

# NO JOBS NO HOPE NO WAY!



## ...youth fight back against Tories

“I can’t sleep at night” The young worker slumped into the chair in the careers office. He explained that he had terrible back ache and was depressed about his future work prospects.

It turned out that he was on a YOP scheme called a Work Experience on Employers’ Premises (WEEP) for 6 months training in catering.

For the first 3 months of the scheme all he’d been doing was washing up and peeling spuds. His back ache was due to standing on his feet all day, bending over.

When he started he’d been told that he would learn different aspects of working, spending time with the cooks learning pastry making, sauce preparations, etc. After all, he was on a ‘training scheme.’ As he said, he’d been ‘training’ to wash up all his life at home!

We looked into the YOP scheme to find out what was going on. The Supervisor felt that no-one in the catering trade would learn anything until they’d spent some time at the bottom. But this was a ‘training scheme’ we said, and were told ‘what can you

learn in 6 months?’

There are hundreds of WEEP schemes like this, young people exploited, doing the dreariest jobs day in, day out, conned onto the schemes because they were told they would get a training.

The scheme is run by a Local Authority and has been agreed by the unions concerned, but do the unions monitor their own schemes? Do they have any control? If they campaigned for all trainees to join the unions and encouraged them to attend branch meetings and

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By Peter Mumford  
(Erith and Crayford LPYS)



## Thatcher seeks to wreck the NHS

Maggie Thatcher put herself forward at the Tory Party conference as the defender of the National Health Service, like a modern Boadicea. How sick can you get?

On the same day that she

uttered those immortal words, health authorities up and down the country were announcing plans to cut down the level of the health service to an all-time low.

The Harlow District Health Authority has announced the closure of the casualty unit and a women’s surgical ward in Harlow hospital and the closure of the alcoholic unit at the

Bishops Stortford hospital—all from 1st November.

The Health Authority came out with the staggering statement, just a few weeks ago, that they could balance the books if there weren’t so many new patients!

Yet the savings intended by the closures are

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## FIGHTING FUND- £35,000

### MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENT

£13 thousand in a week breaks all records for Militant’s Fighting Fund and shows our paper can only go from strength to strength!

A tremendous last minute rally from our supporters brought us some massive individual donations (£1,500, £500 and a promise of £2,000) plus £50s and £25s for which many thanks are due.

But there was also a flood of smaller donations, £10s, £5s and £1s. Some were sent with messages like ‘please accept this donation to help fight the witch hunt’ (Sarah Barrett, Hitchen, with £10).

Most significant of all, readers from the most hard up sections of society are pinning their hopes on Militant and sending their last pennies to speed the victory of socialism.

Many thanks to every contributor.

£1,470 has been phoned in since the chart on page 13 was finalised and that has taken us to £35,095 — past our target!

We are confident that more and more readers will give regular donations to build Militant and will collect amongst fellow workers to build a daily workers’ newspaper by the end of next year.

## Labour must champion the interests of youth

The Tory policy document entitled 'The Right Approach' has sections that deal with 'individual enterprise', 'priorities for cuts', 'liberating profits', 'strengthening the law', and many others, but there are no sections at all that deal with youth. For the young people of Britain the Tories have more than matched up to their promises: they offered them nothing and they gave them nothing.

Young people, probably more than any other section of society today, have been driven into a blind alley by Thatcherism. More than a million under-25s are on the dole including nearly 280,000 who have been without a job for more than a year and 70,000 jobless for more than two years.

Over half a million young people a year are sickened by being exploited on a variety of 'job schemes' that pay a pittance and offer no career at the end. In the next two years two-thirds of all school leavers will be going straight on to the unemployment lists or onto one of these cheap labour schemes.

Young people still at school know all this and it makes their own education seem all the more pointless.

Moreover, because of high unemployment, the wages and conditions of those young people who do get a

job have been eroded, as employers shamelessly exploit the long queues of job applicants to intimidate the 'lucky' ones who get the jobs.

Among those youth in jobs, only 40 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls are on any kind of day or block release schemes to further their workplace training. Why should their bosses worry about 'careers' when they can get government subsidies to exploit cheap labour?

The Youth Training Scheme cobbled together by Norman Tebbit, Tory Minister for Unemployment, has been received with universal hostility by youth. It is transparently clear that the Tories are aiming at two things and these two only: to doctor the monthly unemployment figures, and to force down the wages of

young workers.

None of the jobs in the Tebbit scheme will offer school leavers a real opportunity to get a proper training and a chance of a worthwhile career.

The Tories and their system have in effect consigned hundreds of thousands of youth to the dustbin.

The riots that took place the length and breadth of Britain in the summer of last year were due in no small way to the build up of anger and frustration felt by young people at the dead-end they face.

**It is a scandal that NEC right wingers are seeking to stifle the LPYS**

No one should have expected better. The Tory government represents the interests of big business, high finance, the banks, the Stock Exchange, the wealthy and the privileged in our society. They can never represent the interests of the majority of working class youth.

It is only the Labour Party and the trade union movement which can act in the interests of workers in general

and the youth especially. The Labour Party must become the natural champion of the interests of youth.

The reforms outlined in 'Labour's Programme 1982', passed by the Party conference, mark an important step forward in advancing many of the claims of young people. In particular, it is important that the Labour Party has now recognised the need, long since called for by the LPYS, to introduce a system of grants for all 16-19-year-olds staying on in full-time education.

But for the Labour Party to gain the confidence of youth, it must also promote and foster the development of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

It is nothing short of a scandal, at a time when youth unemployment is going through the roof and young people are desperately looking for a way out of their situation, that the right wing on the NEC of the Labour Party are contemplating taking measures against the democratic rights of the LPYS by stifling its national committee, its regional committees or cutting its funds.

There is an old adage in politics, that "he who has the youth has the future," and the Labour Party should ensure that it can win the youth by giving greater en-

couragement and support to the LPYS. There is no other political youth organisation in the country that could have matched the campaign conducted by the LPYS over trade union rights for YOPsters, including the national lobby of Parliament last year, or that could match the demonstration this weekend in Liverpool.

**New voters will make up 10 per cent of the electorate at the next General Election**

With more resources, the LPYS would be mobilising, not tens of thousands, but hundreds of thousands of youth. What is more, the demands of the LPYS are more in tune with the real needs of young people:

- ★ for a guaranteed job for every school leaver
- ★ for trade union rights and conditions for all YOPs workers
- ★ for a minimum grant of £20 for all over 16 in full-time education
- ★ for a national minimum wage of £90 a week for all over 18
- ★ for a 35-hour week without loss of pay

★ for the scrapping nuclear weapons.

In the context of a programme for fundamental social change—taking over the top 200 monopolies, banks and finance houses, abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, introducing a socialist plan of production—these policies would capture the imagination of the vast majority of young people.

Neither is the vote of youth inconsiderable. Whereas there is normally a majority of youth who support the Labour Party, that was not the case in the 1979 general election.

The Labour Party must fight to restore its lost position. By the time of the next general election, there will be about 4 million young voters who were not eligible to vote in May 1979. In other words, about 10 per cent of the electorate will be new voters.

The Labour Party must ensure that it is itself the main pole of attraction to youth, facing the horrors of Toryism. Labour must give the hundreds of thousands of young people on the dole and those in dead-end jobs a real perspective of social change.

Capitalism offers nothing but a living nightmare for youth. The labour movement must offer the vision of socialism as the only hope for the future.

## POLISH WORKERS DEFY MARTIAL LAW

The Polish bureaucracy announced last Friday that Solidarity, the opposition trade union, was decreed dissolved. The workers thought otherwise—it may be dissolved in law, but not in spirit.

On Monday and Tuesday, in scenes reminiscent of the first strikes of 1980 that led to the creation of Solidarity, thousands of workers took part in protest strikes and demonstrations, in defiance of the government decree and martial law.

The gates of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk were festooned with banners declaring that "Solidarity Lives", as well as photographs of Lech Walesa, the interned leader of the union. Demonstrations began on the Monday afternoon and were quickly dispersed by the police, although disturbances continued overnight Monday into Tuesday and the next night.

Barricades were set up by groups of workers as quickly as the army vehicles pulled them down. Telephone and telex links were cut off from other Baltic ports of Szczecin and Gdynia, indicating that there were strikes and protests there also.

As we go to press, it has been reported that the Polish government has imposed military authority on the shipyards, making insubordination liable to court-martial. Hundreds of workers have been arrested as the bureaucracy moves swiftly to stifle the protests.

**By John Pickard**

Despite the resemblance of these protests to those of August 1980 at the Lenin shipyard, few workers, even in Poland, would seriously expect this new movement to explode on anything like the same scale as it did at that time, when it led to the creation of 10 million-strong Solidarity.

Two days and nights of strikes and fierce clashes are nevertheless a clear gesture of defiance on the part of groups of workers. The declaration of martial law last December may have been a serious defeat, but the spirit of the workers has by no means been crushed completely.

The government, as well as banning Solidarity, has set up new official 'trade unions' in the hope of seducing workers away from the 'spirit' of Solidarity. Communist Party members have been instructed to join the new official unions and there is now a campaign underway to persuade the big factories—the 200 or so key workplaces employing over 10,000 workers—to follow suit.

Polish workers may indeed be pushed and coerced into joining the new unions. But they will have no illusions about their being 'free'



Photo: Popperfoto

**Riot police shooting tear gas at workers demonstrating in Gdansk last August. This week's new clashes show that Polish workers are still capable of defying Jaruselski.**

or 'independent' of the governing bureaucracy.

The totalitarian regime that governs in Poland would not tolerate a trade union movement that genuinely sought to represent the interests of workers—because such a union would inevitably find itself making political demands that en-

croached upon the privileges and power of the bureaucracy itself.

General Jaruselski, like the other bureaucrats, will do anything for Polish workers... except get off their backs.

As was explained in the Militant from the very birth of Solidarity, such a move-

ment would inevitably clash with the interests of the bureaucracy, and, even though it commanded mass support, Solidarity would inevitably be crushed, if it did not set itself the task of overthrowing the bureaucracy.

In the long run, however, it will not be the martial law regime of Jaruselski, but the

Polish workers who will have the final say on the matter. Water cannons and tear gas will not break the will of the Polish working class to transform political relations in Poland, to carry through a political revolution that will give the working class genuine control of the levers of the economy and the state.

# 'The system let me down'

**Tory policies offer youth no future. Three LPYS members explain their reasons for going on the October 16th demonstration in Liverpool.**

**Anita Brazier, age 17, Secretary Kirkdale LPYS on a YOPS scheme:**

"When I was doing 'O' levels, I applied for 20 jobs and got nothing. I then lined up a YOP scheme which was better than going on the dole. Thatcher and the Tories offer you no future. We've got to get rid of them. I thought the programme of the LPYS was correct.

"The demo is part of a campaign to kick out the Tories. The Tories talk as if they are going to be in power for the next 50 years, but they must go."

**Gary Bogart, Secretary Walton LPYS. Age 20. Unemployed.**

"I did 'O'-levels and a business studies course, but the system let me down. I played by the rules and was put on the dole. I was on my own and wanted to organise with like-minded people. After considering the options, I joined the LPYS.

"I'm coming on the demo to build the LPYS because there are some youth who have given in. They have accepted they have no future under the Tories. I want to try and get people involved in the demonstration and the LPYS and let people see that the system offers them nothing.

"The demo is not just to get people to march but to keep them active and show them there is an alternative. That alternative is the LPYS."

**John Graham, Secretary of Edgehill LPYS, age 21 and an unemployed sheet metal worker.**

"I used to be in the CP but I found their ideas to be unsatisfactory. I then joined the Labour Party and got told about the LPYS and thought the programme and policies of the LPYS were correct. I thought they would offer me a future. I also found the LPYS to be very educational.

"I was sacked because, as an apprentice, I objected to the boss not paying me a trade union rate. He tried to prevent me going to college and day release. He had paid my college fees in the past, but he said that if I wanted to get a trade union rate of pay, I would have to pay my own college fees. I accepted this, but my boss wouldn't. I was victimised and sacked.

"I'm coming on the demo to object to low wages paid to young workers. I want to meet other young workers and convince them that the only way to get rid of the Tories is to join the LPYS and get organised.



Police frisk youth in Brick Lane

Photo: Militant

## POLICE GO FOR YOUTH

A weighty manual containing secret instructions and issued to all London police constables has come to light. Entitled, 'The Constable's Instruction Book', it reveals why urban youth complain of police harassment; constables are all but instructed

to stop them on sight, especially if they are carrying bags, parcels, etc. "Youths between the ages of 17 and 20 must be especially watched," it says.

## Collect cash for LPYS

In all the campaigning activity of the LPYS, finance is vital. LPYS members in Birkenhead were amazed at the response they received during a bucket collection for their demonstration on 24 September and the national LPYS demonstration on 16 October.

In just three hours of activity, £18.73 was collected. Starting at 6.45 am outside Cammell Laird Shipyards, eight members of the LPYS leafleted and collected money as workers went into the yards.

If every LPYS member brought buckets or collecting tins to the 16 October demonstration, then hundreds of pounds could be raised to continue the campaign for a better deal for YOPs and build the LPYS.

By Leo McDaid

## Lothian Council Cuts

Conservative and Liberal/SDP Councillors on Lothian Regional Council have, they think, found a way round the vicious cuts they have imposed on Lothian's working people.

They are going to use YOPsters to do minor improvements in schools and community centres! There are over 600 unemployed bricklayers and about 40% unemployment in the building trade in Lothian. These so-called "self-help" schemes range from roofing over a swimming pool to outdoor play equipment schemes.

No one can deny the commitment to their children's education among working class communities, nor that the necessary organising and building skills are there, but no workers can honestly consider sabotaging the job prospects of their fellow workers.

The Tories and their SDP/Liberal allies cut £1.5 million from the budget for school repairs and minor improvements, and now realise they have irreparably damaged school maintenance in Lothian.

Their solution is to force local communities to raise cash for materials for much-needed school improvements and then use YOPs labour to carry out the work.

But only those communities where there is spare cash—not many with an unemployment rate of over 12%—will be able to benefit from these "self-help" schemes. In working class areas where people are still fortunate enough to be employed, most men and women have to work long hours of overtime just to feed their families. They have no leisure for "self-help".

The result could be a two-tier system of educational maintenance—total neglect of working class areas in favour of middle class areas where people have leisure for the luxury of "self-help." And all to be carried out, if the Tories/SDP get their way, through conscript YOPs labour.

No thought is given to their needs. They are to slave away on so-called "self help" schemes to satisfy the needs of greedy local capitalists—one firm got over £60,000 this year in the rates return deal.

The Lothian labour and trade union movement must mount a campaign now to ensure:

1. Every child in Lothian has the right to a well-maintained school.
2. Every YOPster has the right to a guaranteed job.
3. Every unemployed building worker has the right to a proper job.

**By Madelaine Maines**

(Labour Councillor, Lothian Region, personal capacity)

## 'Signing on' in Harlow

**Harlow school leavers had a rude awakening to adult life under the Tories.**

The local careers office was so packed that it was impossible to get within yards of it!

At least 30 youngsters were forced to wait in the corridor outside. Mind you there wasn't much worth waiting for—it seemed that all they had to offer was either a place on a YOP scheme or a place in the dole queue.

It appeared as if the staff had their orders to keep the dole figures down by 'persuading' youngsters to go on YOP schemes. One young girl we spoke to spent 30 minutes being pressurised before she finally succumbed.

Most of the school leavers we spoke to weren't going to be fooled at any cost—even though some were 'assured' that 90% of YOPs found work after completing their scheme. "No thanks," was the general reply. "I'm not going to be used as cheap labour." "What do I want to stand around in a shop all day doing nothing for?"

Harlow YOP TURC members have tried to channel this discontent in a positive direction. LPYS members have been selling copies of their se-

cond campaign broadsheet, "Signing On" at the dole queue and at the local YOP Centre, with the aim of encouraging Harlow youth to come to the demo in Liverpool on 16 October and to a public meeting we organised on 'Save jobs...sack the Tories!' We have been very pleased with what we've achieved so far. Over 350 copies have been sold and a great deal of interest has been expressed in the demo and the meeting.

We've also been approaching the labour movement to help finance the coach and to send delegations to the demo. We've already had donations from the local TUC, NUPE and several ward Labour Parties towards our campaign but the best news came when an AUEW shop stewards CTTE in a local factory (BOC Medishield) agreed to have a site collection from which they hope to raise at least £50. We're hoping that other local factories will follow this initiative!

**By Tom Taylor**  
(Youth Officer,  
Harlow CLP)  
**and Des Conway**  
(Chairman,  
Harlow LPYS)



YOP worker in an old peoples home, Blyth.

Photo: D Doran (Militant)

## RHONDDA - 50% YOUTH UNEMPLOYED

By Brychan Davies  
Pontypridd LPYS

Nearly 50% of young people in the Rhondda are unemployed. Over half of those people who have a job travel outside of the valley to work. It is a centre of chronic urban decay and bad housing.

The traditional industry of the valley is coal-mining, but only three collieries remain. One, the Ty-Mawr is threatened with closure. In the Rhondda you don't need to be told about the misery of capitalism—you experience it.

Unemployment is not new to the Rhondda. The Treforest Industrial Estate is

yet another museum of British capitalism. The road to it is called 'Power Station Hill' but the power station was closed years ago due to lack of demand. The first factory as you enter the estate is being knocked down. Most of the other factories are either empty, on short time, or giving redundancies. At one time the rush hour traffic jams used to be a problem, not any more. Ironically, the only traffic jam lately was caused by the People's March for Jobs.

It is not enough to just march and demonstrate

about the evils of unemployment. We must explain that there is a need for unemployment in the capitalist system. The youth on the Wales Peoples March turned to the LPYS because of its programme. We understand the need to change the system. To replace not just the Tory government but the capitalist system with a socialist plan. That's the only solution to unemployment, and that's the message the new members of the LPYS in South Wales will be taking to the Liverpool demonstration in October 16.

# The best readers' meetings yet!

## Glasgow

**"We have been called an irrelevance. Well if that's the case then a gathering such as this with over 400 goes some way to answering that!"**

These were the opening remarks of Bob Wylie as he introduced the speakers to the largest Militant Readers Meeting ever held in Glasgow.

Steve Gavin, COHSE shop steward, from the Ravenscraig Hospital, got a really warm welcome in recognition of the struggle of the health workers.

Derek Hatton, prospective parliamentary candidate for Liverpool Wavertree, hit out at the right wing of the Labour Party, and told how a workers wage for Labour MPs could help alleviate the party's problems. "The Parliamentary Labour Party and MEPs had a gross income last year of over £6 million. They gave £15,000 back to the party. No wonder working people are cynical about our party and the individuals that represent it in Parliament."

The main speaker of the evening was editor of *Militant* Peter Taaffe; he explained the implications of the election of a right wing

national executive of the Labour Party, not only for *Militant* supporters but the left as a whole, something *Militant* warned of before party conference.

Peter described the hollowness of the right wing's 'victory', speaking of the divisions within the trade union delegations at conference.

The tremendous attendance at the meeting marked an excellent finish to a week of public activity in Glasgow by the Labour Party Young Socialists and Strathclyde *Militant* supporters. The previous Saturday, with the use of a 'magic bus', over 150 papers were sold and dozens of names were collected for the Labour Party membership.

A fitting end to the week came at the end of the meeting, when the 400 strong audience rose to sing the Red Flag and the Internationale. Marxism had returned in loud and large numbers to the Clyde.

## Liverpool

**The right-wing attacks and threatened witch-hunt of 'Militant' supporters in the Labour Party has provoked massive support and interest in the ideas of Marxism by rank and file Labour Party members and Labour voters up and down the country.**

Area after area is having its biggest and best meetings ever. **Liverpool** was a prime example where the *Militant* Readers Meeting attracted 350 people, to hear *Militant* editor Peter Taaffe. Speaking before Peter, Terry Fields of the Fire Brigades Union and PPC for Liverpool Kirkdale, said the party needed to unite around socialist policies. He said, "It is in our hands to fight

for socialism. We cannot renege on our commitment as others in the party have done." Tony Mulhearn, PPC for Toxteth also spoke.

The horrors of Tory Britain were graphically described at the meeting in Teesside, where 40 people attended to hear John Pickard. A speaker from the floor told how not only schools and hospitals had been closed, but goalposts and a roundabout had been removed from a local playing field due to cuts in maintenance work, leaving the local children bewildered.

Other meetings in the North East were well attended. 130 attended the **Newcastle** meeting; 40 people, mainly new to the ideas of Marxism came to the meeting in the mining area of **Ashington**, and 70 people mainly miners, shipyard and industrial workers, attended the **Sunderland** meeting.



Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant*, addressed the 400-strong *Militant* Readers' Meeting in Glasgow



Terry Fields who spoke at the meeting in Liverpool. Terry is an executive member of the Fire Brigades Union and is PPC for Liverpool Kirkdale



John Pickard, who addressed the readers' meetings in the North East

By Militant reporters

Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant*



## Southampton

In Southampton on a Monday night, 120 crammed into the conference room at the Civic Centre to hear Ted Grant, political editor of *Militant* speak at a public meeting. Ted explained the recent events at Labour Party Conference, and the background to them. He hammered home that under the crisis of capitalism, there was no way forward for working people except on a socialist basis.

After Ted spoke, there was an excellent discussion from the floor, with many questions on *Militant's* policies

It was best summed up by

the points that one worker raised. He explained how he had voted Labour in 1974, but had been disillusioned by the Labour government attacking his standards of living. In 1979 he had voted Tory, and again been disillusioned. Now he wanted to know what alternatives the *Militant* had. It was his first ever political meeting, which was true for very many other people in the audience.

*Militant's* ideas got a tremendous response in a very optimistic meeting, with £125 being collected for the Fighting Fund.

## Portsmouth

**"I joined the Labour Party two months ago because of the 'Militant'—how can I give a regular donation to the fighting fund?"**

That was the reaction of one worker to the *Militant* Readers' Meeting held in Portsmouth last week. There was a lively discussion on the Labour Party conference and the witch-hunt, with the conclusion that Marxist ideas could never be expelled from the Labour Party.

Every speaker gave examples of the misery of life

under the Tories; a student doing chemistry at the Poly even described the age of the equipment he was supposed to work with, and the impossibility of finding decent accommodation in Portsmouth.

A good collection for the fighting fund and sales of books and pamphlets rounded off an excellent meeting—showing the increasing support for the 'Militant' in Portsmouth.

Not everyone here is preoccupied with the raising of the 'Mary Rose'!

## Conferences against the witch hunt

Plans are going ahead for a series of regional conferences up and down the country to fight the witch-hunt.

The meetings have been called by the national Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts, elected by the 2,500 strong Wembley conference on 11 September.

Plans have not yet been finalised, but details so far are as follows:

Tony Benn has agreed to address the anti-witch-hunt conference to be

held in **Bristol** on the later date of December 11.

Other regional conferences will be held earlier on 27 November:

**London:** Conference to be held at the Friends Meeting House, Euston Road.

**Newcastle:** to be held at the Tyneside Cinema, Pilgrim Street.

**Birmingham:** to be held at Digbeth Civic Hall.

**Bradford:** speakers will be Pat Wall, PPC for Bradford North, Terry O'Neill, president of the

Bakers' Union, and political editor of *Militant*, Ted Grant.

**Brighton:** to be held at the Conference Centre (Foyer Hall) and speakers include Rod Fitch, PPC for Brighton Kemp Town.

**Glasgow:** to be held at the Partick Borough Halls. Speakers include Ron Brown, MP for Leith.

Other conferences to be held on November 27 will be at **Liverpool** and **Cardiff**.

## Tribute to an organiser

Alec Auld died in Newcastle this week aged 81. Alec could be truly called one of the founding fathers of the labour movement in the Northern Region. Right up till the day he died his socialism never wavered.

He had been a member of the Labour Party for nearly 65 years, he had been expelled once for his ideas. He was an organiser for the ILP in the 1930s making a living from the commission he received from selling papers in the pit villages of Northumberland. He spent three months in jail during the General Strike for organising the Cumbrian Miners. He organised branches of the ILP in areas as remote as Fort William in Scotland,

where, when he left the area, the whole of the town's labour movement turned out to wish him well.

He remembered the days of the Hunger Marches, the mass meetings of the unemployed in Newcastle's Town Moor, where the local Tories used to 'buzz' the field in small planes in order to drown out the speeches. He was there the day that Jim Larkin came to Newcastle to appeal for support for the Irish workers during the 1913 lock-out.

He spoke recently at a rally in Newcastle that Tony Benn addressed. He was an active member of the local Labour Party. He attended the local CND. There, his impassioned speeches show-

ing the class nature of war had a profound effect on all who heard him.

He learnt his agitational style on the street corners, his ideas not only came from his own rich experience but also from his readings of the great teachers of our movement.

Alec was an unrepentant Marxist, whose sharp mind and clear understanding stayed with him till the day he died. He will be sadly missed by us all, an inspiration to the young, a reminder of the rich traditions of our movement.

By Jeff Price

# Police harass Asian youth -

Following increasing numbers of racial attacks in Newham, East London, local organisations have set up the "Newham 8 Defence Campaign".

By Mark Avis  
(Barking LPYS)  
and Jane Lithgow  
(Wanstead & Woodford LPYS)

This follows an incident recently in which eight black youths were arrested near a local school. They had been among a group of black youths who had gone to the school that Friday, because on previous Fridays gangs of white racist youths had attacked children as young as ten years old.

On this particular Friday it had been rumoured that the same thing was to happen. Local Asian youths had gathered to defend the school students going home. But no group of white youths appeared.

Instead, three men carrying truncheons jumped from a car and moved towards

some of the youths, who thought that they were fascists and that their police truncheons were sticks. A fight ensued, and suddenly, around 50-80 uniformed policemen "appeared" on the scene.

The eight youths were then arrested on charges ranging from threatening behaviour to actual bodily harm. One of the defendants was so badly beaten that he was in hospital for several days.

Recently, marauding gangs of fascists have been asked by the police merely to disperse whilst one black youth was arrested for possessing an offensive weapon—a cricket bat—on his way from school!

The Newham 8 Defence

# ARRESTED FOR SELF-DEFENCE

Campaign says the whole incident was set up by the police and that the eight were framed.

Unmesh Desai, a full time worker for the Newham Monitoring Project (set up by the Labour GLC) and secretary of the campaign, told us that this incident should be seen not as an isolated one, but as a reflection of the racial attacks and police harassment which are part of everyday life in Newham.

The Defence Campaign, he argued, should be widened out from not just the religious and community groups, but to involve the whole local labour and trade union movement.

Already a "steering committee" of the campaign, elected at a recent public meeting, contains several Labour councillors. There has already been a picket of Forest Gate police station and a series of pickets and

meetings have been planned. The next is on October 28 at East Ham Town Hall.

A collection will be taken at the big Ford plant in Dagenham where many of the local black community work, and there is the possibility of a one day strike of local school students in sympathy with the eight.

This incident is only one example of racial attacks and

police harassment in East London which will only begin to be solved when the police are truly and locally accountable and when socialism has wiped out the causes of racism.

Details of the campaign, requests for speakers, and donations can be sent to Unmesh Desai, c/o Newham Monitoring Project, 285 Romford Rd, London E7.

Two of the 'Hounslow Seven' are to be sentenced this Monday, 18 October, at Acton Crown Court, London. Rajvir Singh Pawar has been found guilty of assault and Bhapindar Natha of assault and resisting arrest.

They are among seven Asians arrested after a police raid on Hounslow Town Hall last year. Asian youth had hired the hall to raise funds for a youth club, but police raided it at midnight and many Asians were hit by the baton-wielding police. Rajvir's 58-year-old father, who was arrested, was particularly badly beaten, needing four weeks off work after the attack. Police brutality continued as the arrested men were taken to police cells.

Local LPYS branches have helped the Asian youth campaign against the arrests. A further three Asians are still to be tried.

## LEICESTER

A meeting of over 400 heard of the arrest of three Asian youths in Leicester. Two are charged with actual bodily harm on two white youths; the third is charged with obstruction. Jim Marshall MP and Patricia Hewitt, PPC Leicester East, were invited to speak.

A picket was held outside the magistrates court as the three appeared

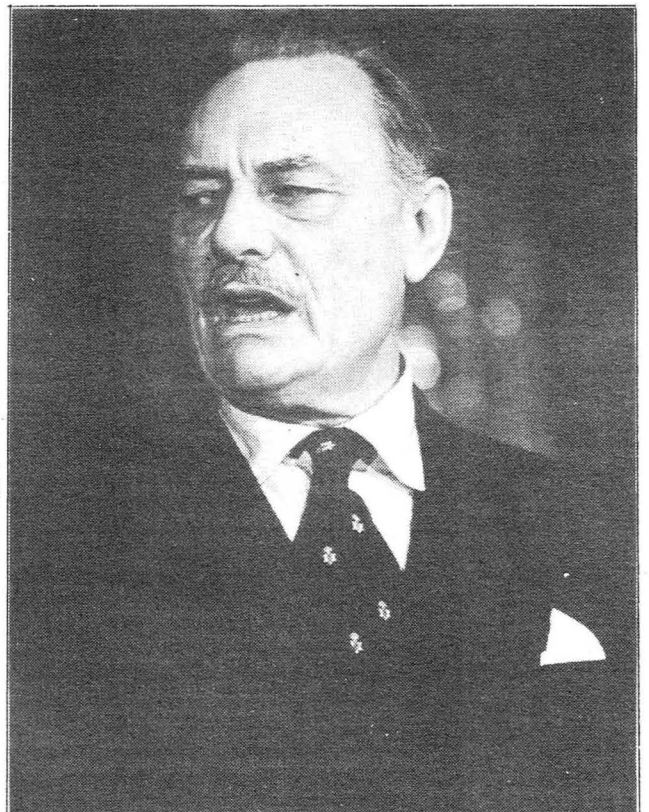
The Defence Campaign's statement points out that the two white youths have a reputation for for intimidating Asian members of the community. They had threatened the arrested Asians a couple of days earlier. There has recently been an increase in racist graffiti and arson attacks.

One of the arrested suffered severe bruising on his left forearm. Racist abuse was hurled by the police and the Asian youths were denied access to their parents for a long time.

The hearing was adjourned until 14 October. Meanwhile, messages of support and funds are needed for the "Leicester 3 Defence Campaign", c/o Belgrave Community Centre, Rotley Street, Leicester.

By Gary Freeman

Asian youth demonstrate against the return of the National Front to Brick Lane, East London, during the summer, on August 29.



Enoch Powell, the racist demagogue, returns to the fold. The Ulster Unionist MP called for repatriation at a fringe meeting at the Tory conference

## The message from Tory conference -

# FLEECE, ROB AND BLEED 'EM

"Talk of a crisis is absurd." Such a statement from the Tory Minister of Health, Kenneth Clarke, at last week's Tory Party conference gives an insight into the mentality and short-sightedness at this rally of the party faithful.

Whereas the slogan presiding over the Labour Party conference was 'Peace, Jobs and Freedom', the Tory slogan should be 'Fleece, Rob and Bleed 'em'.

Not for them any discussions about the reality of life under their policies, about mass unemployment, poverty and the destruction of the welfare state. The Tory Party conference is an exercise for public consumption, with the rabid Tory ranks dismissing the plight of millions of workers in an avalanche of bigotry, double

By Bob Wade

standards, blinkeriness and stage management that would put the Stalinist bureaucracies of the Eastern Bloc to shame.

Falklands euphoria was still very much in evidence; even the platform resembled the flight deck of HMS Invincible. Defence Minister Nott was given rapturous ap-

plause for saving the British Empire. At least here he wouldn't be given any nasty questions (from the likes of crypto-communist Sir Robin Day) that he would have to walk away from.

Open debate, which would have shown the depth of the split within the Tory leadership, is not allowed of course. One young delegate attempted to point out the way the conference is rigged, but had the microphone switched off. He did manage to shout, however, 'This conference has been stage managed from start to finish!' No parliamentary seat for this young hopeful.

The leak to the press that the Tories were planning the destruction of the National Health Service was glided over, although one delegate, a certain Ian Taylor, blurted

out that the NHS should be put out to private contract. Mr Taylor no doubt had the welfare of the people at heart. He is also a director of a private health company.

The real mood of the rank and file was to be found in the Tory members' favourite subject, Law and Order. Here, amongst other enlightened demands from the hang and flog 'em brigade, was the call for Irish workers who live and work in Britain to have their vote taken away. Depriving half a million workers of the vote proved too extreme even for this Tory leadership—for this year, anyway. They will look at it next autumn instead.

During this debate, Young Conservative Philip Pedley spoke darkly of 'parties within a party' (gasp) and a

campaign being waged by 'Tory Action' (Tor-reaction—geddit?). While he conveniently forgot to mention how the YCs were becoming increasingly riddled with fascist sympathisers and NF members, he had a point, however. In the fringe meetings around conference the ultra-rights of Tory Action and the Monday Club were skulking around whipping up the Tory ranks with racist hysteria and talk of repatriation. Their guest of honour was the arch racist himself, Enoch Powell.

### Rumblings from the right

But the neanderthal rumblings from the depths of the Tories' bigoted ranks

were successfully stage managed out of the public eye. Instead we got nice, smiling pictures of Mrs Thatcher and entourage, taking standing ovations from row upon row of clean cut, blue rinse representatives of the British way of life.

You see, despite everything the Tory Party is a compassionate party. Why, they passed a resolution that said so. One delegate, Mr Howard Flight from Bermondsey, said that anyone who didn't realise that the Tories were in fact a caring party "had to be deaf or blind." Before you start cupping your hand to your ear or squinting your eyes in search of that rare thing called Tory compassion, don't worry, it's not you—the Tories and their system are the ones that are sick.



### The worry of Woolworth's

What is the main concern of John Beckett, the new boss of Woolworth's as he contemplates which stores to close? It's his £201,000 golden handshake from his old firm, British Sugar, which was taken over two months ago. "Money can't compensate for the loss of a super job", he cried; but at least it gets him a better class of handkerchief. Will his new employees be as generously rewarded if he tries to force through redundancies? It is believed that at his new post Mr Beckett will be paid a minimum of £65,000 a year.

### Out-right Reaction

An indication of how far down the road of reaction the Tory Party has gone was the presence at last week's conference of Buster Mottram, representing Shipley. This tennis star is well known for his past support for the National Front. And his behaviour last week shows it is not so much his ideas which have changed, but that he now finds a more receptive ear for them within the Tory Party. At fringe meetings he made strident demands for the repatriation of 'immigrants'.

Invited to the Conference by Marcus Fox MP, Mottram declared that his aim was to get into Parliament. Asked by an Express reporter whether or not his past NF connections would not spoil his chances of this ambition he explained: "Look there are people who left the Tories when Ted Heath was in power who joined the NF. They are now back in the fold and in Parliament."

### First Law of Robotics

Marxists have often explained that whether or not new technology proves beneficial, depends upon who controls it. A socialist plan of production, based upon the ownership of the dominant areas of the economy, could make modern labour-saving devices benefit everyone.

But a report tucked away in Computer Weekly, 23 September, shows how those who run capitalist society use new technology. Apparently a management consultant's report conducted for British Leyland states they are using more robots than needed on the production line to intimidate the unions to accept sackings and low manning levels throughout the company.

### 25 YEARS AGO

In a week when Solidarity has been banned in Poland, it is worth recalling the comments of a liberal Polish weekly, *Zycie Literackie*, which flourished with some relative degree of freedom in the immediate aftermath of the Polish revolt of 1956. In an article published September 1957, it reported that conditions facing workers in the industrial town of Lodz were appalling. Three people had choked to death on a train because it was overcrowded. There were 30,000 TB cases in a city of 670,000 people. The complaints of workers were ignored as the bureaucrats took power to themselves.

The magazine, *Zycie Literackie* cautiously commented: "There are men in important positions who would forget about the existence of the working-class if the workers did not remind them of their existence and of their feelings from time to time."

But it is not a question of asking bureaucrats to behave as democrats. In Eastern Europe the battle is to replace the totalitarian regimes with democratic states, genuinely run and controlled by workers. Because Solidarity's leadership refused to do this, it was tolerated for a while and then closed down. 25 years ago, as the 1956 revolt ebbed away, magazines such as *Zycie Literackie* lost what relative freedom they had enjoyed.



# Profits before health

## PRE-MENSTRUAL TENSION

For thousands of women, one week in every four is living hell. I am one of these unfortunate women; I suffer from PMT (pre-menstrual tension or syndrome).

Forty per cent of all women have a significant problem and ten per cent of those suffer so severely that their life is disrupted. The symptoms include depression, irritability, tension, clumsiness and lack of concentration.

A survey in 1978 of 138 women who were attending a special clinic, showed that 34 percent had attempted suicide, 10 percent admitted baby battering and 6 percent had a criminal history of violence. Dr Katharina Dalton of University College Hospital, London, said that with treatment the women lose their violent tendencies.

In 1960 research showed that out of 156 newly committed prisoners 49 per cent had committed crimes during the first four days immediately before menstruation and the first four days from menstruation.

But don't try to make an appointment to see Dr.

Dalton. She had a two year waiting list when she appeared on television eighteen months ago. Even if you could afford to go privately the waiting list is probably four years by now.

The likelihood of convincing your doctor is another problem. I had to make several visits before I could convince him I was a sufferer. I was given some vitamin tablets which do help if you do not have a severe case. In a recent visit however he suggested I get pregnant as this was a good cure!

## Women denied treatment

The only real 'cure' is treatment under a doctor who is not overworked with resources for research. While the Tories and their system still exist then so will these problems, because PMT is not a very 'profitable' disease and in a society where 700 elderly die each day in winter due to the cold the Tories are not going to do anything for us.

The only real 'cure' is socialism. Only under socialism will women and their related illnesses be treated with the respect they deserve. Only under socialism will women be treated with the equality

which will allow diseases like these to be completely cured.

Kim Waddington  
(Basildon Womens Section)

## WHOOPIING COUGH

Baby Ingham, Baby Fowler and Baby Prince of Wales all have something in common—all three have been vaccinated against whooping cough in the last month—but there the similarity ends.

No-one doubts that Charles and Di and Tory Health Minister Norman Fowler and his wife are just as concerned about their children getting the disease as we are about our daughter. However, since it is caught as a result of direct contact then it is unlikely that wee Willie had much chance of getting it anyway.

As for Norman Fowler, his words of concern have something of a hollow ring. His government cut £200,000 from the budget for high technology equipment at the Government's own research centre at Porton Down,

where they are developing a whooping cough vaccine that could reduce the risk of brain damage.

The present epidemic is the worst since mass vaccination started in 1955. It is directly linked to the drop in vaccinating that has taken place through fear of brain damage from the vaccine. All the figures point out that the risk of death or permanent damage (1 in 3,000) for children who get the disease far outweighs the risk of brain damage (somewhere between 1 in 100,000 and 300,000).

As worrying as the whooping cough epidemic must be the re-occurrence of diphtheria and a case of polio in Northern Ireland. These three diseases affected and killed many until 30 years ago. Increased vaccination and improved housing, nutrition and living standards generally were thought to have wiped them out.

The Government's present vaccination drive might stem the tide. But unless the working class stop the cuts and driving down of living standards by getting rid of this Tory Government then all the poverty and bad living conditions of the 1930's that allowed these diseases and many others to ride rampant will return.

By Jane Ingham  
(West Leeds Labour Party)

# Views behind the news

During the 1979 lorry-driver's strike one TV reporter searched high and low through farms, trying to find chickens who had died due to lack of foodstuff. The search was in vain until he entered a Co-op and killed 25 chickens through shock when he switched the TV filming lights on.

This example of the ludicrous lengths to which the media will go is taken from the excellent new book, "Really Bad News", published by the Glasgow

University Media Group. Explaining how BBC and ITV television news programmes are biased, this book is a development, in a less academic and more popular style, of their previous books, "Bad News", and "More Bad News".

The three main areas of TV news examined are 'Industry', 'the Economy', and 'the Labour Party'. The essence of their argument is that, in reporting these issues, the news programmes adopt as their own standpoint only one point of view with the reporting being organised around this.

In industrial news,

management or government views usually form the basis of programmes and their explanation. The economic reporting also presents the activities of unions as being the force of "trouble" rather than the normal workings of capitalism.

In reporting the Labour Party, the issues are presented from the point of view of the right wing. Thus in the 1980 leadership election, the left were always presented "as a surgent force variously engaged in "bullying", "intimidation", "black-mail", "undue pressure" and "dictatorship".

The writers make suggestions for democratic control of TV, but shy away from suggesting that workers' control and management is needed to break the control of the ruling class and its ideas. The book as a whole though, is very readable and interesting and should be of value to all socialists.

A member of Hampstead LPYS reviews "Really Bad News" by members of the Glasgow University Media Group (price £2.95 published by Writers and Readers Co-op.)

# Private Barons who profit from water

Much attention has recently been focused on the Tories' plans for privatisation of parts of public industries: gas showrooms, British Telecom, Railway Hotels, etc.

These plans must be resisted by the trade unions and Labour Party, but at the same time we should remember that a very important part of the 'public sector' is still in private hands. Most people think of the water and sewerage industry as being a public utility, controlled by local authorities, or, since 1974, the Regional Water Authorities.

In fact, however, there are 28 private water companies in England and Wales, owned and controlled by private shareholders, enjoying the benefits of monopolies making profits from an essential resource (i.e. water). None of these companies are involved in the unprofitable side of sewage disposal.

Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company, for instance, supplies water to Tyneside and much of Northumbria, a population of about 781,000. The chairman, **Michael Ian Bowstead-Straker**, is a farmer, educated at Eton, served in the Coldstream Guards, he

By  
Gavin Dudley

keeps himself busy being also chairman of Newcastle Area Health Authority (Teaching), and a member of Newcastle University Court of Council. He is a former chairman of the Northern Area Conservative Association (1969-72) and High Sheriff of Northumberland (1977).

Also on the board is **Sir William Elliott**, Conservative MP for Newcastle North, former vice chairman of the Conservative Party Organisation ('70-'74), he describes himself as a 'farmer', and is President of the Water Companies Association.

Another board member is local industrialist **Sir John**

**Hunter** (chairman of the Swan Hunter Group 1957-79, chairman of the North East Broadcasting Company Ltd., director of Common Bros Ltd., Midland Bank, formerly on the British Employers Confederation etc.). Tynesiders should obviously be grateful to Sir John that he spares a little of his time to keep the water flowing into our taps!

On a turnover of about £9m (all figures based on 1979/80) they managed to pay dividends of £954,085. The total spent on dividends, corporation tax and interest was over £2,365,000, more than the year's wage and salary bill!

## Nationalise 28 private companies

Other notables on the boards of the water companies are: **Major Sir Rennie Mandsay**, chairman of Mid Southern Water Company. He is also keeper of the Privy Purse, Treasurer to the Queen, Director of Lyon, Lohr & Sly Ltd., member of Lloyds Press and a former president of Farnham Con-

servative Association.

**Lt Col Sir George Meyrick** is chairman of West Hampshire Water Company. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He enjoys relaxing in the Calvary and Guards Club.

**Lt Col W H L Gordon**, a director of Rickmansworth & Uxbridge Valley Water Co has interests in the John Holt & Co Ltd., Lonhro Exports Ltd, and the Uganda Co Ltd. He hired out his business experience to the Minister of Overseas Development as an adviser ('71-'75)

The Bristol Waterworks Company board boasts the **Lord Darling** (2nd Baron), a retired Major from the Somerset Light Infantry, educated at Wellington College and Sandhurst.

Essex Water Company is the largest of the 28, supplying 1,349,000 people, with assets of over £60m. The chairman is the **Hon Peter Brassey**, a Lt Col, Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire since 1975, educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Just in case Peter can't cope he can always turn for support from fellow board member **Admiral Sir Andrew Lewis**—Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum

of Essex, formerly Commander in Chief of the Naval Home Command and Flag ADC to the Queen (don't worry if you've never heard of these jobs before either).

The **Lord Tweedsmuir** is on the board at Folkestone & District. **Lord Chichester**

**Lea Valley Water Authority:**  
**Deficit**  
**—£800,000**  
**Payment to Shareholders**  
**—£872,491**  
**Result**  
**—Increased Rates.**

is deputy chairman at Colne Valley. Many of the companies are linked together through their board members:

**Charles C Doewra** is on the Board of the Essex WC, the Tendring Hundred WC and the North Surrey WC, whose chairman, **Sir Leonard Mills**, is also chairman of Sutton District WC, whose board member **Peter D Davey** is also on the board

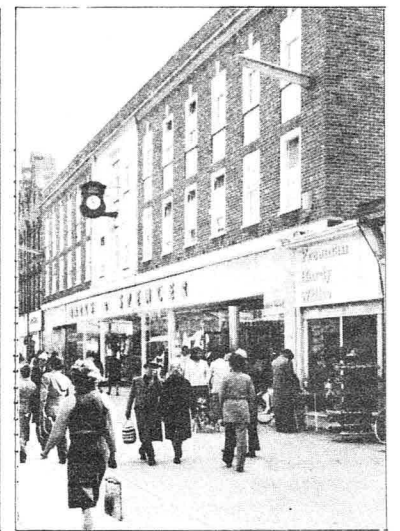
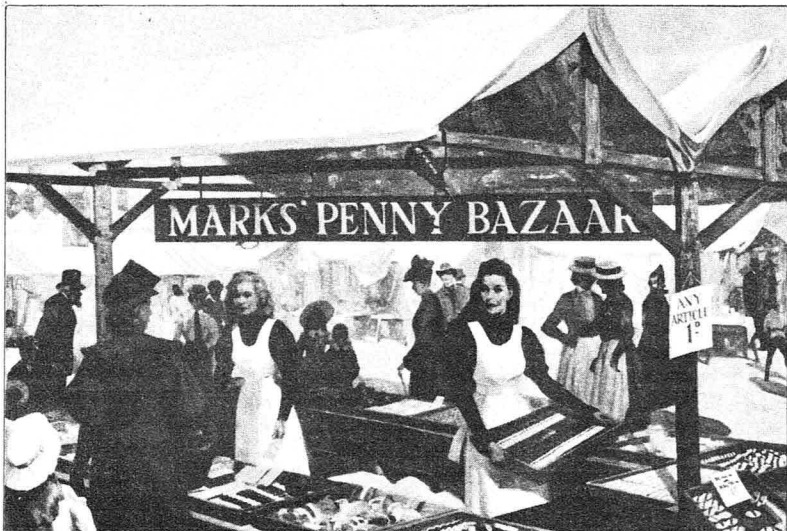
at Lee Valley, North Surrey and East Surrey WCs. This is just one example. There are many, many others.

A study of the 1979/80 Accounts of 26 of these companies shows total assets of nearly £400m. Total income (nearly all from domestic and commercial water rates) of about £160m. Total dividends paid out was about £16m.

Mid Southern paid out £1,394,477 in dividends, compared to £1,869,223 paid to employees. Dividends were equivalent to nearly £5,000 per employee—anyone for a pay rise?

Lee Valley had a particularly hard year. They ended up with a deficit of nearly £800,000. This unfortunately meant increases in rents for their tenants (some of their properties were previously let free). A standing charge was introduced on the water rates, pushing up water bills for the poorer off. Of course, the shareholders mustn't be discouraged—they received dividends of £872,491, more than the deficit on the year!

The labour movement must demand the nationalisation of these 28 companies and their integration into the regional water authorities. The jobs of the employees should be guaranteed in a reorganisation of the water industry which would release resources for the expansion of such areas as water quality, pollution control and sewer repairs and modernisation.



From a small business at the end of the last century, Marks and Spencers have grown to have stores in a number of European countries, with a turnover measured in millions of pounds.

As times get harder, union organisation becomes ever more necessary, a lesson well illustrated by **Jo Speakman**, who worked for Marks and Spencer in the Rochdale area—until she was sacked.

As a Marks employee, Jo was subject to an annual appraisal of her work. Described in her Conditions of Employment booklet as "an opportunity to comment and discuss your future progress," Jo's appraisal led her straight to the dole queue.

She was criticised for her size, for not wearing enough make-up, not being of 'fresh appearance' when entering the store, being clumsy, aloof, and not fitting into store society.

From the nature of these criticisms, you might think Jo was an area manageress, or at very least a high-fashion salesgirl. She was, in fact, a part-time kitchen assistant, whose job was to serve dinners and wash pots

## 'THEY WANT A MISS WORLD TO DO THE WASHING-UP'

By Linda  
Chester

in the canteen.

The appraisal starts with a period of surveillance by management, followed by an interview. In Jo's case, because management wanted to fire her, there was also a final interview.

She was told she could take a friend along, and she asked me to go. I was told, however, that I could watch and listen, but take no part.

The atmosphere was hostile and distressing for Jo. Her immediate supervisor and another told her of their views of her—and it didn't include one good word.

Amazingly, one of their complaints was that she had once forgotten the salt and pepper pots from the manager's lunch tray. Such behaviour was just not acceptable: "We mustn't get

complacent, even behind the scenes," they said.

Said Jo: "They hired me when I was this size, and never told me they expected me to lose weight. The company doctor is very pleased with me because I have lost 12 pounds, even though he has told me I would find it very difficult to diet.

### Complaint—she forgot the manager's salt and pepper pots.

"I hadn't been told to wear make-up until a month ago. So I started, and they're still not satisfied.

"I work in a kitchen, so I have to be very careful about hygiene, so of course I'm

fresh when I go into the store. They insist that I'm clumsy, but I can't see why. After all, I'm bound to make some noise loading a dishwasher. They say I don't fit into the society of the store, but I've been to most of their parties, and have some very good friends there.

"I either deny or have an answer for everything they've said about me, but still they insist on sacking me. The truth is that I do my job well, and management want me out because they can't mould me.

"Because I have been working there for less than 12 months, I can't even go to an industrial tribunal to try and prove unfair dismissal. Now they say they will give me a fair reference—that I was dismissed, but without

giving the reason. That is worse than no reference at all. It implies that I could have been sacked for dishonesty.

"Marks and Spencer are notoriously anti-union, although they say they're not. I think they want blood.

### Paternalistic management—only way to defend rights is to build up USDAW

Out of a basic wage of just over £20 a week, I have to pay £3.15 in travel, plus a weekly trip to the firm's

hairdresser. Now it seems they want to see Miss World doing the washing up. They expect rather a lot for their money, I think.

"The only answer for shop workers is to build USDAW until it is strong enough to take on these bosses who masquerade as progressive, but really exploit their workers to the limit.

"And USDAW must have the vision too, to see that so long as big business exists this kind of thing will go on, and the only real solution is a socialist one. After all, M&S has considerable other business interests, and it isn't as if the workers there are any better off."

# Steel

## Criminal neglect by bosses

**Once again, the knife is at the throat of the steel industry. There is a growing threat of further closures of major plants in the British Steel Corporation.**

The great sacrifices of steelworkers in recent years which they were told would "save" steel are all in vain as BSC look to shed thousands more jobs.

The cause of the crisis in British Steel is not the workforce, but the collapse of British industry. Steel is a basic material used throughout a modern industrial society.

The demand for steel is a measure of the health of an economy. In 1973/4 demand was nearly 20 million tonnes, but now it is down to 12 million tonnes with no sign of real improvement. The economy as doctored by capitalism is seriously ill.

The industries that use steel are being destroyed. Since 1972 the car industry has declined 50%, construction 40% and metal working machine tool manufacture by 70% while in the last two years 750,000 jobs have disappeared in engineering. This is the size of the crisis.

No amount of "effort" by steel workers can sell steel to non-existent customers. BSC relies on the privately owned sector of the economy to buy steel, yet these days the market has shrunk. The steelworkers' nightmare is part of the horror of a Britain ruled by profit seekers.

The Tories try to hide their guilt by blaming the world recession. It is certainly true that the entire capitalist world is in decay but Britain is rotting faster. Home consumption of steel has fallen in the last decade by 37%. This is a far sharper decline than all other major countries, France has declined 21% Germany 18%, Belgium 15% USA 7%, while in Italy consumption has increased by 7%.

The vanishing of industry has left BSC, like a cartoon character, running in mid-air with no support. BSC has had a desperate policy of chopping back as demand collapses, but to no avail, the problems continue.

This spiral of decline has seen manned capacity fall by 11 million tonnes to 14 million tonnes. But still the bottom falls away, and plants work at a mere two thirds of capacity. The total production of BSC is now less than the 12m that was planned in 1972 for Teesside alone.

The crisis has also hit the private sector. In five years 33,000 jobs and many plants have closed. The madness of capitalism is shown by the closure of the Dupont works at Llanelli, one of the most modern arc plants in Europe. But the Tories are determined that the na-

tionalised sector, as always, should pay for the failure of private ownership.

The BSC was forged from the run-down parts of the steel industry. The most profitable sectors including special steels and stockholding were left in private hands.

BSC was born with a massive burden of debt from the extravagant compensation paid to the old owners, costing £45 million a year. When the industry began to modernise, after the decades of private neglect, the cost was huge, with massive overheads like £207 million paid in interest in 1979.

The Tories are attacking all the nationalised industries. In steel they are letting BSC be destroyed. Macgregor's contract includes payment for denationalisation, and already parts have been privatised through the Phoenix scheme, while Redpath, Dorman Long has been sold off to Trafalgar House on the cheap.

As well as antiquated plant, huge debts, a declining market and Tory attacks the workforce have also have to fight against the breath taking incompetence of management. Only they could waste millions by such 'investment' as £5 million on electric cable for a furnace that wasn't built.

**The central problem is the failure of British capitalism who have run the economy down from the workshop of the world to the junkyard of the world**

An extra burden to BSC is its decline in world trade. Until 1979 Britain was a net exporter of steel. It has recently lost sections of the home market and is likely to lose a large part of its US market due to import tariffs being imposed.

Time and again the workforce has been promised that after one more round of cuts the future will improve. Meanwhile the workforce in BSC has been slashed as Ebbw Vale, Hartlepool, East Moors, Shelton, Bilston, Shotton, Corby, Consett have all been butchered.

The number of jobs at all the remaining plants has also been cut back. In 1973 BSC had 227,000 workers, in April 1982 it was 84,000. But still they want to cut back more. The danger is that so

much of the BSC has been cut that any more blood letting will kill it off.

Redcar and Ravenscraig are under threat, but the board room of BSC must be a madhouse to consider closing down two modern plants. Redcar blast furnace has only been working 3 years and cost £400 million to build.

The workers have paid enough to the system. Over 140,000 jobs have gone, and many towns been destroyed, while living standards have fallen, and the safety record has seriously worsened. On Teesside six maintenance workers have died so far this year.

The unions must call a halt. Steelworkers are going to fight. At this year's ISTC conference it was pledged to "fight to the finish" over any closures. The objective must be a united campaign of all the workforce.

There must be no more divide and rule. Already there is a whispering campaign trying to set plant against plant, which must be countered with a campaign to build unity and confidence.

**The fight to save Scotland's steel plants**

See page 14

The mineworkers showed last year that the best laid plans of the Tories and the pro-capitalist chiefs of the nationalised industry could be stopped by a fight. The steelworkers have been far from backward in fighting for jobs, but in the past they were left to fight alone.

No more! A united fight with all the workforce actively involved through regular meetings, demonstrations and newsheets building links with other industries and communities is the way forward. With the support of the Triple Alliance, the miners and railworkers whose jobs are so interdependent with steelworkers, and with the aid of the trade union movement, steel closures could be stopped. Unity is strength.

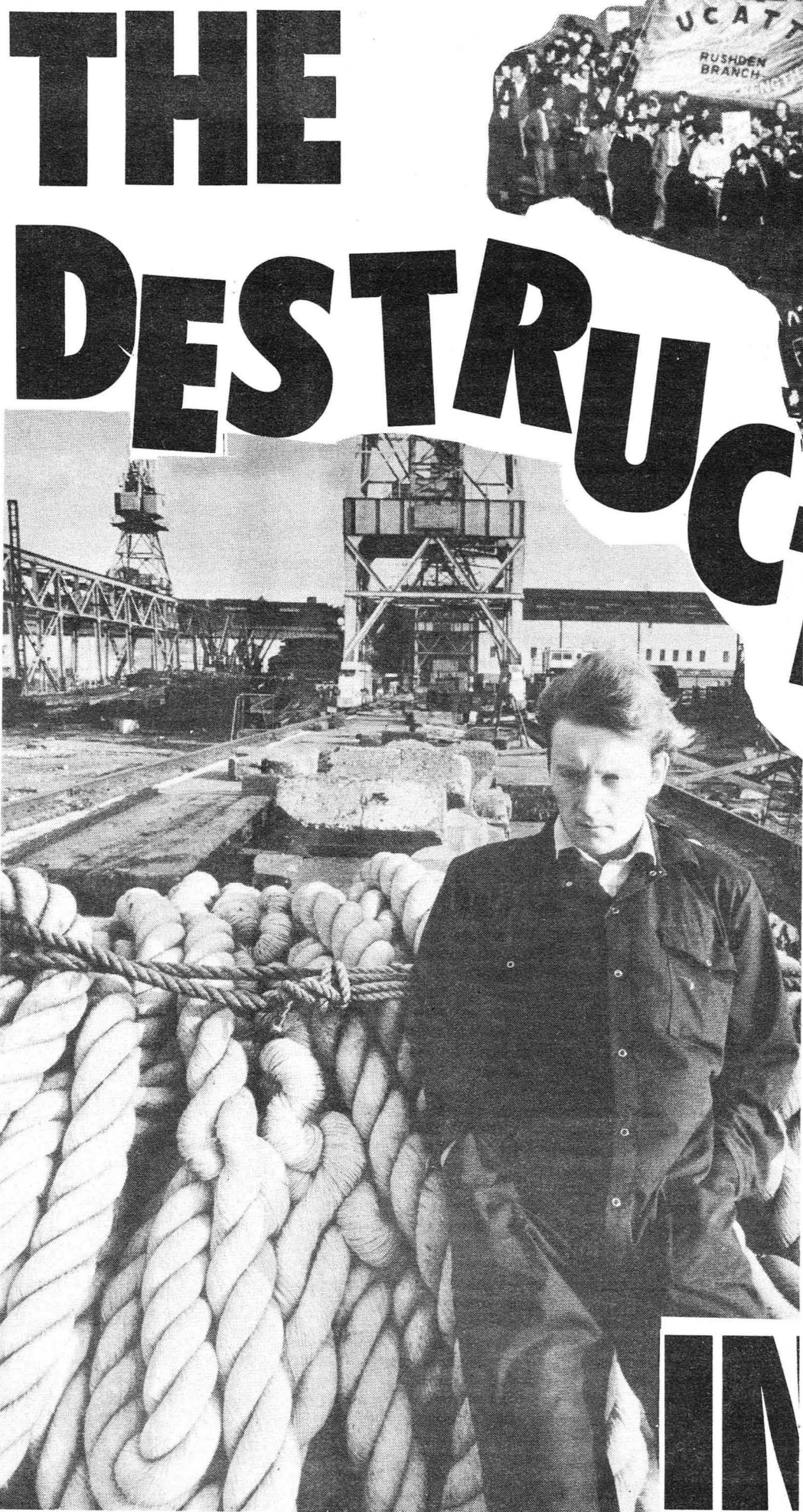
The BSC and the Tories won't be moved by pleas for compassion and for reasonableness; such tactics have cut little ice with the Tories even in the Health Service.

All they understand is strength. The fight for jobs is political, and has to be linked to challenging the government and their crazy system.

All the facts show that the central problem is the failure of British capitalism who have run the economy down from being the workshop of the world to the junkyard of the world. In 1945 the British steel industry had an advantage, when Germany and Japan had virtually no steel industry while Britain produced 12.7 million tonnes.

Today over 35 years later Britain produces less steel than in 1945. What a monument to the criminal neglect of capitalism and the Tories. Yet steel is needed to build a society, and there are endless needs and uses for steel to improve Britain and the world.

The Tories offer no future for steel or society. A socialist Labour government can build that future with a plan of industry. Steel will play a crucial role in a publicly owned plan of production for the benefit of all.



The shipyard at Robb Caledon, Dundee occupied in autumn 1981 with support from many shipbuilding workers nationally. PHOTO: MILITANT

**Water workers, Post Office engineers, Steel workers, Health Service workers. All of them will be taking action in the next week against this reactionary Tory government in defence of jobs, wages and the future of their industries.**

The steel industry is a perfect example of what to expect under the Tories. Wage increases have been sacrificed for the last three years. Whole towns have been murdered, the communities virtually destroyed. Productivity has been increased. And the result? More redundancies—5,000 more, and the possibility of closure of one or two of the industry's major plants.

The Tories view the future of millions of working people with utter contempt. They have a blind disregard of the effect of their policies. But such a haughty stance

## PREPARE TO B

has had its effect.

Swelling up now is the discontent, anger and frustration which has been accumulating since the Tories come to office. The worm is beginning to turn.

The mood of workers is changing. Reports from the steel plants indicate that the workers have decided—this far and no further. The carrot of redundancy money will not have the same effect. Workers know the meaning of 4 million on the dole, and the money soon runs out.

**Unity is Strength**

Feeling the pressure, from below, for determined action against the Tories, has led to

the calling of a number of national one-day actions. The water workers will conduct their first national stoppage on 18 October. The workers in British Telecom will be striking on 20 October to try and prevent their industry being sold off to the financial vultures—who are eager for rich easy pickings.

The idea of a general strike to bring down the Tories is becoming commonplace. So why are the national disputes not tied together? Unity is strength.

The Tories understand only one language—that which hits their pockets and profits. They can withstand token days of action. But the working class united in strike action is a different matter altogether.

Of course the Tory press will scream about it being a





Steelworkers march in opposition to the closure of Corby in 1979.  
PHOTO: MILITANT

# THE TONGUE OF HEAVY INDUSTRY

Steel article by Bill Hopwood  
Shipbuilding article by Ray  
Physick

## BRING DOWN TORIES

political strike to bring down the government. But the issue has to be faced squarely. It is a political struggle, because behind the attempts to cut wages, jobs and sell profitless parts of nationalised industry stands Thatcher and her crew. They represent the interests of the boardrooms and intend to solve their crisis at the expense of the working class.

### For a 24 hour general strike

By drawing together these struggles through organising a 24 hour general strike these issues could be clearly put. Drawing on the experience of health workers, telecommunication workers and steel workers it would be

possible to explain what the Tories' measures really mean.

At mass meetings, demonstrations and rallies the message could be explained that on the basis of capitalism there is no remedy—except at the expense of workers. Reforms are no longer possible. Only a programme of socialist change can find a solution.

In this way it would be possible to drive home the idea of the Labour government taking over the 200 monopolies with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need. This would allow the introduction of a socialist plan of production.

The interests of workers in these coming struggles are tied together. Whatever happens in the steel industry will affect the railworkers and



miners, and vice versa.

A 24 hour General Strike, involving the 12 million-workers organised through the TUC would have the effect of a political earthquake, and prepare the way for bringing down the Tory government.

# Shipbuilding Workers management the only answer

**A massive slump faces world shipbuilding. At present 90% of world shipping orders are due for delivery at the end of next year.**

**With a huge surplus of ships, many of which are 'mothballed', there is no possibility of an up-turn in the market.**

For the thousands of workers employed in shipbuilding and allied industries, the future looks very bleak indeed. With this Tory government in power, yard closures and massive lay-offs are threatened. The example of British Steel should act as a warning of what happens when the Tories apply their economic "remedies".

Formerly, Britain was the greatest shipbuilding country in the world. But under the stewardship of private ownership the industry has been ruined.

Unconcerned with investing money back into the industry and being more intent on making the fastest possible profit, they totally mismanaged, mis-directed and wrecked the industry.

The figures speak volumes. World tonnage launched doubled between 1951 and 1957, doubled again between 1957-68 and again between 1968-75. Yet, during these 25 years, UK production remained static and the workforce shrunk by 100,000.

In 1949 British shipyards launched a total of 1.2 million gross registered tons (g.r.t.) in merchant shipbuilding. The rest of the world produced 2 million g.r.t. while Japan launched 148,000 g.r.t. By 1976 world merchant tonnage reached 31 million g.r.t. The British share was only 1.3 million g.r.t., yet Japan's share was a fantastic 15.8 million g.r.t.

Lack of investment is the major explanation for such a rapid decline. In 1970, assets per shipyard employee in Japan totalled £2,800; £1,800 in Sweden but only £825 in Britain. Little wonder that overseas shipbuilders managed to capture a bigger and bigger share of the shipbuilding market.

Reliance on the home market further worsened the situation. In 1956 Japan overtook Britain as the largest shipbuilder. At that time 35% of British made oil tankers were for export; in Japan over 80% were for export.

Depending on home markets meant that the British shipbuilders had to produce a large variety of ships. Japan, however, geared production to the needs of the world market.

As these needs changed British shipbuilders found themselves in a difficult situation. Held back with an-

tiquated machinery, they were unable to produce the new types of ships and thus British shipowners were forced to buy abroad. This particularly applied to the development of supertankers.

In the 1950's and 60's, most oil had to be transported from West Africa and the Middle East. The supertankers were developed for these journeys. But now that oil is produced from Mexico and the North Sea, often only short distances are covered to supply the American and European continents. This, together with the world recession, has created enormous over-capacity in the tanker market.

Ten years ago the world tanker order book was 96m dead weight tonnage (dwt), two years later it soared to 231m dwt. Today, many shipyards have gone to the wall because they poured investment into building large crude carriers and supertankers. Over 100m dwt of tankers are today laid up. Last year's order books for tankers were a mere 13.5m dwt.

The owners were only too glad to sell off the shipyards they had brought to the brink of ruin. Moreover they had the audacity to demand lavish compensation.

Of course the crisis in British shipbuilding cannot be separated from the world economic crisis, but its dramatic decline from being the world's leading shipbuilding country to today's sixth can be attributed to the ruinous policies of ship owners in the post war years.

The decline has continued since nationalisation. The workforce has been reduced by 20,000 to 66,000, the share of the world market has been reduced from 4% in 1975 to 1.4% in 1981. With the crazy logic of capitalism it is inevitable that there will be cutbacks and further redundancies.

A campaign is urgently needed to unite workers in the industry and to present an alternative to the present chaos. A corporate committee of shop stewards and convenors would be a first step in linking the individual yards together.

Foremost in a programme of action must be the de-

### World shipbuilding orders (million gross tons) at the end of March 1982.

POLAND	1.4	SPAIN	2.2
U.K.	1.1	JAPAN	11.8
YUGOSLAVIA	1.0	SOUTH KOREA	2.8

### World launched merchant tonnage

	World	Japan	Britain
1949	3,131,805	147,974	1,267,467
1959	8,745,704	1,722,577	1,383,387
1969	19,315,290	9,303,453	1,039,576
1976	31,046,859	15,867,828	1,341,274
1979	14.4 million	4.7 million	455,141
1981	16.9 million	8.4 million	188,521

Faced with the dramatic growth in shipbuilding in the late 1960s and 1970s, British yards made a belated attempt to climb on the bandwagon. Awash with massive government aid (there was no question of the owners investing their own money) British shipyards launched a programme of massive investment.

This investment programme appeared sound while the oil boom was at its peak but the recession of 1974-75 hit British shipyards hard. The British shipyard order book peaked in March 1974 reaching 7.519 million tons, but by December 1976 orders had dropped to 2.946 million tons. Moreover between January 1976 and March 1977 over 1.1 million tons of shipping orders were cancelled.

In 1977 at the time of nationalisation a member of British Shipbuilders commented that "Some yards have investment coming out of their ears".

A classic example of the anarchy of capitalist "free enterprise" is here exposed. The employers, however, put the burden of their crisis on the backs of the workers.

By the end of 1976, British yards had 40% spare capaci-

ty. The owners were only too glad to sell off the shipyards they had brought to the brink of ruin. Moreover they had the audacity to demand lavish compensation.

At present, the industry is run in a totally bureaucratic fashion, management are only concerned with balancing the books and showing a profit. To overcome this workers' control and management of the industry is needed. This could be organised by having boards with representatives in the industry, elected through their unions, the TUC and the government. Such elected representatives would be subject to recall and be paid the same wage as a skilled worker.

★ Oppose all redundancies and closures. Share out the work on full pay!

★ For a 35 hour week without loss of pay.

★ Nationalisation of shipping lines to plan future building programmes.

★ Nationalise ship-repair and allied industries.

★ Workers' control and management of the industry.

# PSOE heading for win-but socialist policies needed

## SPANISH ELECTIONS

As Spain prepares for general elections on 28 October, the workers' organisations are evident throughout Barcelona.

In the subways, train stations, streets and on buildings, in fact everywhere, their names, slogans, paintings and posters express the hopes and aspirations of the workers.

There is the massive reproduction of Picasso's 'Guernica', the small Basque town devastated by fascist bombing in the 1930s, just outside Barcelona's 'Sagrada Familia', revealing the suffering of workers. Another picture, on the Placa de Catalunya, proudly displays the red rose of the Catalan Socialist Party.

The workers' organisations show their aspirations with colourful paintings of pretty schools and houses: 'This is what we will build under socialism.'

On the advertising hoardings in the main streets, the Socialist Party (PSC-PSOE), unquestionably echoing the sentiments of workers throughout Catalonia, demands 'Por el cambio' (for the change).

This demand is rooted in the misery and hardship suffered by millions of workers throughout Spain. There are two million unemployed. In 1981 the trade unions, the UGT and CCOO, arrived at an agreement with the UCD (Tory) government limiting wage rises to between 8% and 13% in return for an extra 300,000 jobs. But the government promises have never materialised.

Unemployment benefit evaporates after a period of time, depending upon the length of employment. After

By Steve Higham

this there is nothing.

'Community service' exists for unemployed workers but this amounts to little more than organised misery. Payment for this work, while varying from area to area, can be as little as £6 per day; but you are not allowed the 'privilege' of working every day, and there are restrictions as to how many individuals in the same family can sell their labour in this way.

Indeed, such is the poverty that I have been approached several times by beggars in the railway stations and streets, occasionally showing some physical deformity. Sometimes they are men with children.

Low pay for those at work is a serious problem. Josefina, a hospital worker in Barcelona and a UGT and PSOE activist, showed me her monthly pay slip with a take home pay of 41,500 pesetas (about £50 per week). "This is not the lowest wage in the health service. Some workers, the cleaners and others earn far less, perhaps as little as 30,000 to 35,000 pesetas a month (about £40 per week)."

A skilled telecommunications engineer, Cristo, an employee in the national telephone company, an activist in UGT *telefonos* and once again a PSOE member,



A Socialist government needs to break the power of the old State apparatus and power of the 100 families, or they will be broken by it.

told me that the average take home pay in his industry amounted to about £60 per week.

Housing also presents an appalling problem, in particular for the youth. One young worker, a conscript soldier, explained: "In the past, say 10-15 years ago, it was possible to have a decent home if you had two jobs or by working overtime. Now this is impossible. Buying a home is out of reach for most people. In Barcelona, people suffer the most terrible housing conditions although there are plenty of new, vacant flats. They are not taken, because it would cost almost half of your salary to pay for them."

Linked to these problems is the struggle of Spain's national minorities for autonomy, which has given rise to ETA terrorism in the Basque provinces of Northern Spain. Historically, there are three national minorities in Spain—in Galicia, the Basque country (Euzkadi) and Catalonia—but such is

the crisis of Spanish capitalism, that also in Andalusia, the country's poorest region, the call for autonomy is receiving wider and wider support.

This is an expression of the general discontent with the present crisis-ridden system which is run by the government in Madrid.

It is little wonder that the government party, the capitalist UCD, has virtually no support left, particularly in the main workers' cities, and is likely to suffer a humiliating defeat in the general election on 28 October.

It is widely expected that the Socialist Party (PSOE) will win a handsome majority and assume power. This would be the first time the socialists have been in government since Franco's fascist dictatorship was imposed in the late 1930s.

Election meetings are being organised by PSOE activists in the main factories. Papers, stickers and election programmes are being

distributed in the streets, squares and plazas. PSC activists are contrasting workers' homes, distributing party material.

Following the victories of the French Socialist Party and PASOK in Greece, the election of PSOE with a massive majority will be another tremendous triumph for the working class in Spain and internationally. The workers expect a socialist government to carry through the transformation of society that is so desperately needed to end poverty and unemployment. For this, clear socialist policies are necessary.

But the PSOE leadership is showing no sign of understanding the need to break with the capitalist system. In fact they are even showing themselves reluctant to be swept into office on a majority vote for change, and are waging a 'low-key' campaign.

But election victory in itself is insufficient.

PSOE leader Felipe Gon-

zales has promised 800,000 jobs, but does not say where they will come from. The economy, he has claimed, will grow by 8%—but he does not say how.

The economy will only grow, jobs created and workers' living standards improved if the Socialist government implement a socialist programme. The last thing Spanish workers want is a victory followed by counter-reforms such as that adopted by Mitterrand in France or the last Labour government in Britain.

Supporters of the Spanish Marxist paper, *Nuevo Claridad* are campaigning for a 35-hour week without loss of pay, retirement at 60, work or full pay and a national minimum wage of 40,000 pesetas per month.

All these necessary measures will be possible so long as the PSOE, should they win, break the power of capital, by nationalising Spain's top 100 families which control the land, big banks and factories.

## COUP THWARTED BUT DANGER REMAINS

The "colonels' coup" planned for 27 October, the day before the elections, has been exposed—but it is another reminder of the deep tensions in Spanish society.

The aim was to prevent the victory of the Socialist Party. Such a government would be under pressure by the workers to carry through radical reforms. This is an intolerable prospect for many capitalists, already reeling under the weight of the recession, and the extreme right-wing officers and bureaucrats who still make up the backbone of the Spanish state apparatus.

Three colonels were arrested on 1 October but many more officers were obviously involved. The colonels are known to have

been in contact with ringleaders of the abortive coup of February 1981, who have been serving their 'sentences' in luxurious surroundings, with free access to visitors, telephone calls, etc.

The latest plot, it seems, was part of the plans for a return to military dictatorship that were hatched by the conspiracy of high ranking officers leading up to the February coup.

### Generals only opposed coup for tactical reasons

In fact the entire top of the officer corps and officialdom is a bastion of reaction built up under Franco and remaining virtually intact today. Workers will not be deceived by the verbal repudiation of the coup

by the Supreme Military Council last week, reaffirming their "loyalty to the King and the Constitution".

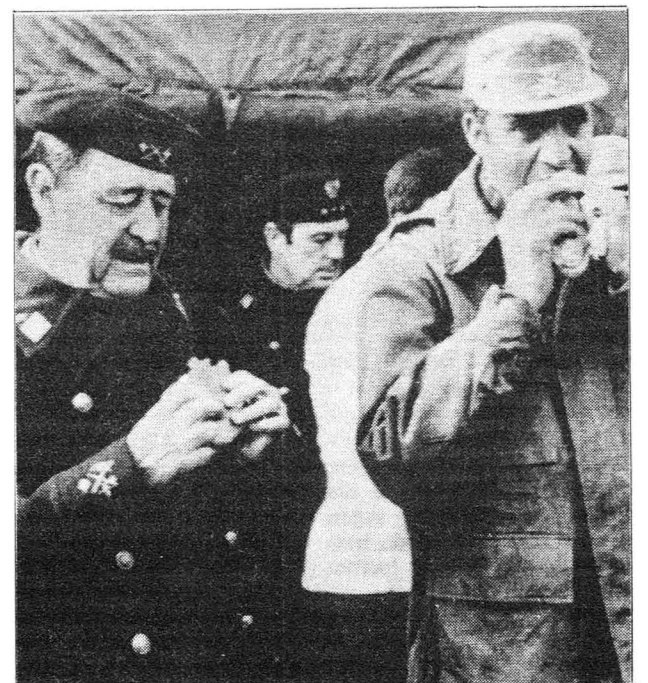
Significantly, what the general condemned was the "irresponsible behaviour of some army officers." The coup was thwarted, in other words, not because of any love of democracy on the part of the military establishment, but because it would have been a reckless and premature gamble from the ruling class point of view.

As in February last year, the capitalists and the generals have no wish to provoke a massive movement of the working class in defence of democratic gains, which they would be unable to control. The workers would not submit to a new dictatorship without gigantic struggles that would threaten the very survival of Spanish capitalism, as in the 1930s. This is the real reason for the

generals' present devotion to the Constitution.

But behind the scenes they will continue plotting and scheming to safeguard the interests of their class, biding their time until they are able to crush the workers' movement. The threat of future coup attempts can only be removed if the incoming Socialist government introduces bold socialist measures and at the same time acts decisively to purge the state of fascist elements, dissolve its organs of repression and bring the armed forces and the bureaucracy under democratic working-class control.

By George Collins



King Juan Carlos with General Milans del Bosch, leader of the February coup last year.

# Hong Kong: Tories and Chinese bureaucrats— Alliance to crush democratic rights

“At the very bottom 750,000 people live in rickety huts, perched precariously on cliffs and in rocky gullies, without some or all of the services of electricity, water or sewage, and vulnerable to landslides and fires.

“The house of Wong Wai Chu, his wife and their baby, for instance, is a packing case shack, somehow glued together with a hundred or so others, to the side of a hill...The room is twice as big as a lift...” (*Guardian* 30/12/81)

This is life for one in seven of the people who live in the world's most overcrowded colony, Hongkong.

Hongkong was a late addition to the British Empire back in the nineteenth century and is now one of the last relics of the heyday of British capitalism.

Five million people live here, the overwhelming majority in terrible poverty and frustration to the extent that several riots have broken out in the last year. On the other hand a few thousand people live in luxury, creaming the profits from industry, finance and commerce in this ‘gateway to the Far East’.

British imperialism grabbed the colony after the Opium Wars of the last century, when they successfully imposed that drug on Chinese society. According to the treaty then enacted, Britain will hand back most of the colony to China in 1997.

Margaret Thatcher's visit to China recently was precisely to discuss the ‘transition’ of the island into Chinese sovereignty and to find out if British big business could grab a bigger share of China's \$20 billion import market.

But Margaret Thatcher did not even bother to put

By Phil Frampton

forward the pretence that she is representing the democratic wishes of the people of Hongkong, the mass of whom are of Chinese descent. No outcry here over their ‘rights,’ no spending millions of pounds to implement the ‘wishes of the people’. For unlike the Falkland Islanders, the livelihood of 70% of Hongkong's people is making profits for the multimillionaire tycoons who run the economy.

Those with jobs are forced to work up to 12 hours a day seven days a week, to provide for their families. Despite 98% of the population being Chinese, English is the main teaching language in most secondary

## Thatcher's army of ‘liberators’ in the Falklands are jailers in the Far East

schools and the main language for business. Classes are so crowded—45 or more—that according to the *Financial Times*, teachers have to speak to the pupils via public address systems! have to speak to the pupils via public address systems!

Under such conditions the British ruling class—if it wants to maintain its super-exploitation of the economy—cannot afford democratic rights. The people of Hongkong have no say in how their island is run and, unless they begin to wage a struggle,

will have no say as to whether they remain ‘British’ or Chinese. Thatcher's army of ‘liberators’ in the Falklands are the jailers in the Far East!

But should any of the islanders be worried about becoming part of the People's Republic of China, they can relax. The ruling clique in China may not want them. Hongkong is now of strategic importance to China's rulers as a link with the capitalist world, a source of foreign currency and a means of re-exporting \$(Hongkong) 16 billion to the west.

China even has a stake in the exploitation of the islanders. It is estimated that China, through its banks, controls 40% of the island's financial market, provides 50% of Hongkong's food, and owns factories, mills and dock facilities.

The cry for democratic rights for the islanders has not, therefore, come from Peking. On the contrary, the Chinese bureaucracy, with no pretence of defending the workers, are prepared to leave Hongkong under the dictatorship of a British appointed governor.

In return for this they are demanding economic concessions off the British government, which will be forthcoming if Thatcher wishes to save her profiteering friends and £800 million British exports to Hongkong. Some type of lease-back arrangement such as that being floated for the Falklands in the future, will be made. This will leave the workers of Hongkong in exactly the same hands as before.

Some of the Hongkong businessmen fear that Thatcher will make too many concessions at their expense, especially if she blunders as much as she did over the Falklands. They are even demanding ‘a bigger say in the running of the island.’

The leadership of the Labour Party should break from its past policy of connivance at the fate of the Hongkong workers and



The majority of Hong Kong's people live in terrible poverty and frustration

pledge the introduction of full democratic rights for the Hongkong people.

Successive British governments have even refused to implement in Hongkong ILO conventions on the right to organise and have decent working conditions. British trade unionists who have sister firms in Hongkong should raise the demands of

these workers and establish links to support the fight for decent wages.

But the only way in which the islanders could get true self-determination, faced with the overwhelming financial and economic domination of the big financiers and property owners, will be through the expropriation of the island's

industries by the working class. Combined with the struggle for worker's democracy in China, to end the wheeler-dealer diplomacy of the present bureaucratic regime, this can lead to a genuine worker's government in Peking to support the struggle of the people of Hongkong and all other capitalist countries.

## Thatcher re-arms Argentina

Even before the Falklands war has officially come to an end, Thatcher's ministers are busy re-arming the Argentinian junta. The *Manchester Evening News* reported, on 24 September, that the Defence Ministry sees no objections to supplying four Rolls Royce engines for two Argentine destroyers being built in West Germany.

No doubt the families of the dead and wounded servicemen and merchant seamen who supported the war in the belief that they were fighting an ‘evil dictatorship’ will be pleased to know that it was all a mistake after all.

The reason why the Tories once again see fit to arm the junta is because the junta



Called a ‘pirate’ by the Argentine press a few months ago, Thatcher has now re-established military and financial links.

will now get back to its normal activity of attempting to suppress the working class movement in the Argentine.

The trade unions in Rolls-Royce should embargo all work for the military police dictatorship.

# Left programme for Sri Lanka

The Nava Sama Samaja (New Socialist) Party is fighting the Sri Lankan presidential election on an unashamedly socialist programme called ‘The Seven Revolutionary Tasks’.

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, the NSSP candidate, has been speaking at many meetings throughout the island explaining this programme and urging the maximum opposition to the reactionary regime of J.R. Jayawardene.

As indicated in previous ‘Militants’, the capitalist Tamil leaders of the TULF have now openly called for a boycott of the election, which in practice means giving support to Jayawardene.

But it seems likely that many Tamils will in fact vote for Kobakkeduwa, the SLP candidate, in order to fight against Jayawardene. Kobakkeduwa is, however, toning down his radical rhetoric now, and this may affect his vote.

The NSSP, despite holding big meetings, do not expect to win a large number of votes. The vast mass of workers and peasants will vote for Kobakkeduwa as the only candidate who can defeat Jayawardene, which they see as the immediate objective. However, the votes which the NSSP does receive will be a clear vote for its revolutionary programme.

1. Mobilise the masses through strikes, demonstrations and other mass actions to force J.R. Jayawardene to resign immediately. Force Parliament to hand over all powers to the new president and then dissolve it.

2. Reinstate immediately strikers and other who have been thrown out of work.

2. Appeal to the people to form workers' committees and armed services' committees; recognise all such committees as the legal organisation of legal power; abrogate all repressive laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and restore the civic rights of those who have been unjustly deprived of them.

4. Convene a Constituent Assembly from delegates of workers, peasants and armed forces committees.

5. Declare the autonomy of the Tamil speaking people and recognise their fight of self-determination; give all citizenship rights to all plantation workers.

6. Mobilise the masses and with their intervention declare all foreign businesses, large businesses and land holdings nationalised and recognise the right of the tiller to the land.

7. a) Reduce income inequalities  
b) Take immediate steps to distribute essential goods to everyone at a reasonable price.

## OBITUARY

### Oswin Fernando

On 10 October, addressing an election rally of 1,500 workers, Comrade Oswin Fernando, Secretary of the Sri Lanka United Federation of Labour, collapsed and died. A pioneer of the Socialist and trade union movement in the 1940s, hero of the liberation struggle, a founder of the Nava Sama Samaja (New Socialist) Party and member of its Political Bureau, Oswin died as he had lived, in revolutionary struggle for the cause of the working

class. He will be remembered with affection by many British trade unionists following his visit to Britain in 1979. *Militant* sends its deepest condolences to Oswin's widow and family, his comrades of the NSSP who will be sorely afflicted by his loss in the middle of their historic electoral crusade, and the workers of Sri Lanka who will mourn him. We will publish a longer tribute to Oswin's memory in a forthcoming issue.



# Letters

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

MILITANT, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## No help for the old under capitalism

Dear Comrades

The capitalist press has made much during the Health dispute of the suffering of patients, due to the action of health workers in support of their pay claim. Little has been said about the suffering of patients caused, either by the cutbacks to services, or by the limited services which have always been all that was provided for such groups as the elderly, the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped.

In Poole 23% of the

population are of pensionable age. Yet for a population of about 130,000 in the area there are only 15 long-stay hospital beds for elderly, mentally-ill and senile people. As a result even emergency cases can expect to wait a year for a place in a hospital.

This means a further period of distress and strain for family, friends, and neighbours. In many instances these old people will be living in old people's homes or warden-serviced flats, greatly lowering the standard of life for other elderly people, and placing extra burdens on the warden or staff not equipped to deal

with people as ill as this.

A social worker gave me an example of this suffering recently. An elderly man, who cared for his senile wife, was admitted to hospital for an operation for cancer. His wife was moved to a short-stay hospital place for three weeks. After this period the old man was told that he was well enough to return home, but must not attempt to care for his wife at this stage.

However there was no alternative. His wife must return home as her bed was ready to be occupied by some-one else. So an elderly sick man was left to care for his senile wife only supported by a district nurse and

a home help.

Surely elderly people who have worked all their lives are entitled to expect that society care for them when they need help. But of course, under capitalism, what use are the elderly anymore, so they would have no priority for hospital care even under a thriving NHS.

Let us all fight for a socialist society, where people are cared for according to their needs, not according to their means or their 'use' to society.

Yours fraternally  
Jeanie Molyneux  
Dorset NALGO

## Watch out—there's a Tory snooper about!

Dear Militant

Recent attacks on teachers in general and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in particular have ranged from the vicious to the ridiculous.

On the one hand, Rhodes Boyson contemptuously rejected calls from the NUT for smaller classes on the ground that old-fashioned teachers could deal with large classes and only the incompetent left-wing progressives were interested in the 'numbers game.' This ignores the interesting fact that the best pupil-teacher ratios exist in the public schools—or are they riddled with leftists, Dr Boyson? He also ignores volumes of research which shows how pupils receive more individual attention in smaller groups.

On the other hand, attempts are made to suggest that the NUT has been taken over by 'extremists'. The apparent inability of the NUT Executive to take any action on a mild anti-nuclear motion passed at conference suggests otherwise. Nevertheless the accusation reflects a genuine fear on the part of the Tories that their social base in 'professions' such as teaching is being eroded.

This erosion is not due to

extremist infiltrators but to the attack on education through public spending cuts which is forcing even the most moderate teachers into semi-opposition. I have seen avowed Tories and Liberals burning with indignation when the cuts start to affect them.

However, the latest effort of the Tory 'Social Affairs Unit' seems to be an effort to turn tragedy into farce. 'Detecting Bad Schools' by Dr Digby Anderson advises parents to be on the look out for bad teachers—'Trotskyists or lesbians', who can be detected because 'they wear badges.'

The good doctor suggests a sure-fire way of assessing the academic standards of a school—look at the ideological stickers on the teachers' cars and try to sneak into the staffroom and see if words like 'creche' or 'workshop' appear on the notice-board.

It is not enough that teachers should have to put up with cutbacks, overcrowded classes and derisory pay offers, we now have to be careful when opening our wardrobes in case some student of Dr Anderson is busy checking up whether we are Trotskyist lesbians!

Yours fraternally  
Derek MacMillan  
East Grinstead



Delegates, including Pat Wall (right), PPC for Bradford North, try to get into the debate at Labour Party conference. The passing of the register has angered many Labour Party activists. Photo: MILITANT

## Don't resign—stay and fight

Dear Comrades

Please find enclosed cheque for £16 from a Labour Party member who was so disgusted by the attacks on *Militant* by the right wing trade union leaders that he took out a subscription to *Militant*.

We had been watching the revolting spectacle of Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley (both of them on over £14,000 per year) trying to denigrate and deny the right of real socialists to be members of and MPs for the Labour Party.

Less than half an hour after this disgusting display finished, he phoned and asked out how he could take out a subscription.

Unfortunately, his son, an LPYS member, tells me his dad is thinking of resigning from the party. No socialist should take that step or make that mistake. It is the

party of the working class and we all have a duty, as much as a right, to fight and continue to fight for the interests of our class in our party.

Fraternally  
Deb Evans  
South Herts LPYS

## Help from Nationwide—for a change

Dear Comrades

Recently I saw the indisputable proof of how the right wing of the Labour Party dread *Militant's* ideas getting a fair and wide hearing.

During Nationwide on the first day of conference, when the register was passed, Sue Lawley was introducing *Militant's* ideas: £90 a week minimum wage, 35-hour week, workers' control of industry, nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords. As the BBC does, just now and again,

have to keep up some pretence of balance, it could not be avoided to spend appr. 20 seconds on these policies.

I was quite pleased at this unexpected deviation from the usual practice of lies, distortions, dished up with the occasional out of context quotation from Trotsky or Pat Wall. Evidently Denis Healey was not amused. Repeatedly during the programme he made open attacks on "naive Nationwide researchers" who have been taken in by the *Militant's* propaganda.

"That is why we have you here, to counter all their ideas!" reassured Sue Lawley, the presenter. This still had not placated him, he was evidently furious at such a public airing of extremist demands, like a job and decent living conditions for all!

His fury during that programme and his subsequent complaints to the BBC, demonstrate his total understanding of how lethal *Militant's* ideas are to him and the right wing—even

just 20 seconds' worth of them.

Yours fraternally  
A Brighton supporter

## No peace for Labour

Dear Comrades

'Peace, Jobs and Freedom' was the slogan of the 1982 Labour conference.

The conference failed to live up to its promise. There will be no peace in the Labour Party while the witch-hunt is in operation. There will be no jobs for dozens of people if the right wing force *Militant* to sack their employees. There will be no freedom to express your socialist views in the Labour Party while the right wing of the party save their abuse and slurs for the left wing of the Labour Party and not direct it towards the Tories.

'No peace, jobs, freedom' is the right wingers' slogan for the Labour Party.

Yours fraternally  
Barry Lewis  
Thanet West CLP

## A problem shared is a problem halved

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to read Margaret Pracy's letter (10/9/82) concerning her distraught friend. Her idea of phoning the Samaritans was a good one. Their method is simple and often

effective, to listen and thus share the problem.

Lenin himself suffered from moments of near despair. During the first world war when so called Marxists all over Europe were supporting their national capitalists, Lenin was isolated and impoverished in Switzerland. Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, wrote that he suffered spells when he could not do any work. He had to leave meetings early because

of blinding headaches.

Very few people go through life without a period in which it seems circumstances have ganged up on them with the intent of pushing the individual under.

Immediate practical steps to take to help the comrade in crisis are first to rally round. Don't ignore the problem, encourage the comrade to talk about it. Cliche or not, a problem shared is

a problem halved. Often some friendly advice may go a long way. Above all show compassion and be patient.

Although Margaret may have felt inadequate, I'm sure her friend felt cheered to know that she had someone to turn to who would spend time trying to help her.

Yours fraternally,  
John Simpson, South  
Belfast Young Socialists.

## How a 'moderate' welcomed Stalinist methods

Dear Comrades

The refusal of Sid Weighell (NUR) to carry out his union's mandate to vote in favour of the NUM nomination for the LP National Executive Committee, Eric Clarke, may well have shocked comrades as to the extent to which the right wing are prepared to go against their members' views in order to carry out a witch-hunt against *Militant*.

But I was even more shocked to read in the local newspaper, the *Leicester Mercury* that Jack Jones, secretary of the Leicestershire NUM, supported Sid Weighell's action. According to the *Mercury* (30/9/82) Mr Jones said that although he was sad that his union would have no representative, he felt in some ways it was bet-

ter to have no one rather than Mr Clarke.

"I feel that many unions wanted to ensure that this was a moderate executive committee and it was no way a reflection against the NUM...Mr Clarke is a left-winger and people in this country need to be persuaded by this conference that the left is not taking over the Labour Party.

"Many people have said that they are fed up to the teeth with the Militant Tendency and they don't want people to get into power who will make this country a satellite Communist state."

Well there you have it. Bro. Jones supports the suspension of democracy to prevent a left-winger retaining his NEC seat and then accuses us of being Stalinists. The sooner all NUM officials are elected, the better.

Yours comradely  
John Merrell  
Leicester

## Help the health workers who help us

Dear Comrades

I personally owe my life three times over to the health workers. It seems as if ever since I was born I have been in and out of hospitals. How many more workers and their families owe their lives to the dedication of these people.

But dedication doesn't pay their bills. This Tory government has forced health workers into strike action. That is where the blame

lies, not with the health workers.

*Militant* defends these people and tells the truth, not lies or slander.

What about all the people on waiting lists for operations? I had to wait over a year for mine. Not because nurses were on strike but because of not enough beds, staff, etc. to go round. If you were rich there was a bed straight away.

We must fight together to transform this profit before health system we live under.

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Zignani  
Peterborough LPYS

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Oct 9th.
Eastern	1600		2,000
East Midlands	1172		1,800
Hants & Dorset	933		1,300
Humberside	935		1,100
London East	1908		2,100
London West	749		1,000
London South	1874		1,500
Manchester & Lancs	1359		2,000
Merseyside	1541		2,100
Northern	1706		2,500
Scotland East	688		1,300
Scotland West	1419		2,300
Southern	1564		1,700
South West	1190		900
Wales East	486		1,000
Wales West	1888		2,000
West Midlands	1993		2,000
Yorkshire	2024		2,500
Others	8594		3,900
<b>Total received</b>	<b>33,623</b>		<b>35,000</b>

## Target £35,000 By October 9

# Massive effort puts us back near target

The right-wing leaders who want to counter our views have a lot of travelling to do. It's much easier to sit in London and declare Marxism to be illegal.

But their attacks have helped result in some of the largest ever readers' meetings and collections at these meetings have been one of our main sources of funds this week. In Glasgow, £330 was raised before expenses.

From Brighton, £52, (thank you Libby for the special donation). We've had £96 from Coventry, with a number of IOUs to come on top. £221 was collected at a Merseyside meeting, £20 put in from TV fees, and £10 from Sutton and Bold LP (St Helens).

£10 net came from a meeting in Perth, where presumably most of the meeting had quite a long way to travel. The Orkney Branch of the Labour Party have not had a readers' meeting but that did not stop them sending us £20.

On the other hand, £169, after expenses, came from a meeting in Bristol, and cash from Devon included money collected on a train on 22 September, and a meeting on 'What Militant stands for' organised by Tavistock LP.

£44 after expenses came from a meeting in Hammersmith, £160 from East Ham, £207.50 from Islington, while South London readers have ensured their line goes well over the target with an extra £362 to date.

Bradford supporters heard Pat Wall this week, and donated £185 afterwards, with an additional £30 from Huddersfield. £230 (including IOUs) came from a meeting in Newcastle, £14 from Ashington with £57 more from Teesside and £60 in Sunderland (plus £9.50 from Sunderland South GMC members).

By Steve Cawley

Bath meeting produced £24 clear (augmented by a sponsored parachute jump), £60 from Swansea and Port Talbot, £57 collected on appeal sheets from readers in the Cardiff South East area, £30 from Harlow and £20 from Canterbury meetings.

Fleetwood readers contributed £22, and there's a donation to come from a series of meetings in the Manchester area—at least £20 from Wythenshawe alone. Last but not least, £92.70 collected at a meeting in Southampton together with cash from a meeting of Fareham Central LP and some members of Gosport Labour Club shows that our class attitude to the recent Falklands war coincided with working class ex-

Selling the paper at Labour Party Conference. Ray Apps (left) talking to Alan Sapper, this year's Chairman of the TUC.



**THIS WEEK**  
**£11,730**

perience in these towns.

Thanks to LPYS Branches in Erith & Crayford, Stevenage, Blackley, Newcastle North, amongst others, also LP members in Beckingham (Kent) and Dukinfield (Tameside), Liverpool SOGAT 82 supporters, also anon. donations from Bradford pensioner and reader in Newcastle, Staffs.

Peter Taaffe donated his £30 fees from LBC radio, £3 came from a Swedish reader, MS Singh (Leeds) sent £2.20, S Cooper (Gravesend) donated pay for 22 September, and GMWU members at Kinkardin Power Station (Fife) held a collection for Militant after hearing a speaker. A Lewisham NALGO member sent us her expenses from a trade union school, and a collecting tin was rattled successfully at a factory gate meeting at Beeston Notts.

Individual donations of more than £10 came from C Goldie (Sheffield), B In-

grams (UCW, London), M Langmead (Bristol NE LPYS) and the Grant family (Narbeth, W Wales). Thanks also to clerical workers at Birmingham Poly, students S Nube (Salford) and C McNulty (Brunel) (both fivers), fun-run sponsors (W London), folk night (Basildon), stop the witch-hunt party (Bracknell), and Maidstone social organisers. The Kent total also benefitted from donations from A Dobson (Tunbridge Wells), T Johnston (Faversham) and J Woolf (Sevenoaks).

Although we will have 'closed the books' by the time you read this, we won't have closed Militant. We ask any of our readers who haven't helped us so far to send us now what you can afford (and who can afford this system?) to give us a big start to our final quarter's target for the year. Let's have a brilliant final total for 1982!

# ads

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

## MILITANT READERS MEETINGS. 'WHAT WE STAND FOR'

EALING: Tuesday 19 October at 8 pm. Speaker: Mike Waddington (Basildon CLP delegate to Labour Party conference) at Ealing Town Hall, Broadway, Ealing.

NORWICH: Fight Tories, not socialists. Wednesday 27 October, 7.45 pm, Duke Street Centre, Norwich.

COLCHESTER: Sunday 17 October, Labour Party Rooms, 7.30 pm.

TRETHOINAS: 20 October, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Andrew Price. Pnyrwern School, Trethoinas.

CAMBRIDGE: Monday 18 October, 8.00 pm. Speaker: Steve Glennon. At the Bath House, Gwydir Street (off Mill Road), Cambridge.

BRACKNELL: Monday 18 October, 8.00 pm. Speaker: Terry Pearce (delegate to Labour Party Conference). At Griffen House, High Street, Bracknell.

REDHILL: Wednesday 27 October at 8.00 pm. Speaker: Ray Apps (delegate from Brighton Kemp Town to Labour Party Conference). At Progress House, 164 Garlands Road, Redhill.

CROYDON: Tuesday 9 November at 8.00 pm at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon.

BEDLINGTON: 'Labour Party conference—which way now?' On Thursday 21 October at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Dave Archibald (delegate Newcastle West CLP to Labour Party Conference). At the Howard Arms, Bedlington.

CARDIFF: On Wednesday 27 October at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Ted Grant. At Royal Hotel, St Mary St, Cardiff.

CHESTERFIELD: Thursday 14 October, 7.30 pm. Speakers: Wayne Jones and Cliff Hawley (President Derby NUM, personal capacity). Rooms 3 & 4, Market Hall, Chesterfield.

OXFORD: Thursday 14 October, 8.00 pm. Speaker: Tom Smith (Coventry SE LP). East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street.

BASILDON: Thursday 14 October, Laindon Community Centre, Aston Road (near Laindon BR station). 8.00 pm.

BEDLINGTON Marxist Discussion Groups: Thursday 14 October—'Is Russia Socialist?' Thursday 4 November—'History of the Labour Party'. All start at 7.30 pm. Details P Marsden, Blyth 62098.

NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:

FOREST HALL: Details Dave Metcalfe, 0632 665277

NEWCASTLE WEST: Every Sunday. Contact Rob Lowther, 0632 775636.

NEWCASTLE NORTH: Every Sunday. Contact Karen Walker, 0632 732959.

GOSFORTH: Every Sunday. Contact Rob Dennison, 0632 844918.

SANDIFORD: Every Sunday. Contact Gavin Dudley, 0632 652906.

GATESHEAD: Every Sunday. Contact Tom McGuinness, 18 Lumley Gardens, Gateshead (Gateshead 783262).

WASHINGTON: Details, Washington 478424.

## CLASSIFIED

### LONDON DEBATE CANCELLED

The debate between Peter Taaffe and Neil Kinnock, advertised for 20 October, has been cancelled, as Neil Kinnock has withdrawn to go and speak at the Northfield by-election. It is hoped to arrange a new date later this year.

PIANO for sale 2'x4'x5'. Needs tuning & transport. Sold to highest bidder. Contact Dave Farrar 01-986 3828.

WANTED: Accommodation in East London area. Anything considered. Contact Tim White, Box 4, 1 Mentmore Terrace, E8.

A major event for the broad left. Unite in support of the alternative policies.

Friday 15 October, 7.30 pm, at Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London (near Kings Cross Station)

Speakers—for the health workers Roger Poole (NUPE national officer); Les Huckfield MP; Jo Richardson MP; John Aitken (EETPU Broad Left candidate for general secretary); Ian Brown (EETPU Broad Left candidate for National Secretary—plumbers).

Chair: Sean Geraghty (Electricians leader, Fleet Street). Sponsored by Tribune, Flashlight (EETPU) rank and file journal) and EETPU supporters of Labour.

'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 incl. p&p. From Nicki Westcott, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

(NB. Would Andrew, Paines Hill, please write again with full address so that his poster can be sent to him.)

'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: T-shirts £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 orders to R Harris, 35 Westminster Court, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1UR. All proceeds to Fighting Fund.

# Industrial Reports

## TELECOMMS

### Strike back at bosses

Almost 200,000 workers from three different unions, the POEU, the CPSA (P&T) and the SCPS (P&T) will strike for 24 hours on 20 October against the government's plans to denationalise British Telecom.

Preparations have already begun for an unprecedented display of unity in action. Given correct leadership and a well-thought-out programme of action, we have the strength and momentum to defeat Tory proposals for our industry.

Tory denationalisation plans span the entire public sector, from oil through airways to the NHS. Profitable industries or parts of industries are 'privatised' at bargain basement prices, supposedly to stimulate private profitability, bailing out 'private enterprise' in this recession.

The Tories also wish to undermine strong union organisation in nationalised industries through their tried and tested weapon of unemployment. Denationalisation has always brought redundancies in its wake as industries are made 'fitter' and 'leaner' in preparation for profit-hungry owners.

The sale of BT is exceptional only in being the largest denationalisation ever proposed. BT has estimated assets of £15,000 million. The treasury expect £2-£3,000 million from the flotation and this would be used to fund tax bribes in the run up to the next election.

Both workforce and customers would be victims of this public theft. A Department of Industry leak predicts 45,000 BT redundancies due directly to denationalisation on top of the effects of new technology or the slump.

As BT concentrates its contracts for supply and manufacture within the home market, 'privatised' BT will chase the cheapest overseas tenders with resultant closures in British private industry also.

Home telephone users will suffer deteriorating service at escalating prices. As prices for big business are lowered to combat cream-skimming operations from recently allowed private competition, domestic phones will increase prices to compensate. 'Unprofitable' services like kiosks and rural communications will be allowed to waste away.

Those who invested most in the industry, the public and the workforce stand to lose over denationalisation while only the Tories, their speculator friends and the financial institutions would gain.

The 24-hour stoppage on the 20th is most welcome, if

By Colin O'Callaghan

somewhat overdue, as the POEU Broad Left have been calling for such a stoppage since the BT Act 1981 split BT from the Post Office. We have continually argued for a protest strike to mobilise the members and draw attention to our case.

In isolation from a developed strategy, however, a day's stoppage would be little more than a gesture instead of a springboard for further action. Despite Executive resistance a flood of letters are presently circulating in the union calling for a special conference. We must develop a winning strategy and unite members behind it.

A conference would act as a rallying point and a forum for ideas which up until now the union has not had the opportunity to debate.

The Executive's initial response has been based largely upon the Tories' declared intention not to sell until after the next election, so great emphasis was placed on the return of a Labour government. Now the favoured government option is to sell before the election

with share sales open to all telephone users, making reversal extremely difficult. This reinforces the case for a special conference to draw up an effective defence.

The POEU in particular has a great deal of industrial muscle, the full force of which has never been unleashed. We cannot afford to pull our punches now. The POEU Broad Left advocates escalating sanctions against financial institutions and big business interests who stand to gain most from denationalisation.

The POEU can and must direct industrial action against selective targets to hit the Tories' paymasters without undermining our campaign for public support.

Every nationalised industry is under attack, yet our opposition remains isolated. The solidarity re-kindled during the health workers' dispute must be harnessed in defence of the public sector.

The POEU and its sister unions in BT should take the initiative at national, regional and local level to call for the creation of public sector defence committees and turn them into fighting forces capable of stopping the Tories in their tracks.

## Waterworkers

In last year's pay deal the Water Council agreed to move towards wage levels which would be in line with the gas and electricity industry.

Their memories are obviously short, because this year they have offered the water workers absolutely nothing in reply to the claim for a 15% rise. The response of the trade union side has been to recommend a 24 hour strike, which would be the first ever national water workers strike.

As Ray Gray, Northern chairman of the water workers explained, "it's not as though this section of workers is asking for the earth." The basic pay for the highest grade on the manual side is £82.

"Then added to this is the

bonus. This is for basically working in one big toilet, with tunnels of average size, so you are bent double. Its claustrophobic, wet and dirty. You are constantly faced with the dangers of drowning and of gas and chemical waste. You don't know what has been dumped into the sewerage system.

For this type of work, essential to the whole of society, you would expect that workers would receive a decent living wage. This time they are determined to make sure they get it. In Ray's words: "there's so much we could do in our industry with the power that we have."

Ray Gray spoke to Dave Cotterill

## USDAW Broad Left

The general conference of the Broad Left in the shop-worker's union USDAW held last weekend laid plans to begin the campaign for Broad Left candidates for the union's NEC, and endorse Jeff Price's candidature for the USDAW president elections.

As a first step, they will be aiming for nominations from branches. The campaign will concentrate on the

fight for a £90 minimum wage, a 35-hour week and a joint campaign with other unions against low pay. Other vital policies taken up will be opposition to redundancies and closures, protection of part time workers jobs and opposition to Sunday trading.

## COALVILLE

Coalville, a Leicestershire town that derives its name from coal mining, faces devastation because of



Steelworkers picket steel conference in Sheffield on 6 October Photo: David Smith (IFL)

## SAVE STEEL-BUILD TRIPLE ALLIANCE

Another unemployment domino is threatening to fall in the West of Scotland.

In May 1981 the Talbot car plant at Linwood closed. Their basic steel was supplied by Ravenscraig Mill at Motherwell, so now rumours are flying thick and fast about the closure of Ravenscraig.

Tommy Brennan, the convenor at Ravenscraig, was angry about the methods of the top management of British Steel. "Rumours and innuendo are no way to deal with the livelihoods of 6,000 men. It is a disgrace, an attempt to confuse the workers here.

"The television people have already been down, putting words into people's mouths about closure. Let me tell you this. If they come for Ravenscraig there will be an almighty struggle.

"This is the finest plant in Western Europe. There is no logic whatever in closing it. McGregor is no different from his predecessors, Villiers or Finneston. Every problem has the same answer. Close the plant and cut down the workforce."

On 7 October, the Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen and steelmen

met in Scotland and issued a defiant rebuke to the steel bosses. "Any attempt at closures will be resisted with every means available," said Mick McGahey, of the NUM.

By Bob Wylie

The interests of miners are obviously linked with steelworkers. Ravenscraig gets its coal from Polkennet colliery and if the steel plant goes 1,000 jobs will automatically be put at risk in the mining industry.

The Triple Alliance lobby must start a massive campaign to save the steel industry

Strathclyde regional council has estimated that Ravenscraig's closure would put 12,500 jobs under threat immediately and in the longer term probably a job loss of double that would be

the consequence. The stand taken by the Triple Alliance in Scotland has undoubtedly re-kindled the fires of resistance at Scotland's other steel plant facing the axe—Clydebridge.

Russell Cleery, the Joint Shop Stewards secretary at Clydebridge told Militant: "The struggle to save jobs at Clydebridge is very much part of the struggle to save British Steel. Everybody knows that we are playing big-time dominoes. If Clydebridge goes it will be Ravenscraig next. And after that even Hunterston."

The ironic headline in the Glasgow Herald when the threatened closure was made known was 'Younger leads fight to save Ravenscraig'. Younger is the Tory Scottish Secretary of State who has presided over the loss of 175,000 Scottish jobs in three years!

Workers will greet such claims with the disdain they deserve. Only their own unity and action can save them now. The Triple Alliance lobby of Downing Street on 26 October must be the start of a massive campaign to save the steel industry in Britain, and if bringing Thatcher down is the only way that that can be done, then so be it!

See feature on steel, pages 8 and 9.

threatened pit closure in the area.

But the local labour movement are already organising against unemployment. Bosworth CLP have called a demonstration for 16 October. The demonstration is supported by the NUM and Arthur Scargill has been invited to speak.

Details: Assemble Scotland Playing Fields, 11 am, Saturday 16 October. Coaches from Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 10.20 am.

By Pauline Maniscalco (Leicester W LPYS)

## APOLOGY

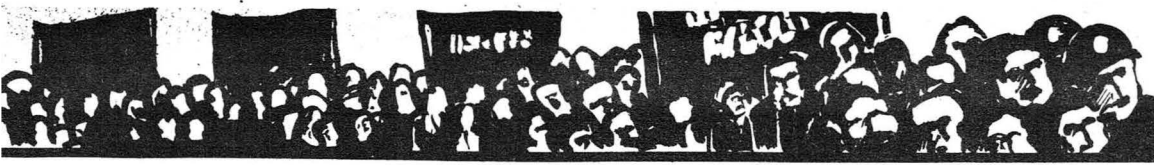
In our issue of 6 August (Militant 613) we published an article about the National Union of Railwaymen which was illustrated with a picture. Unfortunately, the wrong picture was printed by mistake.

The picture erroneously used showed a station trolley being driven not by a railwayman but by a postman. The caption did not identify the driver (who was unknown by us) nor did it make any comment about

the picture.

If, however, the driver, who we are told is a Mr Overington, was in any way aggrieved by the use of this picture, we would like to apologise to him for our mistake.

The boilermakers' union (ASOB) conference starts on 20 October. See shipbuilding feature, page 9.



# NHS **Wanted - a bold lead**

## dispute -

**Over 2,000 health workers marched through Harrogate on the Yorkshire day of action on 6 October.**

Reg French (NUPE) thanked all trade unionists for the magnificent support they had given during the months of the dispute. He described the trade unions as a living force that could not be put down by the Tebbit bill or unemployment.

The main speaker at the rally, Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE, General Secretary), attacked the '24 hour dogooders' who broke hospital picket lines to work—as long as the TV cameras were there!

"These people" he said, "would not work day in, day out in the health service as health workers do". He called for an indefinite strike in the health service until the claim was won.

The last speaker, Joan Maynard MP, gave the example of two nurses who left the march to tend to someone taken ill on the pave-

ment. "This shows that health workers care" she said.

She slammed those who were doing very well out of the health service such as private practitioners and the drug industry. "This must be taken into public ownership", she said to loud applause.

All the strands of industrial action, the steel workers, the miners, and the waterworkers, all would help the healthworkers win their claim.

From there the marchers set up a big picket outside the Regional Area Health Authority Headquarters where union members were still working. The demo, the rally and the picket were all full of fight and enthusiasm but a national lead for national action involving all sections of the trade union movement is absolutely essential to force this government to retreat.

**By Pete Watson**  
(Bradford Trades Council)

## **Belfast**

It was Northern Ireland's local day of action on 7 October. Once again every hospital was reduced to accident and emergency cover only, and rallies and marches held in Derry and Belfast. In both cities health workers occupied Health Board headquarters to publicise the action.

Len Murray visited hospital picket lines, and later addressed a rally of shipyard workers who stopped in support of the hospital staff.

Around a thousand Belfast workers showed they will stand against sectarianism in common struggle for the right to a decent living standard.

They marched from hospitals in South, West, East and North Belfast:—your religion didn't matter—you were low paid workers fighting with fellow trade unionists against the Tories' vicious attempts to drive another section of Northern Ireland's working class into absolute poverty.

"We'd be better off on the dole," said one porter from the Royal Victoria Hospital. "but if you go on the dole here, you stay on it."

The rally was lively and good humoured in Belfast, but Len Murray was jeered by local activists with calls for "an all out strike." and "We don't want a sell out. What about ASLEF."

Health workers' response to the present regional action is critical and angry. The mood is for all-out strike ac-

tion with accident and emergency cover being provided. Only when we move to such action do health workers here feel justified in calling for a 24-hour general strike of all unions.

## **For a 24-hour general strike**

That such a response would be given was evident from dozens of telegrams of encouragement. Bus workers donated a day's pay to the strike fund. Tony Benn sent his support and even the public services unions in the USA sent a telegram.

It was again a good day in Belfast, but the action must now be escalated. A conference of rank and file representatives from every

hospital shop stewards committees must be called by the TUC to assess the mood and re-assess the strategy. In those unions which nationally are holding back, their branches must inundate their National Executives, with calls for escalation and all out action with accident and emergency cover, if the Tories remain adamant on their 6%-7½% offer.

Even at this late stage, we can still be victorious—if the TUC health services committee are prepared to lead more boldly and more confident of victory.

## **Micky Duffy**

Chairman North & West Belfast Joint Shop Stewards committee (RVH & Mater & Throne hospitals).

## **South West England**

Friday the 8th saw the turn of the South West. In Plymouth, over 100 pickets lined gates at the main hospital, though the turn out could not match that of the

22nd.

Members of the crew of an NUS ship which came into Plymouth joined pickets and some workers from the dockyards, despite letters sent to workers following a strike by 3,000 employees on 22 September, threatening disciplinary action if workers came out again.

## **Manchester Royal Infirmary**

The fearless impartiality of the police was shown on Tuesday morning at a Manchester Royal Infirmary picket line. Martyn Edwards (Moss Side LPYS) was scooped up by a doctor's car crashing through the pickets, and carried on the bonnet for 20 yards, holding

desperately onto the wind-screen wipers.

As he fell off the moving car, the wiper broke and the police promptly arrested him on the grounds of criminal damage. No action was taken against the doctor.

# **WEIGHELL FORCED OUT BY MEMBERS ANGER**

## **NUR activists want a fighting union leadership**

**A hundred members of the National Union of Railwaymen lobbied the union's Special General Meeting on 13 October, travelling into Birmingham from as far afield as Glasgow.**

Although the SGM was supposed to discuss the pay claim, the chairman ruled against a strong challenge that they had to discuss whether to reinstate right wing General Secretary Sidney Weighell after his dramatic resignation last week. The challenge was only beaten by 40 votes to 37.

Despite the press reports of a mass mood of support for Weighell, the placards outside showed the real feelings of many rank and file NUR members. "Roll out the Weighell—wheel in the new" said one, with others naming the General Secretary "Slippery Sid".

One delegate summed up many members feelings about the leadership's attempts to stifle freedom of speech. "He's trying to do to the NUR what Edwardes has done to Leyland".

Another delegate from the North West showed the bitterness "I think if Sid Weighell is reinstated, he will

press for the 6% offer with the strings meaning loss of guards and porters' jobs. If he gets back in today, I'll be out of a job tomorrow.

## **Jobs at risk**

"It's possible it could be accepted anyway, but far more likely if Weighell is General Secretary. Weighell preaches continuously that the union is not in the habit of selling members jobs up the slope, but if these productivity proposals are accepted, this is what will happen.

"I'd far rather accept nothing and keep guards and porters, and the safety of the trains. Is one life lost worth taking away 16,000 guards? Weighell would accept productivity far more readily than the NEC.

"We are 100% behind the NEC. 16,000 jobs would go for one man. Weighell would take the 6%, bow on the way out, touch his cap and say 'when do I get my knighthood?'"

**Reports by Martin Elvin**



**The Special General Conference of the NUR on 13 October voted by 41 votes to 36 to accept Sid Weighell's resignation.**

The news was greeted with jubilation by the lobbyists with shouts of 'fantastic', and 'magic'. Delegates were ap-

plauded and hands shaken all round as the news came out.

The changing mood within the railworkers' union was shown by the high sales of the NUR Broad Left paper 'Left Lines'. A fuller analysis of the implications will appear in next week's

## **'Militant.'**

The most vital need now is for a united campaign on one agreed candidate for the General Secretary, on a fighting programme to defend jobs and living standards and defeat management attacks on established working practices.

**PHOTO: John Arthur**  
The NUR executive meeting prior to the SGM were denied access to the union HQ, Unity House, in an amazing denial of union rights and had to meet elsewhere.

## BRITISH TELECOM

# FIGHT BACK-DOOR REDUNDANCIES

**This week, water-workers, steelworkers, and the staff of British Telecom are taking strike action over threats to jobs and wages.**

The nationalised industries are major targets for Tory attacks, and British Telecoms (BT) face the prospect of massive redundancies through privatisation (see page 14). On top of this, BT workers suspect that management are trying to jettison employees through back door methods.

"The drive for a 25% improvement in operating efficiency will inevitably focus management's attention on the need to be more critical in its staff investments."

**By Phil Holt**  
(Liverpool Internal POEU)

So, reportedly, begins a document to British Telecom's Inland Directors from NF Tappenden (Chief Officer Inland Personnel). Dated 16 August 1982, the first paragraph concludes "it is to be expected that this year's appraisal rounds will throw up more than the usual crop of less than 'fully acceptable' reports."

Appraisal reports are open assessments by workers' superiors of an individual's work and promotion prospects. Other than the drive to reduce staffing

which was recently revealed by the Guardian there's no other basis for this statement even within the document.

Already, the Tappenden paper is producing a huge wave of uncertainty and horror among BT workers—and no wonder. The paper refers to those who cannot adopt to BT's changing culture as "beached whales". It mentions that a paper on redundancy will be circulated in the near future.

But the main thrust of the "advice" to lower management is tantamount to blackmail in the eyes of most union officials. It lays out a schema of events whereby employees are given the details of superannuation benefits for retirement "in the interests of BT". Otherwise they will face the stigma

of going through what is termed "non-culpable inefficiency" procedure—an attempt to get rid of workers under a cloud of inefficiency accusations.

This paper and the Guardian document clearly show the type of regime privatisation is bringing to BT. Job security is fast becoming a thing of the past. It further underlines the need for an industrial and political struggle to defend public ownership and all the benefits that flow from this to workers and the ordinary customers.

BT workers will be eagerly awaiting news from management on the authenticity of this document. However our experiences seem to confirm that the main provisions are already in operation.

## NO JOBS

(From page one)

organise as trainees together, then that exploitation could be overcome.

The 'Daily Mirror' recently reported that each week, one young person on the dole commits suicide. 16 year olds are leaving school after eleven years education, seeing no future whatsoever.

In London alone, 3,000 people under 30 sleep rough, partly due to the terrible housing shortage, but also because society offers them no future. The fact that heroin addiction has increased by 50% in the last eighteen months is yet another indication of the desperate situation facing youth, looking for a way out of the present crisis.

But what is the Tory solution to problems such as youth unemployment? The 'Youth Opportunities Programme', which has now 'employed' over one million young people, is a device to reduce unemployment figures and use youth as cheap labour. Only 40% of those on YOPS get a job at the end of their schemes.

The 'Young Workers' Scheme' which offers a £15 subsidy (or reward) to employers who take on someone under 18 and pay them less than £40 a week, shows the Tories attitude to low pay.

The latest quack scheme introduced by the government's Manpower Service Commission to create more temporary jobs would make a married man just £7.80 per week better off than being on the dole (excluding fares), according to MSC Chairman

David Young speaking at a posh dinner last month.

David Blunket, Sheffield Council Leader said "I was insulted that he should expect people to join the scheme for this, it wasn't even half the price of the dinner he was eating."

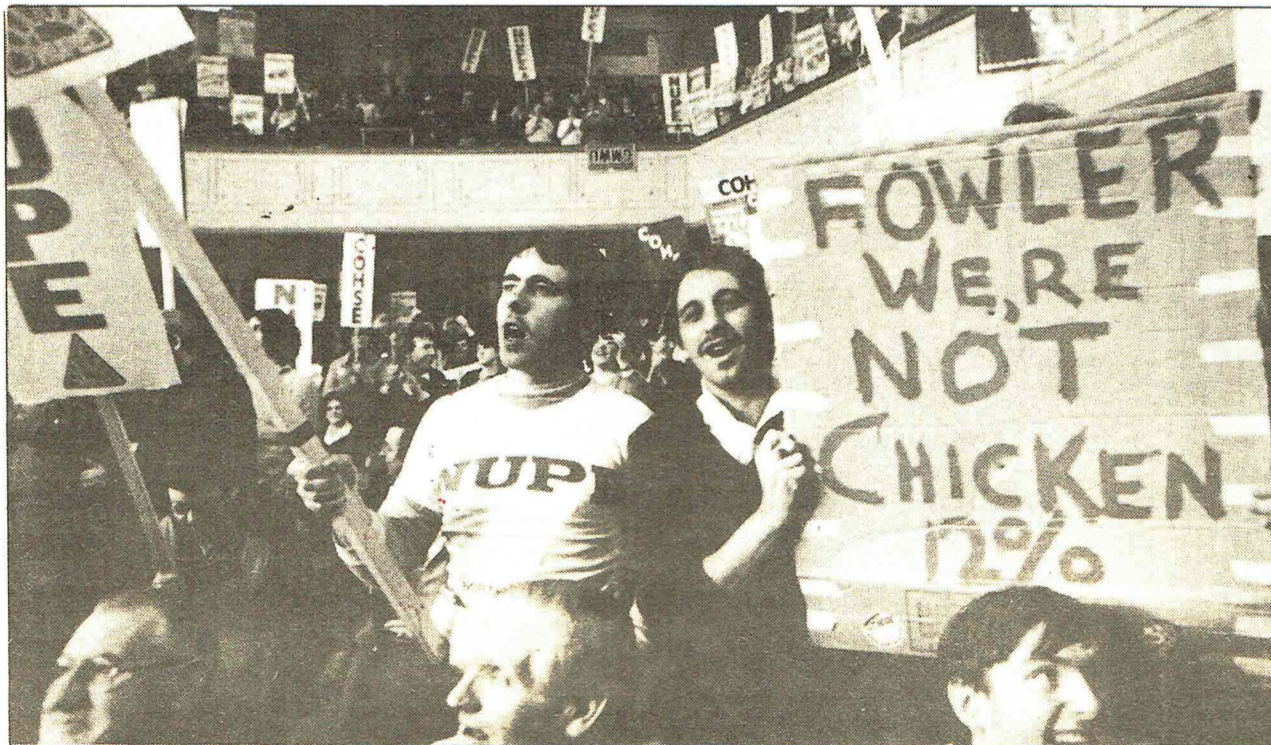
The Labour Party Young Socialists are fighting for socialist policies as the only solution to the scandal of unemployment and low pay.

We demand:

- A guaranteed job, or the right to training on full pay for every school leaver.
- Trade union monitoring and control of all training schemes.
- A guaranteed grant of at least £20 a week for all 16-18 year olds in full-time education.
- Trade Union rates of pay and conditions for YOPs and all trainees on government schemes.
- A minimum wage of £90 at 18.

Just one *thirteenth* of arms expenditure would be enough to give every YOPster £55 a week, a 35 hour week, and 5 weeks paid holiday a year. The wealth exists in society, but it is being frittered away by the whims of the bosses, bankers and financiers in their search for profit.

The LPYS is leading the fight for Labour to take up bold socialist policies. With 10,000 members across the country, the LPYS is the biggest socialist youth movement in Britain. Demonstrating on October 16th is just the start—join the Labour Party Young Socialists—get involved with the campaign to kick out Thatcher and Co., and return Labour to power with socialist policies.



Belfast NHS workers at last week's Day of Action. See reports inside.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

## WRECKING NHS (From page one)

trifles—£28,000 on the casualty, £44,000 on each of the two wards. These savings will be made from "less medical treatment". It's the logic of the madhouse! Reduce expenditure by reducing patients—as if patients have accidents or illnesses or become alcoholics on purpose!

The Tories' logic seems to be—you only breathe air because it's available.

The number of casualties in Harlow in 1980-81 was 29,000. In 1981-82 it has increased to 34,400. Obviously the hospital administration think either accidents will cease to occur or that they will cure themselves. Already, the trade unions, the Labour Party and hospital workers in the town are getting together, to fight the proposed closures.

The regional day of action for the Harlow area in support of the hospital workers' claim is on 19 October. That day will now take on extra significance in Harlow.

But the cuts by no means end there. The day before the Harlow announcement, it was reported that the Oxfordshire Regional Health Authority were planning to introduce massive cuts in services. This authority, covering a population of 2.3 million, was reported to be planning almost the abolition of the NHS as a free service.

People just moving into the area would be barred from any NHS service except emergencies, many operations like hernias would have to be paid for, charges would be introduced for staying in hospital and all mental

hospitals would be closed. All this, it was reported, to save a deficit of £12 million!

Now other health authorities have drawn up contingency plans to cut essential services on a similar scale.

**By Bob Edwards**  
(Harlow Labour Party)

The Tories have tried to take some of the heat out of the anger over these announcements by pointing out that they were only 'options' being considered by the authorities and that in any case they were obliged under the terms of the 1946 Act of Parliament to provide certain services.

But workers will not be fooled by these Tory alibis. These health authorities—even if they are not planning such swingeing cuts this

year—are deliberately 'softening up' public opinion for deep cuts. It is intended that alongside the virtual abolition of the NHS, the cuts they do introduce will appear 'moderate', i.e. more acceptable. Then later on, the really big cuts will begin.

The Tories want to introduce a system of private insurance in place of the NHS and they would do it if they could get away with it.

In the face of the Tory proposals, shelved but only shelved for the moment, and in the face of the threats from these health authorities, workers must stand firm. The fight of the NHS workers for a decent wage is linked to the fight of all workers for a decent health service.

Down with the Tories! Fight for a socialist Labour government committed to a comprehensive, fully free health service!

Liverpool Demonstration  
 Festival 10.30  
 March 12.30  
 Saturday 16 October

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