vote against the Tories was highest in the areas worst hit by unemployment, in the North East, the North West and the Midlands. Labour won landslide victories in Lancashire, Cumbria, Northumberland and Humberside.

Labour now controls every English county council north of the Mersey and the Humber [there were no elections this

time in Scotland]. But the Tories also lost control of "true blue" counties like Cheshire [for the first time ever] and Warwickshire [for the first time since 1897]. Even in 'Royal' Berkshire, the county of stock-brokers, stud farms and aristocratic garden fetes, Labour gains have robbed the Tories of overall control. Millions of voters who took 900 council seats off the Tories want the Tories out—out of Westminster as well as out of the County Halls.

The great majority of trade unionists and Labour Party members, together with millions of Labour voters, will enthusiastically back the challenge to Thatcher

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By Bob Labi

(London Labour Party Executive member)



SNEER MINDLESS IRRESPONSIBILITY. ALL THEY CAN THINK ABOUT ARE HOUSES, SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, REASONABLE FARES...

## Police State methods used by DHSS

"An evening visit can be very effective in a liable relative, i.e. a lone mother case."

"Effective" means frightening.

This advice comes not from a handbook for "minders" or "protection" agents, but from DHSS circular FIG (RO)/2, the scandalous contents of which 'Militant' can now reveal.

The circular outlines the police-state methods the DHSS bosses, under instruction from the Tories, want some of their staff to use against Social Security claimants.

The circular proposes that on mere suspicion of fraud, and without necessarily having clear evidence, claimants should be subject to harassment

Exclusive details from a 'Militant' reporter, of instructions given by the DHSS to social security 'fraud' investigators.

and intimidation aimed at bringing an end to the claimants' benefit and almost certainly leading to the distress of being branded a "scrounger".

It is objectionable that at a time when cuts are being made, money is poured into investigating fraud and abuse," said Peter Palmer, chairman of the DHSS section of

the Society of Civil Servants last weekend.

One of the most iniquitous measures introduced is the "specialist claims control". This is known to the social security trade unions as "the knocker campaign", illustrated in this DHSS circular.

A special team of investigators go into soc-

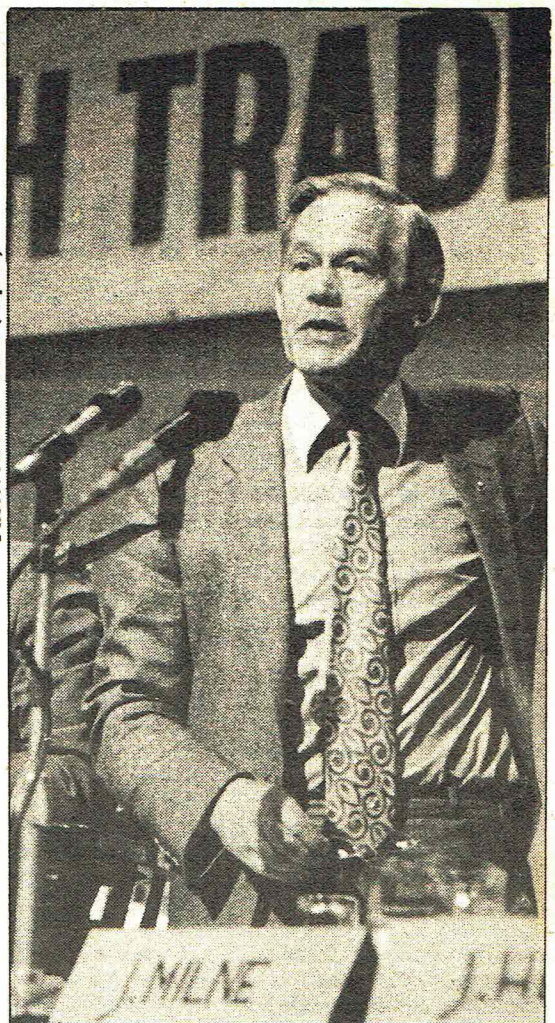
ial security offices, pick out a number of cases and investigate them for fraud. They try to make claimants withdraw claims through an atmosphere of fear and shame at wanting to claim in the first place.

A knock on the door in the night is usually a very effective form of intimidation. Paragraph 16 of the document says it "will be necessary to make further investigations, observations, shadowing, liaison with the police, checking of vehicle numbers."

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Photo: Andrew Wyard (Report)

Alan Fisher at Scottish TUC conference.



Where is Thatcher's mandate now? She must call a general election

# MITTERAND WINS!

The victory of François Mitterand in the French Presidential elections has initiated a new era for France and indeed the whole of Europe.

The victory of the socialist candidate was greeted by huge crowds of workers in Paris and other towns of France with an outburst of rejoicing reminiscent of the victory of the Popular Front government in 1936.

According to 'The Guardian' even policemen made a victory sign. A riot police squad hurrying to the Socialist Party's headquarters on the Left Bank sounded 'Mitterand President' on its horn.

Mitterand received 52% of the vote compared to Giscard D'Estaing's 47.96%, a higher margin of victory than D'Estaing's triumph over Mitterand in 1974.

Mitterand received more than a million more votes than his opponent this time.

Reflecting the gloom of the French capitalists, the franc and share prices plummeted downwards on the Bourse in the aftermath of the election results.

At the same time, the discontented French workers and middle class, aroused by the prospect of breaking the 23-year rule of the right,

turned out in greater numbers than in the first round. A full 5% more of the electorate voted in the final ballot, most of those being Mitterand supporters.

Moreover, this victory was achieved in the teeth of the blatant bias of the Giscard-controlled media, particularly the TV. Feeling the ground slip from beneath his feet, Giscard attempted to lie his way back into the Elysee Palace. This ploy, however, was just as ineffective as the scare campaign of the Tories in the London GLC elections. Indeed, it completely rebounded on Giscard D'Estaing. Not only the working class, but the small businessmen and farmers were in revolt against Giscard and his regime.

Together with his prime minister Barre, he attempted to implement a French form of Thatcherism. Savage cuts in living standards and state expenditure were imposed as a means of boosting the profits of big business.

Unemployment shot up to 1.7 million, 7.3% of the working population.

The indignation at the return of mass unemployment in the chants following the election victory by the workers in Paris: 'Mitterand President, Giscard unemployed.'

While life for the inhabi-

tants of the great grey tower blocks of council flats which scar French cities has grown worse the rich have become even richer. According to an OECD survey, among leading industrial nations France ranks the country with "the most unequal distribution of wealth."

The collapse of the French economy has resulted in the record number of bankruptcies of small businessmen. The middle class have seen their problems grow while Giscard hobbled with obscene dictators like Bokassa and received lavish gifts of diamonds, etc, from their hands.

The Poujadists, representing small businessmen, actually called on their supporters to vote for Mitterand in the final ballot!

Mitterand's programme includes proposals for a wealth tax, a minimum wage, and a 35-hour week. This is to be achieved by a programme of 'reflation' and the nationalisation of all private banks and eleven giant industrial groups. This engendered tremendous support amongst the working class.

Mitterand will now be compelled to try and capitalise on this victory by dissolving the National Assembly [parliament] and declaring new elections, probably for late June. In

the euphoria of victory it is most probable that this will lead to a big victory for the workers' parties. Support for the Socialist Party in particular will grow massively.

There are big obstacles still in the way of victory in the assembly election for the left, however. The constituency boundaries are completely rigged in favour of the right. For instance, in the conservative Alps region, 30,000 votes elect a deputy, yet in radical Paris, 180,000 votes are needed!

But Mitterand will probably boost the support for the Left by using his Presidential powers to introduce radical measures such as a minimum wage.

What is certain is that the working class will see the victory of Mitterand as a signal to move forward to implement the demands promised in his election programme. As in 1936 they could implement a 35-hour week even before Mitterand gets round to legislating in its favour.

This in turn could push Mitterand to go even further than he intends. He will be compelled to nationalise the banks and may even nationalise some of the eleven industrial companies.

His election victory has aroused the whole of the working class in France. But even if the whole programme is introduced this will not be sufficient to solve the problems facing the French working class.

If the industrial companies were nationalised, only 40% of industry would be in the hands of the state. Power would still be in the hands of the capitalists. The capitalists will use this power to undermine and sabotage the reformist measures of a Mitterand government. They will try to cancel out increases in wages and the shorter working week through inflation.

In 1936 they were compelled to retreat in the face of the sit-in strikes of the French working class and concede the 40 hour week. However, later, on, when disillusionment with the Popular Front government set in they took back the concessions.

## A new phase

Moreover, in 1968 big concessions in wages were granted in order to derail the general strike. But the capitalists took back these gains through inflation at a later stage.

Even in Portugal, where 70% of industry was taken over, because the process has not been completed and a socialist planned economy established, capitalism has been able to recover.

Gradually, counter-revolution in Portugal has whittled away the gains of the 1974 revolution and a right wing government is now in power.

The only way to guarantee the reforms promised by Mitterand is by going the whole way and taking over with minimum compensation, the assets of the 200 families, who dominate the commanding heights of the French economy.

In this way, a planned economy could be introduced, democratically controlled by the working class.

If this road is not taken, as sure as night follows day, the right will make a come-back in France. Already, Chirac, leader of the Gaullists, has cast himself in the role of a right-wing 'saviour' of France after the period of 'socialist turmoil'.

However, things will never be the same in France or in Europe. The victory of the French workers has raised the movement of the working class throughout the whole of Europe onto a higher plane. It is a pointer to what will happen in Britain when a general election takes place here.

The Socialist Party and the Communist Party are bound to grow in influence and members in the next period. Events will demonstrate to its rank and file that only a worked out Marxist programme and perspective is capable of satisfying the aroused expectations of the French workers.

The permanent change which the working class have shown they desire is possible only by establishing a socialist France.

Photo: Militant

# BRIXTON Defend those arrested

By Kevin Fernandez

The defence of people appearing in court on charges arising from the Brixton events of 11/12 April is an urgent priority.

The court proceedings, with some people still remanded in prison, and the fines and costs are causing serious hardship for the families of many of those involved.

Most are pleading 'not guilty', and are being remanded on bail for various dates between May and August. Some youths, however, under pressure and without proper legal advice have pleaded guilty.

In many cases, it is the victims of police rough-handling or assault who are being charged with 'assault on the police' or 'threatening behaviour'. There is great bitterness in the Brixton area about this, not just amongst youth involved, but among their families and older people generally who are well aware of what is going on.

One youth who was hit by police was himself charged with assault—and was held in custody in Lewes Prison. Only recently has he been out on bail (£400), is obliged to stay at home between the hours of 7pm and 7am and has to report two days a week to Brixton Police station.

The LPYS believes that all the charges arising from the Brixton events should be dropped. The police operations, harassment and intimidation, provoked the violence. Throwing petrol

bombs and looting are not forms of action which can be supported by the labour movement, but they were nevertheless a response to the police attack and expressed the anger and frustration of youth suffering from unemployment and appalling social conditions.

Apart from this, however, is the fact that many of those arrested during the clashes, and particularly afterwards when more arrests took place, were simply bystanders in no way involved in fighting the police. Many people were arbitrarily and indiscriminately seized and arrested by the police.

While these youth are being brought up before the magistrates, police who threw bricks and beat up innocent bystanders are let off scot free!

More arrests are being made, with police carrying out raids in the early hours of the morning.

The importance given by the new GLC Labour majority to the Police Committee, under the chairmanship of councillor Paul Boateng is to be welcomed. The committee should immediately begin its own investigation of the Metropolitan Police's role in Brixton and other similar areas of London.

The labour movement in London must mobilise in support of the Labour GLC

manifesto pledges in relation to the police, that the Metropolitan Police should be accountable to elected representatives of the GLC, and that the SPG, the Special Branch and the Immigration Intelligence Unit should be disbanded.

These demands had been called for during the LPYS campaign in Brixton and received enthusiastic support at the LPYS mass meeting of 600 on 15 April.

The LPYS policies have been receiving an extremely favourable response in the area. Eighty people have shown an interest in getting involved in the LPYS meetings, days of action, socials, etc. Lambeth Central LPYS branch successfully held its inaugural meeting last Monday.

LPYS members are continuing to carry out urgent work for the *Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton*. This includes petitioning and raising money for a hardship fund for defendants, sending observers to the Courts, and speaking at various labour movement branches to build support for the Committee.

The latest sponsors of the Committee are the secretary of the POEU South Central branch, the South London branch of the National Society of Metal Mechanics, and the Morden branch of

ASLEF. Many individual shop stewards are signing and distributing the Labour Committee petition.

The *Labour Committee for the Defence of Brixton* was formed on the initiative of the LPYS, and with the support of local trade union and Labour Party activists to take immediate action on some of the urgent issues arising from the Brixton events.

The local Labour Parties were until 7 May preoccupied with the GLC and it has taken time for trade union bodies to meet and decide on action.

The LCDB responded to the urgent demand for action from the youth and black people of the area, and from the outset attempted to broaden its basis by calling for support, and representatives, from local trade union organisations.

Its main aim (as reported previously) is to press for a full people's inquiry, firmly based in the local labour movement, and to organise immediate assistance for those who were arrested and their families.

Some groundwork has been done by the LCDB in collecting material relevant to such an inquiry—but the pressure for it must be immediately stepped up, with the involvement of Labour Parties, trade unions, black organisations, shop stewards' committees, and the tenants' movement in the locality.

Lord Scarman's inquiry, set up by the Tory Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, will be conducted in two



Police move in to Brixton High Street, Saturday 11 April

parts: "(1) an examination of the events of 10/12 April and their immediate causes; and (2) consideration of the underlying causes, with special reference to the problem of policing areas where the community is multi-racial."

Official publicity for the Scarman inquiry confirms its narrow aims (looking into 'policing') and its legalistic approach. People in Brixton overwhelmingly believe that Scarman is a white-washing exercise on behalf of the Tories, and black organisations are recommending that in-

dividuals should not appear to give evidence concerning their own cases, as there is no guarantee at all that this will not have repercussions as far as the police are concerned.

The preliminary hearing of the Scarman inquiry takes place on 14 May, and public hearings are due to start in June.

The limitations of Scarman and the demand for a real investigation of the roots of the Brixton crisis, from the point of view of the Brixton people, underlines the need for the labour movement to implement a real inquiry.

## Labour Committee takes on urgent tasks



## Salford greets Peoples march for jobs

A cheering, enthusiastic crowd of over 7,000 greeted the marchers on the eastern leg of the People's March for Jobs as they entered Sheffield on Friday.

If proof was ever needed that Thatcher's policies of trying to drive ordinary

working-class people into the ground will never work, then that proof was given here.

In the redundancy-ravaged town of Sheffield people were genuinely glad to see that somebody was doing something to protest

against the rape and pilage of their once proud steel industry.

On the road into the city centre we passed one closed down steel mill after another. People were coming out to protest not only against lost jobs, but about all the lost pride and dignity, and the wasted lives of both young and old.

Hatred of the Tories was obvious. There were loud chants of "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie—Out! Out! Out!" all the way to the city hall.

People dipped very deeply into their pockets to help the march along. In just a few hours we collected £1,206. That just shows how much working-class people are prepared to sacrifice to help kick out the Tories.

**SATURDAY MAY 30th "Rock for Jobs" Carnival, Brockwell Park, Lambeth, south London. Bands playing include Pete Townsend, Aswad etc, and George Melly, Trad Jazz, Folk. Stalls etc. [Including an LPYS stall] 2pm-7pm**

**LPYS members meet 1pm onwards by the main gate opposite Herne Hill station [7 minutes from Victoria].**

**SUNDAY MAY 31 Mass Demonstration. Assemble 12 noon Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, (Marble Arch Tube) march to Trafalgar Square. Rallies at Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square. Bring banners!**

# Workers solid for Labour

**Working-class voters came out solidly against the Tories in the County Council elections last Thursday—nad produced a landslide victory for Labour in the urban industrial areas.**

Besides regaining control of four Metropolitan counties lost in 1977 (Manchester, Merseyside, W. Midlands, and E. Yorkshire) it won control of fourteen others, including several on which Labour has never before had a majority.

The attempt by the capitalist media to present this as a "disappointing" result for Labour is outright distortion. They are trying to cover up a shattering Tory defeat.

The clear polarisation was not just a North-South division. There was also a clear class polarisation in London and the South East.

The "two party" swing since 1977 (based on Labour and Tory votes only) in the Northern areas hit by mass unemployment was enormous: Manchester 23.3%, Bolton 22.4%, Leeds 23.1%, Bradford 23.8%, Sheffield 22.2%, etc.

Even more significant in some ways was the swing to Labour in the Midlands, where many working class voters backed the Tories in the 1979 general election. In just two years they have learned the harsh truth about the policies of the bosses' party, as they have been hit by a tidal wave of closures and redundancies.

In spite of a vicious anti-Marxist campaign against Labour, which in the West Midlands fought the election on a radical manifesto, the swing averaged 18% and reached 30% in some areas. In some constituencies, busmen never before involved in the Labour Party came out to do election work, reflecting the effects of Tory transport cuts.

As the 'Financial Times' (9 May) ruefully commented: "The short-lived flirtation with the Tories is over and if the conventional wisdom that British general elections are

won and lost in the band of seats across the industrial Midlands is true, the local election results are a dire warning for Mrs Thatcher."

Further South, in Brighton, Basildon, and Watford, Labour also gained seats with big swings against the Tories.

In London, the defeated Tory leader, Sir Horace Cutler, claims Labour's failure to get more than a majority of 8 as a personal "success".

### By Militant reporters

But the swing since 1977 averaged 11%. Even the 4.5% swing to Labour over the 1979 general election would, if repeated in a general election now, still give Labour a marginal victory.

In predominantly working-class Inner London constituencies, the "two party" swing was 13.9%. In Outer London, it was 10.7%, while in relatively affluent suburbs (like Croydon, Ruislip, Beckenham, etc.) and some wealthy enclaves (Chelsea, Westminster South, etc.) the swing was much lower, with a small swing to the Tories in a few places.

Yet Labour triumphed on the GLC in spite of an unprecedented "red-scare", anti-Marxist campaign by the bosses' media. The main casualty of this was Ted Knight who failed to win Norwood. Reactions on the doorstep showed that Lambeth council's attempt to fight Tory cuts through big rate increases had not helped Labour's prospects here.

In some other areas, red-scare attacks had little effect. In Brighton, Kemptown, where the press has relentlessly attacked the Labour party's selection of 'Militant' supporter Rod Fitch as prospective parliamentary candidate, there was a massive 14.3% swing to Labour.

In Uxbridge, in the GLC, 'Militant' supporter Jake Magee failed to win the seat, but produced a 15.4% swing to Labour (over 1977).

In the heart of Tory Suffolk, moreover, 'Militant' supporter Roy Phillips, gained a 700-vote landslide majority for Labour.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru candidates were hammered by Labour and lost most of their seats.

The National Front, now split into at least four fragments, lost votes everywhere. The fascists managed to pick up over 5% in only four London constituencies, for instance, compared to over 15% in five London constituencies in 1977.

In view of all backing they have had in the capitalist media in recent months, the Social Democrats put up a pathetic showing. In London, their average vote in 9 constituencies was only 11.9%. The results nationally, moreover, show that the Social Democrats will get nowhere against Labour in the industrial areas.

The Liberals won 387 seats nationally, virtually all from the Tories. "The disappointing showing of the Liberals," according to 'The Times' (9 May), speaking for big business, "is very marked."

The Communist Party, who fielded under 90 candidates in England and Wales (less than half the number in 1977), gained insignificant votes in most constituencies and lost several council seats to Labour.

Ignoring the real lesson of the County Council elections, however, some of the Parliamentary Labour Party's right wing have been echoing the capitalist press' completely false "analysis" of the result.

In a speech last Tuesday (12 May), Denis Healey claimed that the results in London were a "clear warning". He said that with 3 million unemployed, Labour has never reached the 20% lead over the Tories which Labour had under the Heath government, when unemployment was still under 1 million.

Evidently, Healey's speech was put together before he had read the latest Marplan poll, published in Tuesday's 'Guardian'. This gave Labour 19% more support than the Tories, representing a 13% swing to Labour since the

last general election.

This poll was conducted between 23 and 26 April—and clearly withheld by the press until after the 7 May elections! Another poll, taken by Gallop before 7 May showed that only 24% of voters approved of the present government's record, while a staggering 67% disapproved. Very little has been made of this, of course, in the capitalist press!

The lesson, both of the council elections and the opinion polls, is clear. The workers overwhelmingly want the Tories out. Sections of the workers and even some of the middle class who voted Tory in 1979 have now turned back towards Labour.

This trend, already starkly clear in the North and Midlands, will tomorrow be revealed in suburban London and the South East too, as unemployment and cut living standards begin to bite more deeply there as well.

Neither radical election manifestos, nor the vicious media denunciations of "Maxist-domination" and Labour "splits", has deterred workers from voting Labour. On the contrary, the swing to the left in the Labour Party has resulted in massive gains, particularly in the working class areas, but also in parts of the Tory heartland.

## WORKERS' CAMPAIGN IN DERRY

Derry Trades Council confirmed its historic decision to contest the local elections when the five candidates handed in their official nomination papers on Wednesday 6 May.

For the first time since 1967 [when twelve Labour Party candidates ran] the working class of Derry has an opportunity to put a non-sectarian, socialist voice into the council chamber.

The five candidates, all active Trades Council members, are Bernard McAnaney of the public sector workers union, contesting Waterside Urban; Colmn Tox, INTO [Irish Nat. Teaching Org.] contesting Bogside-Brandywell; Ann Donnelly, COHSE in Creggan; with John

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from the TUC chairman, Alan Fisher, speaking at this year's conference of the National Union of Public Employees on Sunday.

"I ask the Prime Minister one question. After Thursday, where is your mandate now?"

"I ask that Mrs Thatcher should call a general election now, so that the people of this country can decide. I hope she will call it quickly..."

The call for an immediate general election—and a campaign to return a Labour government committed to the implementation of socialist policies—must now be taken up as the battle cry of the labour movement.

A number of Labour groups, particularly on the GLC and on Metropolitan counties like the West Midlands, are committed to radical policies—and Labour must fight for the implementation of these left policies.

Some cuts, particularly in education, school meals and transport, will quickly be at least partially reversed. But there is a limit to how far Labour councils can resist cuts or implement reforms under a Tory government.

The only answer is to use Labour's county election victory as the launching pad for an all-out campaign to

bring down the Tory government.

The bosses' gutter press and the TV and radio have made a massive propaganda effort to play down the devastating scale of the Tory defeat last Thursday.

But let there be no mistake: last Thursday's Tory defeat sent a painful shock wave through the Tory establishment and through the inner councils of the City and big business.

In the serious newspapers of big business, the commentators have voiced their real fears: "Even in the South East," said 'The Observer' (10 May), "the government is paying some price for the failure of its economic policies. But in the industrial areas of England and Wales (and if Scotland had voted, it would have been worse), voters have turned against the Tories to a degree which may be irreversible by the general election. When even Lancashire and Cheshire defect, the rot has bitten deep."

The 'Sunday Times' (10 May) in one article actually admitted the real scale of Labour's victory. Far from indicating only a marginal victory in a general election, the county results "suggest that they would win an overall majority of about 40 seats if a general election were held tomorrow."

king class unity of interests has really impressed the Trade Council activists here.

As the campaign heats up, a day of mass canvassing activity has been arranged for Saturday 16 May.

There will be several city-centre rallies throughout the day, to ensure that the socialist message reaches the widest possible audience.

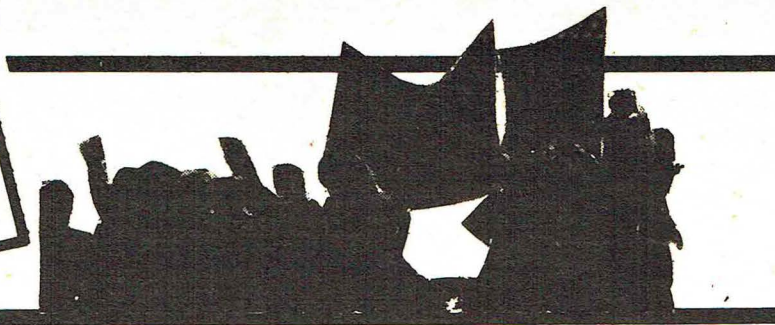
The deep anti-Tory and anti-sectarian mood of workers must be translated into votes on 20 May. As the manifesto states, 'working class unity is the only real answer to all the problems which plague Northern Ireland workers.'

### Good response

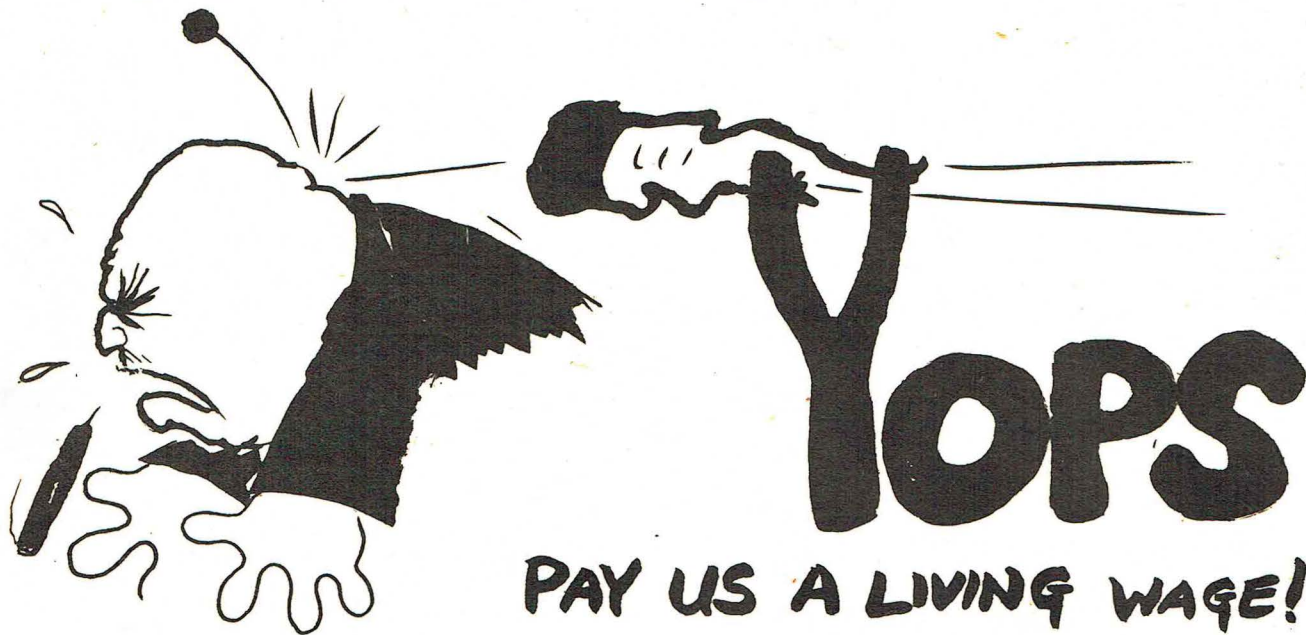
In the work-places, there has also been a good response to the cash appeal sheets. The council has been staggered by the tremendous messages of support and cash donations flooding in from all over Britain and Ireland.

This living proof of wor-

**WORKERS  
IN ACTION**



# YOP Trainees Strike



This summer three-quarters of school leavers in Scotland will sign straight on the broo(dole). The only 'opportunity' for most youth will be the chance to be used as cheap labour on the Youth Opportunity Programmes.

By Danny O'Donnell (Clydebank LPYS) and Gordon Wilson (STUC, Youth Committee, personal capacity)

Our generation won't sit back and meekly accept these conditions. The mood of young workers on the schemes is one of anger. In the West of Scotland a series of YOP strikes have recently taken place.

The action was started at

Renton in Dumbartonshire when the YOP workshop was moved there from the Vale of Leven. This meant an extra £3.60 a week in train fares, and you don't get travelling expenses until it's over £4.00. The trainees came out for two days and were followed by those in YOP schemes at Clydebank, Govanhill, Polmadie and Govan.

They rejected the current wage of £23.50 and are demanding a rise to £28. The protests have been spontaneous and unco-ordinated and there is the danger that they could lead to disillusionment

if they get nowhere.

The LPYS have approached the National Union of Public employees to organise a campaign to unionise the YOP workers, and co-ordinate action to improve their wages and conditions. LPYS members are organising meetings with the YOP workers in their lunch-hour arguing that to achieve the £28 wage increase they must get organised—isolated protests are not enough but if the 450,000 YOP workers were organised nationally they would force the government to sit up and take notice of their demands.

# FASCISTS BEATEN BACK

Thursday 23 April, will be remembered in the history of the Gravesend labour movement as a day when the youth and the Indian workers came out to stop a Kent National Front election rally.

The NF were driven out of the town in 1976, after widespread fighting in the streets and in pubs. Their attempt at a general election campaign in 1979 ended in their car cavalcade being abandoned.

That was the background to the mobilisation, at two days' notice, of 700 local people to stop the NF. The Indian community had a mass turnout, particularly from the Indian youth and Workers Association supported by Gravesend LPYS, Labour Party and the Anti Nazi League.

After fighting and 20 arrests, 25 hooligans from as far away as Folkestone and Tonbridge, were eventually escorted in by 200 police only to be told by their leader that the meeting was cancelled! They then had to make an undignified run for it over the back fence escorted by the police. This victory was celebrated by a spontaneous march through the town to the police station, which was hurriedly protected by 100 police and dogs.

By a 'Militant' reporter

The fascist legacy has however remained. Since 23 April a 14 year-old Asian boy has been attacked and had his hair cut off, and an 18 year-old white youth has been shot in the leg. Just the rumour of an NF march one Saturday led to tension in the town all day and 1,000 young people, black and white, gathered to stop them.

The Labour Party and Trades Council must now take a firm stand and unite with the Indian workers' organisations to fight the NF and the conditions which breed racism.

One in eight workers in North Kent are now unemployed; 70% of Gravesend school leavers will go straight on the dole this year.

Frustration and bitterness is growing amongst young people and could be directed against blacks and Asians unless the Labour Party makes it clear that it's the bosses' system which causes unemployment. We must win Asian youth and workers to a common struggle against unemployment, bad housing, and police harassment. Join the Labour Party and help make it a mass socialist party which can win this fight.

# Blooming Socialism at Kew



"Excuse me, can I have a look at your badges?" asked the man in a police uniform. "Oh no," I thought, "Here we go again. You go down to Kew Gardens to relax after a weekend of intense political discussion at the Labour Party Young Socialists' conference, and now what?"

After an embarrassed pause, he pointed to the nearby lawns. "Look at that," he said, "All the flower beds grassed over. They've dug up all the roses in the rose garden and grassed that over too. Skilled gardeners laid off

By Helen Mullineux (Havant and Waterloo Labour Party)

and 15% more cuts still to come."

He went on to tell us that the Botanic Police, also being cut. "the morale is terrible. No-one knows which of us is to go. It's mad—if you lay someone off then he can't buy, say, a car, and that puts car workers out and that puts steelmen out.

"They've no right. No right to cut back on one of the best and most important gardens in the world. We've managed to create a place of peace and quiet with no dogs or radios or hoodlums and it belongs to

the people, how dare they cut it?"

And they've no right to throw me on the scrap heap at the age of fifty. I've worked all my life. Never owed money. Always earned what I ate. I want to go on working, contributing. It's enough to drive you mad. The suicide rate's going up you know. I want to do something but I don't know what."

We pointed out that he could join the Labour Party. He came straight back at us with "You can't blame us older ones for being a bit cynical. Not when you've got people like Wilson and Callaghan who've got several homes each. What do they know. But we don't want another party—Social Democrats, blooming hypocrites, I think."

This man brought home to me the correctness of all the ideas I'd heard from the Militant supporters at the LPYS conference. The calls for trade union rights for the police, the calls to turn the Labour Party into a working class party fighting for socialism, would no doubt raise immediate reproaches in this man and many more like him.

As he said, "All I want is to go on working, keep a roof over my head, dinner on the table and a bit of a holiday each year." If the present system can't afford to give those few things to everyone, then we have every right to sweep them and their system aside in favour of a socialist system that can give those basic necessities to every person in the world.

## "Too radical"

Over 80 people attended a meeting organised by Leeds University Labour Club to hear John Silkin, a leading Tribune M.P., outline his views on the "policies" of the Social Democrats.

Mr. Silkin was highly critical of the Social Democrats, but when challenged from the floor on the record of the last Labour government, in which he was a cabinet

minister, he replied by saying that although "mistakes" were made, it was a socialist government. He warned against including radical demands in the manifesto, such as the abolition of the House of Lords, because we mustn't try to do things overnight.

Steve Johnson (Club Secretary)

## March ban hits at democratic rights

The decision to ban all marches in London for a month has been taken on the grounds of a "threat to public order" as a result of two fascist marches planned for 25 April. These had aroused widespread opposition from workers and in particular black and Asian workers in Ealing and in West Ham.

The fascist New National Front's attempt to march less than a mile from Southall where Blair Peach was killed by members of the Special Patrol Group two years ago had particularly fueled anger, with even shopkeepers showing posters saying "they shall not pass" and giving support to a counter demonstration.

After initially saying they could 'maintain order' (i.e. deal with opposition), the police later changed their minds when the counter demo was planned, possibly being influenced by events

in Brixton. But of course the police claimed they couldn't just ban the NF and the New NF demos there had to be a total ban on all political demonstrations including the activities of the labour movement.

As the local LPYS leaflet pointed out, and as Militant has always stressed, only a mobilisation of the labour movement can halt fascism, fighting with socialist policies to end the unemployment and the miseries which it creates.

The capitalist state uses blanket bans to stop legitimate working class and even "non political" activities. They have even banned a children's maypole festival and as the letter on page eleven shows a peaceful demo on citizen band radio was threatened.

By Barbara Humphries



Knowing that their bankrupt capitalist policies would gain little support from workers, the Tories based most of their Greater London Council election campaign on 'red scare' tactics, resorting to name calling. "Trots, neo-communists, Marxists, Stalinists, Reds, Commies" poured out of Tory mouths, assisted by their friends in the Tory 'New Standard' newspaper. All over London there were billboards screaming 'Keep London out of the Red;; etc, etc.

Labour won, however, taking control of the GLC. What did the Tories think now, after Labour's victory? Tory MP and Transport Secretary Norman Fowler told the 'Guardian' (May 8): "This is not a mandate for Marxism." Talk about having your cake and eat it!

This year is the 600th anniversary of the Peasants Revolt, an enormous uprising against feudal oppression. It was an early example of ordinary people fighting for their rights against the ruling class.

But an 'enterprising' group in South East London where one of the Revolt's leaders, Wat Tyler was murdered, wanted to celebrate in a way which forgot the class struggle. COPRA [the Commemoration of the Peasants Revolt Association] had plans for a festival, with large scale commercial involvement, run by a private exhibition firm in Bromley. They claimed the name Peasants Revolt was misleading as "even lords of the manor, churchmen and Aldermen of the City of London" participated.

So they asked "all sections of the community" to celebrate—Prince Charles to represent the Royal peasants and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Holy Artisans. The show, the organisers said, could be "tailor made for national and local companies, organisation and traders"; in an area with a market of five and a half million people.

But this is 1981. The grand plan to celebrate the Peasants Revolt by class collaboration, letting "bygones be bygones", fell foul of capitalist crisis: the firms which supplied the money withdrew their finance. Instead the local labour movement held a festival last Monday, attended by over 3,000 people with Tony Benn MP, and trade union leader Alan Fisher and Joan Maynard MP speaking. Perhaps you can't forget class realities that easily after all. What a shame.



George Wright, General Secretary Wales TUC, speaking at last week's Conference

Photo: A. Wiard (Report)

## Wales TUC reject new 'social contract'

There was such opposition from delegates that the General Council of the Wales Trade Union Congress were defeated in their attempt to get acceptance of a new social contract at the recent Wales TUC Conference.

By Rob Sewell

Introducing the 'social plan' document, George Wright, General Secretary Wales TUC, described it as: "a collection of views, intended to be thought provoking to open up an alternative strategy".

The document itself was in reality a re-hash of the worn out social contract, drawn up by the last Labour government, which paved the way for the Tory victory in 1979. George Wright was at pains to stress the fact that it was

"only" a consultative document which would be fully discussed by the movement; at a special conference in October.

This failed to satisfy many of the delegates. In the ensuing debate—probably the liveliest of the conference—the document was attacked for what it really was...an attempt at wage restraint, pushed through the back door by the General Council.

Derek Gregory, of the National Union of Public Employees, stated that the document was to the right of Labour Party policy. In fact, the General Council had done what Roy Jenkins, David Owen and Shirley Williams

had failed to do, i.e., compile a manifesto of the Social Democrats!

Dave Clarke, from Deeside, argued for a complete rejection of the new social contract. He stated that a pact was needed by the labour movement, but this could only be based upon a socialist plan.

To loud applause, he went on, "That plan in its turn must be based on the workers' interests and the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange".

The right wing union officials were busy demanding "responsible debate" as the platform came in for a hammering. Emlyn Williams, of the National Union of Miners, for instance, was told to sit down by the chair, but thundered "no social contract! No incomes policy!"

Earlier, every delegate heralded the miners' strike and

welcomed the climb down by the Thatcher government. However, Emlyn Williams warned the conference, and indirectly the Tories, of the possibility of future action.

"Not a half penny has yet come into Wales. Now the policy is one of slow strangulation. There has been no capital or recruitment. Our patience is becoming exhausted."

The conference went on to condemn the Tories and the massive rise in unemployment. At present 147,000 are unemployed in Wales, and the forecast is it will reach 20% by this time next year. Many delegates believed it was time to take up the fight against the Tory Government and demanded that the General Council be prepared to lead such a fight instead of introducing measures which curb workers enthusiasm and operate in the interests of the bosses.

## Class issues to the fore in Dublin May Day march

"Every member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, every member of the executives of the major unions and of the executives of the Trades councils must be prepared to go to jail if any trade unionist is imprisoned."

This call from the secretary of Dublin Trades Council received an enormous echo from the 20,000 workers who took part in a mass demonstration and work stoppage for the afternoon of May Day in Dublin.

The class anger and militancy of the demonstration gave the ruling class in the South of Ireland a clear

By Pat Smith

indication of the response of the labour movement if they were foolish enough to carry out the order committing the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, the Irish section of the British Transport Workers Union to jail. His crime is to refuse to lift the trade union embargo placed on the export of cars, spare parts, during the current dispute over redundancies at the Talbot car plant in Dublin.

Pointing down O'Connell Street to the statue of James Larkin, Dublin Trades Coun-

cil secretary told the May Day demonstration, again to tremendous applause, "Who would remember Larkin as a great leader of the working class if in his day he had accepted the law of the land?"

The mood against the Fianna Fail government came from their failure to provide jobs for workers and their handout to big business when they reduced corporation tax by 10% in the last budget. Possibly the loudest cheer of the demo went to the vice-president of the Trades Council when he accused big business of paying no taxes except "tax in the plain unmarked envelopes which they gave to bolster the funds of Fianna Fail."

The Dublin demonstration was a huge success, despite

the country's largest union, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, telling their members not to stop work and to only march if they had time off. But what was more significant about this demonstration was that the class issues were even clearer than during the anti-PAYE marchers of 1979 and 1980.

Unemployment in real terms is now approaching 180,000 people. Officially, more than 10% of the workforce are jobless. Annual inflation is running at 21%. There has been a wave of strikes and occupations over the last three months. And the Federated Union of Employers have now been threatened with a general strike by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions because of their refusal to give the extra increases arising from the 'national understanding' on wages. These events and this demonstration serve notice on the capitalist class and Fianna Fail as they approach the general election that the working class are prepared to fight.

### Militant Readers Meeting

#### BLYTH

Wed 6 May 'Poland— which way forward?'  
Wed 20 May 'Trade union struggle today'  
Wed 3 June 'Northern Ireland—is there a solution?'  
All meetings at 7.30pm 148 Disraeli St, Blyth. For more details contact P Marsden

#### CHESTER

'Northern Ireland—socialism or sectarianism?' Speaker: Alan Runswick (Birkenhead Labour Party) 7.30pm 20 May Chester Labour Club 5 Upper Northgate Street

#### BOOTLE

'Which way forward for the Labour Party?' Speaker: Peter Taaffe (Editor, 'Militant') 7.30 Tue 19 May Bootle Labour Club

#### NEWHAM

'Benn versus Healey— which way for Labour?' Speaker: Bob Labi (London Labour Party Executive, personal cap.) 8pm Wed 20 May. Lister room, East Ham Town Hall.

#### SOUTHEND

'Social Democratic Party—Which way for Labour?' Speakers: Steve Glennon (Stevenage Labour Party) 8pm Wed 27 May at the Labour Hall 40-42 Cambridge Rd. For details tel Southend 353588

#### WYTHENSHAW

'Northern Ireland—Common Misery, Common Struggle.' Speaker: John Byrne (Ardwick Labour Party) 8pm Mon 18 May 26 Mitchell Gardens, Bench Hill, off Hollyhedge Rd.

# Workers Unity against THE REAL ENEMY

**Since the death of Bobby Sands there has been sporadic rioting, much of it unreported, in Catholic areas of Northern Ireland.**

**There have also been numerous shooting incidents, again largely unreported in West Belfast.**

**By  
Peter Hadden**

(Northern Ireland  
Labour and Trade  
Union Group)

With the possibility of a second hunger-striker, Francis Hughes, dying shortly, there is a danger of serious escalation of violence. According to Hughes' family he is extremely weak and has lost his eyesight.

Two other hunger-strikers, both now approaching their 50th day without food, will soon be critical. A fourth prisoner has just joined them.

Yet the Tories have refused to come up with even a hint of concessions to prevent more deaths. Their obstinacy caused the needless death of Bobby Sands, and they will bear the main responsibility for what may happen in Northern Ireland.

It would require only a limited change in the prison regime in the H-Blocks to settle the hunger strike. In particular, concessions on clothing and work could be introduced for prisoners in H-Block and Armagh and all prisoners in Northern Ireland. They would not amount to special or political category status, but would nevertheless meet the prisoners' main demands.

Sands' funeral drew an enormous crowd of between 70,000 and 100,000 people, including those lining the route. This huge attendance does not reflect a resurgence of support for the Provisionals, but a genuine sympathy for the plight of the prisoners and total opposition to the Tories' intransigence. One Derry workers summed up the present mood in Catholic areas as "anti-Provo, anti-IRSP (Irish Republican Socialist Party), pro-Bobby Sands."

When support for the hunger-strike was closely tied to the Provisionals, it drew little or no response. The demand for political status, as raised by them, did not gain a mass echo even in the Catholic areas. The present mass support for the prisoners is mainly a call for a change in prison conditions.

Should the Provisionals or the INLA choose this issue for a justification of a stepping up of their military campaign, they will only serve to dampen popular support for the hunger

strikers in Ireland and internationally.

The methods of individual terrorism adopted by the Provos have failed to achieve a single one of the stated objectives of that organisation. Instead they have helped increase sectarianism in Northern Ireland, they have weakened the labour movement, and have given the excuse to the State to introduce repressive legislation. Should these futile tactics now be re-employed on behalf of the prisoners, it will be the hunger-strikers and the people in the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland who will be the first to suffer.

The hunger-strikers also exposed the weakness of the sectarian campaign of the H-Block Support Committee. Rather than address their appeal to the working class and its organisations, these bodies have appealed solely to the 'nationalist' groups, including the most right-wing and reactionary politicians.

Last weekend they invited all political organisations in Ireland which (in the words of former socialist Bernadette McAliskey) were "anti-imperialist" to a conference to discuss the H-Blocks. These parties include the right-wing nationalist Irish Independence Party, the SDLP, and even the Irish Tory Party, Fianna Fail, now in government in the South.

Again it has been the prisoners who have paid the price for this sectarian campaign. The H-Block Committees have repelled support. They proved incapable of mobilising a movement which could win concessions.

Only the labour movement, drawing together Catholic and Protestant workers in Northern Ireland, is fully capable of resisting repression. This is the lesson of the hunger strike.

The labour movement cannot afford to remain silent. The repression used today against Republicans in Northern Ireland can be used against the labour movement in Britain and Ireland in the future.

It is this which makes doubly scandalous the bipartisan approach adopted by leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party in Britain. Worst of all has been the visit of Don Concannon to the dying Bobby Sands, solely to convey the message that he (Concannon) backed the Tories.

Already strong opposition to Concannon's stand has been registered within the Labour Party. Tony Saunois, Labour Party Young Socialist representative on the National Executive Committee, has tabled a motion condemning the Tory government's stand and re-iterating the policy supported by the National Executive which is that basic concessions should be given to all prisoners to wear their own clothes and negotiate a choice of work, training and education. It is up to party activists to voice their support for Tony Saunois' resolution and ensure that the Parliamentary leaders of the Party no longer back the Tories.

The issue should also be raised in a similar fashion within the trade unions in Britain and Ireland.

Already the Derry Trades Council has taken a class stand on the question. At last week's meeting of Belfast Trades Council it was agreed that a statement should be issued calling for prison reforms. A special meeting of the Executive of the Council has been convened to discuss the matter further.

While not backing the demand for political status as it has been raised, by the provos, the labour movement cannot ignore the background to the H-Block crisis. These prisoners have mainly been convicted in non-jury courts under special legislation. Many have been convicted solely on the basis of confessions given after interrogation in police detention centres.

Amnesty International and even the government's own Bennet Report have exposed the horrific techniques which were employed to force the signing of confessions.

The labour movement must immediately set up an inquiry into the whole system of repression in Northern Ireland. This could highlight the use of repressive legislation, the techniques of the army and police, and also demonstrate the threat these pose to the working class organisations in the future.

Part of such an inquiry should be a review of the cases of all who have been convicted on offences arising from the Northern Ireland troubles. This review would be able to

## NORTHERN IRELAND



Photo: J. McKittrick (Militant)

The aftermath of rioting in Derry after Bobby Sands' death.

**The labour movement must draw Catholic and Protestant workers together in a fight against the common enemy—the Tories and their system. A united working class is the only way to defeat repression and sectarianism**

establish who has been imprisoned on the basis of frame-up or torture and who in the eyes of the labour movement is a political prisoner and on whose behalf it would fight. The movement would exclude from this category those conscious sectarians, who, by committing sectarian atrocities, have sought to divide the working class of Northern Ireland.

Were the labour movement to take up the question of H-Blocks in such a non-sectarian, class manner, entirely independently of the H-Block Committee and of the provos, they could get a response from both Catholic and Protes-

tant workers in Northern Ireland. This would be a major factor in forcing the Tories to act.

There is no desire among either Protestant or Catholic workers for a return to the nightmare of the early 1970s, of car bombs, pub bombs and nightly tit-for-tat assassinations. Despite the tensions surrounding the hunger strikes, there has been no mass turn by working class people or by the youth back to any of the para-militaries, Loyalist or Republican.

But there are no grounds for complacency. Further H-Block deaths could spark off a fresh wave of violence and sectarian killings. The

labour movement must act now, to draw Catholic and Protestant workers together against the economic and all other forms of repression being meted out by the Tories.

Above all, the building of a political arm of the trade unions in Northern Ireland is now a matter of urgency. Only through such a political vehicle can the energies and frustrations of the youth in particular be turned away from the dead end of paramilitarism, sectarianism and street violence, and channelled into united class activity against the Tories and their system.

# COVENTRY BOOM CITY TO GLOOM CITY

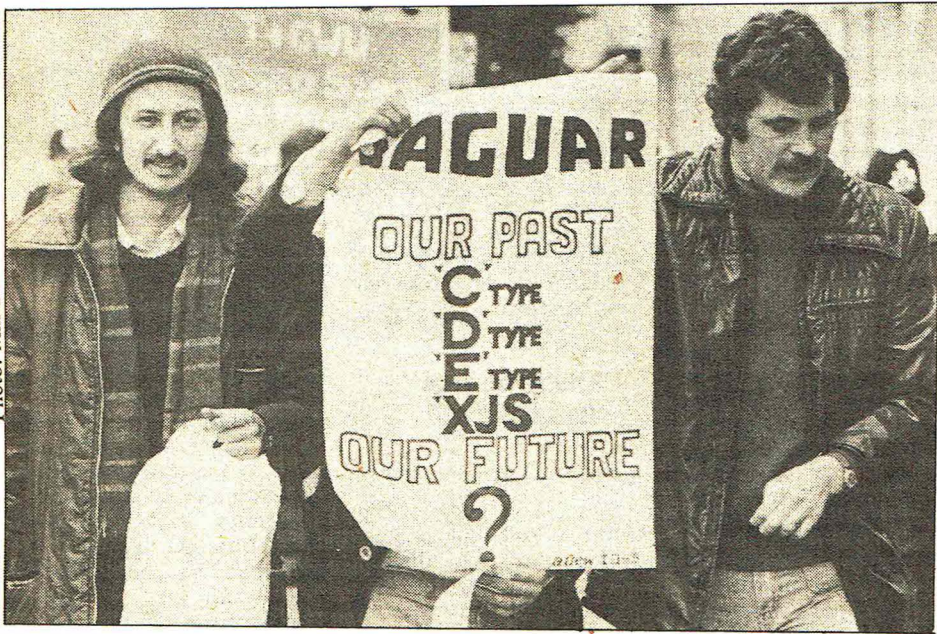


Photo: Militant

Jaguar—a name almost synonymous with Coventry. The decline of the car industry has hit Coventry hard

Next week on May 20, the spotlight will be turned on Coventry, when the "People's March for Jobs" passes through this one-time 'boom city'.

Just ten years ago, of all cities in this country, industry in Coventry was booming. Its rate of growth had been faster than in any other city in Britain this century.

Its unemployment rate, generally below half a percent in the early 1950s, was consistently among the lowest in the country.

Its wage rates were high—in the car industry, up to twice that in comparable factories elsewhere in Britain. The Coventry Toolroom Agreement, which governed the rates for skilled engineering workers, set the wage levels which shop stewards throughout the country aimed for.

This industrial picture was paralleled in the field of public investment and housing. Coventry was the phoenix that had arisen out of the ashes of the war.

Coventry's Labour council could proudly point to a rebuilt and modernised city centre and a substantial programme of public building. In 1956 over 2,000 council houses had been built with a comparable figure built privately. To many it seemed that the aim of building 'socialism in one town' was being steadily achieved.

Today all this seems little more than a dream. Unemployment has doubled in the last year, with 1 in 7 now out of work in the area.

By  
**Jim Hensman**

(Godiva Ward  
Labour Party)

On April 9, unemployment in Coventry's 'travel to work' area stood at 33,907—an increase of 17,522 over the previous year. Within the City of Coventry alone, 24,437 workers chase only 729 vacancies—odds against getting a job are 35 to 1!

For some firms, its becoming cheaper to place a £25 advert in the local paper than to reply individually to the 400 or 500 people who've written for a particular vacancy.

Industry has been more effectively destroyed by the Tories and their system than all the German bombing during the war, including the closure of British Leyland's Canley plant, 1980 saw more than 15,000 redundancies in Coventry's industry.

Young people have been particularly hard hit. Unemployment among 16 to 19 year olds is five times what it was in 1974, with half of this age group without permanent work. Firms like Jaguar have stopped taking on any apprentices at all.

Up to 70,000 workers are on short time, and the West Midlands Regional Group

of Chambers of Commerce now estimate that only 5% of Coventry firms are working at full capacity (compared with 26% in the third quarter of last year).

All the services and facilities painstakingly built up since the war are facing destruction. No new council houses are being built and Coventry has been called a 'disaster area' by the housing pressure group Shelter. £3 million of public expenditure cuts this year, mainly in education and social services, will severely hit services already under strain.

Recently the Council announced that a specialist social worker would be taken on—to tackle the growing suicide problem in the city.

This symbolises the demoralisation and despair that faces working people unless the present downward trend in Coventry is fought against and reversed.

What went wrong? Just as Coventry grew when its industry grew, so it has declined as its industry has declined. The chronic underinvestment which has been a feature of British industry has made goods less and less competitive on the world market.

Alfred Herberts, who made £8.7 million in profit between 1965 and 1970, paid out £9.2 million in dividends over this period. By the early 1970s investment per worker in manufacturing was half that of West Germany or France, and only a third that of Japan.

The current world recession has only made more stark this underlying weakness in British industry.

Coventry, with over half of its workers in industry, compared to the national average of about a third, has consequently been severely hit.

For thousands of young people in Coventry, leisure and recreational facilities are increasingly beyond the range of their pockets.

In a city of a third of a million people, there is only one such public facility. Because of the cuts, charges to use this sports centre and swimming pool have risen beyond the reach of many. To their credit, the Labour Council organised half-price admission at the centre on production of a UB40—but this hasn't been advertised in the Job Centres or Careers Office.

On the other hand, you can join Warwick University's '200 Club', or the 'Sky Blue Connexion', which is run by Coventry City Football Club.

Rates are £50 per year for the 200 Club and the Connexion £82.85 for eighteen months for season ticket holders at Coventry City Football Club, or £97.50 for other members. Who can afford that? And you need a car to get there.

This is just one part of Coventry City FC's policy of putting business first, a football team second. A series of ventures, such as changing the club name to 'Coventry Talbot', investing money in an American football club, and now planning to convert the ground into a

## High life? High price!

By  
**Kevin Parslow**  
(Coventry NW  
LPYS)

20,000 all-seater stadium, have come to nothing so far.

Like the British car industry, Coventry have been flirting dangerously with relegation from the First Division! This was summed up recently by the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*; "The marvellous off-the-field progress which has seen the completion of the Sky Blue Connexion, the balancing of the books, and the start of plans to convert Highfield Road into an all-seater stadium will mean nothing if City's stage is to be Division Two football."

Who would want to pay a minimum £2 for a seat at a second division football match? More to the point, who could afford it, week in, week out?

With the cinema costing £1.70, it would be important for there to be a large

number of youth clubs to cater for young people's recreational needs.

Unfortunately this isn't the case, and the choice facing all workers is the pub, the club or the TV. If you have a job you can afford to go out but on the dole how can you afford to lash out on beer at 45-50p a pint?

But now even the night clubs are going under or moving out of the reach of young workers. Last Saturday, May 9, Tiffany's shut up shop. The manager said the club hadn't made any money for the past six months.

The 'Tamara', for instance, used to be a disco for working class youth. Now, with £3 entrance fee, drink prices to match, and a 21 and over age rule and a ban on jeans, it is only for the elite.

Leisure and recreation should be run for society, but at the moment it's under the rule of the profit motive. We should demand the common ownership of all such facilities so that working people can enjoy the benefits.

## THE FIGHT BACK!!!



Photo: Militant

The labour movement in Coventry is not just sitting back in the face of this crisis.

In September 1980, Coventry South East Labour Party called a meeting which led to the formation of the Coventry Labour and Trade Union Campaign Against Unemployment.

In addition to taking over 600 by special train to the November 29th Liverpool demonstration, the campaign adopted, and has campaigned for, the following demands.

- Free bus passes for the unemployed
- Free access to Council owned leisure facilities for the unemployed
- Trade unions to organise the unemployed
- A massive expansion of the Youth Opportunities Programme—with trade union rates of pay, trade union control and a guaranteed job after a year's training
- An end to systematic overtime—for a shorter working week of 35 hours,

By  
**Dave Nellist**  
(Chairman, Coventry  
South East  
Labour Party)

with no loss in pay  
○ A national minimum wage of £80 per week, index linked to inflation

○ No to voluntary redundancies—share out the work

○ An early general election—to replace the Tories with a Labour government pledged to the implementation of socialist policies, to establish a planned, democratically run economy with the major firms taken over, and run in the interests of working people as a whole.

On Friday, May 22nd, the campaign is organising a public meeting, following the "Peoples' March For Jobs" passing through

Coventry. A conference has been set for Saturday, June 13th at 2.00pm, Methodist Central Hall, called specifically around the campaign's demand for a special day centre for the unemployed to meet and to organise.

The fight against unemployment and the problems which face working people can only be taken up when the trade union movement actively campaigns around policies as outlined above.

Delegates to the June 13 conference, from all bona-fide labour movement organisations in Coventry should be forwarded to the organising secretary, Dave Nellist, 30 Coundon Road, Coventry.

**SAVE JOBS—  
SACK THE TORIES!**  
Friday, May 22nd, 7.00pm  
Speakers: Lawrence Coates, Labour Party  
Young Socialists National Committee; Colin Lyndsay, President, Coventry Trades Council; representative from Ansell's Strike Committee; speaker from Indian Workers Association

# BIRKENHEAD 1932



Police break up a demonstration by the National Unemployed Workers Movement in 1931

**“We had much higher unemployment in the 1930s but we didn’t get this in any way,” was Mrs Thatcher’s comment (ITN News) on Brixton’s explosion of anger against police provocation and appalling conditions.**

**Unemployment was not “a primary cause” of what happened, according to the Tory leader. What was this but a crude racist smear?**

**Thatcher was attempting to pass off the upheaval as a “race riot”, to blame the street fighting on the black people of Brixton.**

Her smear, moreover, was based on the completely false assertion that nothing similar happened in the 1930s.

If Thatcher really believes this, it only goes to show her profound ignorance of what happened in the 1930s. That terrible period of suffering for the working class was the last time the Tories tried to “cure” capitalist slump with savage deflationary policies.

Ignorance may make a soft pillow for brainless heads, but it is time the Tory leaders were reminded of the historical facts.

In 1931, registered unemployment soared to over 2½ million. That was according to official statistics. The total true number of unemployed has been estimated at 3,289,000.

During the autumn and winter of 1931 there were serious clashes between unemployed demonstrators and the police in at least thirty town and cities throughout Britain. The “primary cause” of these battles was the attempt of the police, sometimes backed by special constables and

By Lynn Walsh

troops, to smash the organised protests of the unemployed.

In 1932, the true number of unemployed reached a horrifying peak of 3,750,000 in September. There were more violent clashes.

Unemployed workers, frequently organised and led by the National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM) demanded improved relief scales and the abolition of the vicious means test. In many cases, the police banned these demonstrations, and when they went ahead moved in to break them up with brutal force.

In January 1932, there was fighting between the police and demonstrators in Keighley and Glasgow, and army reservists were used to defend the town hall in Rochdale against unemployed demonstrators.

“We had much higher unemployment in the 1930s but we didn’t get this in any way,” says Thatcher.

Mrs Thatcher, it seems, knows nothing about these angry movements of the unemployed in the 1930s, or of the violent clashes that were provoked by the police. Her remarks on Brixton show that, in particular, she is completely ignorant of events in Birkenhead and Liverpool in September, 1932.

There is nothing which

happened in Brixton on 11/12 April 1981 that had not already occurred in Birkenhead, in 1932. If anything the fighting on Merseyside was on an even bigger scale than Brixton, and went on for longer.

Throughout the summer of 1932, there were marches in Birkenhead protesting against the means test, and demanding higher unemployment pay. Several big marches were organised by the local trade union and labour leaders on a ‘non-political’, strictly ‘trade-union’ basis.

The mayor of Birkenhead, however, arrogantly refused to discuss with trade union delegates, and the Public Assistance Committee rejected the demands for concessions to the unemployed.

Dissatisfied with the very limited campaign of the trade union leadership, the unemployed increasingly turned to the NUWM, which was then largely led by the Communist Party. The NUWM demanded an end to the means test, the extension of work schemes, the restoration of the economy cuts in wages and unemployment relief, and a 25% reduction in council rents. This gained a strong echo from the area’s unemployed workers.

## Mood of anger

Under pressure, the mayor reluctantly called a special council meeting to discuss the demands. The unemployed gathered in pouring rain for several hours before the meeting began—only to hear all the old, vague promises from the councillors.

A mood of enormous anger built up, and two days later the town erupted.

The NUWM organised a march to the Public Assistance Committee office. The procession was over a mile long, and it is estimated that over 8,000

people assembled outside the PAC office.

“The procession proceeded in more or less orderly fashion, five and six deep,” reported the *Birkenhead News* (17 September, 1932). “In the main it was a purposeful gathering, if a motley one.

“Men in ragged clothes and worn out shoes; men with clothes faded, yet neatly pressed and shoes brightly polished; here and there an upright professional-looking man; men with washed overalls that had not known the grime of the shipyard for months; old men with white hair and bent shoulders; young boys but shortly out of school; each one ready to shout in the chorus of ‘Struggle or starve’ and ‘Down with the Means Test.’”

Enormous tension built up, and the police attempted to push the demonstrators back. The PAC merely promised to consider the means test at its meeting on the following Monday.

Spontaneously, part of the demonstration went to the house of Alderman Baker, chairman of the PAC. As it happened, he was out, but the demonstrators trampled over his garden and pelted the outside of his house with stones and dirt. When the police arrived they laid in to the demonstrators with their batons.

The *Birkenhead News* describes what happened: “Batons were wielded to good effect by the police; who scattered flying ranks of the mob in all directions, leaving about fifty of them lying screaming and shouting in the road.”

But this was only the beginning of the explosion of mass anger at unemployment and the brutal administration of unemployment relief.

Let Mrs Thatcher accuse us of making all this up, we will quote from two eminently respectable academic historians. “The crowd,” they write, “grew restive, and had to be broken up by baton charges...” The crowd is often referred to as “the mob,” and battles with the police are, of course, “riots.”

In their book, ‘The Slump,’ John Stevenson and Chris Cook write “Elsewhere in the town, the riots gathered momentum. In the North, a mob collected and smashed the windows of the Co-operative store and started to loot their contents.

“At the Park, another mob tore up the iron railings and used them as weapons and missiles against the police. The battle went on for several hours in many parts of the town, until the early hours of the morning, when some sort of peace was obtained.”

On Friday evening, however, a crowd again gathered outside the PAC offices, and Joseph Rawlings, an unemployed leader, called for a massive demonstration on the following Monday.

“The police arrived and the meeting dispersed,”

write Stevenson and Cook. “But when the police tried to follow the crowds into the warren of streets that surrounded the docks they were confronted by a sort of guerrilla war in among the maze of alleys and terraced houses...”

“But on Saturday night the rioting flared up again and went on throughout the night and into Sunday. Sixteen shops were broken into and looted and at one point there was a pitch battle between the police and a mob of 400 rioters armed with iron railings, bricks and bottles.

“In the narrow streets, women threw household furniture from the upstairs windows on to the police, including in one case an iron bedstead...”

## “Disturbances” in Liverpool

“The Liverpool police had to be called in on Sunday morning, including a mounted contingent who were brought in by ferry in the early hours...”

“Three days later there were disturbances across the river in Liverpool, following a march through the centre of the city by a large body of unemployed. Further disturbances took place at West Ham, Croydon and North Shields.”

What did Thatcher say about Brixton? We didn’t get this sort of thing in the 1930s?

However, McNee, the Chief of the Metropolitan Police, and some Tory MPs may be better informed about the 1930s than Mrs Thatcher.

Immediately after the clashes in Brixton, McNee said that it was obviously the work of ‘outsiders’. This was echoed by Tory MPs. Perhaps they were taking their cue from the Tory Home Secretary of 1932.

After the battles between the unemployed and the police in Merseyside, Belfast, and London, Sir John Gilmour assured the House of Commons that “the demonstration yesterday was no spontaneous movement. It is quite clear that the National Unemployed Workers Movement, the Communist organisation... has been the root and the instigator of these difficulties.”

Clearly, if thousands of workers were taking to the streets all over Britain and rioting—it must be the work of ‘communists’ and ‘outsiders’!

In some respects, however, the police chiefs of 1932 had a bit more sense than those of today. Commenting on the sharp rise of juvenile convictions in 1932, Birkenhead’s own Chief Constable said:

“In very many cases it is fairly conclusive that the incidence of unemployment has been primarily responsible for crime, and it is becoming more and more apparent that the industrial conditions are having a most disastrous effect upon the character of the youth

and young men of the borough who find it impossible to obtain employment” (*Birkenhead News*, 17 February 1932).

Yet in Brixton, where over half the unemployed are young people and half of the jobless youth are black, Mrs Thatcher says “I don’t think unemployment is a primary cause.”

The events in Brixton are just a foretaste of the enormous social explosions that will blow up in other towns and cities as British capitalism continues downwards on its spiral of degeneration and decline.

In Brixton—as in Bristol a year ago—there has been a spontaneous explosion of anger, not on racial lines, but involving predominantly black workers and youth as they bear the heaviest burden of unemployment, rotten conditions and police harassment.

The spontaneous forms taken by the revolt in Brixton, with a section involved in looting and burning, arises from the frustration and anger of unorganised youth—and their lack of confidence, at this stage, in the labour movement.

It is big business—and its political representatives, the Tories, and its front-line arm, the police—who are responsible for what happened. But the labour movement itself has a responsibility actively to win the workers and youth of the area, uniting black and white, with socialist policies.

Following the magnificent intervention of the Labour Party Young Socialists in Brixton, the whole movement must campaign to channel the frustration, and the anger and energy of young workers into mass organisations capable of carrying through a transformation of society.

The 1930s show one thing clearly: however much the ruling class feared rising crime, lawlessness and rioting (to use their language), they much more feared an organised mass movement of the working class and the unemployed against their system.

The battles that took place, like that in Birkenhead, were in most cases provoked by the state’s ruthless attempts, through the police, the army, and the courts, to smash organised protest by the unemployed.

The tragedy of the 1930s was that the labour and trade union leaders refused to give a lead to the unemployed, and the unemployed workers’ movement, for its part, remained isolated from the workers in the trade unions.

Brixton signals the urgency of the labour movement giving a bold socialist lead to the unemployed, who are now facing desperate conditions—especially the youth and black people, who have had enough of Tory rule and are ready to fight for real change.





**BRIXTON  
1981**

**'We had much higher unemployment in the 1930s but we didn't get this'**

**-Mrs Thatcher's comment on Brixton**

## EXPLODING TORY

## MYTHS

**By Mick Rogers**  
(NUR Wimbledon)

**The week after the Brixton 'trouble' I was working out of Waterloo. I brought my train in, went up to the guardroom to have a cup of tea—and walked straight in on a heated discussion on the 'riots' in Brixton.**

Although many of the guards—black and white—had sympathy with unemployed youth of the area, they were complaining about 'attacks on the police', looting, burning and smashing up property.

'There was unemployment in the Thirties, but we never had this sort of thing!' one 26-year-old insisted, echoing the Tory propaganda of the day, which was out to show the events as a race riot.

'Don't you believe it!' I said, 'Blacks or no blacks, there were riots in Britain in those days and big clashes with the police—as big, if not bigger, than Brixton was.'

'All you bloody communists are the same! You use anything for propaganda!'

I tried to explain about what happened to the hunger marchers and what happened in the 1930s. Then I had a problem. I had to take my train out and couldn't continue the discussion!

When I got home, I searched through back copies of 'Militant'. I remembered an article at the beginning of the year about the depression and unemployment in the Thirties.

Next day, when I went to the guards' room at Waterloo I hid the copy of 'Militant' in a copy of that day's 'Times'. I began to quote as if it was 'The

Times', leaving out any reference to what area of Britain it was about.

'Police were harassing the unemployed workers, mounted and foot police suddenly charged into the multitude of unarmed workers. The fighting spirit of the workers had been aroused by the unprovoked attack and they fought their way out of the pavillion on to the main road. The battle raged for hours, shop windows were smashed and extensive damage done, and not until after midnight did this struggle come to an end.'

### Facing the police

'What's that? Another riot in Brixton, or Bristol again. It must be the black youth on the rampage again!' This sort of comment was even coming from some of the black railway workers!

Then I said, 'No! This is what you said yesterday wasn't happening in the 'old days', but it's happening in Glasgow in the 1930s, plus in 50 other towns and cities throughout the country.'

I passed round the centre pages of 'Militant' and they read what I'd underlined and looked at the pictures. In the discussion afterwards, most of them agreed they might have been misled by Maggie Thatcher and the Tory press about the Thirties as well as about Brixton. They began to realise this was not a new situation for unemployed workers to come face to face with the 'Establishment'—i.e. the government and the police.

Then I started on about the need for a change in society, under workers'

controls—so that no youth would ever have to fear a life of unemployment, racial prejudice and an uncaring society which only believes in pure profits above workers' needs.

Again, I had problems in carrying on the discussion! I had a timetable to keep to, whatever people say about trains not running on time! I had to take my train out and leave my workmates to think about what we had been saying.

### Countering the lies

I believe they did start to think about and understand the problems of unemployed youth. The next time I went into the guards' room at Waterloo I sold all my copies of 'Militant', which had never happened before. I also gave out copies of the LPYS broadsheet on Brixton, and a lot of other guards have asked me for copies.

I have heard it being discussed in guardrooms, and in guard rest-rooms between Waterloo and Portsmouth. In fact, there is an LPYS broadsheet stuck on the board in the guards' room at Guildford! This just shows how necessary it is to read 'Militant', understand the policies and cut across the Tory press' lies and propaganda.

But even that is not enough. I have been trying ever since I started on the railways twelve months ago to discuss unemployment and political issues with my fellow workers, but cards and horses have always been more important. It is only when something like Brixton happens that is close to home—most BR Southern Region workers are black—that they actually start to discuss unemployment and social problems, and what can be done to change things.

# TEXTILES THE DEBATE ON STRATEGY

## HOW TO FIGHT FOR JOBS

**By  
Sheila Woodhead**  
(Heywood and  
Royton Labour Party)

**In the textile towns of Lancashire, entire families have been thrown out of work. Mills close almost daily. The textile industry is bleeding to death.**

British manufacturers are losing the cut-throat battle for international and home markets, as world recession squeezes even the most efficient producers.

At the Dyers, Bleachers and Textile workers' union conference this week, one item on the agenda will overshadow all others: the fight for jobs and the fate of the industry.

When Jack Brown, general secretary of the Amalgamated Textile Workers' Union, took part in a debate on 'The Textile Industry and Import Controls' in Rochdale recently, this was the central question.

The debate, organised by Heywood and Royton Labour Party Women's Council, was opened by Margaret Creear. Unemployment was the major issue confronting the labour movement, she said.

The entire textile industry is already in a weakened state, after decades of abuse by the bosses. Tory policies are now inflicting fatal blows. What should the next Labour government do to save jobs?

Margaret placed the problems of the textile industry in context: the critical decline of Britain's industrial base, with crises affecting engineering, cars, electronics, etc.

The crisis is world-wide: there are more than twenty million unemployed in the advanced capitalist countries. Even the modern, progressive industrialised countries, such as Germany and Sweden, are feeling the icy blasts of recession.

Britain's trading decline, from 25% of world markets in 1951 to 6% in 1975, and falling dizzily since, is the result of the profit-hungry capitalists' reluctance to diversify, research and reinvest in the industries they exploit.

The British sickness—masked for a time by the general post-war boom—has become starkly apparent in the period of world recession. The gloves are off, competition sharpens and the weakest go to the wall first.

Import controls are presented as providing a breathing space for manufacturing industry to reinvest and become competitive. We've heard this argument before: the social contract swindle was to 'give industry a chance'; the billions of pounds of our money poured into industry, with no strings attached, through regional development grants, export credits, industrial training benefits, employment subsidies, industrial relief, was

to 'set the bosses on their feet.'

Despite surging profits, the extra money created by the workers' sacrifices went straight into the capitalists' pockets. The promised growth in investment and security of jobs in the development areas, never materialised.

Even when profits are low, 'firms distributed nearly all of them in dividends' (Ryder reports). British investment abroad is one of the only thriving areas of the economy.

Even if we were daft enough to trust the bosses to reinvest, would import controls work?

The quotas on American synthetic fibres badly affected the British woollen industry. The block on Indonesian shirt and trouser imports was met by cancellation of Indonesian government orders for aeroplanes, process plant and other goods.

At best, retaliation by those denied British markets would simply transfer unemployment from one group of workers to another.

Employers, protected from overseas competition, would have no need to invest or modernise. The run-down of industry would continue apace behind the protective wall of tariffs. Prices and profits would soar, while workers in other industries lost jobs as a result of retaliation against British exports.

Jack Brown, replying to Margaret's opening speech, called for selective controls so as not to hit the third world workers. Ironically, however, it is only in the third world that the ability to retaliate is weak!

The general tenor of discussion was internationalist. Most contributions stressed the need for international organisations of labour rather than import controls.

Textiles—like most of British industry—is controlled by major monopolies and multinationals. Courtaulds, for example, controls firms in thirty-seven countries. Its Bangladeshi workers get only three per cent of the wage-levels of West German Courtaulds workers.

Unions in developed industrial countries must use all the strength, skills and resources to organise workers in subsidiary companies, to lift wages and improve conditions and to forge indestructible links with foreign labour against the same boss. Jack pointed out that his union had successfully fought to recruit black labour in South Africa, against that government's policy.

Regionalism is the natural extension of the na-

tionalist logic of import controls. Clutching at straws to protect their members can blind trade unionists to the path they are travelling.

One speaker passionately outlined the plan to block the opening of an American denim manufacturing company in Durham, because the only other denim producer—based in Nelson—had already put workers on short time. She found it difficult, in her loyalty to her workmates, to see how divisive her block with the bosses is. Yet never was a united working class more vital!

What, then, are the alternatives? Not just for the textile workers, but for all industries and for public sector workers.

Every redundancy, including voluntary redundancy, should be fought. Occupations may not always be successful, but there is no alternative in the immediate situation.

There should be an immediate ban on overtime, and the unions must demand a shorter working week in all industries, with an £80 minimum wage to wipe out the need for long hours.

Militant action is vital! Every peaceful closure gives confidence to the bosses and is a psychological and material blow to labour. Every resisted closure makes the next one less likely.

As in other industries, textile workers are caught between two stools: underinvestment or investment in new technology, which replaces workers' jobs. That is the best capitalism has to offer—redundancy by another name!

We have reached the moment in history when the labour movement can no longer afford capitalism.

We need a national plan of production, under workers' control. To achieve this, we have to take into public ownership the major monopolies which control the commanding heights of the economy.

Again, we must learn from our experience! Workers have paid for these companies over and over again, so we must offer compensation only on the basis of proven need. We must refuse to pay for a crisis we haven't created.

This is the campaign that has to be carried throughout the labour and trade union movement.

We can see that capitalism no longer provides even the basics of life. Private ownership can no longer develop the material or social base of society.

We have to mobilise the labour movement to take over the tasks capitalism cannot perform, and to put an end to a system which offers workers nothing but a future of poverty and unemployment.

## INTERNATIONAL

## EL SALVADOR

## The land of the hunting dogs

**Thomas Linehan, a Labour Party Young Socialist member from Dagenham, East London, visited El Salvador last December. He gives an eye-witness account.**

**Crossing the border from Guatemala, we noticed how the Salvadorian troops snapped out orders at will, threatening any dissenters with a wave of their guns.**

Arriving in San Salvador, the capital, the mood was even more hostile. It was then that a bizarre series of events began, first of all, with the loss of my passport. My stomach was turning at the thought of explaining to trigger happy soldiers why I did not possess identification.

Consoling myself, I thought maybe the gruesome tales about El Salvador were exaggerated. I was wrong. San Salvador is the right wing junta's centre of operations, the beating heart of the monster.

Because of the huge concentration of troops, right-wing assassination squads are able to roam the city in practical immunity. To my misfortune, I 'bumped' into what I could only suppose to be one of these squads.

I reacted angrily after a van tried to run me down, only for the occupants to gun me down, while my friend looked on in disbelief.

My friend, who dragged me clear of the gunmen's van, said, at the sound of the first shot, the street packed with rush hour travellers, cleared in one second flat, and told me of people crammed in shop doorways, their faces frozen in terror.

As soon as the gunmen drove off, people went on their way as if nothing had happened. After all, this was El Salvador and just another assassination attempt, fortunately for me unsuccessful.

This is all part of the right's deliberate policy of psychological warfare, the aim being to paralyse the workers and peasants into a state of submission. These 'goon squads' are clearly given a free rein by the Junta. The gunmen had an almost casual attitude. We had seen troops earlier, just around the corner and they couldn't have failed to hear the shots, but the gunmen acted throughout as if there would be no threat of

interference. Their assumption was naturally correct!

People were not prepared to help me to hospital, for fear of retaliation, so we had to make our own way. The hospital was like a scene from 'Mash', wounded people lying everywhere.

One person with half his chin blown off was left completely unattended, people walking around him as if he didn't exist. This was the Hospital Rosales—hospital of the poor!

With all due respect to the overburdened staff, I was treated attentively as if they were embarrassed that such a thing could happen to a visitor to their country.

One doctor told me that he personally treated 9 or 10 'balaso' victims a day. He pointed his fingers to his head in the shape of a gun, asking if I understood.

He also told me that death squads frequently burst into the hospital to complete 'unfinished work'. As a piece of 'unfinished work', my friend suggested I leave quick. I needed no prompting!

### Warnings from death squads

The death squads terrorise the people of El Salvador. One of these groups, the Maximiliano Hernandez Brigade, named after a 1930 dictator whose most notable achievement was massacring 30,000 workers, regularly accuse Jesuit priests of being Communists.

Is it any wonder the people live in state of near panic? An American teacher living in El Salvador, told me of how anyone suspected of leftist sympathies, receives these "unwelcome" visitors, usually, in the dead of night.

The victims, along with their entire family, children included, are literally hacked to pieces with a machete and their remains, a head here, an arm there, are scattered outside neighbouring houses as a warning to others.

The method is intimidation, the effect is devastating! The ruling junta, "moderate" according to its dotting sponsor, the United States, has reneged on every promise it made to the Salvadorian people.

When popular unrest grew, the junta reated in the time honoured way, the Dr Jekyll of "reform" changed into the Mr Hyde of reaction. Political normality Latin American style was resumed.

As well as demented "death squads", other "notable" allies of the Junta, are the Orden (order) and the National Guard. The Orden the blood hounds of the Junta, are armed mavericks from the ranks of the peasants, in the pay of the army. They supply information on leftist movements, usually for just a few pieces of silver.

### Pampered killers

However, the group which the people detest most of all, are the National Guard. Career soldiers, these fanatics, drawn from the middle class, spearhead most of the operations against the guerrilla army (FMLN).

Whenever the guerrillas elude one of their "celebrated" pincers, and this is a regular occurrence, the Guard vents its rage on the nearest village, as last October in Morazan province, when they "retaliated" by murdering over 500 civilians.

These pampered killers, in their cravats and well polished boots, arrogantly strut about the peasantry, convinced of the righteousness of their "cause". A Salvadorian worker summed them up. "They are hunting dogs tearing our people apart."

For too long the imperialists of the United States capitalist class, and the Salvadorian oligarchy, have literally wrung the poor to their last drop of sweat.

They know that if this popular revolt was successful, their interests, wealth and privileges would be in mortal danger, so they feel any methods are justifiable if their nightmare is not to become a reality.

Nonetheless, all the cards of history are stacked against them, and even by unleashing the predators of the Right, they cannot and will not hold back the hands of the clock.



The Chilean working class, crushed by Pinochet in 1973 are moving into action again

## MINERS STRIKE

On 22 April, 10,000 workers at the El Teniente copper mine in Chile came out on strike after management had offered a 2% wage increase as their reply to union demands for an 18% rise to at least partially keep up with inflation.

Supported by the national union Coordinadora Nacional Sindical they are prepared to continue the stoppage after the 60 day limit put on strikes by the ruling junta of General Pinochet.

Trade union activity since Pinochet seized power in 1973 has required enormous courage. The President and General Secretary of the CNS were arrested this January for illegal union activity and many many more have simply disappeared, been murdered or thrown in prison for defending workers' rights.

It is impossible though for any regime to legislate or bayonet the class struggle out of existence. The El Teniente miners over the past four or five years have been pushed to the fore in struggles against the Pinochet regime. They have clearly seen what mili-

## CHILE

tary dictatorship means to all but the richest in Chile.

El Teniente like the rest of the copper industry was nationalised in July 1971 under the Popular Unity government of Allende. Such had been the zeal with which publicly owned companies have been handed back to capitalist owners that there had been talk of the copper industry also being denationalised.

But two things stopped the regime from following the logic of their Chicago monetarist advisers. One has been the slow rate of international investment in Chile, which despite the lavish inducements of a low paid, repressed working class, has felt the chill winds of capitalist crisis.

The second reason is fear of the response of Chilean workers. The El Teniente strike is just the latest of a

number of strikes and protests which have disturbed Pinochet's dream of a tranquil pursuit of profits for the bosses.

The disgusting housing conditions, which have deteriorated rapidly under the junta have sparked off mass protests. Dwellers in the shanty towns around Santiago have publicly demonstrated against the lack of housing. Groups of homeless families have staged fasts and hunger strikes in Catholic churches and in the Swedish embassy. At least there the police and security forces would be more diffident about attacking protesters.

Workers in Chile are operating under enormous difficulties of cruel repression but the struggles of the working class will be the determining factor in removing the Pinochet junta, and ensuring socialism in Chile and South America as a whole.

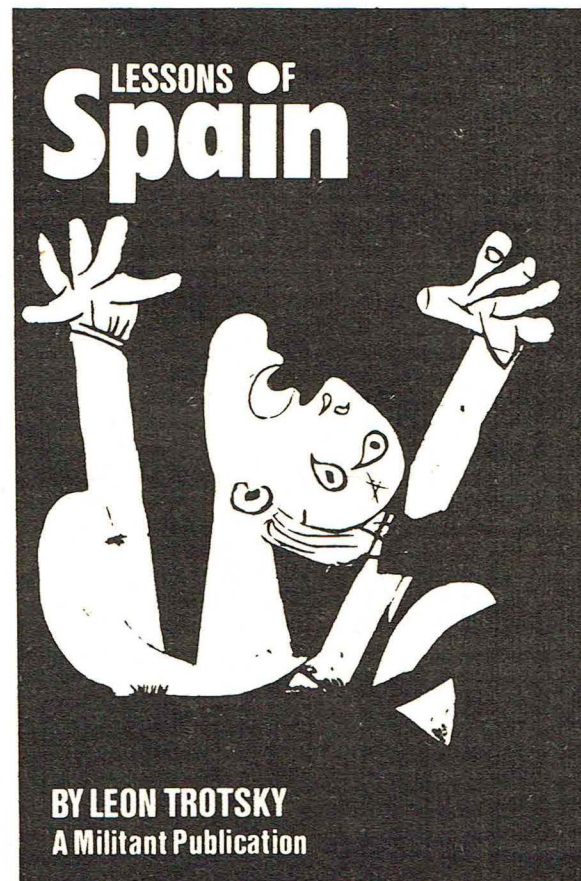
The miners' strike shows that the Chilean working class are beginning to move.

### NEW MILITANT PAMPHLETS

'Lessons of Spain' by Leon Trotsky. With the original 1938 introduction 30p + 15p p&p

Also available 'The Spanish Revolution 1931-36' by Ted Grant

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# Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



## The truth, the whole truth....?

Spot the difference. The Daily Mail removed a policeman from their photo of Brixton

Dear Comrades

At the recent LPYS conference Arthur Scargill attacked the bias and distortions of the capitalist press, owned and controlled by a handful of millionaires such as Rupert Murdoch. I endorse Arthur Scargill's remarks.

The Associated Newspaper Group includes both the Daily Mail and the South Wales Evening Post (though the chairman Rothermere lives in the South of France). Both papers have recently had attacks on Militant.

The Tory rag, the Mail has apparently admitted 'retouching' a picture they had of the Brixton riot—in fact they more like obliterated it removing a policeman from the photograph. If they can do this to photos I'll leave you to draw your own conclusions what they do with words in articles.

Their bias is no surprise if you look at some of the characters who control these empires. Pearson of the Financial Times has 83 weeklies, 10 evening papers and one morning paper. Lord Cowdray has now

handed control of his empire over to a relative, Lord Gibson. In the same group are the Duke of Atholl and Michael Hare, also an aristocrat. Another example is Trafalgar House of Daily Express etc. donated £20,000 to Conservative funds in 1977 and managing director Victor Mathews was at one time member of the right wing Economic League.

Yours fraternally  
Jim Bond  
Neath

## CB Radio: for breakers or strike-breakers?

Dear 'Militant'

Citizens Band (CB) radio users have been fighting to legalise our use of the frequency in operation all around the world by CBers—27MHz AM. For the past few years we have had many major confrontations with the government.

The movement is growing all the time, but just as we look like winning they use every dirty, low life tactic to suppress the will of the march on the 10 May and the Campaign for Nuclear

March on the 10 May and found we had fallen foul of the Home Secretary's blanket ban on marches, which was apparently intended to stop the National Front marching. Most CBers didn't think their case had anything to do with politics in the beginning, but they are learning.

The Citizen Band Federation have contacted the National Council for Civil Liberties who are taking up our case along with that of Disarmament, who are also

affected by this ban.

We've always had a good working relation with the police before, but I think things are beginning to change. We started out fighting for freedom of the airways and ended up fighting for freedom of speech. We haven't even got the right to protest for the right to protest! Catch 22.

Fraternally  
'Iconoclast'  
East London Breakers  
Association

## Carefree workers

Dear Comrades,

I was very perturbed on reading your article 'A Tale of Two Classes' (24 April). I became even more concerned over the injustices to the ordinary working class people when, on the same day, I read the following article in a national newspaper;

A top chief inspector was awarded costs and had his job re-instated after being cleared of shoplifting.

Store detectives watched as he put groceries worth £8 in his shopping bag and passed through the check-out without paying. In court he told magistrates he had been working ten to fourteen hours a day and doing all the domestic chores because his wife was ill.

Obviously the strain was too much for him, as with the guidance of his psychiatrist, he managed to 'convince' the magistrates that with all his worries and anxieties and problems with his sex life, he had committed a crime while under pressure.

Presumably working class people don't have any exceptional worries or anxieties let alone any problems with their sex lives. So much for British justice.

Fraternally yours,  
Janette King  
Hangleton CLP

U.S. experience in the 'wide open spaces', where public communications depend solely on the crude law of supply and demand. In this small island there is overwhelming proof of the extensive interference of C.B. in the already hard-pressed fire, ambulance and hospital communication services.

Citizens Band may provide the chat in saving the lives of a few suicidal 'Breakers' but its potential to assist the growing number of unemployed driven to the end of the struggle for survival is restricted to the unlikely few who would place ownership of C.B. before food and family care.

Contrary to assisting the march of socialism CB, in the hands of blackleg lorry drivers and right wing groups with access to funds far greater than the rank and file labour movement could draw on, provides yet another means for organising strike breaking and attacks on the left.

Come off it Comrade Clegg! Stop playing with your consumer durables and let's get on with the real issues that face us.

Yours fraternally  
Jack Hawker  
Bexleyheath LP  
POEU Broad Left

Dear Comrade

I did not expect to see the pages of 'Militant' thrown open in support of the multinational electronics corporations sales drive for yet another high profit, low social value, consumer gimmick.

But here we have a plea from a Shaw Labour Party correspondent, arguing the case for Citizen Band radio and the right of the individual to indiscriminately pollute the air waves for his own entertainment.

This particular right of the few owes nothing to socialist thought, employs the same principles as private health care and education, and expresses the right to support exploitation of cheap labour through the purchase of goods manufactured in certain underdeveloped nations.

In fact, the very principles of 'freedom' advocated by the Thatcher government.

Yes, there is a move in the offing to confine 'Breakers' to 927 MHz F.M but in common with all such Tory and Liberal legislation since the 'Ten Hours Bill' and Factory Acts, there is no likelihood of sufficient funding to pay for an inspectorate to enforce the new law.

The avoidance and saving of lives through the emergency channel may be true of

## Property leads to war—Official

Dear Comrades,

Support for Marxism sometimes comes from the most unexpected quarters.

In a short article in the 'Radio Times' (2-8 May) previewing the BBC 2 TV programme 'The making of Mankind', the anthropologist Richard Leakey concludes from his researches that there is no basis for the belief that humans are inherently aggressive.

He states that conflicts and wars only began when farming created property

rights and jealousies around ten thousand years ago. Before that, human beings were hunter/gatherers who did not threaten one another.

The article quotes him as saying "Their whole strategy of survival was based on sharing and doing things together."

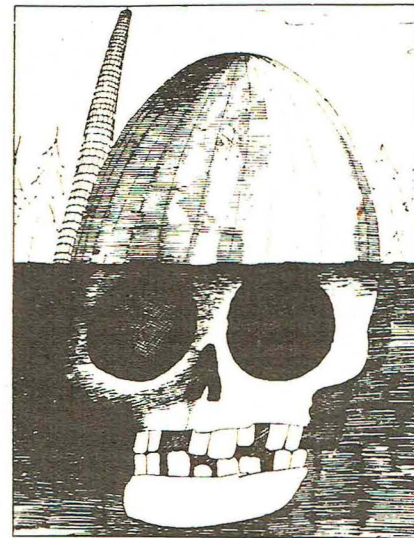
"They seemed to be a positive compassionate animal. It's only in recent times that things have gone wrong."

The importance of his series cannot be underestimated. It will show to millions the materialist evo-

lution of mankind, and our progress in a relatively short period. It will prove that private property has not always existed.

This should also give a spur to comrades to read Engels' classic book 'The origins of the family, private property and the state'. It will give us a glimpse of how television could be used to genuinely inform on a mass scale, a socialist society.

Yours fraternally,  
Alan Turner  
South East Leeds CLP



## The germ bomb

Dear Comrades,

The recent revelations regarding Winston Churchill's wartime plans for germ warfare must act as a lesson for the entire labour movement.

The development and testing of an anthrax bomb on the Scottish island of Gruinard revealed that six major German cities were considered for bombing and contamination with anthrax spots. This disease, transmitted simply through breathing polluted air, has horrifying results. Septic skin scabs develop and death through blood poisoning follows within a week.

A four-pound bomb has made the entire island of

Gruinard uninhabitable for forty years and it could be so for another 100 years! Had Germany been bombed, Berlin, Stuttgart etc could today be deserts.

The modern development of germ, nuclear and conventional weapons could, if used, return the planet to the domain of the insect.... or no life at all. Those who plead for peace in the vain hope that capitalist and bureaucrat will "see sense" and disarm are living a dream.

For socialists the only war that can end wars is the class war.

Fraternally,  
Eddie Phillips  
Glasgow Provan CLP

## Concern for the £millions

Dear Comrades

Those nasty Marxists accuse the capitalists of merely seeking profit and disregarding the safety of working people. Well, this week I've had two warnings about my safety and it seems the bosses really care after all.

In the pub, I was surprised to see a beer mat slogan saying, "You may only be one drink away" warning of the dangers of drunken driving. This warning was "Issued in the interests of public safety by the brewery industry."

Curious. The same people who spend millions getting us to drink more, telling us to lay off? Perhaps I'd misjudged them all these years.

I turned over the beer mat "Drink Barbican—alcohol Free Lager"—drive safely: drink 19 pints of Barbican? (ugh).

More seriously, another warning, on cars this time. In a local paper there was a horror story about the danger of 'fake' spare parts that could even kill us, (if the Barbican doesn't).

What with times being hard, fewer cars are being sold and rather than take their cars to those ever-so-reliable garage chappies, we motorists were servicing our own cars.

What a stunning piece of news: cut, frozen and cramped amateur mechanics grovelling in engines for lost nuts will be surprised. It wasn't said, but implied, that we shouldn't do it.

The real horror, however, is that nasty (foreign, of course) companies are making cheap and unsafe copies of parts and endangering us.

But never fear! Our heroes, the men in shining Rolls-Royce, leap to our defence. "This has gone far enough. When we find them we'll stamp on them" they spluttered. "They have no consideration for public safety."

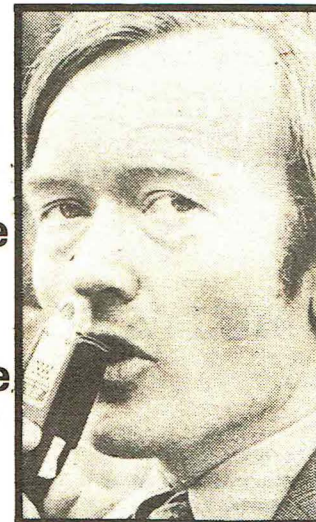
What fine fellows! I could almost have believed their concern if I hadn't noticed that this 'unsafe' trade is costing manufacturers two thousand million pounds a year.

Where was their concern for public safety when it was costing them a mere £2m or £20m a year?

Yours Dave Griffiths  
Stafford and Stoke  
Labour Party

## IN MEMORY OF

Harlow Militant supporters honour Ian's memory as he would have wished—by continuing the fight for socialism



Ian Burge, Harlow Labour Party; ASTMS NE London Medical branch; Secretary of Tower Hamlets Health district Joint Shop Stewards Committee, died 18 May 1980

## IAN BURGE

# ads

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

**CLASSIFIED**

## 'I'D RATHER BE MOLE THAN A RAT' T-Shirts

Summer T-shirts. Colours—white, yellow, sky blue, dark gree, navy and black. All with red motif. Round neck and short sleeves.

Sizes—children's: 24, 26, 28, 28 and 30 inch chest. £2.80 each. Adults': small—32-34; medium—34-36; large—38-40; extra large (no dark green)—42-44. £3.25 each. Both costs include postage and packing. Please indicate colour, and size preferred. **ALL PROCEEDS TO THE FIGHTING FUND:**

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**OUT NOW!**

**'A fighting programme for the NUR'**  
 Price 25p [+10p postage] from **World Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN**

Fancy yourself as a parliamentary candidate in Croydon? Croydon Co-operative Party (affiliated to four CLPs) is organising brains trust/question time session to enable the local labour movement to hear individuals interested in standing for any of the Croydon seats. No selections immediately pending. Write to Secretary, Flat 10, 13 Beulah Hill, London SE19.

**National Demonstration Against Racist Attacks** called by Coventry Campaign Against Racism, Saturday, May 23rd. Assemble: Edgewick Park, Foleshill, Coventry—1.00pm. March moves off at 2.00pm to City Centre, to lay a wreath near 'Mothercare', where Satnam Singh Gill was murdered. Bring TU, JSSC, LP and LPYS banners.

**WEST MIDLANDS MILITANT MAY DAY 400 CLUB DRAW** winners £150—No. 98 J Charles, A Orton, J Charles, S Hall (Carrefour Hypermarket) £20—No. 309 Carmel Carrolan (Yardley) £10—No. 313 M Hinks (Erdington) £5—No. 104 Barbara Hanson (Castle Vale) £5—No. 16 Bob Scott (Birmingham University) £5—No. 221 B Robinson (Davenport) £5—No. 379 Louise Birch (Kings Norton)

**JUST OUT! 1981 SUPPLEMENT TO PROFITEERING FROM CHEAP LABOUR**

In April 1981 the British Department of Trade released the latest reports by British companies with subsidiaries in South Africa in terms of the EEC 'Code of Conduct' on wages and other conditions affecting black workers.

SALEP's pamphlet 'Profiteering from Cheap Labour—Wages paid by British companies in South Africa', published in August 1980, gave data from last year's reports to the Department of Trade. The new supplement updates the pamphlet with the latest figures obtained. The wage rates given in the supplement are those which applied (according to the companies) in June 1980. Price: 15p (plus postage) 10% reduction on orders of 10 or more. Order from: SALEP, Westgate Street, London E8. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to SALEP.

**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

## BIRMINGHAM MILITANT RALLY

Saturday 6 June. Doors open 12 noon Stalls, Crêche, Refreshments, entertainment at 1pm: The Banner Theatre Group present their play on BL

2.30pm: 'The Socialist Way Forward'

**SPEAKERS:**

Ted Grant [Militant Political Editor]  
 Les Kuriata [LPYS National Committee]  
 at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham

Tickets £1

Tickets available from M Spence, 22 Milstead Road, Yardley, Birmingham.

# Build Militant

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 11 July	Target for year
Eastern	1541		3550	7100
East Midlands	1355		2750	5500
Hants & Dorset	979		2600	5200
Humberside	591		1750	3500
London East	1918		3800	7600
London West	1201		2400	4800
London South	1082		2750	5500
Manchester & Lancs	1373		2900	5800
Merseyside	1229		3300	6600
Northern	1703		4300	8600
Scotland East	929		2200	4400
Scotland West	1493		3750	7500
Southern	1818		3550	7100
South West	779		1750	3500
Wales East	619		1300	2600
Wales West	809		2300	4600
West Midlands	1343		4300	8600
Yorkshire	1967		4500	9000
Others	5543		6250	12500
<b>Total received</b>	<b>28272</b>		<b>60,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>

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

# GILT-EDGED INVESTMENT

By Steve Cawley

**Big businessmen in the City have made a fortune by gambling recently. Not on the result of the Cup Final, or a flutter on the horses but on the stock exchange.**

Ignoring the record post-war unemployment and the record bankruptcies in 1980 share prices hit a new high. Most of these hustlers are just printing money for themselves, and share prices bore no relation to the dismal state of the economy.

One supermarket firm, however, reported profits up 40% for the second time running. All the 'glory' will go to the bosses who will get patted on the head by the shareholders. What will go to the workers? Right first time—nothing!

The company have turned down a demand for a 20% wage rise, 35 hour week, and longer holidays by maintenance engineers and offered a final 12½% for skilled craftsmen and pro rate for other workers.

These leeches are the people who determine the policies of the Tory Party. One of the family owners is a Tory MP, another is a supporter of the Social Democrats.

They also try to dictate the policies of Labour governments. If we want to ensure that future Labour governments don't give in to the vested interests of the bosses, we need to fight for a government which is committed to clear socialist policies.

If you agree with us, make sure you join the growing ranks of those who support *Militant* not just in words, but also with their money.

Among these have been participants in discussion

groups in NW London and Brixton and at a meeting in Blackpool, which raised £57 for us, TGWU branch 5/909 for £20, Merseyside NGA members £20 (including 'night out') and Knowsley NALGO supporters who sent us £7. Brighton LPYS donated £2.25 (what about other LPYS branches?) and a number of individual donations made up the bulk of this week's £1,029.

Thanks particularly to Bath NGA member £15 (expenses), M Holmes, Bilericay LP, also £15, and for tenners to N Simpson (Kent NUM), student G Childs (Trent Poly L.C.), R Schofield (SCPS, London) and M Singleton (Brighton). S London reader R Andrew donated £8, and fivers this week included those from S Donnelly (Leyton), S Smith (Trowbridge), and EETPU member, Edinburgh.

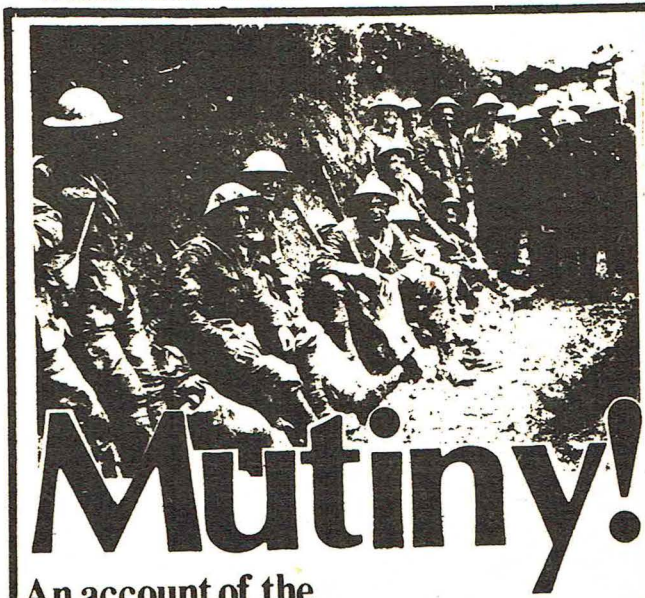
Between £2 and £5 came from J Marston (Valley LP, Liverpool), J Akehurst (Brighton) L Levane (S London) A MacFadgen (NUR, Peterborough) and Gedling, Notts readers J Jones (GMWU) and L Walker (TGWU). £1s were R Wilson (TGWU, Edinburgh) C Baum (Grantham), T Maxfield (N Derby NUM), F Doyle (Glasgow), B Miller (Brighton) C Bennett (March), B Williams (Liverpool Trades Council) and J Kerr (London LPYS member, unemployed).

Smaller amounts given regularly by a large number of our readers, of course, add up very substantially over the weeks. The odd 10p or 20p collected from cha-

nge in fact adds up to thousands of pounds so far this year! Sums such as the 60p from R Bowler (Newcastle Central LP) "on a nurse's wages, but to celebrate the birth of a second child, Megan" or the 80p from Brighton student J Harris are therefore extremely welcome!

Conventional fund-raising included £5.75 Mole T-shirts (Blackburn), Paisley disco £21, Brighton social £59 and Gravesend and Gillingham parties £52.65. Less conventional methods included sponsored chilli eating by N Toms, Brentwood (hot stuff) which netted £2.50!

Another £22 came in from



# Mutiny!

An account of the Calais Soldiers' mutiny in 1918 written by a leading participant

Alf Killick

Available, price 20p [+10p post & packing] from World Books, 1 Mentmore Tce, London E8 3PN

**Militant pamphlet 20p**

**THIS WEEK**  
**£1,029**

a Lancashire sponsored walk, and pamphlets which added nearly £50 to our funds were West London supporters' "French Revolution", Oxford supporters' Key Economic Facts for Socialists and Birmingham readers' Index to articles in *Militant*. (All these are available from World Books).

Don't follow the ways of the stock exchange. Don't speculate on short term gains and long term dead losses. Insure your future by getting the strength of Marxism around you. Read, sell, and give your money to *Militant*—a gilt edge investment for the future.

# TRADE UNION CONFERENCES

## NUPE

**'Where is your mandate now': prompted by Alan Fisher, a thousand delegates at the NUPE annual conference roared out to Margaret Thatcher their views of the recent council election.**

This was backed by support for Tony Benn for deputy leader of the Labour Party, and a call for the next Labour government to "bring into public ownership the financial institutions and giant monopolies which control 80 to 85% of the British economy."

As would be expected at this conference, the cuts by the Tory government dominated all the main debates so far. Delegate after delegate came to the rostrum in the National Health Service debate.

They condemned the run-down of the public sector and the increase in the private health sector, where, for example, NHS hospitals are now "openly advertised for sale to private developers."

Conference unanimously carried a composite calling for a campaign against paybeds and to commit the next Labour government to end private health care and private health insurance.

Marchers from the "People's March" were given a standing ovation, when they came to the front of the conference—another indication of the strength of

By  
**John Pickard**

feeling against the Tories. In one composite, the conference expressed its fullest support to bring about an early general election and added it "declares its willingness to support any call by the TUC for a general strike."

But there was also a recognition that a programme of action was needed to fight unemployment and the Tory policies; no more redundancies: work to be shared out with no loss of pay: reduction of the working week to 35 hours with no reduction in pay.

It also called for a reduction in the retirement age for men to 60: a minimum wage for all workers, and for the election of a Labour government pledged to bold socialist policies, including public ownership of 80% of the economy. This composite was passed.

On the Sunday evening there was a packed meeting of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to hear Tony Benn. This meeting was also an indication of the growth of socialist ideas and the Left with NUPE.

## SOUTH WALES NUM

**"There is no doubt in my mind that miners have an historical mission to lead in class struggles."**

By  
**Rob Sewell**

So the South Wales Miners' President, Emlyn Williams, pointed to the leading role the miners have played, at the South Wales area NUM conference.

He went on "the actions of the South Wales miners in striking spontaneously, but in a unified, disciplined manner on Monday, February 15 against pit closures, went like a shock wave through the coal fields."

"Action on 16 February brought forward the meeting of the NUM and the Coal Board, with the government, and compelled the government to recognise that only it had the solution

to the problems.

"We ended the strike on the basis of a promise made by a government notorious for breaking them. This may have been a mistake. We have yet to see the problems which gave rise to the strike being resolved."

"But the government has had a stern warning. I have no doubt that if it shows weakness, then we shall not! This is a warning also to the NCB which has shown signs of wanting to back peddle over the issue."

He went on to call for 'unanimous support' for Arthur Scargill in the coming presidential election in the NUM.

The Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers Union meets this week, from May 16-19. An article on the fight for jobs in the industry appears on page 9 of this issue.



Firemen rally against the cuts in Nottingham in 1979. The Tories are now trying to push through even heavier cuts in the fire service

## FBU

**The recent county elections have shown Labour councils have a clear mandate to fight Tory cutbacks, and firemen should be part of that fight linking the struggles of the working class to our own.**

There can be no FBU solution on our own. We all have a duty to rid society of this reactionary anti-working class government who, when their system is in crisis immediately make the working class pay for it.

The Fire Brigades Union conference this week must now produce a fighting programme to rally not only firemen but other trade unionists, in defeating the Tories.

Our executive council must take the lead; decisions made at conference on the action needed must be the mandate for our union leadership so that there will be no need to waste precious time and risk dissipating energies by organising 'delegate conferences'.

There is no doubt that if firemen want to maintain the service at its present level and to retain the pay formula, then we face the

By  
**John Allington**  
(Chairman, Merseyside FBU)

biggest struggle since 1977.

The Green Paper, produced by the Tories propose savage cuts in the fire service.

Already approximately 1,000 jobs have disappeared. The Green Paper is the basis on which the employers will operate to savagely reduce the fire service if the FBU is not prepared to act nationally.

We cannot afford to retreat on any of the employer's declared intentions, like overtime, manning levels, reductions in cover, reductions to day manning and retained firemen's work. Any region that is going to be picked off must be prepared to fight back with the knowledge that the strength of the FBU nationally will be thrown behind them if necessary.

The right to strike is our only weapon and there are plenty of resolutions to support that. Just because this issue has not arisen so far does not mean that they

won't use it in the future to try and test the membership along those lines.

The upper quartile—parity with the highest twenty-five per cent of average national wages—must be defended. But the membership should be warned that it may be a hindrance to them in the future. If it does, we should not be afraid to reject it, and fight for a minimum decent wage for firemen.

The number of resolutions calling for one nationalised fire service shows the growing awareness of the membership towards this philosophy. An integrated national service, with adequate finances from government and uniform standards, is vital.

At present, with control under local authorities, firemen still have to negotiate with local employers on the size of the budget and the quality of service and so on, and there is a danger that isolated weaker areas could face attacks alone.

And the service must be run by those who depend on it, on the basis of democratic workers' control. Control of the fire service should be by a central body made up of a third of the workers in our industry, through our union, a third

from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and a third from a Labour government, to integrate it into a socialist plan of production.

For this fight we need a strong united union. For the future, we must work towards one union for the service, with only one rule book, the FBU rule book, nothing less.

And we must now look to the Labour Party deputy leadership and recognise where our allies lie. The working class can well do without the pro-capitalist government like the last Labour administration of Jim Callaghan.

We must look forward to the beginnings of a socialist Labour government, and Tony Benn's election to deputy leadership is certainly a step in the right direction, as well as defending the recent democratic gains within the Labour Party.

**Militant Readers' Meeting at FBU conference**  
**Speakers: Terry Fields [FBU executive, personal capacity]**  
**Richard Venton [Militant]**  
**Tuesday May 19, 7.30pm at The Greyhound Pub, opposite the 'Three Bs'**

## UCW

By  
**Eddie Thorpe**  
(UCW, Oldham In-door branch)

**Since 1980 we've seen many contradictory processes taking place within the post office workers' union, the Union of Communication Workers.**

The union has just suffered a major setback with the acceptance of approved working methods, yet at the same time there has been a tremendous growth of the Broad Left within the union.

Over the past twelve months we've seen our union leadership, along with the leaders of other trade unions, trying to hold back the tide of democracy that is sweeping through the labour movement.

At the Labour Party conference, the UCW dele-

gates voted against the issues of reselection and election of Party leader. This went to the extent that when faced with defeat on the election of the Party leader, they said they must consult the membership before making a decision! Not many UCW members will remember the last time they were consulted on Labour Party policy!

At our annual conference in Brighton this week, many important issues will be on the agenda. With unemployment around the 3 million mark the fight for the 35 hour week must be taken to the rank and file membership. Post Office workers will be particularly hit with the effects of new

technology. Last year the UCW employed the Sussex Policy Research Unit (SPRU) to look into the effects of new technology—it found that 40,000 jobs could be lost over the next decade.

But the report was dismissed by the Executive and the Post Office management alike as pure supposition. While the Post Office management was given the right of reply to the report, SPRU was given no such opportunity.

It is imperative for the membership of the union that it has a planned strategy of implementation of new technology within the Post Office and not a policy of blundering along accepting piecemeal deals each year, leaving what membership is left in ten years' time wondering what went wrong.

At the special conference last November we had a major debate on whether 'section 6' of the agenda, on political and social issues, should be discussed. This should have a part of

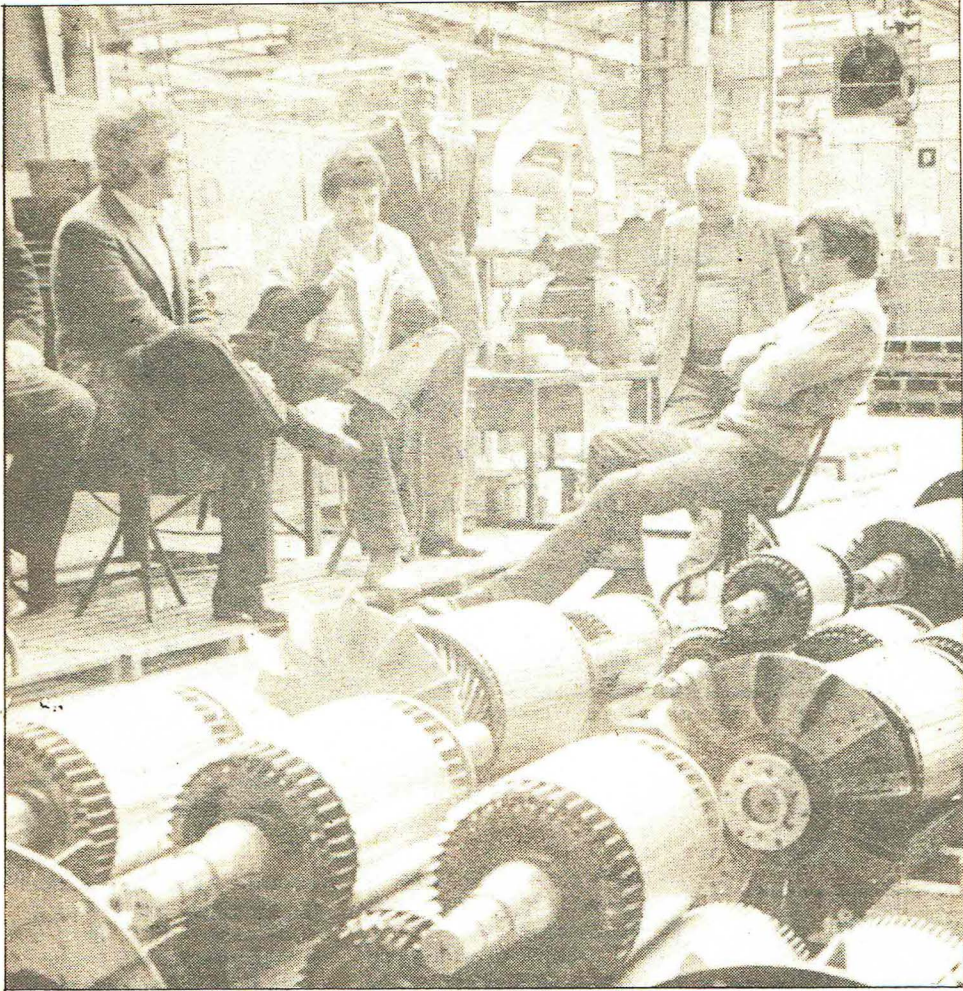
conference laid aside for a debate on these important issues.

If the situation is not altered at this year's conference, our delegates will once again be in the position of going to the TUC and Labour Party conference blind, with no mandate from the membership. The delegates must have a chance to show their feelings on these major issues. And we must support the Labour Party conference decision of '30-40-40' formula for the election of leader and deputy leader of the Labour Party, and support Tony Benn in his fight for the election of deputy leader against Healey.

**Militant Readers Meeting at UCW conference: Room 2, Wagnor Hall, Regency Rd, Brighton. 8pm on Tuesday May 19.**

**UCW Broad Left Rally. Speakers: Tony Benn MP and Peter Dodd (Broad Left Secretary). Hotel Metropole, Kings Rd. 7.30 Sunday May 17.**

# Industrial



Workers occupy the Lawrence Scott plant—they must receive support from the NUM and Ministry of Defence workers

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

## Lawrence Scott Workers Occupy

Lawrence Scott and Electromotors Group was taken over by Mining Supplies Ltd of Doncaster last October. Since then, the company put workers at the Manchester factory on short time working, on the basis, they claimed, of preventing redundancies. Yet over two months ago the management started preparations for transferring work to their factory at Norwich.

The first sign was when they stated a copy of all drawings would have to be taken and put 'in store' due to 'fire regulations'. After this, workers found out that a copy tape of the compu-

By Reg Sidebottom  
(Ashton-under-Lyme CLP)

ter's production information had also been taken to Norwich.

The final straw came when some of the workers found out that the company had sent a letter to the top 20 customers informing that in future all orders should be sent to the Norwich factory!

When this information came to light, the company announced that the factory would close on the 10 July. The decision of the workforce at a mass meeting was taken to occupy the factory. The company threatened the workforce with dismissal, by deeming that they had sacked themselves. They also tried to scare workers by saying they would lose all their redundancy pay.

The stewards have now made contact with the workers at the Norwich plant, who have agreed to black work that may be transferred for production, and to raise financial support. Now the stewards are trying to contact the workforce at Mining Supplies, Doncaster.

At this moment, the owner of Mining Supplies, Arthur Snipe, is still refusing to talk to the workers.

Support from all factories and trade union organisations is required, if the workers are to stop the closure. Particular assistance is required from NUM workers and Ministry of Defence workers, as the National Coal Board and the Naval departments are the two biggest customers for Lawrence Scott's products.

## Crosbie Victory

By  
Felicity Dowling  
(NUT)

With the victory of Labour in the Nottingham county council elections, sacked teacher Eileen Crosbie was reinstated.

She was sacked over a year ago, when the Tories were in control of the council, for following official National Union of Teachers' policy and refusing to teach an oversized nursery class.

Eileen, and Tony Taylor, press officer for Nottingham Teachers Association spoke to *Militant* at the recent NUT conference, explaining the situation.

**Tony**—Eileen was faced with an increase in the pupil/adult ratio, when a temporary nursery nurse was axed, leaving her with only one nurse instead of two in a converted wood-work room.

**Eileen**—I had tried to get something sorted out before Christmas, but the local authority did not respond to the union.

For three days after Christmas I had between 32 and 34 children on the books, and more were due to be admitted (26 is supposed to be the maximum permitted, using DES ratios).

I refused to take the class and withdrew to the staff-room, knowing that I might be suspended, but that the union was backing me.

In those three days in January there were more accidents and incidents than December when the kids are worked up before Christmas. No matter how much training you've had, in some circumstances you can't avoid an accident.

The education department sent an official to see the class; not before lunch, when the children were settled, with no games equipment out etc. As a result of the visit, the junior school got an extra teacher; fine, but the nursery was told it was not a special case.

Eileen was suspended and finally dismissed. The NUT in Nottingham started a

series of strikes in support.

'Other teachers can make sure they don't have oversized classes and take that through the union divisions and associations. There's no point in one person sticking their necks out and losing their job.

Councillors can consider children's needs above finances. Teachers can keep parents aware of the effect of cuts on their children's education, so they too can try to influence the people who make decisions.

I'm really pleased that our union conference passed the amendment to instruct members to take action, rather than advise them to, once a decision on action has been taken. It gives you security; unless you've been in my situation, you don't know that insecurity that I've faced.'

The lessons of the Eileen Crosbie dispute and a programmes to fight cuts and redundancies will be on the agenda at a *Militant* week-end school for teachers, Labour councillors and parents involved in fighting school closures, organised by 'Militant Teacher'.

### 'MILITANT TEACHER' Weekend School

13/14 June. Venue: Newtown Community Centre, Newtown Shopping Centre, Walsall Road, Birmingham [one miles from Birmingham city centre]. Sessions on 'how to fight school closures' and 'the history of the Labour Party and the struggle for education.' Creche and shop available—cost £2 from Jane McVey, 6 cost £2 from Jane McVeigh, 6 Lancaster Grove, Leeds 5.

## Lee Jeans

The 90 days 'deadline' given to the Lee Jeans workers in Greenock is now past. All the threats about eviction of the occupying workforce have come to nothing.

The tables have been turned on the bosses. They expected the young women who slaved behind sewing machines for them, to meekly accept the redundancies served upon them 14 weeks ago.

Now it is the bosses themselves who meekly accept that the girls are occupying until they know the factory is to be kept open.

What deterred the bosses from carrying out their eviction threat was the enormous support from every section of the organised labour movement in Scotland, and considerable sums of money and declarations of support from all over Britain.

Well over £3,000 every week is coming in, and the figure is rising even after 14 weeks! The LPYS collected about £250 at their Bridlington Conference and this was received with warm thanks by the workers at the factory.

The morale is not flagging in the least. Margaret Stevenson, a member of the occupation committee, told *Militant*:

"We're keeping the machines in good condition so that when we start back we can begin work straight away."

"So you think you will be victorious?"

"Either some one will buy this place up and run it or the old owners will keep it open. Nothing else can happen. We will never give up. We know there'll be a victory."

By Greg Oxley

## ANSELLS

By Brian Debus

The strikers at Ansell's in Birmingham have been stunned by a letter they have received from some regional officials of their union, the Transport & General Workers Union.

This letter contained a statement from the T&G's legal department, together with an introductory letter and tear off ballot slip from Brian Mathers, the regional secretary.

The statement from Albert Blighton, secretary of the legal department, pointed

out the following: the men's pension fund money was in jeopardy, that the ex-gratia payment from the company will be withdrawn, and unemployment benefit won't be paid, while the dispute continues.

Claims for unfair dismissal could not be commented on, but went on to say the chances were not good. Compensation for loss of employment was lost for all time, if industrial action was continued. And finally, there was "no possibility of the brewery re-opening."

This is only excelled by the regional secretary's letter, which contained the following: "I have also to

advise you that the Managing director of the company has written to the union indicating that unless the agreement to re-open the Aldridge and Gravelly Park depots is reached by 20 May then the company would withdraw all offers of re-employment, and also the offer of ex-gratia payment to those whose jobs are lost.

"In view of this the union is under an obligation to negotiate for a re-opening depots in knowledge that the alternative is a total loss of jobs together with an ex-gratia payment."

The ballot slip then reads "tick either A or B": 'A' says "I fully understand that the brewery will not re-open but wish to continue to be in dispute with the company, and accept that as a result the compensation which had

been offered will be withdrawn."

'B' says "I have reconsidered my position and accept that negotiations should commence for the re-opening of the Aldridge and Gravelly Park depots distribution coupled with the acceptance of the offer of compensatory payment to those who are not re-employed."

Significantly, the envelopes in which these letters were contained went through the 'addressograph' machine at the Aston Cross brewery.

The first that the T&G branch committee knew of this ballot was when a reporter from the 'Birmingham Post' contacted the strike committee!

Ken Bradley, branch chairman, made these rest-

rained comments: "We shall continue to conduct our business on all channels by holding a branch meeting with our members this week. We don't believe in union or management administration by post. We shall conduct business as normal face to face. We shall invite the Regional secretary and Divisional officer and expect them to demonstrate their concern by being in attendance at the branch meeting this Wednesday. That's a challenge.

"I have only been able to see him three times in 17 weeks. When I finally spoke to him this morning he said he was too busy to see me. He said this was only one of hundreds of branches he was responsible for; yet this ignores the fact this is the

only branch in official dispute!

"Any resolution adopted at this Wednesday's branch meeting will take precedence over any other decision—i.e. a ballot—and members will be in a position to come to an agreement when information is conveyed to them about recent developments.

"A strong commitment of support is being given by other breweries so that we will be more able to gain a success when we go into negotiate with Allied Breweries."

The fight for jobs at Ansell's has gone on for 17 weeks; now more than ever before, a bold, firm stand is needed from the union leadership—not ballot papers!

# Reports

## CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS Follow CPSA - step up action!

**An intensified plan of action in the struggle with the Tories and increasing support for the left marked the conference of the civil service's largest union, the CPSA.**

This week's conference of the Civil and Public Services Association gave a massive endorsement to a motion laying out a detailed policy for intensifying the civil service dispute.

The motion, moved by Dave San (Customs and Excise, Liverpool) "condemns the Tory government's failure to honour their commitments to civil servants and to concede the Council of Civil Service Unions' pay claim of fifteen per cent with a £10 underpinning minimum by 1 April 1981.

"Conference congratulates both the selective strikers and the membership generally for the tremendous support shown for the campaign, disproving press statements generally on our lack of support, and re-affirms its belief that only a settlement of our full claim can safeguard the living standards of civil servants.

"While supporting the action taken so far, conference, recognising the increasing demands of the membership for stronger and firmer action, believes we need to escalate the campaign to force the government to reach an early settlement.

"The NEC are therefore instructed to campaign within CCSU for the following:

★ Closure of the ports and airports, by calling out all civil service union members in the CAA, Immigration and Customs and Excise in those areas, on indefinite strike with strike pay.

★ Indefinite strike of all members in the passport office, with strike pay.

★ Maintenance of the major selective strike areas presently involved.

★ Should our resources prove insufficient, conference agrees to increase voluntary levy.

★ Should this action fail to achieve swift settlement the NEC should promote a campaign amongst the membership for a five-day national civil service strike without pay, with a national demonstration and lobby of parliament during the strike action.

★ Emergency system of payments to be established in DHSS and DE to protect claimants.

**Brian Ingham**  
(Industrial correspondent) reports from CPSA conference

"Conference believes that such a programme of action will rapidly break the government's resistance and destroy any public credibility they have left.

"Conference further recognises that it may prove necessary to call an all-out strike of civil servants to win a living wage in 1981 and therefore instructs the NEC to begin immediate discussions with the other civil service unions and within the membership towards this end."

**Elections for executive positions within CPSA showed a marked increase for the left within the union. In what was a small turnout, in the presidential elections, Kate Losinska retained her seat with 26,425 votes, Len Lever received 16,498 and Broad Left candidate and 'Militant' supporter Kevin Roddy received 15,351—an increase in the Broad Left vote.**

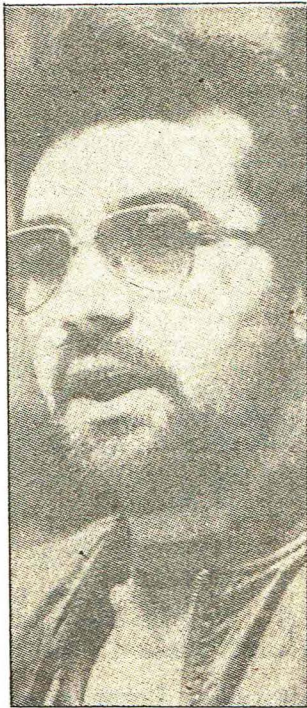
There was growing sup-

In moving the motion, Dave San explained that the demands of some of the delegates for all-out action were premature. Before agreeing to this ultimate step, he said, the members would want to see that all other possible avenues exhausted.

Seconding the motion, 'militant' supporter Pat Byrne (DHSS) criticised the right-wing NEC, who had not only failed to come forward with any motion of their own to take the action forward, but were opposing every motion on the pay campaign sent in by branches.

Ken Thomas, CPSA general secretary, who had disagreed with the NEC and therefore declined to speak on their behalf on the question, said that it was an honest debate, with the delegates quite clearly speaking for the members in their branches.

This was illustrated by Norman Hall (Newcastle DHSS central office branch)



Delegate Dave San

who explained to conference that at a mandating meeting of over three thousand members, opposition to the demands in this resolution was limited to less than one or two hundred.

**port for the left in elections to the union's National Executive. Whereas last year only two left wingers were on the executive, this year ten were returned, including a left wing deputy president and two 'Militant' supporters, Frank Bonner and Jean Mahoney. 'Militant' supporter Chris Baugh received a departmental vote, and will take a place on the executive should one member leave.**

Some delegates had opposed all-out strike action without strike pay on the grounds that CPSA members on very low wages simply couldn't afford such a sacrifice. In his reply, Dave San said if members couldn't afford 7%, they couldn't afford not to take such action to win the claim!

Dave San's reply followed closely on a speech by Marianne Chambers, moving opposition on behalf of the NEC.

During the speech she threw a challenge to the delegates: if their members

**ELECTION OF FULL-TIME OFFICIALS**  
Senior CPSA officials will in future be elected every five years, following a motion passed at Conference by 147,936 votes to 49,139. Unsuccessful candidates will have the right to appeal to conference. At present, officials are appointed by the Executive for life.

Unanimous support for a resolution similar to that passed at the CPSA conference, was given at the separate group conference of CPSA members within the Civil Aviation Authority.

would support the all-out action proposed, they should come to the rostrum. Hundreds of delegates spontaneously flocked to the front of the conference in a magnificent show of strength behind the resolution! This support was then confirmed by a majority of at least 4 to 1 for the action.

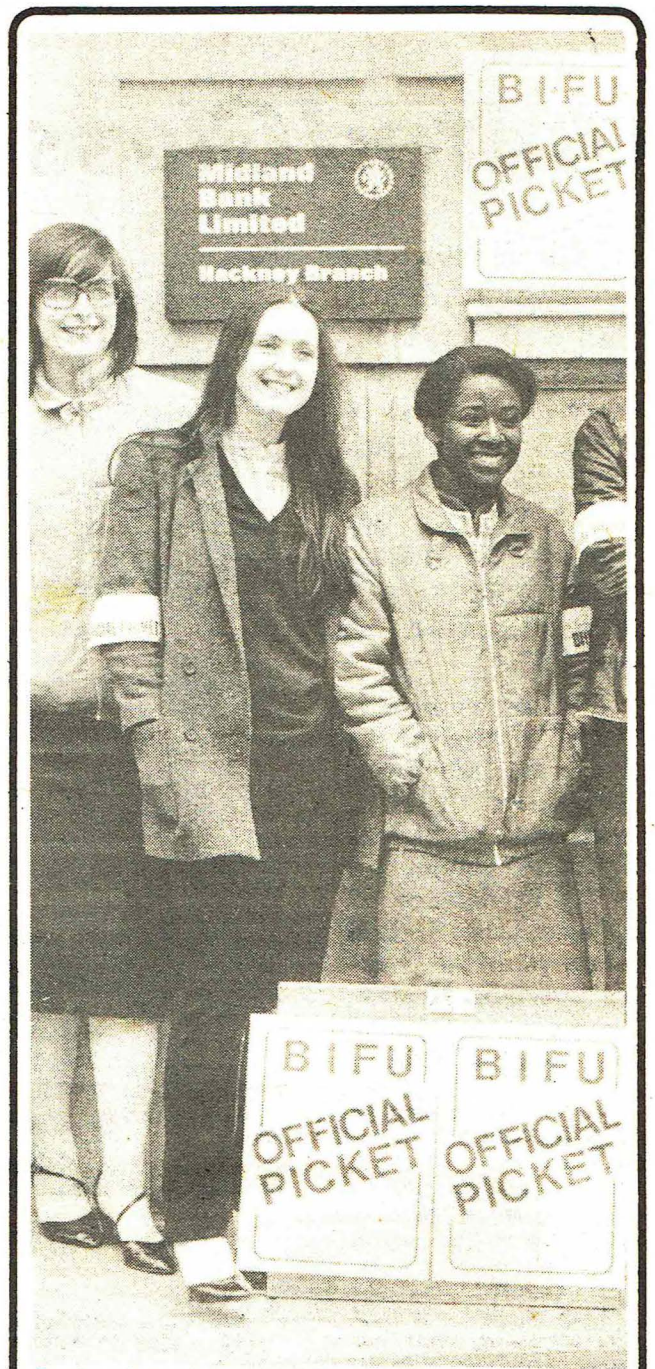
CPSA members are now faced with the task of keeping pressure on the NEC to ensure that the terms of this resolution are translated into action.

The union's leadership in the coming year will be more responsive to the demands and aspirations of the membership. The significant victories for Broad Left candidates in the elections for the national and section positions will alter its complexion.

In the election for DHSS section chairman (about a quarter of the union's membership) Kevin McHugh, 'Militant' supporter in the Newcastle Central Office, turned a six thousand majority for Pat Wormersley, sitting vice-president of the union, into a 400 Broad Left majority.

In the smaller sections, the other sitting vice-president, Kate Losinska, lost their positions as section chairmen.

Delegates vote at conference



Bankworkers picket of Midland Bank in Hackney

## BANK - WORKERS STRIKE

Nearly 800 staff at Midland bank computer centres in London, Pudsey and Liverpool took strike action over 36 hours involving all shifts, from 11-13 May.

The centres were virtually closed down. At Oxgate Lane in London the strike was 90% strong. For the few staff who did go in there was no effective work.

Coopers Row in central London was in complete darkness. All the lights had been switched off—no one was working. This deals with international business and Midland bank will be losing over a million pounds.

Management are dictating that employees get only a 10% rise. "On living costs alone we could justify 20%. They made £215 million last year. We don't mind them making a bit of gravy, as long as we are allowed to dip our bread in it now and again" said Bob Green, BIFU office rep at the Oxgate computer centre.

"They say that profits are going down because the year before last they made £300 million due to high interest rates. £215m is still a very good year.

"One problem in the banking union is the fragmentation of the industry. Management put pressure on individuals where there are only a dozen or so in one

Bob Green, BIFU office rep, Oxgate Lane computer centre, spoke to Ed Bober

branch. But in the computer centres we are able to get over this problem. 250 people work here at Oxgate Lane. We are mounting effective industrial action."

Management must negotiate with BIFU. In the next week or so there could be a total stoppage in all the banks in the country if management does not come to its senses. Balloting has been taking place on further action.

### AUEW

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.

## United Glass - 3 Million reasons to win...

"The bosses try something nearly every day to try to get one on us. Always trying to find a weak spot. Great!

This only raises the lads morale and boosts our determination to win!"

This is the unhesitating optimism of the 560 workers, members of the General and Municipal Workers Union, on strike in defence of jobs at the United Glass plant at Peasley Cross, St. Helens.

The strikers have escalated the action, organising flying pickets to various parts of Britain, preventing finished goods from entering warehouses. This was the case in Bedfordshire, when lorry drivers refused to cross the picket line in solidarity.

At Peasley itself, the Transport and General Workers Union, which has shown magnificent support, have now taken unofficial strike action and are seeking to step this up.

Nevertheless, the reactionary bosses at United Glass have shown no intention of yielding. A top management/union meeting last Thursday proved useless. The unions have pledged that no further negotiations will take place until United Glass withdraw all threats of job losses.

This pledge will require "backup" in terms of concrete action. It is very important that Peasley's sister plant, ten minutes away at Ravenhead, is brought into the dispute.

Likewise glass workers throughout Britain, at Pil-



The 'People's March for Jobs' marchers call in at United Glass' Peasley plant on 6 May

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

# STRIKING FOR OUR JOBS

Report by Steve Higham

kingtons, Rockware and others, desperately need to support their brothers at Peasley.

As a leaflet distributed by supporters of 'Militant' points out "There are 3 million reasons why this

struggle must be won. A victory for workers at United Glass would not only eliminate the possibility of further redundancies at Peasley and Ravenhead. It would weaken the bosses' determination to throw

more workers onto the dole queue from the glass industry in general."

This increase in activity is vitally necessary if management are to concede victory and withdraw the compulsory redundancy notices,

which hang over the heads of 81 workers.

In addition, messages of support from all sections of the trade union and labour movement would be thankfully received. Shop stewards were delighted, for

example, when they received an encouraging letter from Yeovil LPYS!

Please forward these with much needed financial assistance to Alan Abberton, 106 Marshalls Cross Road, St Helens, Merseyside.

## DHSS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Surely, you might say, this only happens if the DHSS had reasonable evidence of fraud? Not so.

The DHSS circular makes it clear that anyone who has been on supplementary benefit for more than four months is at risk. For example, the visiting officer may report a "suspiciously high standard of living." If you're on benefits, you'd better get rid of your television and other 'luxuries' if you've got any, just in case.

If the claimant has a skill such as typing or car repair where "local knowledge indicates there are opportunities," or a claimant's relatives are known to be in business or self-employed you are under suspicion. If your third cousin runs a

sweet shop, watch out!

A woman living alone with a child, a widow, divorcee, or single parent gets the worst treatment, especially if the investigator believes there are "signs of male presence."

Once these 'suspects' have been selected, the claimant is visited and told his or her claim is "under special review", and warned of the "serious consequences of fraud."

"If you have good reason to suspect the validity of the claim" says the circular, "but insufficient evidence to justify an interview under caution," [i.e. one leading to prosecution] "Let the claimant know of your suspicions and say that if he were here to withdraw his claim then it would be

unnecessary to pursue your enquiries further."

The document then says "there must be no pressure."

But this cautionary advice is laughable, after the circular has recommended methods which are clearly intended to be intimidating.

The proposals have clearly been designed to create an atmosphere of fear amongst supplementary benefit claimants.

These methods have been adopted by the Tories to save £40 million. But 'The Guardian' [9 May] recently revealed that the anti-fiddlers are themselves fiddling—inflating the amount of money saved in order to meet the Tories' target [£50 million]. One fifth of the alleged "fraud cases" were not real fraud at all, and did not represent real savings.

And perhaps we can ask Mr Jenkin, the Tory DHSS minister, what he is doing to help needy people to get

their unclaimed benefits. These were reckoned to be worth about £400 million in 1979, ten times the amount the Tories claim to be saving from detected fiddling.

And what are the Tories doing to defeat tax evasion which overwhelmingly involves the rich? This is estimated to cost between £1,000 million and £2,000 million every year. The answer is they have cut back on the number of tax investigators!

Social Security benefits must be freely available to all who need them, without being frightened to claim for fear of the knock in the night.

Uniting together the broad labour and trade union movement, side by side with the civil service unions and the claimants, can build a movement that is capable of defeating this government's attempt to make the claiming of social security benefits a "crime".

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