

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

Mobilise for the
Labour Movement
Conference
September 11th
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As Police and Courts attack Workers...

DEFEND OUR RIGHTS

Fleet Street Electricians...

By Bob Wade

The bosses and Tories have squealed with rage at the splendid solidarity action taken by Fleet Street electricians in support of the Health workers.

With all odds stacked against them, from the law courts to their own 'leaders' in the EETPU, they voted 2

to 1 in favour of the action. A court injunction under the Employment Act had been served on them, and

now EETPU official Sean Geraghty could face imprisonment for contempt of court.

While health workers will applaud this unselfish act of solidarity, there will be anger at some NHS leaders such as Albert Spanswick who were successful in getting other Fleet Street print unions to call off their promised action, and who are now lukewarm in response to the electricians.

They argue that stopping the Tory papers will damage the cause of the health dispute in the eyes of the public. Yet from the start of

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NHS Pickets arrested

In a display of brute force, police arrested 57 hospital workers picketing West Park Psychiatric Hospital, Epsom on Monday 9 August.

In a move which gave a vicious foretaste of Tebbit's anti-union laws, male and female nurses, porters and domestics were lifted by the ears, beard, pressure points and necks as they peacefully held a sit-down picket inside the hospital gates.

By John Bulaitis

One young nurse, Billy Cathcart was particularly brutally treated. Other pickets described how he was held down by six policemen, kicked, handcuffed and his arms twisted up to his neck.

Marcus Bradley, GMWU shop steward told me, "Thirty of us were then crammed into 3 cells at Epsom police station. Each cell was only fit to hold two men.

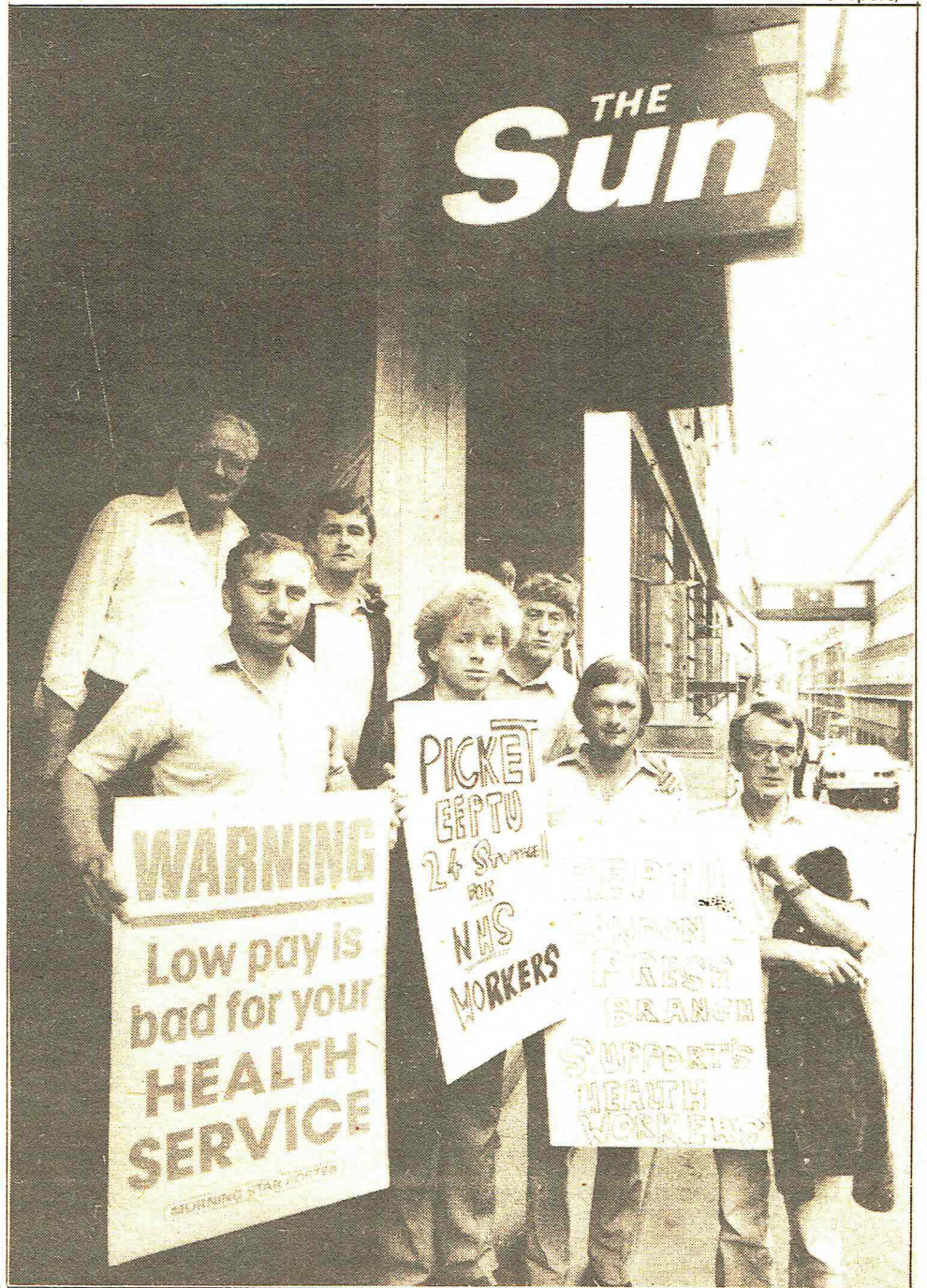
"There was no ventilation,

the toilets would not flush, we were allowed no food, we had no right to use the phone and we weren't even allowed a cup of tea.

"Many nurses had been on duty since 6 o'clock in the morning yet we were left standing cramped in these conditions for over three hours." Jimmy Cathcart (the brother of Billy) and a GMWU steward said "your headline should be "Maggie gives them 10.5% to stop the nurses getting 12%"

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Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)



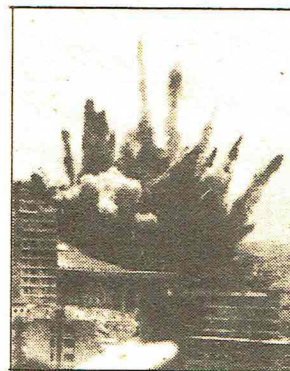
Fleet Street electricians picket the 'Sun'. Trade unionists must fully support their action

LEBANON

The ruthless destruction of West Beirut by Israeli shelling and bombing has opened up the biggest split in Israel since the formation of the state.

The terrible civilian casualties in particular, make this the bloodiest of the series of wars fought to defend the Zionist state as a "peaceful haven" for Jewish people—on the land of the Palestinians.

The Palestinian movement, however, under the narrow nationalist leadership of Arafat, is not only facing military defeat but is caught in a political dead-end. It now seems only a matter of time before the PLO forces pull out of Beirut. The determined resistance of the young Palestinian guerrillas is all but exhausted. They cannot indefinitely withstand Israeli bombardment.



Bombing of West Beirut

Arrangements for the PLO's evacuation are being worked out by the US government, still the region's main arbiter.

Begin is determined to en-

sure all the PLO leave. The PLO leaders, however, have been holding out for a token presence in West Beirut, to be allowed to take their heavy arms and for official US recognition of the PLO.

The US, although in fact negotiating with PLO leaders, will not give official recognition unless the PLO recognises the right of Israel to exist.

Syria, Iraq, Jordan and the (more remote) Sudan have apparently agreed to take PLO contingents. The Palestinian forces, however, would be held firmly under the thumb of these regimes.

All along, the PLO leaders have relied on the support of the reactionary Arab government rather than the class support of workers and peasants in the occupied territories and the Arab states. Now the Palestinians are paying a terrible price for

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Ten thousand eyes for an eye. Ten thousand teeth for a tooth...



LEBANON

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

their leaders' failure to link national liberation with social and economic demands.

That, however, would mean challenging the ruling classes and dictatorial elites of the Arab states, whereas Arafat and company have always preferred to rely on money and arms from regimes like Saudi Arabia. In other words, the PLO leadership has become the client of rulers who fear an independent Palestinian state, in which national liberation would spill over into social revolution, as much as the Israeli ruling class itself.

The recent wave of strikes on the West Bank and within Israel shook Begin far more than successive guerrilla campaigns, which Israel can always defeat militarily.

Begin's invasion in fact, has been intended not simply to hit at PLO bases in Lebanon but to tighten Israel's grip on the West Bank. The new "civilian" administration in the occupied territories is far more repressive than the temporary rule it replaced, and has provoked enormous Arab protests and strike action. Begin's moves to con-

solidate Israel's extended frontiers, moreover, has also provoked opposition and protest from a growing number of Israelis. The occupation of a third of Lebanon and the devastation of West Beirut has brought even more protests.

It is not likely now, therefore, that Begin will try to occupy West Beirut. PLO evacuation would make this unnecessary. But taking the shattered streets from the

tain, he would be a virtual client of Begin. In any case, Israeli forces will probably continue to occupy a "buffer zone" in Southern Lebanon, and Gemayel would be presiding over a state of continued, incipient civil war.

No peace while Palestine occupied

There will be no peace in the Middle East while Israel occupies the Palestinian homeland. In the coming months some of the Palestinians, out of desperation and despair, may well turn to terrorism internationally. The bombing of a Jewish restaurant in Paris, whoever is responsible, is an ominous warning.

But terrorism is no way out. The Palestinians must turn to the only forces on whom they can rely, the workers and exploited people of the occupied territories and the Arab lands.

If they linked national liberation to the demand for a socialist Federation of the Middle East, the Palestinians could win mass support from Arab workers, split Israeli workers from their reactionary Zionist rulers, and be sure of the solidarity of the international working class.

By Lynn Walsh

PLO would mean even heavier cost for Israel in money, arms, in casualties, and through the enormous drain on Israel's economy.

Begin is clearly hoping that in September, when Sarkis goes, he will be replaced as President by Bashir Gemayel, leader of the ultra-reactionary Maronite Christian 'Lebanese forces.

Gemayel welcomed the Israeli invasion and has thrown his own forces against the Lebanese Muslim militia. If he did emerge as President, which is not cer-



Above: Destruction caused by Israeli bombing in West Beirut
Below: Almost surreally, shopping at Harrods continues a mile away in East Beirut, where Israel's allies, the Christian forces rule



ORGANISE FOR 16 OCTOBER DEMO

The major political theme at last week's LPYS Summer Camp was: build the 16 October Demonstration called by the LPYS and YOPS Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC).

A series of seminars were organised and a Campaign Manual for YS Branches distributed. Now LPYS Branches should ensure that working class youth from all sections are on the march—unemployed, YOPS workers, FE students and trade union youth.

Coaches and trains should be organised now. It was

reported that the London LPYS has already booked a train to take 1,000 people to the march. If this example is followed by the other areas then the target of 15,000 should be easily met.

One seminar was organised to discuss how the commitment in Labour's Programme '82 for a minimum £20 a week grant for all 16-18 year olds in full time education could be used to build for the demonstration. A special leaflet geared to FE and School students is being produced which local LPYS Branches should use to organise meetings in the Techs and Schools.

To raise funds for this activity YS branches should appeal to local trade union

branches explaining the aims and importance of the march. It was reported how the Sheffield YS members had booked a Caravan in the Town Centre to advertise YTURC and had received a tremendous response, raising £60 in donations.

While building the LPYS was the major theme of the Camp, important debates and meetings were held in the Middle East, South Africa, Peace and Disarmament and Northern Ireland.

As last week's *Militant* reported despite numerous letters to individual MP's, phone calls etc no speaker could be found from the right-wing 'Labour Solidarity Campaign' to debate on 'Marxism and the Labour

Movement'. And for the 2nd year in succession, the 'Clause 4' grouping which leads the National Organisation of Labour Students were unable to provide a speaker to defend their views in a debate on 'Women and the Struggle for Socialism'.

But whilst others may be scared to put forward their ideas, the preparation laid at the Summer Camp to build the demonstration show the confidence of the LPYS: that our ideas can win thousands of youth to the fight for socialism.

By Nick Wrack

People's festival

The week Sunday 15th August to Saturday 21st August will be a big one for the labour movement in East Kilbride. August 1982 marks the 20th anniversary of the local trades council and to celebrate a week of rallies, meetings and demonstrations is being held.

It starts with a peace festival on the Sunday and on Monday afternoon the CND peace march, through Scotland, comes to East Kilbride. On Tuesday the LPYS is sponsoring a youth debate on unemployment at St Leonards Hall followed by a disco at the Bonnie Prince Charlie pub. Wednesday sees the film

Rosie the Riveter and the LPYS play *Thatcher on trial*.

On Thursday there is an open forum on public expenditure cuts and the week finishes on Saturday with a demonstration and rally against unemployment. This will be addressed by leading figures in the labour movement including Jimmy Airlie of the AUEW, Jimmy Livingstone the former convenor at Talbot, Linwood and Maurice Miller MP.

Further details or programme of events: contact Laurie Gardner, East Kilbride 41199, ext 3245.

By Bob Wylie
(East Kilbride LP)

BUILD FOR SEPTEMBER 11th

LABOUR MOVEMENT
CONFERENCE WEMBLEY
SEPTEMBER 11th 10.30am

Fight the Tories - not Socialists!

"The policy of our Union, based on the conference decision, is that we are opposed to witch-hunts within the party, which would help the Tories and SDP who are the real enemies.

"The September 11 Conference slogan sums it all up. This conference is important—to show the opposition of the labour movement to the witch-hunt; it will be a rally against expulsions."

Joe Marino the general secretary of the Bakers Union puts the position of his union clearly. Many similar statements have come into the office this week, despite the holidays! The Bakers Union however didn't just content themselves with a message of support, they also sponsored the conference.

Has your organisation appointed its delegates yet?

NUPE in Brighton are sending 5 delegates, the AUEW Reading District

Committee are sending a delegate. One delegate each are coming from Sevenoaks Labour Party and LPYS, 5 from the Temple Cowley Ward (Oxford City CLP), 5 from Walton LPYS and 2 from Fenham LP branch of Newcastle West CLP.

There is not enough space to include all the organisations that have phoned reports through of how many delegates have been appointed by various local organisations. Suffice to say that we have been told at least 15 coaches have been booked or planned from six areas of the country!

All sections of the labour movement, not just the activists, but the many fresh layers of workers coming into to activity, have heard or read of the *Militant*.

There have been literally hundreds of articles about the *Militant* up and down the country—not including the many letters that have appeared in *Labour Weekly*, or the television and radio appearances, no wonder Jim Callaghan on a recent radio programme was heard to say

that he's heard enough of the *Militant*.

The publicity the right wing sought in the past has rebounded on them. Well, the up to 3,000 delegates we're expecting at the conference will really make old Jim wish this witch-hunt had never started!

About 10 shop stewards who recently attended a TGWU school have asked to be sent the *Militant* regularly. Reports are coming in of plans to hold more factory gate meetings or lunchtime meetings in Leeds and Leicester—get one organised in your area!

All our experience is showing that wherever workers are approached to send delegates to the conference a more than favourable response is given. The register is not yet defeated, true, but neither is it yet won. The September 11 conference will marshal the forces so that it never is!

By Rob Sewell

CAPITALIST MISERY : SOCIALIST ANSWER

"Only a fool would try to suppress Marxism."

Those were the words of Michael Foot, spoken with unconscious irony at a recent public meeting in Birkenhead.

He then went on to "justify" a witch-hunt against *Militant*, to a stony silence from the audience of 400. In contrast, applause greeted a Young Socialist when he said, "We hear a lot about *Militant* 'violating' Clause 2, but the right wing have violated Clause 4 for decades."

Presumably, Foot imagined he was on safe ground in Birkenhead. After all, Birkenhead's MP, Frank Field, is a valiant and tireless crusader for the expulsion of what he mysteriously terms "the inner circle" or "hard-core" of *Militant* supporters. When pinned down, Field elaborated: those he wants to expel would be identified by selling the *Militant*!

Of course Frank is an expert on "Parties within a Party". He helped set one up last year with the aid of traitors who have since defected to the SDP; he was a founder member of the Labour Solidarity Organisation.

Having lost the argument

on policy (several times over), the right-wing in Birkenhead LP resort to a familiar attempt to dismiss *Militant* supporters as insignificant in numbers. One right-wing Councillor told the local press that Richard Venton, a local *Militant* supporter, "is very much a man alone in our Party."

None of us can recall such claims in April and May of 1979, when the same *Militant* supporters organised mass canvasses of Young Socialists for—Frank Field! But the unfortunate Councillor must be regretting his words since.

The same night that he publicly denounced *Militant* as a one-man outfit, he was given full speaking rights at a Birkenhead *Militant* Public Meeting, in the presence of 180 others! This was one of the biggest labour movement meetings in Birkenhead in recent years—and certainly the most enthusiastic.

And since then, members of Birkenhead CLP have given their reply to the witch-hunters. 3 out of 6 ward branches have opposed the Register and any expulsions. The GMC passed no less than seven separate resolutions against the witch-hunt and register, by margins of about 40 votes to 12.

The GMC also sponsored the September 11th Labour Movement Conference. And Richard Venton, "very much a man on his own in

the Party", was democratically elected as delegate to LP conference, standing against a right-wing EETPU official! This was despite the fact that most of the comrades who claim to be on the Tribune left of the party voted for the right-winger!

With 21% unemployment, 7,000 on the Housing waiting list, the future of Cammell Lairds' shipyard hanging in the balance, and horrific housing and social conditions for the mass of Birkenhead people, the Labour Party will continue to grow, will continue to move leftwards, and *Militant* will continue to grow in influence by open, honest explanation of our socialist answers to capitalist miseries.

Militant's support in Birkenhead may have been minimal 4 years ago, but the experiences of life have forced growing numbers to support *Militant's* socialist policies.

And no individual, however prominent, will succeed in suppressing Marxism. As Mr Foot put it, "only a fool would try to suppress Marxism!"

By Richard Venton

(Birkenhead Labour Party)



Sponsors include:

Wavertree CLP; Brighton Kempdown CLP; Bradford North CLP; Isle of Wight CLP; Coventry South East CLP; Bradford District LP; Bakery Food and Allied Workers Union Executive; Labour Party Young Socialists National Committee; TGWU Sussex District.

And in personal capacity: Tony Benn, Ray Buckton (ASLEF); Bob Wright (AUEW); Les Huckfield MP (NEC); Joan Maynard MP (Vice-Chair, Labour Party); Jo Richardson MP (NEC); Ernie Roberts MP; Ken Livingstone (GLC leader); Kevin Roddy (CPSA President); Rod Fitch (PPC, Brighton Kempdown); Terry Fields (FBU NEC & PPC Kirkdale); Derek Hatton (PPC, Wavertree); Tony Mulhearn (PPC, Toxteth); Dave Nellist (PPC, Coventry South East); Terry Harrison (PPC, Edge Hill); Cathy Wilson (PPC Isle of Wight).

Speakers will include: Ken Livingstone (Leader of the GLC); Les Huckfield MP; Pat Wall (PPC for Bradford North); Terry O'Neill (President of the Bakers Union and candidate for LP NEC); Peter Taaffe (Editor of *Militant*); and other leading figures from the labour movement.

Please send credentials for delegates (maximum 5 per organisation) on behalf of (name of organisation)

I enclose a cheque/PO for (£1 for each credential)

My organisation agrees to become a sponsor of the conference (tick if applicable)

We would like a speaker (tick if applicable)

Name

Address

Return to Labour Movement Conference, c/o 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



The Tolpuddle martyrs rally, 1982. "Dedication, energy and fervour" of *Militant* supporters appreciated.

In the last week Basildon CLP, despite the personal intervention of the regional organiser, passed a resolution opposing the Register.

We also received a copy of a petition against the Register and expulsion of *Militant* supporters signed by 25 out of 48 GLC Labour Councillors (including the leader and deputy leader).

We have also been notified that the following trade union bodies have passed resolutions against the witch-hunt; Sheffield USDAW, Sheffield Div.

Council ASTMS, AUEW Leicester 17, and the Suffolk Area Committee of the Agricultural Workers Trade group of the T&GWU.

CC Churchward Exeter CLP sent us a copy of a letter he'd sent to Michael Foot (plus £5 fighting fund donation) pledging his support against the witch-hunt, in which he said "...My first opportunity to observe those of the *Militant* tendency came when I attended the "Jobs" rally at Cardiff last year.

"I was impressed then, and again at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' event only a week or two ago, and marvel at the dedication, energy and fervour of these, mostly

young, comrades.

"I am implacably resolved to support them, to do what little I can to ensure that they shall not be driven out of the Labour Party—my Party, their Party, to which those who are presently conducting "the witch-hunt" have no moral right to belong.

"They it is who should be forced out—not socialists—or let them of their own volition emulate the others of little faith, the Roys and Davids and Shirleys."

By Mike Waddington

Photo: John Arthur

Police

'COUNTRYMAN' COVER-UP

Many senior London policemen could well be indifferent to this week's 10% pay rise. For years, it is alleged, they have been getting their main income by participating in organised crime.

The full-scale of the alleged corruption in London's police force has come cascading out in recent days, as the police officers sent in to clean up through 'Operation Countryman', have finally despaired of getting anywhere by normal channels, and instead given the results of their investigation to the media.

"Frankly Countryman was obstructed", Arthur Hambleton, former Chief Constable of Dorset and head of Countryman, told Granada TV's *World in Action*, on 2 August.

It is easy to see why there was such concern in the hierarchy of London's police. Originally Countryman, set up in August 1978 to investigate suspicious police behaviour over three robberies, had twenty-two

officers and expected to take about six months.

But such was the web of suspected corruption they unearthed, they had to bring in a further 70 officers and the use of a computer.

Within six months they had drawn up a list of allegations against some of London's leading detectives. Their list included 78 officers from the Met and 18 from the City of London force, including: 4 Commanders, 4 Chief Superintendents, 8 Superintendents, 5 Chief Inspectors and 6 Inspectors.

In a somewhat desperate attempt to re-assure the public this week, Scotland Yard have told us that at least no-one above the rank of Commander was on Countryman's list! Among the crimes involving the police were: conspiracy to murder, carrying out burglaries, drugs, collecting rewards and extorting money for bail.

Alf Sheppard, a middle man between a team of robbers and Chief Inspector Cuthbert and Sergeant Goldbourn explained: "If you looked at it sensibly, all you were doing was working for the police to give them a lion's share of what you were getting". The police set up robberies, kept other police away from the area and escorted the thieves away safely.

So far only Cuthbert and Goldbourn have been convicted as a result of Countryman, but Hambleton has stated that restrictions began to be imposed on Countryman in the summer of 1979.

The Tories, elected in May 1979, devoted a large part of their propaganda to the fight for law and order. But they seem to be quite selective in their definition of criminals. Former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, Alderson told *World in Action*: "I got the impression that Countryman was not popular with the Home Office."

In February 1980 the operating head of Countryman was transferred, and by the summer its brief had once more been restricted to the original three robberies and was down to a staff of

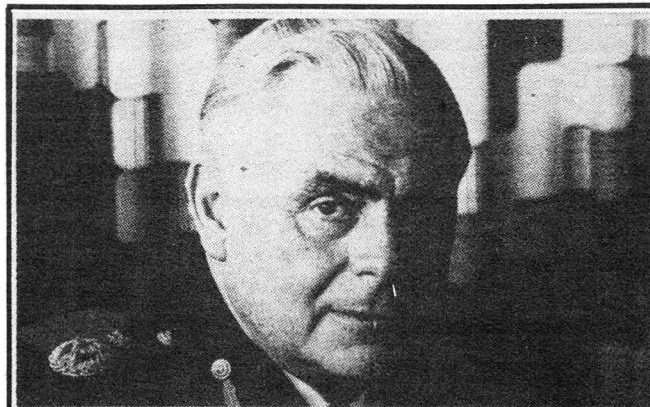
only nine officers. The 80 inquiries under way and the 107 complaints about police corruption were handed over to Scotland Yard's Complaints Bureau and seem to have made little progress since.

A number of officers have quietly been asked to leave the police and have probably gone on unblemished to work for private security firms or other work, where their knowledge of gangs would prove productive.

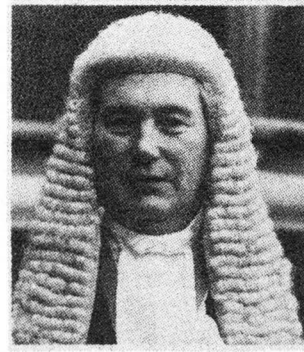
Despite the current media publicity, the Tories show all the signs of wanting to sweep the matter under the carpet. They talk of establishing a small anti-corruption unit, staffed by police, within the existing Police Complaints board. Attorney-General Havers has said that he has looked at the allegations about a cover-up with the greatest of care, and there is no truth in that suggestion.

But Countryman is not the first investigation into the London police force to run into difficulties. In 1969-70 Frank Williamson, then Inspector of Constabulary, resigned in frustration after ten months in which documents went missing and there was a lack of co-operation.

He told the *Guardian*, 4



Above: Arthur Hambleton, former head of 'Countryman'. Right: Sir Thomas Hetherington, Director of Public Prosecutions.



August 1982, that there were only three types of officers at Scotland Yard: those who are corrupt and cover it up, those who are clean and cover up the corruption, and those who are too stupid to realise that corruption is there.

Again in 1972, a three-man squad from Thames Valley police produced a 400-page report on corruption at the Yard, naming 30 officers; no charges were brought. In 1976 a 1,600 page report from the Chief Constable of Kent resulted in just two resignations.

Yet although the Met, being the country's largest police force, has received most attention, the same situation applies elsewhere. As part of their defence, Scotland Yard this week let it slip that they were investigating two other police forces for corruption over

thefts from lorries. Chief Inspector Cuthbert told Countryman that corruption went "right to the top of the tree. It's happened in the Met. It's happened in all the counties. It has happened for years and years." (*Guardian*, 21 July).

Currently the police are virtually a law unto themselves, and all the other forces of the bosses' state move in to help cover their tracks. It is essential that control of the police is taken away from those secret conclaves.

The latest allegations make the socialist demand for democratic control of the police even more urgent. For without democratic accountability, power exercised secretly inevitably leads to corruption.

By Colin Barber

Merseyside Liberals fan the flames

Once again Liverpool is under a microscope. Now the big news stories have passed the gutter press have blown up out of all proportion small isolated events.

"Riots flare in Liverpool" was one banner headline in the *Daily Star*. All it amounted to was a group of young kids throwing stones at the police.

Recent events have been seized on by "Sir" Trevor Jones to throw up a smoke screen around his anti-working class policies. His latest attack is the privatisation of the market's cleansing force as a prelude to the attempt of privatising all cleansing.

So reactionary are the Liberals that even Reg Flude, the Tory leader, admits that their eight-year coalition is under threat. He feels that the Liberals are moving away from the Tories and becoming too right-wing!

Initially Jones seized on the egg-throwing incidents with Michael Heseltine, the so-called minister for Merseyside. Parents angry at the threatened closure of

By Richard Knights

Croxtheth Comprehensive had finally managed to see 'Goldilocks' Heseltine. When Heseltine emerged from the talks the anger of the parents boiled over.

However the egg-throwing incident was stage-managed by three photographers from national daily papers. The Parents Action Committee are apparently raising the matter with the Press Council. Trevor Jones then had the audacity to say that these events were driving industry away from Merseyside!

The fire in Myrtle, Toxteth has given the press another field day. Myrtle Gardens has been emptied of its tenants and is currently being redeveloped in a £4 million programme by Barrats.

They are turning the slums into luxury flats. Luxury private flats in the squalor of Toxteth is a sick joke as far as local people are concerned.

Once again Trevor Jones hit the headlines claiming it was all a plot and that he had knowledge of a so-called fire hit-list. The ravings of Jones



Croxtheth Estate School, Liverpool. Photo: Phil Rowe.

have been condemned by the local Fire Brigades Union (FBU), who feel that, if there was only so-called hit-list, they should have been the first to know and not the

'Fire hit-list' shown to press, not FBU

press. The FBU have also expressed concern at the stoning of fireman by some of the youth of Toxteth, and have called on the local com-

munity to protect firemen who are only acting to save lives.

Finally, the disturbances in Everton have given our intrepid council leader another chance to titillate the Fleet Street hacks. A few dozen youth have been stoning the police so Trevor Jones has in a "non-political" statement called for the Merseyside police chairman to resign. Apparently the source of the riots are "political elements attempting to bring the city to a standstill".

But the real culprits are the Liberals and the Tories. If there are any resignations

to be made on Merseyside it should be Jones and Heseltine.

Rioting no answer

Why all the problems? Even the local police federation chairman, Fred Jones, admitted "we don't know why they do it, it could be boredom, unemployment". The Labour Party must ensure that the anger of the youth is turned constructively against the system and the Tories and Liberals who prop it up.

MILITANT PAMPHLET

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The attacks against 'Militant' rarely mention our policies. Find out what the media and right wing are so scared of. Only 30p (post free) from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

NICARAGUA Big reforms in health care

The appalling brutality of the military regimes in Latin America is well documented, with tens of thousands butchered every year. There is, however, another form of murder taking place—that of denying medical care and public health facilities to millions of the poor.

The latest issue of *New England Journal of Medicine* carries a special report documenting the dramatic improvements in Nicaragua since the 1979 revolution overthrew the US-backed gangster regime of Somoza.

Prior to Somoza's downfall, conditions were appalling, possibly the worst in Central America. 35% of town-dwellers and 95% of the rural population lacked safe drinking water. Possibly as many as 83% of children suffered malnutrition, up to 45% severely.

A third of the population contracted malaria at least once in their lives. Tuberculosis and parasitism were endemic. Infant mortality was as high as 140 per thousand (Panama, a near neighbour and by no means a developed country, has a rate of 30 per thousand).

Most of the child-killing diseases could have been controlled by basic public health measures. But 90% of medical services were devoted to only 10% of the population, only 8% of the people were covered by the state medical scheme, with a further 20% catered for by special poverty schemes.

Reagan has limited US aid to private institutions

Since July 1979 remarkable improvements have been achieved. 70% of the population now have regular medical care. Health campaigns, enlisting the general public, have been mounted to vaccinate children, teach basic health measures, remove environmental hazards, including mosquito breeding sites, etc.

Literacy campaigns have been coupled with health education. Health posts have been set up in rural areas, permanently staffed by nursing aides and visited by doctors weekly. Special centres to tackle the deadly scourge of infantile diarrhoea treated 92,000 children in the first 21 months.

More than 10,000 homes have been provided with sanitation for the first time, and 24,000 new latrines are built per year. Illiteracy has been reduced from 52% to 12% of the population.

In three years of revolution more has been achieved in social welfare than in 50 years of Somoza family dictatorship. This has not come easily, however. The recent severe earthquakes and floods will seriously test the measures against Malaria and Dengue fever.

Far more menacing is the attitude of US imperialism. Reagan has stopped US aid, which is now limited to private institutions. In addition, foreign drug and medical supply companies are demanding payment in advance as well as repayment of the enormous debts run up by Somoza.

Cuba and Mexico provide for some of Nicaragua's needs, assisted by a number of European governments (not Thatcher, of course). However, the 300% increase in national resources devoted to health must be threatened by Reagan's increasing attempts to bring about the overthrow of the Sandinista government.

Terrorism by former national guard elements and incursions from neighbouring US puppet regimes are growing, and the USA is trying to isolate Nicaragua internationally.

Nevertheless, the efforts of the imperialists will ultimately fail. The people of Nicaragua have no interest in returning to the horrors of another Somoza.

The colonial revolution is advancing, even in America's own backyard. The bloody civil war in El Salvador goes on, and the strong-arm government of Guatemala is becoming increasingly shaky.

Nicaragua has overthrown landlordism but has not yet proceeded all the way towards eliminating capitalism. Major parts of the economy remain in private hands.

In the coming period the Sandinista government will be under pressure to bring the whole of the economy under state ownership and control, though all the signs are that these changes will be carried out from above without the initiative passing into the hands of the workers and peasants.

But the example of the guerillas' victory in Nicaragua, and the improvements that have been achieved, will encourage the poor and oppressed in other countries. This explains US hostility to Nicaragua, and even tiny Grenada.

How much more could be won if the drive for a new society were led by the working class of Nicaragua, fighting on a socialist programme, and appealing to their brothers and sisters in the rest of Central America, Mexico, and the USA itself!

Article by Mike Kennard (Maidstone SOGAT) based on "Special report—developments in health care in Nicaragua"; Halperin DC and Garfield R., *New England Journal of Medicine*, 5th August, 1982. Vol 307 No 6 pp 388—392.



A mother and children fetch water in the part of Managua destroyed by the 1972 earthquake. The tall building in the background is the new Banco de America

Photo: Jenny Matthews

BANGLADESH New drugs policy

An immediate ban on 237 largely 'harmful' medicines, and the removal of another 1,500 'unnecessary' drugs by the end of 1982, was announced by the Bangladesh government in June.

A committee of experts drew up the policy and list of drugs to be banned. Combination antibiotics, combination analgesics, multivitamin preparations, many tonics, cough mixtures and lozenges, products with a high alcohol content, anabolic steroids, and products containing strychnine, clioquinol or codine have been targeted for removal.

The new policy is expected to save over £2 million a year in foreign exchange, and will allow the government and health workers to concentrate on providing the most essential drugs to a larger sector of the population.

Professor Nurul Islam, chairperson of the expert committee, noted that it would also help to improve health care: "Nobody will die because of want of

medicines in the country if we stick to only 250 essential drugs, including 100 life-saving medicines," he said.

Less happy with the new policy were the multinational drug companies. By the end of June, sources in Bangladesh indicated that some of the major companies were threatening to totally withdraw all production facilities in the country, including those for essential drugs.

The market for drugs in Bangladesh is estimated at more than £35 million annually. Although there are at least 176 companies involved in production and marketing of drugs, more than 80% of the Bangladesh market is controlled by just 8 multinational companies: Fisons, Glaxo, ICI, May & Baker, Pfizer, Hoechst, Squibb and Organon.

Local Bangladesh companies were more enthusiastic about the policy, partly because it encourages local production of essential drugs. Health Advisor Major General Shamsul Huq said that local companies had extended "overwhelming support" for the policy.

The Bangladesh government intends to prioritise the necessary facilities for local

industries to achieve self-sufficiency in the manufacture of essential drugs. Existing licensing agreements have come under review, and if products are produced by local manufacturers, multinational firms will not be allowed to import similar drugs.

War on Want and two other UK-based development agencies, Christian Aid and Oxfam, have for many years supported a health care programme, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK—the People's Health Centre), in Bangladesh. Recently GK established a limited company, Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals Limited (GPL), which in 1981 began production with two of the most essential drugs for primary health care—ampicillin and paracetamol. By 1982 they were able to produce a further six drugs.

GPL is wholly owned by the GK Charitable Trust. It limits its profits to 10-15% above cost, and according to its charter, reinvests half its profits to improve the factory, spending the other half of the profits on medical research, including investigating the therapeutic properties of locally available herbs.

Production of essential drugs by GPL has forced the multinationals to dramatically slash their prices. The net result of the fierce competition has meant cheaper drugs for the Bangladesh government. Without strong competition from local manufacturers, the multinationals will be back to a situation where they can set the prices.

The new drugs policy goes some way towards strengthening the local industry but still leaves many questions unanswered. The power of the large drug manufacturers rests upon their ability to sell particular brands rather than the cheaper generic drugs, and upon the widespread belief, supported by heavy promotion, that there is a prescription to cure every ill.

By Andy Chetley

(International Health Campaigner for War on Want)

We welcome further contributions on the struggle to solve the problems of health care in the Third World.



Bangladesh has been a paradise for the drugs multinationals. Drug control laws are not enforced. Pharmacists, many of them untrained and unlicensed, prescribe their own wares—no doctors prescription is needed.



1842: THE FORGOTTEN GENERAL

The 1842 General Strike was a landmark in the history of the British working class.

For the first time, the workers engaged in mass political action separately from other classes. At its peak, the strike involved over 50% of all the country's industrial workers—about 500,000 in all.

With its heart in Lancashire (the then industrial centre of Britain) it stretched from Scotland to South Wales and down to Cornwall.

Strikers organised food for those on strike, gave production permits to manufacturers, and stopped a troop train on its way to crush the strike. They even (over a hundred years before the miners of 1972) organised 'the flying picket', by marching on the factories and getting the workers out.

The 1842 General Strike has been largely buried away in the history books, away from the prying eyes of workers today, keen to learn from the lessons of past class struggles. The ruling class have been right in their concern, for the experience of those workers is a rich backcloth to set off today's struggles.

The strike was probably the largest industrial action anywhere in the world in the nineteenth century. It lasted over twice as long as the 1926 British General Strike, and unlike that strike did not end in unmitigated defeat.

Although it broke out over a proposal to cut wages, this was merely the last straw for many workers. What gave the strike its driving force was the Chartist demand for one man, one vote.

The British ruling class was then totally incapable of granting this right, as it

By Jim Chrystie

would have had revolutionary consequences. Over the next seventy years they conceded it bit by bit, on their own terms, whilst they encouraged the rise within the labour movement of leaders who did not threaten their rule.

But the opposition of the ruling class can be gauged by the fact that Britain did not have full adult suffrage until 1928.

Britain was one of the last major countries to achieve it as France, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Finland,

Why Britain last to get vote

Sweden, Denmark and Russia all gave the vote to its citizens before Britain. This was not (with the exception of revolutionary Russia) because of the democratic beliefs of the rulers of those countries, but because they did not have to face the danger of a mass working class; they were all rural countries.

But Britain in the nineteenth century was different; it did not have just a working class, but one which was asserting its rights in a vigorous fashion. The fears of the ruling class to the demands for one man one vote were explained by Lord Chief Justice Baron Abinger, presiding at one of the trials after the 1842 strike:

'A popular assembly, devoted to democratic principles and elected by persons, a vast majority of whom have no property, and depend on manual labour...the first thing such an assembly would do would be to aim at the destruction of property and the putting down of the monarchy.'

He was right, as the strike of 1842 and its aftermath showed. The 1842 strike did not spring out of thin air. In 1818 there had been a strike of 250,000 Lancashire mill workers.

It was not demoralised wage slaves who conducted the 1842 General Strike but proud, intelligent workmen.

Alexander Hutchinson, who was to play a prominent role in the strike, chairing the Manchester Trades Conference, had in February 1841 brought together in one union: millwrights, engineers, iron moulders, smiths, and mechanics, paving the way for the future Engineering Union of today.

The class consciousness of workers had been moulded by their experience of the first industrial revolution. Engels described a Northern industrial town looking as if an army had returned from war—there were so many mutilations and loss of limbs. But in this class war, workers were able to forge bonds of unity as the logic of capitalism pushed them into larger and larger units of production. By 1841, 93% of Manchester's 40,000 cotton workforce were in factories employing a hundred or more workers.

Yet the recession of the same year was taking its toll, driving down wages and pushing up unemployment. In Ashton, for example, 90% of the workforce was in large factories, but 50% were on short time or unemployed. This combination of potential workers strength and bosses attack on living standards was to prove combustible.

Workers in the mid nineteenth century had formidable organisational problems. Trade unions had only recently been allowed. Even in 1834 agricultural trade unionists at Tolpuddle had been deported.

Crucially they had no national leadership, but activists saw the need for a central and local leadership to conduct disputes. To help overcome the fragmentation of workers, Trades Conferences were called. These brought together workers

from different trades for a specific meeting to discuss how to aid a particular dispute. The Manchester Trades Conference was to play an important role in the 1842 strike.

In the absence of a national workers' party, the only national body in which working class militants were involved, was the Chartist movement. Nationally this body included workers, middle class radicals and small businessmen not given the vote by the 1832 Reform Act.

But in the North—West its strength was industrial workers. And it was participation in the strike by local Chartist activists and the support they gained from

speakers addressed nine public meetings, making 44 speeches in all. They linked the struggle against the wage cuts, with the battle for the transition to a democratic society, and rounded off the demands with the call for the immediate implementation of the People's Charter.

The clear political nature of the strike can be seen by the decision of local strike Committees to title themselves, after the French Revolutionaries, 'Committees of Public Safety'. Machinery was safeguarded, and looting was strictly forbidden. With discipline, speed and a clear political orientation, the strike spread like wild fire through South—East Lancashire.

strategy. At 9 o'clock, 14,000 strong, they marched on the mills and despite attacks by the bosses, by 2pm every mill was closed in Stalybridge, Ashton and Dunkenfield. By now the strikers numbered over 40,000 and, dividing their forces, they marched on Oldham and Hyde. These were 'flying pickets', in their most effective form, before the days of mass public transport or communication.

The following day a further 14,000 assembled in Ashton and marched on Manchester. There was a mass 'turn—out' of the Manchester factories and within a few days all work had stopped in Manchester and a 50—mile surrounding

It lasted over twice as long as the more famous 1926 General Strike, involved workers from Scotland to Cornwall and aimed to win political power for workers

the National Charter Association, which happened to meet in Manchester during the height of the strike, which transformed the struggle from a wages struggle, to one of a national battle for political rights.

The strike itself began on 26 July, when mill owners in the Stalybridge—Ashton area gave notice of a 25% wage cut. Meetings of between 8,000 to 10,000 were

All demands linked to Charter

held in protest. Chartist speakers linked the fight for a fair day's wage with the demand for economic and political rights.

The importance of having local leaders, rooted in the workforce, and not coming in as outsiders, can be seen by the prominent role played by local Chartist activists in helping consolidate and spread the strike. From 26 July till 7 August, 15

On the 8th of August some of the threads were drawn together, and a new stage begun, with two mass meetings at Mottram Moor, historic meeting place of the Chartists. Preparations were now under way to try to turn the strike into a 'Great National Turn—Out', or as we would say now, a General Strike.

The chairman began those meetings by saying, 'Not here for a wages question. It is a national question.' Resolutions were passed for fair wages and the Charter and it was announced that a General Strike would begin the following day.

What happened after is a testimony to the power, determination and class strength of the industrial working class. It is a million light years away from those now at the top of the trade union movement, who run away at the first hint of opposition from the bosses.

By 5am the next day 2,000 workers had assembled at Stalybridge to discuss

area, unless the strikers allowed it.

The strike now spread into Cheshire and Yorkshire. When troops were sent to the area, Ashton workers seized a railway station and prevented their passage. To draw the strike together, a Trades Conference was called in Manchester. On 12 August 358 delegates were given credentials.

This was a highly—organised conference, democratic and disciplined. A three—man Credentials Committee was established, to ensure that only those elected by mass meetings of workers attend. Maximum time for speeches was strictly limited to ten minutes, allowing plenty of time for resolutions, amendments etc.

In the following two days of debate the representatives of the 85 trades present discussed how to achieve the Charter, how to feed the strikers, how to win over the middle class and shopkeepers. When put to the



Left: Contemporary illustrations from 1842, 'Illustrated London News.' (Far left): Military attack at Preston, killing 4 strikers. (Middle): Mass meeting at Wilson's Mill, Lancashire.

Right: Posters from the strike.

(Top): Government offers £50 reward for conviction of leaders.

(Middle): Trade Unionists call meeting for shopkeepers on how they could help.

(Bottom): Chartists send out national call for support.

AL STRIKE

humanitarian reasons. It was the strength and depth of organisation on a local scale that made the 1842 strike so hard to defeat. Thousands of workers were involved in organising bills of credit, collecting money, printing posters, organising meetings etc.

But local initiative was sadly not enough. It required a determined national leadership, which was prepared for the attacks of the ruling class and was organised to stop them.

Drawing on workers' subsequent experience, Marxists have explained that an unlimited General Strike cannot just drift along. It either has to move to ending the rule of the bosses, or it will end in one kind of defeat. In this sense a general strike is a fight to the finish. It is essential that the workers movement is fully mobilised, with a leadership fully aware of the kind of battle they have embarked upon.

The tragedy of the 1842 strike was the absence of such a national leadership—in fact of any kind of national leadership at all. The delegates at the Trades Conference had dispersed to report back to their areas, and the executive committee had been rounded up. And after proclaiming its instructions to its members, the National Chartist Association had packed up shop and gone home.

The ruling class had a skeleton national organisation, but it was sufficient to defeat the strike. Nevertheless it took seven weeks to crush from beginning to end, and when troops opened fire (as they did at Halifax, Skipton, Newcastle—under—Lyne), there was considerable discontent amongst those state forces closest to the civilian population: i.e. police, special constables.

In the absence of a national leadership able to mobilise united opposition to the power of the bosses' state, local issues began to dominate in the closing stages of the strike. Individual areas went back to work during September.

But unlike the aftermath of the 1926 General Strike, when the national leadership betrayed the workers and ensured the victimisation of union activists, the workers returned confident in their own organisations. In most areas the bosses withdrew the demand for a wage cut, and in Bolton and Oldham, the local strike Committee even managed to negotiate a wage rise as the price of returning to work.

The ruling class had been badly shaken by the strike.

In their initial fury, they handed out vicious transportation and jail sentences to some strikers.

When this stirred up opposition, they moderated their approach, and tried to pretend that the dispute had only been about economic questions, and the workers

No national leadership able to take on bosses' state

had been misled by a few agitators. Just like today when the Tory press tries to convey the impression that everything would be fine if it was not for a 'handful of Marxist agitators'.

It is partly for these reasons that the ruling class and their academic scribes have helped perpetuate the myth that political struggle is somehow alien to the British working class movement. They hope in this way to cut the links, which bind the workers in struggle today for those who fought in the past. But for Marxists, history is a means to understand the lessons of the past, so that we do not have to repeat the mistakes today. After the 1842 strike, and other battles of that decade, workers adopted the Socialist Charter, and the Chartist movement became a more thorough working class movement.

They took their demands from their own struggles and those of other workers, which were formulated by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto. The tasks of socialists is to retie this knot of history. It is to bring into existence what Harney, a Chartist leader of the 1840's, described:

'The proletarians will adopt the revolution, the dying legacy of the bourgeoisie with all their strength they will seize upon the revolution and make it permanent, until mankind has struck into new paths, in which it will find and acquire speedily the desired end—universal liberty and happiness'.

Much of the material for this article is taken from Mick Jenkins excellent book: 'The General Strike of 1842', price £5.00 (incl p&p) from 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BY THE QUEEN. A Proclamation.

VICTORIA R. WHEREAS.

In divers parts of Great Britain great Multitudes of lawless and disorderly Persons have lately assembled themselves together in a riotous and tumultuous manner, and have, with Force and Violence, entered into certain Mines, Mills, Manufactories, and other Places, and have, by Threats and Intimidation, prevented our good Subjects therein employed from following their usual occupations and earning their Livelihood: We, therefore, being duly sensible of the MISCHIEVOUS CONSEQUENCES which must inevitably ensue, as well to the Peace of the Kingdom as to the Lives and Properties of our Subjects, from such wicked and illegal practices if they go unpunished, and being firmly resolved to cause the laws to be put in execution for the PUNISHMENT OF SUCH OFFENDERS, have thought fit by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this Proclamation, hereby strictly commanding all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Under Sheriffs and all other Civil Officers whatsoever within the said Kingdom, that they do use their utmost endeavours to discover, apprehend, and bring to Justice, the Persons concerned in the riotous proceedings above mentioned: And, as a further inducement to discover the said offenders, We do hereby promise and declare, that any person or persons who shall DISCOVER AND APPREHEND, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, the authors, abettors, or perpetrators, of any of the outrages above mentioned, so that they or any of them may be duly convicted thereof, shall be entitled to the Sum of FIFTY POUNDS, for each and every person who shall be so convicted, and shall also receive our most gracious pardon for the said offence in case the person making such discovery as aforesaid shall be liable to be prosecuted for the same.

Given at our Court at Windsor, this Thirteenth Day of August, in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, and in the sixth year of our reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

PRINTED BY JAMES CHAMBERS, BUCKINGHAM-STREET, BATHING

TO THE SHOP-KEEPERS OF MANCHESTER AND ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE SHOP-KEEPERS OF MANCHESTER AND ITS VICINITY, will be held in the Carpenters' Hall ON FRIDAY, AUG. 19, AT TWO O'CLOCK.

To ascertain how far they are prepared to meet the Working Classes in carrying out the Revolution of the Delegates elected by the Trades of Manchester and the Surrounding Districts.

By Order of the Delegates in Public Meeting Assembled. ALEXANDER H. TCHING, Chairman. ROBERT WILD, Secretary.

James, Printers, 10th Floor, 10th Street, Manchester.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL CHARTIST ASSOCIATION.

TO THE PEOPLE IN BROTHER CHARTISTS,

The Great Political Tragedy which has been witnessed during the last half century, have at length revealed the degraded and isolated White Man of England, in a corner of their duty to themselves, their children, and their country. Tens of Thousands have sunk down their heads in despair, and have been unable to see their way out of their present misery. We, therefore, being duly sensible of the MISCHIEVOUS CONSEQUENCES which must inevitably ensue, as well to the Peace of the Kingdom as to the Lives and Properties of our Subjects, from such wicked and illegal practices if they go unpunished, and being firmly resolved to cause the laws to be put in execution for the PUNISHMENT OF SUCH OFFENDERS, have thought fit by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this Proclamation, hereby strictly commanding all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Under Sheriffs and all other Civil Officers whatsoever within the said Kingdom, that they do use their utmost endeavours to discover, apprehend, and bring to Justice, the Persons concerned in the riotous proceedings above mentioned: And, as a further inducement to discover the said offenders, We do hereby promise and declare, that any person or persons who shall DISCOVER AND APPREHEND, or cause to be discovered and apprehended, the authors, abettors, or perpetrators, of any of the outrages above mentioned, so that they or any of them may be duly convicted thereof, shall be entitled to the Sum of FIFTY POUNDS, for each and every person who shall be so convicted, and shall also receive our most gracious pardon for the said offence in case the person making such discovery as aforesaid shall be liable to be prosecuted for the same.

PRINTED BY JAMES CHAMBERS, BUCKINGHAM-STREET, BATHING

FOR A FIGHTING NEC

We are standing for election to the NEC and are seeking the support of your CLP.

We stand in support of socialist policies; to reaffirm the right of CLPs to select the candidates of their choice; and in total opposition to a witch-hunt in the Labour Party.

The need for a mass socialist Labour Party has never been greater. The lives of millions of workers and their families have been blighted by mass unemployment and a calamitous fall in living standards. Now the Tories are sharpening their knives for an assault on the trade unions.

We stand for a concerted campaign around socialist policies to force an election and drive the Tories from office.

However, rather than conduct such a campaign against our enemies, the right wing of the Party seem intent on a witch-hunt against the Left, particularly the supporters of *Militant*.

This would have disastrous consequences for Labour. It would split the party wide apart, wrecking any hopes for a united struggle around socialist policies—the only way to defeat the Tories and their Liberal/SDP shadows.

We believe that the resolutions passed at Annual Conference must be translated into reality. A 35-hour week with no reduction in pay; a guaranteed minimum wage; a massive increase in spending on health, housing and education—these must be the demands of a determined struggle by the whole labour movement. However, we must learn the lessons of previous Labour governments which attempted to introduce reforms whilst remaining within the

confines of a decaying capitalist system.

At the insistence of those who really run society—the banks, the CBI and the monopolies—the reforms promised were abandoned.

To avoid the same pitfalls a future Labour government must break the grip of these parasites. That is why Clause IV part IV of our party constitution has immediate importance.

Only by taking over the 'commanding heights' of the economy, facilitating the drawing up of a socialist plan of production, will it be possible to implement and maintain such radical reforms.

We believe that the right of CLPs to select parliamentary candidates of their choice must be defended. There can be no 'second class' members of our party.

We firmly believe that the attack launched against the supporters of *Militant* is just the first strike in a campaign against the whole left. It won't stop at that. Many on the right want to undo all the gains of recent years allowing greater democracy within the Labour Party. They would like to jettison the radical policies adopted by Annual Conference.

To defend these gains and fight any attempted witch-hunt, it is essential that NEC members who stand for building a fighting socialist Labour Party are elected.

It is with this view that we appeal for the support of all Constituency Labour Parties in the elections to the NEC.

PAT WALL
(ShIPLEY CLP)
RAY APPS
(KEMPTOWN CLP)



Pat Wall



Ray Apps

Now more than ever the Labour Party needs a fighting NEC to campaign consistently for socialist policies and the defeat of the Thatcher government. Above all we need rank and file class fighters on the Executive that will not endorse or buckle to a witch-hunt. Unfortunately there have been some elected on a 'left ticket' in the past who have broken their mandate and supported a witch-hunt. Therefore we urge delegates to vote for PAT WALL and RAY APPS, who have proved over the years their consistency in the struggle for party democracy and socialism.

★ For a mass, democratic, socialist Labour Party to defeat the Tories!

★ For rank and file representation on the NEC!

★ For the right of CLP's to select the candidate of their choice!

★ Defeat the witch-hunt!



Shirley Williams and friend at 1979 Labour Party conference. Photo: Militant

A friend in need...

Dear comrades,

We already know what the right wing in the Labour Party think of their former colleagues now in the SDP. Alan Williams MP for Swansea West for example has made no secret of his high regard for Shirley Williams. Delegates to Swansea Labour Association have been told more than once what a loss to the party she was.

But what is the attitude of the SDP traitors to the Labour right wing? Perhaps the following quote from the South Wales *Evening Post* can shed some light on this question.

"He has had to fight like hell to hold his seat against a wholly unreasonable set of attacks upon him. I know he cares for the people and is a dedicated Member of Parliament". That was Shirley Williams speaking at a recent meeting in the Swansea area.

The unreasonable set of attacks refers to the reselection process in Swansea West in which *Militant* supporter Alec Thraves stood against Alan Williams. Indeed the sitting MP did "fight like hell". The fight included a threat to stand as an independent and a call to close down Swansea LPYS.

Never mind though, it's nice to know who your friends are in times of trouble.

Fraternally
Dave Warren
Swansea LPYS

More democracy in the unions

Dear comrades,

As an ordinary member of the Labour Party and a trade unionist, I agree with all the

views your paper stands for. But do not only attack the right of the Labour Party.

Let us get down to attacking the masters of the right, who are the General and Regional secretaries of the trade union movement—Chapple, Duffy, Weighell, Basnett, Murray and a few more. These are the people who pull the strings for the puppets of the right.

Let your paper start a campaign that General Secretaries be put up for elections every five years and that Regional secretaries be put up for the same every three years.

Yours
J Griffiths
Liverpool

When Foot opposed expulsions

Dear comrades,

While looking through old copies of *Militant* I came across an interesting article in the issue of 25th January 1980 (No 487) entitled "Ebbw Vale: Labour Party opposes attacks on *Militant*." It read as follows:

"Michael Foot, commenting on the discussion, agreed that no witch-hunt should evolve. He said that some of the *Militant* supporters in the local LPYS played a valuable role during the General Election.

He went on to say: "If I tried to produce a document to expel Mike Markey from this party then this GMC will probably think I've gone mad." He said the party should be tolerant towards those with different points of view."

Is this the same Michael Foot who now calls for *Militant's* expulsion as a "pestilential nuisance?"

Yours fraternally
George Knell
Huddersfield West CLP



VIEW? COMMENT? EXPERIENCE? CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Don't leave the bosses in command

Dear Comrades

I was quite dismayed by the recent Labour Party NEC decision not to take into public ownership the four major clearing banks if and when elected. It seems logical and obvious to me that to begin a socialist society we must control the commanding heights of the economy and thus have a bias in favour of people instead of profit.

The private sector's only interest is profit and would as always work against us. We should learn from France's mistake. They have not taken enough into public ownership. They have left capitalism in France with too much power and are now having to renege on their election promises.

With a democratically planned socialist economy we can begin to reconstruct Britain. We will be able to advance working people, improve housing, education and welfare as well as fighting unemployment and racialism, in short, start to build a socialist society.

We will no longer be dependent on arms sales (the

most profitable industry on the planet?). In fact we will be able to stop the export of arms altogether. We will also be able to choose who we trade with and who we do not, ie. South Africa.

By taking into democratic control the commanding heights of the economy, including the banks and land we will have the power base and flexibility on which to build a socialist Britain. I hope annual conference reverses the right wing dominated NEC's fudging.

Yours fraternally
Barry Ewart
Leeds

Hope and glory for the workers

Dear Militant

As a now respectable, even quite snobbish, 'Old Aged Militant,' I try a bit of canvassing among fellow-olies. Like me, some have grown as stubborn as mules. One I bumped into recently kept repeating flatly that young Militants were 'unpatriotic'.

I argued that four generations were brain-washed into believing that because we

loved our country we should be proud and loyal defenders of the bosses' Empire! I said that since we grew up we have had a little time (half a century) to see through that one: shouldn't we now support a different kind of 'patriotism'?

We could still sing 'Land of hope and glory' to the same fine tune, but surely not to the same words. I offered him:

Land of hope and glory, meant for you and me
Britain shan't stay Tory, we will set her free
Fatter still and fatter, though their profits grow
We are taking over, time for them to go.

Land of hope and glory, meant for me and you
Don't believe their story, just watch what they do
Don't vote in the yes men, stand up and say no
We are taking over, time for them to go.

Any offer for a third verse? You still have fury, gory and hoary, all easily associated with Conservative governments.

Fraternally
Joe Soap
(name and address supplied)

No to the register

Dear comrades,

I have been asked by Keighley LPYS branch to give you the following message of support following the recent enquiry into *Militant* and the NEC decision to bring back the proscribed list.

Although there are no *Militant* supporters in Keighley LPYS we would like to state that we believe in free speech and democratic debate within the Labour Party. We support your right to exist and air your views through the *Militant* newspaper.

We congratulate *Militant's* attempts to defend the LPYS and individual members against witch-hunts and believe that the Party's leadership would achieve better results by fighting the real enemy, the Tories and SDP, instead of attacking opinions which they happen to disagree with. Everyone's efforts must be turned towards one thing, the fight to secure socialism.

Yours fraternally
Alan Bainbridge
Secretary, Keighley LPYS

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Oct 9th.
Eastern	405		2,000
East Midlands	232		1,800
Hants & Dorset	305		1,300
Humberside	154		1,100
London East	260		2,100
London West	156		1,000
London South	622		1,500
Manchester & Lancs	406		2,000
Merseyside	473		2,100
Northern	210		2,500
Scotland East	136		1,300
Scotland West	104		2,300
Southern	259		1,700
South West	72		900
Wales East	97		1,000
Wales West	84		2,000
West Midlands	315		2,000
Yorkshire	381		2,500
Others	982		3,900
Total received	5653		35,000

Give us a holiday bonus

The SDP/Liberal Alliance is said to have lost half its support compared with last year. This has no doubt panicked many of those who saw that party as the gateway to a quick career.

Since they always said the SDP was a 'grass-roots movement,' owing nothing to the media, they've got some explaining to do. Militant, unlike the SDP has never had a good press from the Fleet Street bosses, but our support is growing steadily.

By Steve Cawley

We have to put over our ideas at meetings up and down the country, and of course make our own appeal to readers for political and financial support.

Thanks this week to readers at meetings in Norwich (£59), Leeds, Hull (£27), Greenwich, Neath (£24), Stevenage (£61), Watford (£74), Harlow (£24), Peterborough (£31), Southwark (£67), Stoke-on-Trent (£40), and West Bromwich (£22), the last-named being a meeting organised by the local LPYS.

Many of our readers were at the LPYS Camp at Coleford, and contributed to the collection there of £740. But many others we feel sure will want to give us a 'holiday bonus' this month. Thanks to supporters from the CPSA DHSS section EC for £45, members of St Pancras North CLP, and Tunbridge Wells Womens' Section, LPYS Branches in Littlehampton, Birkenhead and Newcastle West, and health workers and others who contributed to the appeals sheets sent round Hastings by COHSE steward S Tyller and A Georgiou.

A Rotherham reader sent £33 'overtime,' and £20s came from J Burnett (Littlehampton) and G Dudley (Tyneside). POEU supporters put in £14 (including C East £8.50 and D Twedle £3, S Peacock (Totenhnam) £12, whilst tenners came from J Simms (Andover LP), S Chandler (Southampton), D Dinnon (Leeds), and D & J Fowler (S London).

£8 came from D Fletcher (Glasgow) and £7 from J Marsden (Leeds), with fivers from K Dunn (UCW, N London), S Ghuman (Southall LP), C Churchward (Exeter), and T&S Appleton (Leeds). Amounts from £2 to £4 came from 3 Birkenhead readers, Mr Williams (Rotherham), D Bryan (Louth), J & K Siddiqi (Stoke), and E Bell (London, FBU), and £1s came from a large number of readers, including G Robin (S London), K Zignani (Peterborough), and six Edinburgh members of NUS, NALGO, AUT and TGWU.

Videos in Glasgow netted us £17.50, and £7 came from 'V Boring ward social' (somewhere in England). Photography, sale of records, key-rings, curry nights, homebrew, sale of sun tan lotion, and of tapes on labour history and politics were some of the many and varied ways readers thought up to assist our funds. Thanks to K Albison from Oldham who did a sponsored run and to K Pattison (Leeds) who gave lifts.

But we need to double the current rate of growth of our fighting fund to reach £35,000 by October 9th. We 'should' have reached £10,700 by now, instead of £5,650! But we can make it up, very quickly, if everyone remembers our 'holiday bonus'!

And if you're going away for a couple of weeks and intend to give us a present when you come back, how about sending us something before you go! That way, we're happy and you're happy too because you can relax and enjoy your holiday all the more!

THIS WEEK: £1,682



COME TO SOUTH WALES FOR BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

The South Wales Summer Camp is just two week-ends away (August 28-30th). With the attraction of some of Militant's prominent supporters addressing the political sessions, coupled with the magnificent surroundings of the Gower coast it is not surprising that the bookings are starting to flood in.

This years political programme is designed to give supporters a firm grounding in the basic ideas of Marxism. Ted Grant, Militant's political editor will be speaking at two of the sessions dealing with "What is Marxism" and "Marxism and the Labour Party." With major industrial battles looming on the horizon, "Marxism and the Trade Unions", addressed by Militant's industrial correspondent, Brian Ingham, should prove one of the most lively sessions. Brian will also be speaking on "Is Russia Socialist?"

In order to maintain the Celtic character of the camp we've invited Scotland's Bob Wylie to explain the "Marxist theory of the state". A crèche has been organised, as usual, so that parents can attend all of the political sessions.

Our social events planned for the whole family will be the best ever. For example,

our entertainments committee have organised a social evening which will even surpass last year's academy performance. Discos have been organised for each of the nights with "refreshments" at their normal ridiculously low prices.

However, a word of warning to our English supporters who have managed a couple of victories over the past few years in the sporting contests. In previous summer camps, the Welsh comrades have naturally been a little weary after doing all the organising and this has allowed the English comrades to have the edge over us in the soccer and rugby matches.

Not this year! With the publicity for Militant in South Wales recently we have attracted some new "sporting socialists" into our soccer and rugby teams—so watch out comrades!

If you haven't already booked, do so immediately so as not to be disappointed. Cost £10 per person, £2.50 per child, free under 5s. Cheques etc payable to "Swansea Summer Camp" send to 181 Hanover St. Swansea SA1 6BP. Tel: (0792) 461 081 during day, (0792) 463 623 during evening.

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

ads

MILITANT READERS MEETINGS

BURNLEY: 'What Militant Stands For' Thursday 12 August, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Pat Wall, Venue: The AUEW Rooms, 16 Hargreave St., Burnley.

WAKEFIELD "Tories attack the unions" at 7.30pm on 20th August. Speakers Tony Mulhearn (Prospective Labour Party Candidate Liverpool Toxteth), Ken Capstick (Sec. Park Hill NUM and on NUM Area Council), at Wakefield Labour Club, Vicarage St (Below market).

WEST HULL "What Militant Stands For". Speaker: Pat Wall (PPC Bradford North LP) Friday September 3rd 7.30pm. Nerd Hotel, Anlaby Road, Hull.

GATESHEAD and surrounding area Marxist Discussion Group Programme: 15th August: Nationalisation. 22nd: Marxist economics. Anyone interested contact Tom McGuinness, 18 Lumley Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. Transport available. Ring Gateshead 783 262. All meetings Sundays at 7.00pm.

'Witch-hunt '82 poster' (reproduction of Alan Hardman's 'football' cartoon). 1 for 20p + 12½p p&p. 5 for £1 + 50p p&p. 10 for £1.50 + £1 p&p. 50 for £11 inc. p&p. From Nicki Westcott, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

POPULAR Marxist discussion group. Each Sunday night. Ring Dave Farrar 515 2001.

Classified

Unions fight back! Tower Hamlets LPYS public meeting, August 17th 7.30 Bromley Public Hall, Bow Rd.

Printed note paper. Any size 3p each (minimum 100). Printed personal cards. Any size 3p each (minimum 100). Fancy Dance Tickets 5p each (minimum 200). Send details and postal order/cheque to: Alan Harvey, 17 Imperial Road, Gillingham, Kent.

"NO WITCH-HUNT BUT SOCIALIST POLICIES"

T-SHIRTS and SWEAT-SHIRTS. Sizes and colours for small—32-34; medium—34-36; large—38-40; extra-large—42-44. Red motif on white, yellow, sky blue, bottle green, navy, black (+sweatshirt grey and mid-blue). Cost: £3.25, sweatshirts £6.75 (both prices include postage and packing). Plain T-shirts and sweatshirts also available, deduct 25p from price. Send cheques and postal order to R Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1UR. All proceeds to Fighting Fund.

South Africa—13,000 black goldminers struggle for a living wage! South African Labour Education Project presents: "We Live Like Dogs"—the struggle of black migrant miners on the South African mines. Available for hire from SALEP, 28 Martello St, London E8 3PN. (Tel: 01-241 0434). £5 to LPYS branches/Labour Party Women's Sections. £10 to CLPs, TUs, etc.

GREET LABOUR'S CONFERENCE

Get your Labour Party or YS branch, trade union or shop stewards committee to place their greetings to Labour Party Conference in the pages of Militant. This year more than ever Militant needs your support.

Rates for greetings:
Semi-display: 3 column centimetres £3
6 column centimetres £6
Display: one-sixteenth page £10
one-eighth page £20
quarter page £40
Closing date for copy is 14th September, but send your greetings as early as possible to the Circulation Department, Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Defeat the witch-hunt.



Fight back with the official defence badge, 20p each or £13 per 100 or part thereof. £1.50 p&p from Val Pearce, 16 Wagbullock Rise, Bracknell, Berks.

FIGHTING FUND DONATIONS

Cut out and send to 'Militant', 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Enclosed is my donation of £ to back 'Militant's' campaign against the witch-hunt

Name

Address

Industrial Reports



LIVERPOOL FIGHTS

Croxteth school == Sefton hospital

The people of Croxteth's fight to save their local comprehensive from closure has taken a positive step forward.

A march supported by the labour and trade union movement was held on the estate on 7 August. About 200 people marched including local Labour councillors, party members, and representatives from unions such as the TGWU and the National Union of Seamen.

At the head of the procession was Toxteth Constituency Labour Party including Toxteth's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate—Tony Mulhearn. He spoke at the end of the march and called for the people of Toxteth to ignore the sectarian attempts to divide Toxteth and Croxteth and unite in their common struggle against the Tories.

On 9 August, the Croxteth

Community Action Committee opened a pilot education scheme in the school with volunteer teachers to run courses such as computer studies, photography, history, sociology, English and various other subjects.

This progressive step in the fight will show the Liberal/Tory council that if they can't run a school in Croxteth then the local community can. West Derby LPYS would like to thank all trade unionists and Labour Party members for their attendance on the march and also parents and children of Croxteth for their warm welcome and entertainment which they provided.

The Croxteth Community Action Committee urgently need funds to keep the campaign alive and any donations should be sent to R Murray, 93 Stonehill Crescent, Croxteth, Liverpool 11.

"If one bed goes—that will be it!" With these words, a representative from the Sefton General Hospital Action Committee, expressed hospital workers determination to fight the proposed closure of 2 wards in this hospital.

Over 75 people, mainly from the hospital packed in to a public meeting organised by Arundel Ward Labour Party in Toxteth. "They think Sefton General will be a soft touch, but we'll show them we're not."

Speakers included Julie Taylor, Labour City Councillor for Arundel, and Tony Mulhearn, Labour's prospective candidate for Tox-

teth, who both gave unconditional support from the Liverpool and local Labour Parties to the hospital workers both against the cut-backs, and for the increase in wages, and pledged full support in the campaign and activity.

The fight is not just for jobs—what is at stake is the survival of the NHS in Britain.

Terry Harrison, prospective candidate for Edge Hill, pointed out that Sefton General would be the opening shot for further cutbacks in all hospitals. Liverpool has been set a target reduction of £5½ million by 1989 and a reduction of 400 beds within 12 months.

Yet before the Pay Campaign, over 10,000 people were already on waiting lists for hospital treatment, and the new Royal Liverpool Hospital intended to operate

at 85% capacity is in fact running at 98%!

The meeting took place after a demonstration from the hospital to a lobby of the Liverpool Area Health Authority over the proposed cuts. Many members of the Health Authority, including consultants were horrified to see over 100 hospital workers from Sefton General in the public gallery, singing "we will fight, unite and fight" to the tune of the Conga!

The message from the meeting and demonstration was the need for the TUC to mobilise the whole movement to support the expansion of the NHS. It's time now for a concerted fight back!

By Militant reporters in Liverpool

In Brief

Over 100 Air India strikers have been on strike for over five weeks. The strike was triggered off by two managers who wanted to silence criticism and exposures of their malpractices in the union's monthly bulletin.

But they could never challenge the facts published so they decided to wipe out the union. Roster changes were imposed arbitrarily and the shop steward who challenged this action was sacked on trumped up charges.

An all-out strike followed on 2 July involving the entire UK workforce. In response to threatening telegrams from Air India Management exploiting the present political climate two thirds of the strikers succumbed to the pressure and returned to work. Repeated approaches from the union at all levels to negotiate a peaceful return to work were rejected.

It then became absolutely clear that management have no intention of resolving the dispute and that the sole aim in this operation was to smash the union. On 2nd August all those still on strike were sacked.

Roy DeSilva, Jenny Ray, Mohan Rao members of the Air India Strike Committee spoke to Militant reporters

CENTRAL SCOTLAND: Resist dole threats

Falkirk, once the industrial centre of central Scotland is fast becoming an industrial desert, another victim of Tory government policies. Since 1979 over 5,500 jobs have been lost in an area where unemployment now stands at over 16%.

In the past week the town has received its most serious setback. Over 700 jobs are threatened with the closure of the Carron company who have announced debts of £11 million to two banks.

The company's moves were so sudden they left the factory and the town stunned. Company stocks were suspended at 2.30pm on Tuesday 3 August with the shop stewards informed at 3pm and the workforce at 3.30. One worker commented to the local paper 'you don't know what goes on behind the doors of the boardroom.'

The workforce will soon begin to question where the centuries of profits have gone (the company was formed in 1759) especially the massive profits the company recorded in the 1970's.

Undoubtedly the recession in the building trade is a factor as the company now makes sinks, baths and toilets. But the recession in house building is a direct result of the Thatcher government's policies, especially the limits on local authority house building. The need for the products exists and the desire of the workforce to work is without question.

The questionable factor is whether a fight to save jobs will be led, or whether a deal is struck as has been the case in many of the 54 closures that have taken place in the last three years in the town.

The area has 4 Labour MPs, Labour Regional and District Councils and an ac-

tive local and regional trades council. However, this has not stemmed the floor of closures.

BP chemicals in Grangemouth have lost 600 jobs since 1979 and another 100 are to go by the new year. ICI and British Aluminium have both cut back. Alexander's coach builders in Canelon have lost 250 jobs this year. Foundries in Larbert are paying off and at nearby Denny—the foundry and paper mill industry has been annihilated.

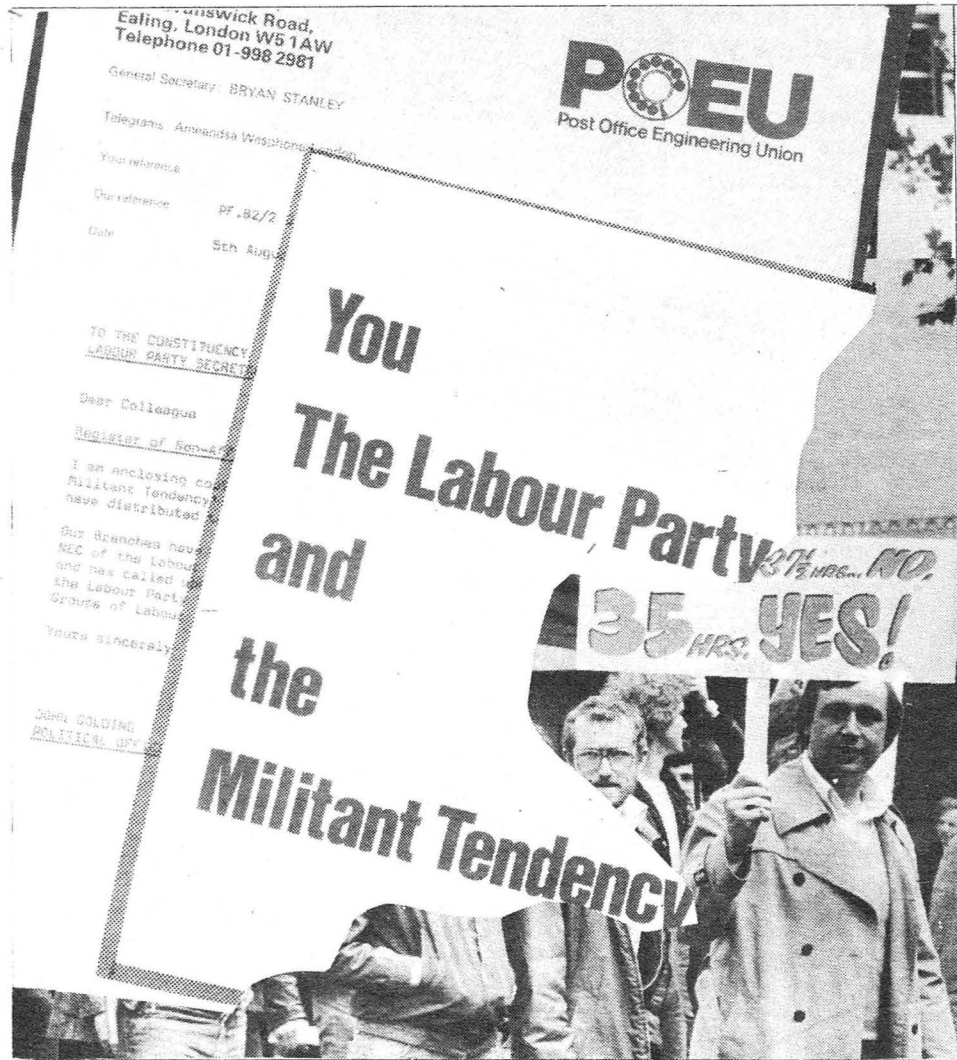
On top of this, Players Stirling are closing down with more than 600 going down the road, and in Bathgate the BL plant is threatened.

It is clearly not enough to sit and wait for the return of a Labour government or to expect anything from this government, Linwood and Invergordon are testimony to that.

The central federation of Trades Councils have in the recent period organised conferences and demonstrations to fight redundancies. This must be taken up again—this time uniting across trades and unions to save jobs. There should also be a call to join the Labour Party by raising the need for nationalisation of companies who threaten redundancies.

There are 11,187 adults on the dole in Falkirk. The redundancy money paid in the past is no longer any incentive to sell jobs. These workers threatened must unite with the local health workers who are fighting the Tory government and the effects of its policies.

By Jim Newlands (Stirling, Grangemouth and Falkirk CLP personal capacity)



The leaders of the Post Office Engineering Union have circulated a scurrilous attack on Militant to all their branches and all constituency Labour Parties. With the demand for a 35-hour week still unresolved from 1978 and POEU members wanting action to stop privatisation many union activists will question the strange priorities of their leaders in fighting socialists not the Tory enemy.

GEC—Huge profits, new redundancies

General Electric Company (GEC) is reckoned as one of the most "successful" companies in Britain. It has devoured smaller firms, made £500 million profit this year and currently has about £1 billion slushing around in the banks uninvested.

On the day their profit figures were announced they declared 160 redundancies and a 3 day week for the rest of the workforce at its Gas Turbine factory in Whetstone Leicester.

They also demanded that workers should be split in two,

working on totally different days, a very useful way of trying to divide the workforce. This part of the plan has now been partly defeated. The workforce has been split in two but with a common day on Friday.

It is believed that by maintaining continuous production this will limit any future attempts by the bosses to split the workforce further.

Nevertheless, some real doubts about the immediate future remain. 50 odd voluntary redundancies have been accepted by the manual

workers. Assuming there will be 50 'volunteers' there is also the assumption that GEC (Whetstone) will obtain a Temporary Employment Subsidy from the Government. Even if they do it will only last 6 months, then the issues of redundancies and a reduced working week will return.

But the unity of the workforce has been maintained which is the foundation stone of any fightback, and the workers have gained a 'breathing space' which should be used to prepare for successful defence of jobs!

On 4 August trade unionists protested outside North London Magistrates Court where NUPE Branch Officer, and Joint Shop Stewards Committee Secretary Myrna Shaw, was on trial for refusing to accept that the police have the right to interfere with pickets.

Myrna was arrested on one of the NHS days of action. The police had been harrasing the picket line all morning, moving them, splitting them up, stopping the petitioning, and finally, stopping use of the megaphone.

A leaflet produced by the DJSSC clearly linked this sort of behaviour by the police to the anti-trade union legislation already put through by the Tories, trying to limit the rights of pickets. It also saw the clamp down by management on union activities as having the same root, and alleged that management had themselves called in the police on other 'days of action'.

The delegations from Tower Hamlets Trades Council, the Health District JSSC, LP, and LPYS, showed the way in which the labour movement should be prepared to defend their stewards, fellow trade unionists, and thereby, hard won trade union rights which the Tories are now attacking.

Myrna's case was, in the end, postponed until September 15, when there will be another demonstration support outside court. Perhaps the court feared the effect of charging a steward the week before health workers were to engage on a further 5 days of industrial action!

Photo: MILITANT



Industrial Reports

HEALTH WORKERS ANGRY AT TORY LIES

Glasgow

Dougie McIntyre, Convenor of Shop Stewards at York Hill Children's Hospital in the West End of Glasgow, gazed over the huge piles of unburned rubbish bags near the hospital incinerator.

"Do you know what that is?" he asked "It's a monument to Thatcherism. There has been a lot of talk about us putting patients at risk. If anybody is at risk the responsibility rests with the government.

"Thatcher and her cronies are sitting back not bothering their backsides".

There was controversy in the local press recently about the closing down of the boiler room at York Hill which was supposedly effecting the heating of the incubators of the baby ward. Dougie set the record straight "it's nonsense. The so-called vital heating system has been out of action for the last 10 days because it's clapped out. Nobody is screaming about babies now."

Dougie pointed out that the figure of £104 has been quoted as the average health workers wage and said "I'd like to meet the people that get that money. More than 50% of health workers get less than £65 a week.

"It's a disgrace the way we are being treated. Mind you, it's all right if you are a high court judge. Lord Chief Justice Lane got an 18% increase, a rise of £8,000 a year which is more than my members take home in a year!"

The shop stewards at the Western Infirmary which is a stone's throw from York Hill were not slow to take up from Dougie McIntyre where he left off on the low pay of health workers.

John Kerr, convenor of the stewards there said "what the Tories have done by giving the police 10.9% is to increase even further the unity of our fight for a decent wage. The police are alright but if they are worth a decent rise so are we."

"In our opinion" he said "all-out action will be the only way that we will have any real effect. Unity is the key. If we get unity and action we'll have no problem."

Another steward at the Western explained that it was vital for success in the dispute for the nurses not to be kidded on by their 7.5% offer. "It doesn't sound bad on paper but 7.5% means a take-home increase of only £2.58p for an enrolled nurse. If you are a resident enrolled nurse you finish up 30p down with a 7.5% increase!

For staff nurses the same amounts are £2.89 if you are non-resident and an increase

By Bob Wylie

of a miserable one penny if you are resident! It's ludicrous, the nurses must stay behind us."

But perhaps Jessie Macaskill summed up the feelings of many many health workers with her blunt message for Thatcher, "I used to be a Conservative voter but not any more. Did you see that programme about the 1930's this week, "Cloud Howe" it was called. That's what the Tories want to take us back to. They have declared class war."

Hull

During the three days of NHS workers' industrial action in July, three laundry workers at Hull Royal Infirmary scabbed and went in to work.

On returning to work on the Thursday, 22 July, the 50 NUPE members refused to work with these scabs until they had agreed to either take a day off or donate a day's pay to charity.

To enforce these demands a sit-in was started in the laundry itself. Agreement was quickly reached and the scabs went home. Unfortunately the G&MWU official on learning of this, instructed his members to return to work!

This provoked a new walk out by the NUPE members and a week long strike. Only 2 days previously, G&MWU members on the dust and from NE Gas had struck for half a day to support a demonstration yet here was a full time official condoning scabbing by G&MWU members within the health service itself!

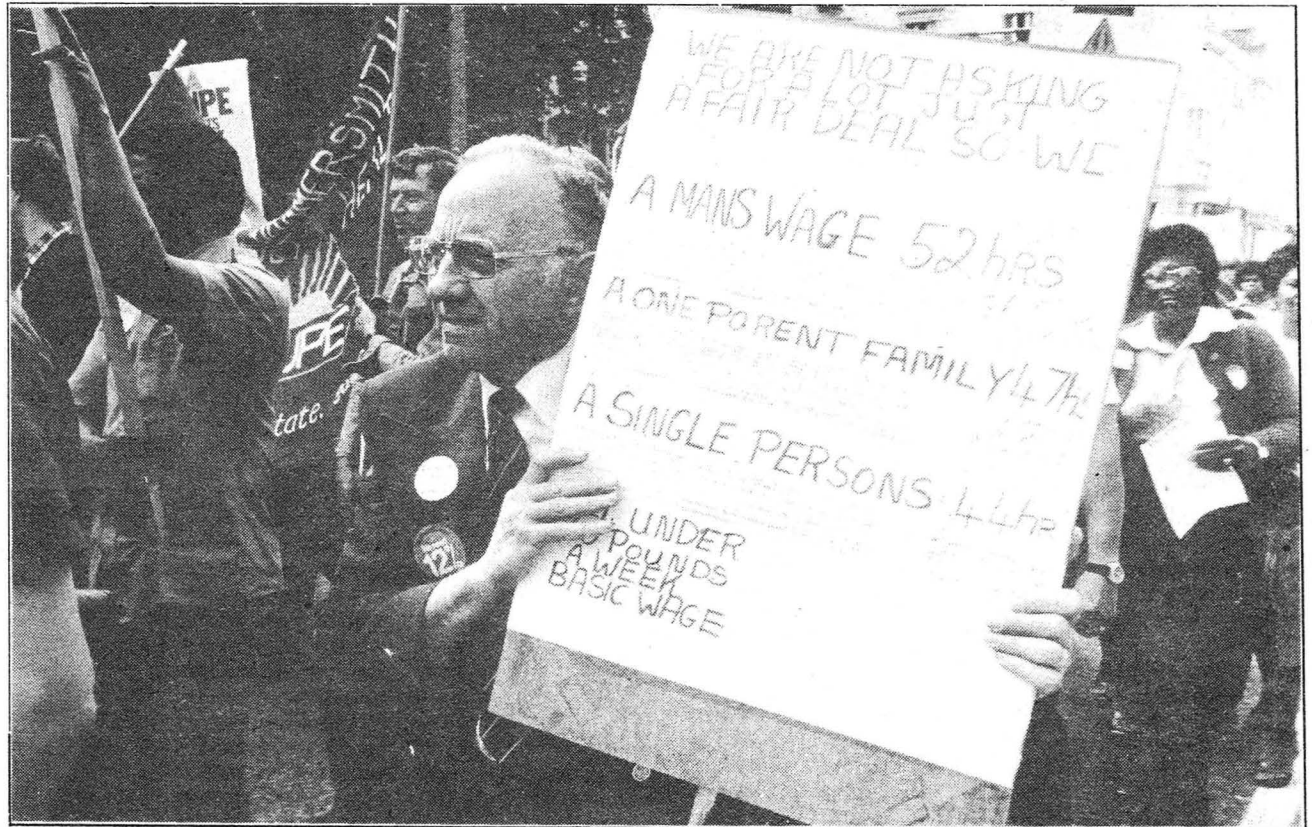
With drivers and porters refusing to handle laundry and pressure brought to bear inside the G&MWU itself, the week long strike forced the official to back down, the scabs went home again, and the NUPE members returned to normal work.

Now, any would-be scabs know what to expect if they cross picket lines in the future and the successful outcome of this dispute shows that effective action can be taken to enforce shop floor democracy and discipline.

By Alistair Tice
(NUPE Chairman, Hull Royal Infirmary)

Coventry

Twenty Health Service workers are cycling to London from Coventry to publicise their fight for a full 12% claim.



This placard on an NHS workers' demonstration gives the truth about health workers' pay, not the nonsense spread by Fowler and Co. in the national press.

At the send off outside Coventry and Warwickshire hospital some workers were dressed as children. "They treat us like kids so we'll behave like kids". Slogans on placards expressed the feelings of NHS workers. "The only good Tory is a lava Tory" said one, and "Dear Mark, take your mum on your next race."

Margaret Pirrie NUPE hospital's branch chairman told us there was "a super mood amongst the membership. After this we can only go for one thing" she said "an all-out strike." Sylvia McGlynn told us that as a Grade C nurse she picked up £63.22p for a week including a Saturday and Sunday.

"How am I supposed to bring up a family on that" she asked. "Now it's a luxury to go out to work it's just independence that makes you do it. I have to rely on rent and rate rebates. My rent is £14 a week."

The workers cycling to London stop in Bicester and Oxford and then in Hillingdon on Thursday before handing in a letter to 10 Downing Street on Friday.

By Pete McNally

Bristol

"We will accept 6%—6% of Thatcher's money," was the response of porters at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

"Fowler wants to cut our wages, saying that if we accept, things will be better next year, but he's already told us that we're not getting any more. It's all lies, the daily papers like the 'Sun' hate us.

"They twist everything we say into a load of lies. We ought to ban the papers in

hospitals. It's meant to be a free country but you haven't got a free press, it's the government and bosses side all the same.

"The nurses are scared to join us because of the possibility of being victimised if they join picket lines. Management are using students to scab on the dispute, doing our job while we are taking industrial action. They say there is no money for a decent pay increase but when Prince Charles came here the food laid out made the Hilton look like a bloody pigsty. Similarly with the Falklands, all it is bloody hypocrisy.

"The likes of Colvin (a local Conservative MP) get up and make patriotic statements about the war but they say we ought to be sacked. If he wants to make comments like this he ought to come down here for a week to work and then draw our wage packet at the end of it.

"Then he'd see if he could cope. We've got to stick out and smash this bloody government and get a decent wage."

Porters at the Bristol Royal Infirmary spoke to LPYS members.

Oldham

In Oldham there has been full support. Already medical records staff have been on strike for 10 weeks. Sterile supplies and administrative stores for 5 weeks and the messengers for 8 weeks.

The action in administrative supplies for seven weeks, has not been affecting patients care but has hit the authorities finan-

cially. Workers were given an ultimatum by management that if they didn't return to normal working they would face suspension or reduced pay.

At this first attempt at disciplinary action by management the whole department walked out on permanent strike. This week for seven days porters and transport staff will be out and will be joined by other groups of workers particularly on Wednesday when all the nurses will be coming out.

Fowler's advert in the papers last week ensured the solidarity of the strike Members have been really disgusted and have cut out the adverts and have shown them to other workers in the hospital.

Harold Ramsden (porter's shop steward) explained how porters in Oldham take home £61 gross for five days, with a £7 rota bonus for working nights. There's very little overtime work except to cover sickness and holidays. In stores some workers take home as little as £50 a week.

The figure of £107 a week given to staff nurses is after 3 years training and for a full week's working including a Sunday. Compare that to a policeman who after 12 weeks training would get £118 a week.

While most drivers of non-essential supplies have respected the picket line a major problem has been private contractors. This strike has shown that the introduction of private contractors has less to do with efficiency than with introducing non-union labour in some areas where trade unionism is increasing its strength.

By Margaret Crear

Edinburgh

Health Service workers reacted with fury to the advertisement published in the national press on 6 August from the Department of Health and Social Security and the Scottish Home and Health Department.

At the Western General and Northern General hospitals in Edinburgh, all the workers came out on strike in protest at the lies and distortions in the advert.

The advert boasted that ward sisters could earn up to £170 and staff nurses up to £131, figures beyond the wildest dreams of most nurses. Ancillary staff were told that under the new offer they could earn up to £146 a week for men and £139 for women.

In fact as NUPE pointed out, only about eight women in the whole country would get that scale of pay!

Bill Thorburn, NUPE convenor of North Lothian Hospital branch 4 explained that those at the bottom of the scale who earn at present £59.02 would rise to only £62.59 if they accepted the 6% offer. The advert claimed they would receive £91 for men and £82 for women.

Bill Thorburn demanded a retraction from the government. As well as theatre staff, porters, catering and laundry workers, some NALGO members at the Western came out too.

By Willie Adams
(Edinburgh West LPYS)

Health dispute -

Learning the lessons

Photo: MILITANT



Health workers have attracted enormous support from the rank and file of the unions

“Strong support for pay strike turns screw on health service” said the headline of the Guardian as the five days of intensive industrial action called by the TUC Health Services Committee began.

Such a series of strike activity is unprecedented in the history of the NHS and shows the determination of hospital workers to win a decent standard of living for themselves and their families in the face of virulent attacks by the media.

Fowler says that waiting lists have increased as a result of the dispute. He fails to say how many months people spend on waiting lists normally, often in pain and anxiety, for services cut by the Tories.

Hospital workers have learnt many lessons from the present dispute. An ounce of practical experience is worth a ton of theory, and union members in the National Health Service will not soon forget the real face of Toryism.

We have also had to learn, however, the need for leadership in the labour movement. Much has been achieved

By COLIN PIPER
 (COHSE Leeds 257 Branch)

ed by rank and file members up and down the country in building the magnificent demonstrations of solidarity and sympathy action, typified by the decision of the electricians in Fleet Street to pull the plugs on the Tory lie machines in support of our claim.

Further reports
 on NHS dispute
 See page 11

This must be built upon. The TUC should now show a lead in calling for a day of solidarity strike action of general strike proportions. This, however, they have so far failed to do.

Thousands of NHS workers are drawing political

conclusions during what is certainly a political dispute. Never has it been more vital for the TUC to make a united and determined stand against the government hell bent on using cuts, unemployment and low wages to break the trade union movement.

Already, the talk of private contractors in the NHS, hospital closures and the like are an indication that the present pay battle is only the beginning.

Health workers are drawing the political lessons of the dispute so far, and have been boosted by the knowledge that an increase in the offer has already been achieved through our determination. The strike committees and joint shop stewards committees in every area must now deluge the TUC's Health Services Committee with resolutions putting pressure on them to give a lead and bring the dispute to a quick and successful conclusion.

With the fight getting a firm lead, it would be possible not only to secure the 12% for all hospital workers, but to build the solid basis of working class unity in action, the only force that can defeat the cuts, stop privatisation and defend the NHS.

NHS Pickets

Continued from page one

Joseph Hassenalli, a senior GMWU steward had his shirt ripped and was called a ‘black bastard’ by the police. He was warned that if he was arrested again picketing he would get six months imprisonment.

Workers at West Park have been taking part in the five days of action but the immediate issue that provoked the strike on Monday was patients' welfare. Management had closed Lakeview ward without consultation with GMWU or COHSE, the main unions in the hospital or even the sisters on the ward.

Twenty-one patients some of whom have had the ward as their home for up to 15 years were literally pushed around like sacks of potatoes without any warning. Nursing staff were threatened with the sack if they didn't move the patients which is a non-nursing job.

Lakeview patients were split up, as were patients on other wards because of this change.

One patient who had been on Lakeview Ward for years was seen sitting outside the wards, bewildered and upset by what had happened. This

example of the arrogant and arbitrary action of the Divisional Nursing Officer was the final straw for the workers.

The unions demanded that management either put all patients back into Lakeview ward or all together again on another ward with the same number of staff as previously.

But at 12 o'clock on Monday, after no response had been gained from manage-

ment total withdrawal of labour began, to win this demand, and also now to call for the suspension of the two management men.

“We have lost all confidence in them” said Joseph Hassenalli who then explained what happened. “We had six on the picket line, the rest of us were in the hospital grounds sitting down in a peaceful picket. The police told us we had to move but we put it to the vote and we

voted to stay. The police then moved in.”

The police action in Epsom in cahoots with the management has only made the workers at West Park and other Epsom hospitals more determined to defeat the intimidation and harassment of the local management to win their just claim for 12.5%, and fight the Tory attacks which are making life hell for NHS patients and NHS workers.

FLEET STREET

Continued from page one

the dispute, the Fleet Street rags have only distorted the issues with horror stories and blatant lies.

The other argument was that the health unions would find themselves fighting two battles, not only for decent pay but against the Employment Act. But this is one and the same battle!

The Health workers know that the key to success will be sympathy action from other sectors, especially those with industrial muscle. If the Tories get away with picking off the electricians they can then threaten other workers who offer sympathy action and thus isolate the health workers.

The Tories designed the Employment Act for this

very purpose and they have dictated the timing of its use. The labour movement would have been forced into a confrontation with the government over this reactionary legislation sooner or later.

The TUC must now mobilise to crush this attack on union rights and the threat of a massive fine or even imprisonment of a union official.

August 11 was one of the five ‘days of action’ called by the TUC, where other workers were invited to take supportive action with health workers. The electricians responded with firm strike action yet incredibly, their extreme right wing union ‘leader,’ Frank Chapple, has said the Fleet Street men must ‘sort out the mess on their own’ and will not permit union funds to be used in the coming court battles!

If the Tories get away with

this, it will give them a new weapon with which to attack the trade union movement. While this stark fact is obviously lost on the likes of Chapple who seem more intent on policing their own members than taking up the struggle against the Tories, the rank and file of the labour movement will see the urgency of the need to fight back.

Already it seems likely that an all out strike in Fleet Street would follow the imprisonment of Sean Geraghty.

If this occurs the TUC must call an immediate 24-hour general strike under the double slogan of ‘Hands off the Unions — Victory to the health workers!’, as the first step in a massive campaign to defend union rights, secure victory for the health workers and force the Tories from office.

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