

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

# TORIES PLUNDER STATE ASSETS

## Defend Nationalised Industries

This week will see the Tories completing yet another plunder of public assets. 51% of Britoil, the company hived off from the British National Oil Corporation, is to be sold off.

It has more exploration interests on the UK continental shelf than any other company.

The Tories trot out their ritualistic condemnations when ever it is announced that a nationalised industry has made a loss. Yet their economic ideology insists that where a publicly-owned industry does make a profit, it has to be sold off.

Since the Tories came to office they have de-nationalised 50% of British Aerospace, 49% of Cable and Wireless, 100% of the National Freight Corporation, 100% of Amersham International, in addition to their sale of 51% of Britoil. They also plan to sell off the oil assets of the British Gas Corporation and to 'privatise' other nationalised industries.

It is clear that some of the previous sales were arranged at bargain-basement prices. British Aerospace shares were sold at a fixed 150

pence each two years ago, and they are now worth around 218p each. Cable and Wireless shares, sold a year ago for only 168p, are now worth 318p on the Stock Exchange, and those City sharks who snapped up the Tories' offer of Amersham shares in February, will have seen their share value rise from 142p to more than twice that.

The sale of shares in Britoil will divert large oil profits away from the public purse and into the hands of the private sector, especially the financial speculators who control the City of London. Britoil shares are not being

Continued on back page



Post Office engineers march against de-nationalisation in October. The Tories are threatening to privatise British Telecom. Photo: Militant

## Support Militant with cash

To counter the the whole of the commercial press, TV, etc, we need the support of all our readers, financially as well as politically, to put forward our ideas for the future of the labour movement in Britain and internationally. Give us your support in fighting for the right of democratic free speech in the labour movement.

A TV producer recently made a donation of £5 to our funds and £50 has come from a branch of Liverpool Labour Party. (see page 4). Please send us what you can. Cheques, postal orders, etc payable to 'Militant'. Send to Fighting Fund, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## COVENTRY County Council by-election

Feature and  
interview with  
Dave Nellist  
See page 7



## NOVEMBER 27: Be there to fight the witch hunt

Last week *Militant* reported the set back at the Labour Party national executive for the right wing, in their attempts to instigate a purge in the Labour Party.

Although they postponed their threats to expel *Militant* supporters from the party, it is clear from their statements in the Tory press that their sights are still firmly set on a whole scale attack on the left of the party and *Militant* in particular.

But rank and file Labour Party members and trade unionists will have the opportunity to answer the outpourings of the right, on Saturday November 27, at a series of conferences against the witch-hunt, being held up and down the country.

Called by the Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts, they are being held in Liverpool, Brighton, Cardiff, Newcastle, Birmingham and London. A further conference will be held in Bristol on December 11.

Leading labour movement speakers will be addressing these meetings. At Glasgow, Bob McTaggart MP, Bob Gillespie of the Scottish TUC, and Ravenscraig steelworks convenor Tommy Brennan, will join other speakers on the platform.

At Birmingham, speakers include Les Huckfield MP, Jack Lanwarne (a divisional NUR officer), and Dave Nellist (see page 7). In London, speakers include Ernie Roberts MP, GLC councillor Valerie Wise, Bob Labi of the London Labour Party executive and Joe Marino, general secretary of the Bakers Union.

In Liverpool, Bob Parry MP will be joined by prospective parliamentary candidates Terry Harrison and Tony Mulhearn, Alan Quinn of the TGWU executive, and John Hannath of the USDAW Broad Left.

Judging by the response so far, it is clear the voice of the rank and file of the labour movement will be heard at these meetings. The Brighton conference has been sponsored by the Sussex District Committee of the TGWU, and there will be delegates from NUPE, POEU, and Bakers Union branches. The organisers of the Cardiff conference received 150 applications for delegates in just three days!

If the witch-hunt is to be defeated then the right-wing must be met by an avalanche of opposition from the ranks of the movement. Make sure your trade union branch or organisation, Labour Party ward or CLP branch, Women's section, tenants association or LPYS branch sends a delegate. Details, see page 5.

Don't stand  
on the  
sidelines...

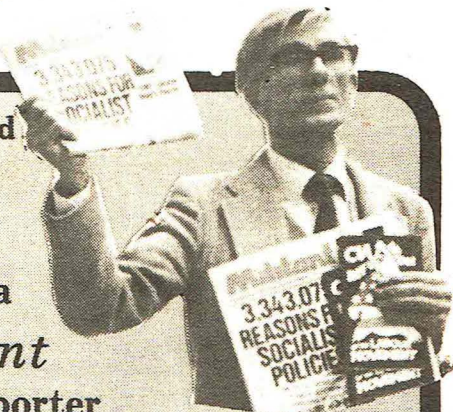
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I want to help in the campaign to defend the paper and stop the witch-hunt. Please send details of how I can assist.

Name .....

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Send to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Telephone 01-986 3828.



## Labour's rank and file will not accept proscriptions

Faced with the serious possibility of legal action, the right wing on the NEC organisation sub-committee agreed last week to drop the scandalous proposals for the expulsion of the *Militant* editorial board and its full time employees.

The legal advice given to the NEC right wing is a complete vindication of the standpoint of *Militant*—that the expulsions, had they gone ahead, would have been arbitrary and wholly unconstitutional, disregarding natural justice in a way that would have been unlikely to stand up even in a capitalist court.

*Militant* has always contended that the right wing were after a witch-hunt plain and simple, the means to do it being entirely secondary to them. This was confirmed only last week when on Channel 4, John Golding publicly admitted that the attack on *Militant* was "a

one off exercise". Michael Foot, on the other hand, with an eye to his own past record as a left, has leaned over backwards to keep up the pretence of tolerance and constitutional legality, while 'giving the right wing the freedom to launch a purge. His speeches before and during party conference were replete with statements that this was "no witch-hunt", that the "constitution must be protected" and so on.

The whole purpose of the register, cobbled together by Michael Foot and Walworth Road, was to maintain the

facade of a 'legal purge'. Indeed, without the facade, it is highly unlikely that it would have had a majority at the party conference.

Over-confident with their conference 'success' on the register, the new right wing majority on the NEC wanted to move quickly to purge *Militant* from the party, only to discover, according to their own legal counsel, that they were acting unconstitutionally.

The elaborate plan for a 'limited' witch-hunt has thus fallen apart in the hands of Michael Foot and Jim Mortimer. The register, because of the attempt to use it to discriminate against *Militant*, is thoroughly discredited. Michael Foot and Jim Mortimer now face a stark choice of either adopting a principled position and dropping the witch-hunt altogether or supporting a far broader and 'bloodier' purge of the party, as the right wing now want.

The Right are now considering, in effect, a return to bans and proscriptions, by declaring *Militant* as "ineligible for affiliation". This may not seem very much different from what was originally planned by Golding and company, but it

would be an open admission of what *Militant* has said all along and what was denied all along by Michael Foot—that these attacks really do presage a return to the old methods of bans and proscriptions.

Under the former regime of a 'proscribed list', secret dossiers and files were made and kept, as Ian Mikado has explained, on the speeches and the activities of lefts, including Michael Foot. Labour Party members who were suspected of being associated with a proscribed organisation were thereby open to expulsion from the party.

Whereas Ron Hayward, on first becoming National Agent, took drawer-fulls of files and dossiers out to be burned, a return to a proscribed list will mean the collection and accumulation of new dossiers and secret files. Completely out of touch with grass roots feeling in the party, some of the right wing are seriously canvassing for a return to these methods.

What would it mean for *Militant* to be declared "ineligible for affiliation", in other words proscribed? Would it mean expulsion for anyone selling *Militant*, or giving donations to the *Mili-*

*tant* Fighting Fund? What would the right wing do about left-wing Labour MPs who occasionally give a donation?

The NEC may try to apply proscriptions in a completely arbitrary manner, ie. only against *Militant*, possibly opening themselves to legal action over unconstitutionality and 'unequal' application of the rules. But on the other hand, if the NEC begin to re-use bans and proscriptions uniformly, they will open up a real can of worms.

They will have to look at all those Labour MPs and trade union leaders who regularly write for the *Morning Star*, newspaper of a rival political party. The 'Communist Party' is putting up its own candidate in the Queens Park by-election on December 2, but that has not stopped Helen Liddell, secretary of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party, giving an interview to the *Morning Star* (November 12). For that matter, how many interviews or articles has Jim Mortimer given to the *Morning Star*?

If the right wing of the NEC try to institute new bans and proscriptions, they will be forced to attack a

whole range of left MPs and trade union leaders and that is something the party and rank and file will not accept. They will be faced with the opposition of hundreds of CLPs and even the big trade unions.

At the Party conference several important trade union delegations defied their conference or executive mandates to vote for the register, but even that was only after the sweet siren voices of the 'soft lefts' had explained how 'reasonable' the register was. When it becomes clear that the right wing want to go back to the 1950s-style proscribed list, there will be justifiable howls of protest from within the ranks of the trade unions.

The Labour party cannot afford a massive internal bloodletting, least of all in a period running up to a general election. The best thing that the NEC can do now, for the good of the Party as a whole, is to drop the witch-hunt altogether and concentrate its fire on the Tories. The NEC will have to direct its main attacks upon Thatcher sooner or later; they might as well start now.



Afia Begum and her 1-year old child threatened with deportation. Photo: D Doran.

## NO DEPORTATION

Afia Begum, a nineteen year old Bengali woman and her 1 year old child are being threatened with deportation. Afia Begum's husband died in a fire and the Home Office say that as her "cir-

cumstances have changed" she must be deported.

Last Saturday over 100 people demonstrated for the right for her and her child to stay. On the march in Bethnal Green there were

chants of: "No more deportations—Afia must stay" and "Whitelaw must go—Afia must stay". Over 20 local LPYS members went on the march.

## CARDIFF MOVES LEFT

By 'Militant' reporter



Labour Party demonstration in Cardiff last year.

Cardiff North Constituency is a Tory marginal right next door to the constituency of Witch-hunter General, Jim Callaghan. The CLP has recently completed a selection process which has important lessons for the movement.

Selection took place immediately before and after the party conference, against the background of the hysterical campaign of the right-wing in favour of the register and expulsions. Andrew Price a *Militant* supporter and a member of Callaghan's Constituency Labour Party, was one of 20 party members seeking the nomination in the CLP. The support he received, particularly from trade unionists, shows that the witch-hunt of the right-wing has no basis of support amongst active members of the labour movement.

For example, Andrew defeated other candidates and won the support of the 15/125 EETPU branch in the city. The local full-time official for the union then referred the nomination to EETPU Head Office, who refused to allow the nomination to go forward to the CLP.

This decision was reportedly taken solely on the basis of political opposition to the candidate whom the rank and file of the branch supported. Yet another glimpse of the total disregard for democracy by the right-wing

of the movement.

Amongst the seven other nominations Andrew received, were two from the AUEW (Engineering section) and one from the public workers union, NUPE. Most significant of all, on the morning after conference voted to accept the register, he addressed a meeting of over 70 members of the National Union of Seamen in Cardiff.

To loud applause he won the nomination unanimously. Rank and file members of the AUEW and National Union of Seamen are no different in Cardiff to anywhere else. Where then are Duffy's and McCluskey's mandates for purges?

The local party ended up with a short-list of Andrew, Ray Davis, a local steel

worker and firmly on the left of the party, and three right wingers. Despite a full turnout from the right-wing and the left-wing votes being divided between two strong candidates, left-winger Ray Davis won with Andrew in second place, 11 votes behind.

Obviously *Militant* supporters in the Constituency Labour Party would have preferred a *Militant* supporter to have won. Nevertheless we welcome the victory of Ray Davis and hope that this will mark the beginning of the end of the right wing control of some of Cardiff's Labour Parties. Cardiff's witch-hunters should take the clear warning—the rank and file do not want a purge.



# GOLDING CHEERED ON BY SDP

Remarkable praise has been lavished on John Golding, right-wing Labour MP, in the latest issue of the SDP magazine, *Democrat*, 24 November.

This anti-Labour magazine entitled 'The Democrat Interview' on Golding as "The man who got away".

It goes on to imply he may have been right.

Those right-wingers who quit were wrong to leave the Labour Party. They could have won support for their ideas better by staying in.

Golding "must stand as an implicit reproach to Social Democrats", says the *Democrat*. "His NEC coup demonstrates it WAS possible to stay behind and fight. The fact that he did not go along with the SDP tends to underline its weakness in the trade union field which threatens to make it too much a professional middle class party vying with Norman Tebbit to impose reforms on the unions" (emphasis in original).

They go on to quote Golding: "The battle has to be won and cannot be won from outside, and leaving the Labour Party is going to be seen as running away."

Clearly some of the SDP traitors who stabbed Labour in the back are worried about their careers. No MP has defected to their ranks this year, no by-election has been won since Crosby and all the polls show that they will be lucky to have enough seats to take them into double figures after the next election.

## Different from 1950's

But they are mistaken if they think that Golding will be able to drag the Labour

Party back to the days of the 1950's. The economic situation is entirely different. In the 50s the post-war boom was in its hey-day and there was room for reforms within an expanding capitalist system.

## Empty shell of Party

Nowdays with mass unemployment, and zero growth, that room for lasting meaningful reform on the basis of a profit system has been eroded. Right-wing Labour governments have tried and failed since the 1950s and workers' bitter experience of the cuts and counter-reforms attempted by the last Labour government is why they have moved towards a radical alternative.

Right-wing policies have been tried and found wanting, and no amount of maneuvering on Labour's National Executive can change the economic facts of life. The *Democrat* though is almost unstinting in its praise of Golding's attempt. "He has never stopped fighting, even when he makes an advance", explains the magazine, as it tells of Golding's hostility to the left-wing.

It goes on: "He deplored the re-election of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer (to the NEC), they are, he says, 'electoral albatrosses around our necks'." That sounds rich when it was the right-policies of the last Labour government which sparked off the winter of discontent and resulted in election defeat.

Golding has followed up the article in the *Democrat*, by stating on Channel 4's 'Week in Politics' 13 November, that after the attack on *Militant*, others would be in his sights, although different tactics would have to be applied against the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy etc.

He seems totally unconcerned about whether his actions will lose the party canvassers at elections. The *Democrat*: "I'm not, says Golding with much confidence, 'worried about becoming unpopular with left-wing activists. They have nowhere else to go. And the election will anyway be decided mostly on the box'."

The right-wing would be quite happy if the party became just an empty shell of an election machine.

## Golding's Selection

One of the most remarkable parts of the SDP's 'praise piece' is its story of how Golding got his parliamentary seat:

"Golding has never hidden his belief that the ends are more important than the means. His parliamentary colleagues were shocked in 1978 when he freely confessed that he owes his seat to packing a selection conference.

"In 1969 the safe Labour seat of Newcastle-under-Lyme fell vacant through the sudden death of the over-worked left-wing transport

minister, Stephen Swingle. Golding, smarting at his union's failure to win any seats in 1964 and 1966, snatched at the fact that there was a strong Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) branch in Newcastle.

"Moreover, he learned the local constituency was looking for a trade union sponsored candidate, because of the contribution the union could be expected to make to the campaign expenses and running costs of the constituency party. When the selection conference was held, he packed it with 50 of his own supporters, as he later confessed."

## Trade unionists and Party

No-one has ever claimed that there was any breach of rules but the story shows the double-standards of the right-wing. They only want trade unionists in the party as passive voting fodder. Marxists welcome all trade unionists into the party and hope they will play a full part in ensuring that the party, built upon the unions, is a real party of workers.

For the right wing, when trade unionists move into action, they are denounced as 'activists', 'infiltrators', who have only joined the party to further their own interests. 'The Democrat Interview' shows the kind of party the right-wing think they can create: one where policy is similar to the SDP, socialists are expelled, where elites rule and power rests upon bureaucratic manoeuvre.

# 'View from the minefield'

By Bob Wade

"Treading a wary path in Labour's minefield" proclaimed the headline in the *Morning Star* on 15 November, over an article profiling Jim Mortimer, general secretary of the Labour Party.

However, 'treading a wary path' would be a better description of the Communist Party of late. Through reading the *Morning Star* over the past few years, you can see how they have precariously picked their way through recent issues such as Afghanistan and Poland, their so-called 'Marxist' analysis slipping up all the way.

Similarly, they have entangled themselves on the present question of the witch-hunt in the Labour Party. The ghost of Stalin still haunts their ranks and they cannot resist taking a swipe at *Militant* and the real Marxists in the labour movement.

Yet in the present climate they do not want to appear to line up with the witch-hunters of the right in the eyes of the labour movement, so they bite their tongue and hold back. Well almost.

Hence the profile in the *Morning Star* is full of praise for Jim Mortimer, apologises for his role in the witch-hunt. It seems the Labour left is being "very unfair to Mr Mortimer." You see, "...He can do nothing else. It's his job." I knew a policeman who said that once.

He has very good credentials for the job as general secretary, says the *Morning Star*, pointing to his "10 years (when) he chaired the Arbitration and Conciliation Advisory Service." All trade unionists know what an asset ACAS has been to the class struggle.

But we shouldn't be so sarcastic because, "...In reality, the left, and the whole labour movement have got a very good friend indeed in the general secretary's office." In reality, five longstanding members of the Labour Party may now face expulsion, along with many others.

After fawning inch upon column inch of praise for Jim Mortimer, the article eventually gets down to some 'politics.' They repeat the ludicrous accusation made by Jim Mortimer at Labour Party conference of "Militant's opposition to detente", and thereby hint that *Militant* is opposed to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Whilst criticising those who put their faith in the capitalist leaders of the west and the bureaucracies of the east to reduce or end the arms race, *Militant* has always supported unilateral disarmament, believing it can only be achieved however on a lasting basis through the socialist transformation of society. Indeed, Pat Wall moved a composite resolution on the subject at the 1980 conference, and Keith Dickinson, one of those who may face immediate expulsion, spoke in favour of nuclear disarmament at the 1960 conference during the stormy days of Gaitskell.

The fact is the Communist Party is a rapidly declining force within the British labour movement. They hope to regain their lost ground through their policy of 'broad alliances', playing host to 'respectable' figures in the movement (not to mention the church and the Liberals). However, they will not gain support from the rank and file of the movement if they line up uncritically with those who wish to set the course for purges and witch-hunts.

## Attack on policy begins

The right-wing assault on policy has begun. They are preparing to close down all the Party's study groups before the election.

Although not perfect, these groups have helped contribute to the development of Party policy in recent years. They have provided information for the NEC in drawing up Labour's Programme to present to Party Conference.

The right-wing have bogusly claimed that policy groups are too expensive, although actually they are only a minuscule part of the Party's budget. In reality for the right-wing it is Conference policy which is too expensive. They are beginning their attempt to roll back the commitments on nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the EEC and the



Youth CND lobby this year's Party Conference. The right wing want to close down the Defence Study Group.

reforms contained in the Alternative Economic Strategy.

At the last meeting of the International Committee, Denis Healey reportedly proposed the suspension of the Defence Study Group, along with those on the Middle East, Africa etc. This was

only deferred for a month on the casting vote of the Chairman. Michael Foot did not vote, having left the meeting before the subject was raised.

The right-wing have made their intentions clear. They want the Labour Party to be no more than an election

machine.

Without even a limited flow of information (which the study groups partly help provide) from rank and file Party members who have some special knowledge of the subjects discussed, the focus of policy deliberation will begin to shift away from the NEC and the party as a whole and towards the Parliamentary Labour Party. Later on, the right-wing will probably move to cut down the Party's Research and International Departments.

The threatened closure of the study groups is a first step on the road to ignoring Conference policy. As far as the right-wing want it, policy will not be what Conference decides. It will be what Front-Bench Parliamentary spokesmen say.

# 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'

WEST YORKSHIRE series of Marxist Discussion Meetings. Week 1: The need for a socialist planned economy. Week 2: How to win the next election. Week 3: What role for parliament in the transformation of society.  
SE LEEDS: Wednesdays.  
NE LEEDS: Wednesdays.  
E LEEDS: Wednesdays.  
NW LEEDS: Wednesdays.  
S LEEDS: Mondays.  
W LEEDS: Tuesdays.  
WAKEFIELD: Mondays.  
BATLEY & MORLEY: Wednesdays.  
For further details contact Jon Ingham, Leeds 741961.

CHORLEY on Tuesday 23 November at 7.30pm at the Green Man Still, Lyons Lane, Chorley. Speaker: Brian Ingham.

WANDSWORTH Militant Readers Meeting. Hear Peter Taaffe (Editor of Militant) 'No witch-hunts, no expulsions. Fight the Tories not the socialists.' Lower Hall, Battersea Town Hall, Thursday 18 November 7.30pm.

OLDHAM 'Socialist Policies not witch-hunts' on 22 November at 7.30pm. Speaker: Terry Fields (PPC Liverpool, Kirkdale). The Grey Horse, Union St, Oldham.

NELSON on Wednesday 24 November at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Manchester Rd, Nelson. Speaker: Brian Ingham.

WIGAN Monday, 22 November at 7.30pm. 'Labour's Programme '82' at the Market Tavern, Mesnes St, Wigan. Speaker Brian Ingham.

BRACKNELL on 29 November at 8.00pm on 'The National Health Service: A Socialist's View'. Speaker: Val Pearce at Griffin House (next to Cinema), Bracknell.

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.

NEWTON AYCLIFFE on Thursday 25 November, at 7.30 pm at the 'Iron Horse' pub, Newton Aycliffe.

CAMBRIDGE Militant Discussion Meetings:  
Thursday 25 November: 'Poland and Eastern Europe'.  
Thursday 9 December: 'Militant and the role of Marxism in the Labour Party'.  
Venue: The Bath House, Gwydir Street, Cambridge, 8.00 pm.

### CLASSIFIED

LAST CHANCE to claim raffle prize from LPYS Liverpool demonstration. Organised by Militant Irish Monthly on the London train.  
1st Prize: 'Ireland Her Own'. Fawn ticket No 39 (serial No ENO 739).  
2nd Prize: 'Life and times of Connolly'. Fawn ticket No 13 (serial No ENO 739).  
Send counterfoils to Box 3, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

TONYREFAIL "Fight the Tories not the Socialists". Speaker: Ken Smith (LPYS NC), on Thursday 9 December, at Tonyrefail community Hall, Prichard St., Tonyrefail.

WANTED. Accommodation in East London area. Anything considered. Contact Tim White, Box 4, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN


## Militant Supporters Association

Registered Promoter: D Smith, 73 Armond Rd, Witham, Essex.

### WINTER HOLIDAY DRAW

Tickets are now available for our annual draw, where you can win a £500 holiday, to be taken where and when you like, for the ridiculous price of 10p!

We're also giving away a VIDEO, and there are other prizes of electrical goods and books! Will you make a donation to your favourite good cause and have the holiday of a lifetime? Contact your Militant seller for details, or write to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

Find out what the bosses and their media, and the right wing of the labour movement are so scared of. Only 30p, post-free, from Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Jan 8th.
Eastern	503		2700
East Midlands	312		2850
Hants & Dorset	303		2000
Humberside	109		1650
London East	576		3300
London West	253		1650
London South	254		2700
Manchester & Lancs	544		3000
Merseyside	578		3100
Northern	459		3900
Scotland East	175		2000
Scotland West	366		3000
Southern	511		2500
South West	86		1500
Wales East	123		1500
Wales West	101		2000
West Midlands	324		2800
Yorkshire	426		3850
Others	173		4000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>6176</b>		<b>50000</b>

## Target £50,000 By January 8

# PUT US BACK ON TARGET

THIS WEEK:  
£1902

We have received yet another letter this week which shows how Militant gets its financial support and also how hard Militant supporters work for the Labour Party:—

*"Dear Comrades,  
At the last meeting of our ward, we discussed the possibility of attacks being made on the MILITANT by the NEC of the party, to any expulsions, and to the register.*

*"Two years ago, our ward was financially bankrupt; now, thanks to the work put in by MILITANT supporters in the ward, we are in a very healthy financial state. We believe that, if any expulsions take place, these will not be confined to only a few—if the NEC are allowed to get away with even one expulsion, they will try to spread them throughout the Party, making many members of our ward, like many others, at risk.*

*"As we are not prepared to see either the expulsion of our members, or the closing down of our Party, we felt at the last meeting that the money we have should go to the best possible section of the Party, most importantly that section now under attack—the MILITANT.*

*"I therefore have pleasure in enclosing £50 donation to your Fighting Fund.*

*Yours fraternally,  
May Barrett,  
Tuelbrook Ward LP,  
Liverpool.*

No wonder the right-wing want to expel the five members of the Editorial Board but not the rank and file supporters of Militant. They want their cake and eat it.

It's all right to allow the rank and file supporters to stay in the Labour Party to do all the donkey work of fund raising and recruiting people to the Labour Party—for which we have an outstanding record—but when we start winning people to our ideas then we should be expelled! Ask

your Labour Party, LPYS branch, Shop stewards' committee or Trade Union branch to back Militant the same way.

Other Labour Party members donating include:— D.Marriot and C Graham from Deptford CLP both donated £5.00, Councillor S Price from Runcorn who donated £3.60, £1.50 from Sukh Ram of Gravesend LP, £1.00 from K Neaily of Redbridge LP, and £1.00 from M Hamill of Renfrew LP.

Labour Party Young Socialists donations this week include:— £25 from Rochester YS, £19.85 which was raised from a social held in Dover, £10 from Littlehampton YS and £10 also from a jumble sale held in Cambridge, £6.80 from Chester YS, £4.67 from Newcastle North and £3.00 from Sunderland South.

Some public meetings raised some very welcome sums, for example: Peter Taaffe spoke at a meeting in Salford which raised £200 including IOU's and Ted Grant spoke at a meeting in Cardiff which collected over £200. Thanks also to the supporters who attended the Bedlington public meeting which raised £20.

Thanks to all the trade union members who made individual donations:— Mark Hyde from Plymouth TGWU who donated £10, Jim Ansell from Mersey Wirral in the POEU who also donated £10, John Bleaken from Gloucester GMWU who donated £8. David Young from Glasgow CPSA £5.05, P Lunn South Shields EETPU £5, P Rogerson Sunderland EETPU £5, T Surrige Blyth NUM £2, J Warnes in the London South Central POEU who gave £1.20, and P O'Keefe from Bootle GMWU who paid £1 for his paper.

Finally special thanks to

those who are unemployed and yet have managed to make a donation:— G Blythe from Gateshead East £15, P St. Clair from South Shields £5, K McMullan Canterbury £1, A Campbell from Chester 30p and P Fraser a YOPster from Bracknell who donated 80p. Thanks also to the two schoolboys aged 13, from

Shettleston who donated their pocket money; G Preston donated £1 and S McCulloch 40p.

Keep up the good work. The pennies build Militant as well as the £'s. So keep the donations pouring in no matter how small, no matter how large, the sacrifice is just the same. Only our united fight will really defeat the Tories and the right-wing.

P.S. Don't forget. Sell those raffle tickets and Christmas cards, use the appeal sheets, and make an appeal at every meeting. Get Militant on target.

## BOOST ESTATE SALES

Sellers on a canvass in the Coventry South East By-election for the West Midlands County Council (see p. 7) achieved a magnificent 140 sales. This shows what response London could achieve with bold socialist policies but also shows the potential for estate sales on the council estates up and down the country.

Further afield two new areas show the support that Militant attracts at the present time. In Inverness a meeting produced 15 new sales of the paper and a readers' meeting in Galashiels in the Scottish borders has also produced regular orders for the paper. Militant is now sold in all the main areas of the country and many sellers now see the need to increase and expand the sales.

In Poplar in East London

as a response to the witch-hunt the sellers organised an extra tube sale (taking the total to 4 tube sales a week) and two estate sales on the following Sunday. As a result of this activity the sales were doubled and many supporters were won over to the ideas of Marxism.

On a new paper sale at a major hospital in the area 16 papers were sold, and many of the workers said they were regular readers, as the paper is also sold inside the hospital: one worker donated 50p for the fighting fund. These new sales are to be continued and new estate sales are being planned for new supporters in the area who have not yet built up regular sales rounds.

Send reports about your sales of Militant to: 1, Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN.

MILITANT PAMPHLET  
'Marxism Opposes Individual Terrorism'  
Articles by Trotsky, Taaffe  
Available 50p (incl p&p) from  
World Socialist Books  
1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

# POEU RANKS WANT TO FIGHT THE TORIES

**Many rank and file activists in the Labour movement have been horrified with the right wing leaders who seem more engrossed with witch-hunts and manoeuvres against the left in the Labour Party rather than fighting off the Tory onslaught.**

This attitude is shared by the Liverpool Internal Branch of the Post Office Engineering Union, especially with the current Tory offensive on the question of privatisation of British Telecom. They are particularly "greatly perturbed" by the role played by POEU sponsored Labour MP John Golding, and have also questioned the actions of their general secretary, Bryan Stanley. They set out their opinions and questions to Bryan Stanley in a letter, extracts of which are printed below;

On what POEU authority does John Golding conduct his witch-hunting and his continued activity in splitting the Labour Party which is causing deep division precisely at a time when maximum unity is necessary?

Why did John lead the right wing on the NEC in removing Tony Benn, from the chairmanship of the Home Policy Subcommittee, when only a week before he was present at a London City POEU meeting where David Norman (*POEU General Treasurer Ed.*) reminded everyone that Benn was an old and valued friend of the POEU? John never objected in front of the rank and file to such a designation of Benn.

Can you ascertain why John is now attempting to cripple the LPYS? It has grown from a small ineffectual group, to one of the largest youth movements in Britain and indeed in Europe. What support and authority does he have from the POEU for this?

Is it now possible for you to explain why you recommended the POEU vote for Tom Breakell, of the EET-PU, for the Labour Party NEC. The EETPU is in favour of the privatisation of British Telecom. Frank Chapple of the EETPU even wrote to the Daily Mail arguing the case to which you

had to reply. In fact of all the TU officials approached at the Labour Party conference, it was only Breakell who showed no interest in distributing our official campaign material (*against the privatisation of BT*).

After being on the LP NEC for 24 hours, then being taken off after they re-counted, Breakell admitted he was thinking of leaving the LP. How is it we can vote for such a man and give this union a decisive voice in the affairs of the LP NEC, precisely at a time when we are attempting to ensure nothing endangers POEU policy being overturned within the LP?

As you know the delegation unanimously voted not to support Doug Hoyle (ASTMS) when John Golding assured the delegation that Doug supported the ASTMS policy in favouring the private network Mercury. You are aware that the Left has pushed for Doug Hoyle in the past, but withdrew its support because of John's assurance. Supporting Breakell was no fluke either. For the first time you also advocated we support an EETPU member for the women's section. Why?

Perhaps you can now explain why John Golding has never taken up the clear breach of the LP constitution, Clause IV Part IV, by the policies actively pursued by the EETPU over privatisation and indeed the ASTMS over Mercury. This has more direct material and meaningful purpose to our members, their jobs, industry and future, than groups within the LP. By supporting the government's plans these unions have helped give public credibility to those endangering our members.

Next can we ask about the reports coming out of West Houghton CLP. Apparently their delegate to conference was at the composite meeting with you when the proposition concerning the

re-nationalisation of BT was discussed.

The delegate apparently alleges that you insisted that the words "without compensation" be deleted from the prop. This comes as a surprise as it was you who related to the POEU delegation that nothing could be done concerning this as it was the "will of the delegation". As it happens another delegate, Eddy Loyden of West Derby CLP who was also there, has confirmed that although three CLPs pressed for these words to be included you did not support this move. There was no strong (or otherwise) protest from the POEU concerning the exclusion of these words. Could you comment? (*See footnote—Ed.*)

Our branch wrote to John Golding concerning the Political Fund Management Committee using union money to circulate 'Solidarity's' literature to POEU branches and Constituency Labour Parties. We asked how can union money be used in this way particularly since he didn't have the authority of the NEC, never mind conference. We also asked him, didn't he think this would further damage relations between local Labour Parties and this union. As you know the overwhelming majority of CLPs are opposed to the register and Solidarity. We asked why haven't we circulated our material to CLPs on privatisation and asked that this is distributed to the public. In our opinion this is a better way to spend union funds. This still hasn't been

done. John has not even replied. Why?

To sum up. Isn't the record of the above one of splitting both the Labour Party and POEU at a time when maximum unity is needed? Aren't all forces both inside the union and LP needed to fight the real enemy, i.e. the government and its plans to privatise BT. Shouldn't this be the priority?

It seems the emphasis and priorities of the union are at the expense of our membership; Whilst vigorously conducting a witch-hunt and voting for those who will agree to go along with such, our own NEC left the issue of privatisation at the bottom of the agenda of this week's POEU NEC meeting, supposedly awaiting TUC decisions. Who is leading who? The democratically elected NEC or the General Secretaries? What are our priorities? We look forward to an early reply.

**Yours fraternally,  
Phil Holt,  
Secretary,  
Liverpool Internal POEU.**

*At this year's annual conference of the POEU, the following resolution—proposition 317, moved by the International Services Branch—was carried; "To ensure that before the POEU sponsor a Member of Parliament, that Member of Parliament must undertake to actively campaign for the re-nationalisation without compensation of any Assets and business lost due to the break of the British Telecom and Post Office monopolies."*

POEU demonstration last month against privatisation of British Telecom



## 27 November conferences against witch-hunt

Please state when applying, whether you want to use crèche facilities.

CREDENTIALS	VENUE
<b>BRIGHTON</b>	
R APPS, C/O 216 WISTON RD, BRIGHTON.	BRIGHTON CON- FERENCE CENTRE, FOYER HALL, KINGS ROAD, BRIGHTON.
<b>BRADFORD</b>	
P WATSON, C/O 12 TILEY SQ., WEST BOWLING, BRADFORD, BD5 7UQ.	CAESAR'S (TIFFANY'S), MANNINGHAM LANE, BRADFORD.
<b>CARDIFF</b>	
F CUTHBERT, C/O 12 SALOP ST., CAERPHILLY, CF8 1FX.	TOP RANK CARDIFF SUITE, QUEEN ST., CARDIFF.
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	
DAVE COTTERILL, C/O 5 RICHMOND TERRACE, FELLING, GATESHEAD, NE10 9DY.	TYNESIDE CINEMA, PILGRIM ST, NEWCASTLE.
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	
J BIRCH C/O 109 NOR- THFIELD RD, KINGS NORTON, BIRMINGHAM, B70 1JE.	DIGBETH CIVIC HALL, BIRMINGHAM.
<b>LONDON</b>	
BOB LABI, C/O 23 IRONSIDE HSE, HOMERTON RD, E9	FRIENDS MEETING HSE, EUSTON RD, NW1
<b>GLASGOW</b>	
BOB WYLIE, C/O 137 MALLARD TERRACE, EAST KILBRIDE, G75 8UF.	PARTICK BOROUGH HALLS, GLASGOW.

### LIVERPOOL: NEW VENUE

R VENTON  
c/o 46 THE  
WOODLANDS  
BIRKENHEAD  
L41 2SJ

CENTRAL HALL  
RENSHAW ST  
LIVERPOOL  
(nr Lime St Station)  
PHONE 051 260 3111

Also: 11 DECEMBER,  
BRISTOL

VENUE: Hall of Memory, Central Hall,  
Old Market St., Bristol.

## 1928/1982 - The struggle is the same

**May I reply to Bob Mellish through this paper to some of the points he made on a recent television interview.**

I joined the Labour League of Youth in 1928 so I feel that I'm in a position to answer him. Bob, the party has not changed, it's still the same with the kind of people who led it in 1929. Only their names are dif-

ferent in 1982.

In 1928 slum conditions prevailed, there was mass unemployment, the means test and later a 10% cut in unemployment benefit and dole money. The Labour League of Youth united with other left wing groups to fight the cuts and the social deprivation of our people. Because of this action we were threatened with expulsion from the Labour Party!

In 1939 the youth of the country were conscripted in-

to the services—yet with its sweeping to power in 1945, Labour refused to conscript the wealth of the country! Labour have been in power seventeen years since 1945, so it had the chance to carry out Labour Party manifestoes, but it has not done so.

In 1982 Jack Jones, formerly of the TGWU, had to lead a deputation of pensioners begging for an increase in their pensions to allow them to live, and later

a demonstration outside the Gas and Electricity showrooms for the removal of standing fixed charges.

We also have in 1982, mass unemployment, tower block slums, homeless families and means tests in different forms. And our Labour Party Young Socialists, who are in the front line fighting against these conditions, are, in a sign of the times, being threatened with expulsion!

The Labour defeat in the

last election was due to Healey's infamous 5% wage limit. With profits rising, prices high, rents increased, after four years of restraint, 5% on the £50 a week wage of a hospital worker, or lorry driver, or local government worker etc, was not on.

Don't blame the party activist. The policies are there—implement them, restore faith in the party and return a Labour government in the election. Don't cry no more, Bob. The party is still

the same as when you and I joined it in 1928. As an active member of the Labour Party over the years and still active, I say socialism will win through in spite of your comments. The people of Bermondsey will give you their answer.

**By J Buckingham**  
(Erith and Crayford  
CLP)



### Student Error

Last week's *Militant* had an article criticising the leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students for proposing that the Labour Party cut the Labour Party Young Socialist's budget, and instead give the money to them. *Militant* reported that in 1981 the NOLS leaders set a target of raising £250 from its 90 affiliated Labour Clubs. The article said they "achieved a grand total of between £60 and £50". This was a mistake. The total amount of money they raised was in fact £6.50! We apologise to the NOLS leaders for this gross inaccuracy.

### Whose Democracy?

How was the new leader of Russia chosen? By open election, with different parties and personalities putting forward their manifestoes for selection by the people of the Soviet Union? That is what would occur in a genuine workers' democracy.

Different currents of thought would be able to put their viewpoints before the people, including anyone who, if they did not advocate force, could even argue for a return to the days of mass poverty and misery that capitalism brought. After all, 65 years after the October Revolution, what would a healthy workers' democracy have to fear?

But the ruling bureaucracy in the Kremlin fear the verdict of the people. That is why they imprison Marxists and those who advocate genuine workers' trade unions. Instead a new leader "emerges" from behind the closed doors of the Politburo, and the Russian people told who their new leader is.

But the ruling-class in Britain have no cause to criticise. When asked by Sir Robin Day whether or not the Kremlin's process was rather like the old way the Tory leaders were chosen, one BBC pundit remarked that the Tory Party and the Russian, 'Communist' Party have much in common. Both are undemocratic organisations, even though they represent different social systems.

### Wit and Wisdom of Williams

What characteristics are required to be an SDP leader? Firstly a large dose of political hypocrisy. Although Shirley Williams was Minister of Prices during the last Labour government, one of the SDP's recruitment adverts claims that under that government "inflation run rampant". Strangely enough no criticism of Ms Williams' role in all this is mentioned.

But then she was probably too busy explaining how Tories could gain from joining the SDP. She recently stated that Christopher Brocklebank-Fowler, the SDP's only recruit from Tory MP's, had "literally grown and expanded" since joining the SDP. Must be all those claret lunches that does it.

### Fifty Years Ago

"Those who make a revolution by half dig their own graves". This old adage was given extra force by the experience of the Spanish workers' parties in their Popular Front coalition with 'progressive' capitalists during the 1930s.

Breaking the hold of the large landowners, who owned two-thirds of the country, and winning over the 70% of the population who worked on the land, was vital for the working class. But their leaders refused to campaign for the nationalisation of the land and as part of their Popular Front deal with the capitalists accepted a rhetorical call for agrarian reform.

In the autumn of 1932 this policy exploded in disaster. Peasants at Casas Viejas in Seville took over the neighbouring Duke's estates and ran it for themselves. The Civil Guard moved in and under the orders of the Minister of the Interior 'to take no prisoners', hunted the peasants through the fields killing twenty.

This gave the reactionaries and fascists the chance to pose as the defenders of the peasants and claim that the Republic had done nothing for peasants. Four years later when Franco staged his coup, the leaders of the left had not learnt their lesson, and clinging to the tails of the capitalists refused to campaign for social revolution. They thereby threw away the chance to win over the peasants in Franco's armies and tragically ensured the victory of fascism.

# PRICE PUT ON PREGNANCY

For many women motherhood is not always something that comes naturally.

Thousands of women every year go through the agonies of being told by their doctors they cannot have children.

Sometimes the fault lies with the government. Oppressive laws on abortions have forced many women to seek back-street abortions. Back-street abortions frequently destroy all chances of childbirth.

Lack of research is another cause. The IUD (inter-uterine device), a commonly used contraceptive device, can and has caused infertility amongst many women. It has still not been established even why the IUD actually works.

It is disgusting that some doctors do not inform their patients of the threat of this condition when approached about contraception.

However, a proportion of

women discover that nature has simply blocked their tubes, thereby cutting off any chances of fertilisation. But amazing breakthroughs in science have helped to overcome this problem. The answer: test tube babies.

Now for some women the joy of holding their own baby can be realised. For some women.

Unfortunately this treatment is not free. You have to pay. £1,000! How can someone, anyone, judge the cost of motherhood?

How can anyone put a price on human life? Where can a working housewife get £1,000? She'll hardly be able to save it from her or her

husband's meagre salary. Only the Tories could allow profit to be made from such a practice. Only capitalism could deny a woman what is her right. The birthrate has fallen over the last couple of years due to the fact that women cannot afford to give up work to have families.

Let's get rid of the Tories. Only when workers finally gain power will women overcome these problems.

Socialism could ensure that the necessary research is financed to overcome fertility problems, without costing mothers a penny. With decent wages too, in line with the cost of living, women will be able to choose whether or not to have a family without wages being a consideration.

**Why should my baby's life have depended on charity?**

Recently my wife went into Hospital to have our second baby. They were attended with marvellous skill and efficiency by the nursing staff, without whose dedication and expertise the baby would not have survived his initial hours of life.

My wife was in labour for six hours and there were complications with the delivery, in that the umbilical cord was wrapped twice around the baby's neck. He also inhaled some mucus at the time of birth, all of which resulted in his developing serious breathing problems.

He was placed in an incubator which provided warmth and oxygen to sustain him. It was then I found out that the incubator was a recent gift to the hospital from a number of charities, including the boy scouts and the brownies. Whilst applauding the good work and motives of the charities, I viewed with considerable alarm the fact that such an essential piece of equipment should be left to the scouts and brownies to provide.

Our hospital is a small local unit, concerned

specifically with maternity cases. The nearest General Hospital with maternity facilities is two hours away, travelling by public transport. If you add on one hour for the visit, and two hours to get home, you can see why that small maternity unit is so valuable to this area.

I discovered later that many such important technological innovations which enhance the quality of life for countless thousands of working class people, (who are the main beneficiaries of the NHS) are donated by charities. Kidney machines, body scanners and many more such life savers are made for profit.

Why should our valuable local hospital have to 'beg' from charities. It is high time that the production and provision of these important resources are taken out of the hands of the merchants of greed and placed at the disposal of the community whose needs they should serve. Then working class people would not have to rely upon the works of charity for the things which should be available as of right.

By Ray Hardman  
(Gosport CLP, UCATT)

Lobbying Labour Party conference to save a nursery.



## CANCER HYPOCRISY

The other day a letter came through the door from the "Marie Curie Memorial Foundation" appealing for donations from the working class to finance a charitable organisation providing nursing homes and a welfare scheme to assist seriously ill cancer patients. On closer examination the patrons of this organisation are none other than:

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother  
Chairman Mr Ronald

W Raven OBE  
Chairman of the committee for Scotland: The right hon. Earl of Wemyss and March  
Founder secretary S/Cdr. T. Bernard Robinson OBE.

"It's really sickening to see how members of the ruling class go through these token acts especially when it's their system that causes most cases of cancer."

By a Swansea reader

## CLOSURE THREAT TO HOSTEL

The Tower House hostel for single men in Whitechapel (East London) is now the scene of a protracted struggle with the management. The residents decided to organise themselves into a residents association to fight for better conditions.

Just to give one example: they are locked in each night by the chaining of the exits. When the fire-brigades union heard about this they said if there was a fire 300 people could be killed. The management then said that if the workers unlocked the doors they would be sacked; so the fire brigade promptly came and snapped the chains themselves.

Paradoxically, the owners of the hostel are trying to

close it down despite the fact that the hostels were the only profitable section of the group last year. They have recently had a similar dispute at their Arlington House in nearby Camden and obviously fear that there could be a whole string of disputes.

The workers at Tower House are attempting to set up a branch of the TGWU and the 700 residents are fighting for their accommodation and asking for support.

Given the chronic housing shortages in London it is vital that this closure is stopped and that decent conditions are won for both the residents and the workers in the Hostels throughout this country.

Messages of support, c/o Tower Hamlets LPYS, 349 Cambridge Heath Rd., London E2.

By Dave Farrar,  
(Tower Hamlets LP)

# Coventry needs socialism

Interview  
with  
Dave Nellist

**A victory in this County Council by-election would be a tremendous boost for the Labour Party in the area, in their struggle to build a working class, socialist Labour Party.**

**Jim Hensman, Press Officer for Coventry SE Labour Party, spoke to the candidate Dave Nellist, who is also the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.**

**What has been the biggest change in Coventry in recent years?**

Since the Tories took office in 1979, unemployment in the Coventry area has trebled. Workers from all over Britain and overseas, saw Coventry with its strong trade union organisation and high wage rates, as an attractive city in which to seek work.

But from 1966 onwards, the steady destruction of jobs has now reached catastrophic proportions. From having 204,000 workers in 1966, there are now only 156,000—the total disappearance of 50,000 jobs.

Manufacturing industry used to employ two-thirds of workers in the city, but in just the last four years the number employed in manufacturing has fallen from 107,000 to around 45,000.

**Why do you think this has happened?**

Primarily through lack of investment. Three years ago, the *Financial Times* did a survey on the city. They described how Canley, the British Leyland Assembly Plant, was reckoned to have in the 1960s "one of the most modern assembly halls in Europe." They went on to say that "starved of large-scale new investment the facility is now out-dated and an obvious candidate for

closure."

Within a year, over 7,000 workers had lost their jobs, when the assembly plant closed. In fact in the last ten years, BL has sacked 23,000 workers in Coventry alone.

**So what solutions does Coventry South East Labour Party offer?**

Firstly, we reject the Tory notion that unemployment is somehow the fault of working people. Thatcher, Joseph and other Tory spokesmen, have said that we "don't work hard enough"—yet British workers have the shortest holidays and longest hours of any country in Europe. It's not a question of lack of resources or money either. For every £1 big firms invest in Britain they can find £2.50 to invest in South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and other countries where trade unions are illegal and slave-labour wages are paid.

In the first issue of our constituency newspaper, in May of this year we identified an eight-point programme which we would like to see Labour campaigning on:

★ *A 35-hour week without loss in pay. Bring down the retirement age.*

★ *A £90 minimum wage at 18, index-linked to the cost of living as accessed by the labour movement.*

★ *No redundancies—share out the existing work.*

★ *A guaranteed job for all school-leavers—replace the government 'employment' scheme with a full crash programme of useful public works.*

★ *When companies claim they are bankrupt, the*

*labour movement must demand that their books and accounts be opened to trade union inspection.*

★ *Nationalise any company which cannot fulfil these demands. If employers say they cannot organise firms to guarantee basic conditions—then we must say we cannot afford the employers or their profit system.*

★ *Nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under democratic workers' control and management, with compensation paid on the basis of proven need.*

**There are some on Labour's right-wing who say that such a radical, socialist programme would never be supported by working people. What do you think?**

I sometimes wonder how they could know that, when such fundamental socialist ideas are never campaigned for by those who have the most access to the media.

I think it's essential, at every opportunity, at by-elections, on party political broadcasts, at rallies, for the leaders of the trade union and labour movement to explain to working people the devastating crisis of capitalism, and the socialist answer.

There are no partial solutions capable of supplying the seven or so 'Canley' type factories we need locally to create 50,000 jobs, and to eradicate unemployment in Coventry. For me, that can only happen when the working people, through their trade unions and the Labour Party, take control of society and begin its rational planning. Then we can honour the debt to those socialists who founded our movement 80 years ago, to enact Clause 4 part 4 of our constitution and see a socialist society in Britain as a step towards socialism internationally.

The campaign to elect Dave Nellist to West Midlands County Council in the by-election on November 26 is well under way. The first campaign meeting attracted 70 people, who watched the anti-nuclear war film, 'The War Game'.

Canvassing is being carried out every day and more public meetings are planned. Prior to the election will be a mass rally on Monday, November 22, to be addressed by Tony Benn.

The importance of this County Council election has been recognised by the many Labour Party members locally and from surrounding areas who helped with the mass canvasses that have been carried out. The election boundaries cover the same area as will a general election, and Dave Nellist has also been selected as the Labour parliamentary candidate for Coventry South-East.

However, help in the campaign is still urgently needed: Contact the Campaign Office, 30 Coundon Road, Coventry. Phone: 0203 23851 or 552059.

**MASS CANVASS this weekend, November 20 and 21.**  
Meet at 30 Coundon Road, Coventry at 10.30 am.



The Labour candidate for the County Council by-election in Coventry, Dave Nellist, during a street canvass last week. Photo: Nick Oakes

## Life on Stoke Aldermoor

The likes of Koo Stark and Lady Diana have limousines and body guards when they go shopping. It's a bit different around here in the Stoke Aldermoor area of Coventry.

It cost me and my husband £1.24 just to catch a bus into town and back to get the shopping. There is a precinct nearby but the selection of shops is worse than in town. Every shop has been broken into—even the cake shop!

The local playgroup costs £2.60 a day, which is beyond the means of most families. For a 'community centre' they've got two army type Nissen huts.

The worst thing was the house. They suffer from damp. While I lived on Stoke Aldermoor in a flat I had my first baby. The flat was damp despite redecorating. My baby got a cough which got worse and worse. We've moved now, but the doctor has said that her cough will never go.

But in comparison I sup-

By Julie Smith  
(Coventry SE LPYS)

pose you could say I was lucky. The little boy downstairs nearly died. The guttering on the top floor was broken and water constantly splashed onto the wall of the downstairs flat. Eventually a type of white fungus grew in the inside of one of the kitchen cupboards. My friend's little boy ate some. He had to be rushed off to hospital and was kept in for nearly four months.

But despite conditions such as these, the Tories are in for a surprise if they think they have worn down the spirit of people on Stoke Aldermoor. During a Sunday canvass of the area, we sold 45 *Militants* and got 12 names of youth wanting to join the LPYS.

The bitterness and anger was summed up by four

youngsters who said they wanted to help us with any leafletting we did, because they 'hated Thatcher.' They helped us sell four copies of the paper. After all, if they are to have half a chance of a future, socialism becomes an essential.

**COVENTRY SOUTH EAST COUNTY-COUNCIL BY-ELECTION PUBLIC MEETING.**  
Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Dave Nellist (Candidate), J Lanwarne (NUR Divisional Organiser) at 7.30pm on Monday November 22. Venue at Central Hall, Coventry. Tickets 50p waged, 20p unwaged. Postal applications to: Coventry South East LP, 30 Coundon Road, Coventry. Cheques/postal orders payable to 'Labour Voice' at the above address.

**COVENTRY SOUTH EAST LPYS PUBLIC MEETING.**  
Speakers A Bevan (LP National Youth Organiser), A Beale (London LPYS Chairman); Local Shop Steward (all speakers to be confirmed) at 7.15pm on Wednesday 1 December at Sidney Stringer School (2 minutes from Pool Meadow).

## 'It's up to us to fight'

**It's nearly four years since I left school and in this time I've had two years at college, two YOP schemes and eight months on the dole."**

Kathy's experience is typical of young worker's throughout Britain today but particularly true of Coventry. There are now less than 2,000 job vacancies in the city as a whole, and for school leavers like Kathy the outlook is very grim.

I did a secretarial course at college hoping this would help me get a job in an office. No such luck! I write on average 4-5 job applications each week but hardly get a reply, never mind an interview. I'm becoming more and more angry.

My first YOP scheme was at a local coach company. I hated it. They had me running all over the place. I used to do the cleaning and make

tea—slave labour.

My second YOP scheme at Talbot Car Company was really excellent. I was actually given training in reception and filing. I sometimes filled in for full-time staff. Although they told me it was unlikely I would get a job at the end of a scheme, I still worked hard. I must admit it was annoying because five more YOPs were taken on as I left. The bosses can pick and choose with us. Its sickening.

Until a few months ago I had never taken notice of politics. To tell the truth, I mistakenly thought politics didn't concern me. I know different now.

Every fortnight my giro for £42 arrives through the post. I'm supposed to "live" on this. I can't even exist after I've payed board and what I owe from the previous weeks. I don't like borrowing but you always have to. By the end of the

fortnight I'm absolutely broke. My parents have to lend me the bus fare so that I can sign on.

Being unemployed I used to get so depressed. All I ever did was sit at home all day doing nothing, often going to bed in the afternoon through boredom. I just didn't understand why I couldn't get a job.

I joined the LPYS only because someone from the Labour Party knocked on my door and discussed politics in a day to day manner. It sounded quite interesting. At first I was a bit wary about becoming involved but today politics is an important part of my life. It's up to the youth like myself and others to fight back against Thatcher and the Tories.

By Militant  
Reporter



This proud proclamation, on a hoarding near Coventry's rail station, is a thing of the past

# RUSSIAN ECONOMY...

# In a bureaucratic

**Karl Marx long ago explained that no social or political system gives way to another, until it has exhausted all its potential for the development of production and therefore for human progress. In this regard world capitalism stands utterly condemned.**

The growth of the main capitalist countries, those in the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) experienced a sharp fall in their growth rates in the last ten years and are now in the grip of a generalised recession. In the years from 1960 to 1973, the average rate of growth of GDP in the OECD was 5 per cent, but that average has fallen in 1981-82 to 0.7 per cent.

Massive unemployment has followed in the wake of the world capitalist recession. In total, there are already 26 million out of work in the OECD countries, and that figure is expected to rise to 32 million next year. While many millions around the globe despair for the manufactured goods of the industrialised countries: engineering products, tractors, machine tools, etc., those same capitalist countries leave millions idle and industrial capacity unused.

But how is it that the so-called 'socialist' countries are also approaching an economic standstill, when the laws of capitalism—slumps, booms, overproduction—have been eradicated? A recent article in *The Times* gloated over the fact that the Russian Minister of Agriculture had announced that production targets were not being met.

"Veteran observers of the Soviet scene", the article went on, "say the present shortages are the worst for ten years. According to reliable reports from the Ukraine, Byelorussia and other republics, meat has all but disappeared from the state shops, and dairy products such as butter and cheese are scarce... estimates suggest that this year's grain harvest will be in the region of 170 million tonnes against a target of 240 million tonnes." (*The Times*, 11 October 1982)

How is the reactionary Western press able to gloat at the colossal East European debts owed to capitalism, the food shortages and even rationing—and not just in Poland either?

In fact, the regimes of the Soviet Union, Western Europe and China, are far from socialist. In Russia since the emergence of Stalinism, the political control over society by the working-class and its organisations has been usurped by a privileged self-perpetuating clique of officials, managers and technocrats.

Capitalism has long been

By Jeremy Birch

abolished in all these countries, but socialism requires not just nationalisation and economic planning but the active participation of the mass of the population at every level in the running of society. This is patently not the method of administration in Poland, Russia or China.

Historically, because of the expropriation of the capitalist class in 1917-18, the bureaucratically deformed workers' state of the Soviet Union was able to prove the undeniable superiority of a planned economy over the chaos of capitalist competition despite the bureaucracy. In 1921, with the immediate problems of civil war and economic sanctions imposed by world imperialism, Russia produced less than 1 million tons of steel. By 1929 just at the start of the rapid industrialisation of the 5 year plans it produced 4 million tons.

Britain in 1929 turned out 14 million tons. 50 years later British steel production had not increased (by 1982 in fact it is lower) while the Russian steel industry was responsible for 155 million tons, and was indeed the world's largest producer.

### Planning developed economy enormously.

The Soviet Union is today the world's largest oil producer, ahead even of Saudi Arabia. It is the world's major producer of aluminium and of coal, and manufactures more tractors than any other country. Despite the destruction of the Second World War, and the loss of 20 million lives (far more than any other of the warring nations) and up until 1945 at least, in the face of the hostility of the entire world, the abolition of capitalism enabled the Russian economy to be transformed.

**From what today would be described as a semi-developed nation, with most of its industry in foreign hands, and barely 10% of the population involved in industry, Russia has grown in half a century or so into the second most powerful nation in the world, employ-**

ing the largest working class.

But what of the Russian and East European economies now? All of them without exception are facing declining rates of growth in production, if not, as in the case of Poland, an actual fall in total annual production. The countries of Comecon recorded a 10% average annual economic growth in the 1950's. But this has steadily declined—from 7% in the 1960's, to 5% in the 1970's and by 1979 they were growing by a mere 2.5%.

The Soviet Union itself has failed to meet the growth targets of the last two five year plans. Indeed, under the current plan which was launched in January 1981, the growth target was a mere 3% for this year and last. Pre-war annual economic growth was around 20%.

Yet in 1961 Krushchev predicted that within 20 years 'Communism' would overtake capitalism. After all, the justification for the transformation of society is that it should free the productive forces and rapidly surpass the highest achievements of the old economic system. But now the planned economies are growing barely quicker than some of the capitalist countries, themselves plagued by recession.

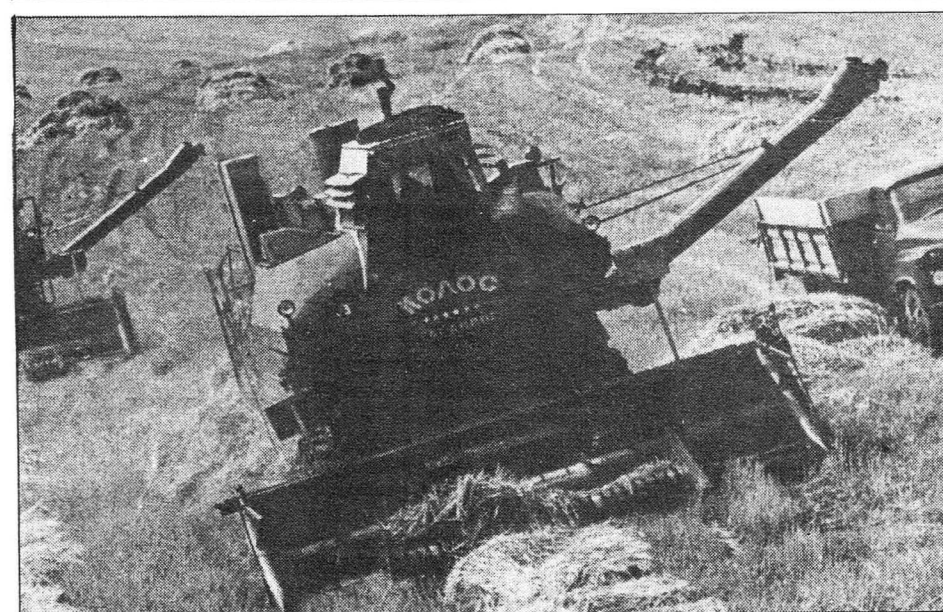
If it is not the contradiction of capitalism, if it is not the exigencies of the capitalist market, which have been eliminated, what is it that is responsible for the stagnation of Stalinism?

It can only be the dead hand of the Bureaucracy, which stifles every initiative and any scrutiny by the masses. The technical skill and experience on the job of the workers in deciding methods of production is untapped. The active involvement of the masses in drawing up the economic plans, in working out from their experience of life what needs to be produced and in what quantities and critically examining the quality of products are obstructed.

At least under capitalism, albeit anarchically, and through sudden catastrophes, the free market regulates production after a fashion. If what is produced lacks sufficient use value for the consumer, it ceases to be produced, probably involving the bankruptcy of the producer and the impoverishment of its workforce into the bargain.

If commodities continue to be produced inefficiently or by outdated labour intensive processes, then, because of their cost, they are no longer purchased. By what is bought, and by what realises the entrepreneurs' profit, so capitalism decides in what amounts various commodities should be produced, and decides on the distribution of available labour between the different branches of industry.

But where the economy is



Russia produces more tractors than any other country in the world (centre picture) but despite this and 27% of investment going to agriculture, bureaucracy and mismanagement stifle food production.

nationalised and operates really as one giant company, it is the accuracy and realism of the plan which determines economic success. The efficiency of the plan depends upon the checking of the aims and targets by the people themselves and not just on bureaucratic command.

### Bureaucracy now an absolute fetter

Trotsky wrote in his definitive account of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, *The Revolution Betrayed*, "The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique. The rough work of borrowing, imitating, transplanting and grafting, was accomplished on the basis laid down by the revolution.

"There was, thus far, no question of any new word in the sphere of technique, science or art. It is possible

to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost."

So even when the foundations of Soviet industry were being laid, the bureaucracy was still a relative shackle on the development of production, i.e. relative to the progress that could have been achieved in a healthy democratic workers' state. But as a more modern and sophisticated economy emerges, it is no longer a mere hindrance but an absolute obstacle to further economic development, for a small number of bureaucrats to have sole responsibility for planning society.

Trotsky continued... "But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the grey label of indifference.

Under a nationalised economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fears, lies and flattery."

Today the bureaucracies of Eastern Europe no less than the capitalists in the West, though for different reasons, are an absolute fetter on production. Under this unchecked, unaccountable bureaucratic caste, corruption, waste and mismanagement are an enormous drain on the economy, and the workers, allowed no say in the running of society, must merely shrug and accept it.

Only genuine freedom of criticism, and the workers' check on all those elected to positions of responsibility could curb outright dishonesty and plain bureaucratic bungling. When the bureaucracy itself punishes some particularly gross incident of corruption



# trait-jacket

it is more as a warning to others not to be too greedy or ostentatious, so as not to provoke the workers, and threaten the whole system of perks and privileges.

Thus, at the 25th Soviet Communist Party Congress, the late premier Kosygin complained that due to mismanagement "the economy is suffering massive losses to the tune of several thousands of millions of roubles a year".

Western businessmen have reported seeing machinery they sold to the Soviet Union 5 years previously, still unpacked, in the original shipment crates.

The Soviet consumer goods sector is no more successful. In 1978, for example, misjudgement of demand resulted in a mountain of unwanted clothing and footwear which had to be halved in price. The net loss amounted to £1,215m.

## Massive waste in agriculture

In agriculture the story is the same. Russian food shortages, as in 1981, are not just due to poor harvests. Despite a higher proportion of total investment (27%) being expended on agriculture than in any other industrialised country, bureaucracy and inefficiency prevent even the feeding of the population.

Professor Alec Nove exposes the planning blunders, even when sufficient is produced. "Lack of storage space results in the loss of much grain and fertiliser, while shortage of packaging materials helps to deprive towns of vegetables and fruit".

Or take the case of the sacked Soviet Deputy Minister of Oil, Elik Khalimov. Having failed to meet the target for increasing oil production, for 5 years his Ministry simply falsified the figures, pretending that Government orders were being implemented. All this only came to light when thousands of barrels of imported chemicals for the oil industry were found abandoned in railway sidings, along with rusting specialised machinery, also imported.

The official publication *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*, estimated that the losses from machinery alone totalled £27m, while 40,000 tons of chemicals were wasted. **It has been estimated that between 30 and 50% of Russian production could be wasted through mismanagement.**

Just the extravagance of the living standards of the top bureaucrats takes a sizeable portion out of the surplus created by the working-class, that could otherwise be devoted to building up industry.

Lenin described the four to one differential conceded

to get the technicians and scientists, etc. to work after 1917 as a *capitalist* differential. What would he say about the bureaucrats' limousines, daschas in the country, and special shops selling luxuries unavailable to the ordinary people?

None of these problems can be solved by the bureaucracy, who themselves are responsible. But they are petrified at the suggestion of allowing the workers the least involvement in the management of the economy.

It would only reveal more starkly the gulf between the official talk of Socialism and workers' rule, and the reality of bureaucratic dictatorship. Any opening of the books and accounts of society would merely confirm the workers' experience of the bureaucracy's unwarranted rewards, and their utter inefficiency.

So, desperately, the bureaucracy searches for a cure to the economic sterility. Under Krushchev, in an attempt to get round the log-jam at the top of society, responsibility was *decentralised* down to local economic authorities. The result was not efficiency but absurd duplication and the local bureaucrats were no more prepared to take the workers into their confidence or ask their advice.

*Recentralisation* to overcome this waste of resources was then superseded by further *re-decentralisation* organised by Kosygin in 1965. Factory managers would be empowered to decide how the plant's profit would be used—how much for wages, how much for reinvestment, etc. But it is not the size of the enterprise or at what level decisions are taken, but whether the workers themselves are involved in deciding how it should be run.

## Disciplining the workforce.

Similar steps have been taken more recently in Hungary, encouraging more initiative at plant level. Along with this has gone more concentration on profits and incentives rather than subsidies. Hungarian communist Party Secretary Kadar, told the Party's 12th Party Congress in 1980 "We must resolutely combat the appealing notion and easy going practice of egalitarianism".

But this tying of wages to production, is really part of the disciplining of labour. Bureaucrats can only compel those on the shop floor to work harder by threats and incentives. They are hated figures, unable to inspire extra effort. With no say in the running of their own lives or the management of their own workplaces, the workers feel as alienated from production as the workers in the

capitalist world.

In the Soviet Union a Moscow State University economist—Professor Popov—suggested in the pages of *Pravda* that industry should shake out labour and create a pool of unemployment. The least productive should be sacked.

This apparently would galvanise the workers into greater productivity, and unemployment would be a salutary lesson for a worker. When they get another job, they would work harder.

Also, the unemployed could be redirected to Siberia, where vast stores of natural resources still lie buried beneath the permafrost. This solution seems to be a mixture of the methods of Thatcherism and Czarism!

Other economists have successfully urged that industrial performance no longer be measured in terms of gross production, irrespective of quality, demand or need. But rather should be measured by 'gross sold output'.

But the regimes of Eastern Europe have also sought relief from declining economic growth rates by increasing trade and financial transactions with the capitalist West. Nearly 50 years ago Stalin pronounced the reactionary theory of building 'Socialism in one country' without recourse to the outside world.

This flew in the face of the basic internationalism of Marxism. But Brezhnev had the commitment to participation on the world market actually written into the latest Soviet constitution.

But it is in the other Eastern European countries that economic involvement with the West has gone the furthest. East-West trade grew 6 times in the 15 years up to 1980. However, the bureaucracies long since having forgotten the economic analysis of Marxism, not only deluded themselves that their own system was eternal but that capitalism too was secure. The two would continue to prop up each other indefinitely.

Reality—with the capitalist world in crisis—has smashed these illusions unmercifully. Eastern Europe, beset by its own economic problems, has now partially imported the problems of diseased capitalism as well—particularly inflation.

Between 1970 and 1977 there was a 165% increase in the price of imports into Hungary, and inflation is admitted to be 10% worse than in the UK. The Vice President of the Hungarian National Bank recently confessed that the health of the Hungarian economy depends upon the stability of the West.

As Hungary now owes \$8,000m to the capitalist world, and 40% of the coun-

try's income comes from exports, 60% of Hungary's trade being conducted outside of Comecon, he no doubt is correct. A further slump in trade in the capitalist world would be a crippling blow to Hungary.

## Huge debts to Western banks

Eastern European debt to the West now total \$90,000m, with East Germany owing \$14.5 billion and Rumania \$10.8 billion. Although Poland with debts of \$29 billion is well out in front. Like some debt ridden Third World country, Poland has been engaged in almost permanent negotiations with Western bankers about rescheduling her debts. This year alone \$10,000m is due in repayments and interest charges, and so far barely a zloty has been paid.

After the upheavals in 1970 with the shooting down of strikers in the Baltic ports, the Polish regime tried to rapidly industrialise the economy, to boost production and therefore to afford more concessions to the workers. They borrowed on the world financial markets to pay for this heavy investment, with the intention of honouring the debts by exports to the West.

But the onset of capitalist recession, meant that demand in the West fell. Indeed, the crisis meant that access for Eastern European exports was deliberately restricted as the West turned increasingly to protectionism. With foreign earnings falling, Poland was compelled to borrow more to repay existing loans.

The decline in Polish production of 2% in 1979 and 4% in 1980, was not so much due to industrial conflict, but to the lack of vital imported raw materials and parts which could not be paid for. So the meaning of the 40% increase in meat prices by the removal of subsidies in July 1980, which reignited the workers' protests and led to the establishment of Solidarity, was an attempt to unload the burden of the crisis onto the masses.

But the Eastern European countries are only forced on to the mercy of Western financiers because of their inability to properly integrate their economies. The main aim of the bureaucrats of each nation is to extend their own power, prestige and privilege.

Instead of the harmonisation of their economies, and a division of labour within a Socialist Federation of Eastern Europe, each national bureaucracy is intent on building up, often with capitalist loans, their own industrial base. There is probably more co-operation within the Common Market than within Comecon!

Rumania and Hungary



The career of Leonid Brezhnev, who died last week, owed nothing to the traditions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, and everything to the traditions of Stalinism.

Brezhnev's own lifestyle was comparable to that of any Western statesman. He was a collector of large cars, including in his collection a 450 SL Mercedes Benz (a gift from Willy Brandt), a large Cadillac (from Richard Nixon) a Matra Rancho, two Rolls Royces and a Russian-made Zil limousine. When he was not speeding around in one of these he could always retire to his country dacha outside Moscow or to his personal 'retreat' on the Black Sea coast.

It was in the 1930s, when the last remnants of the old

Bolshevik Party were being murdered in their tens and hundreds of thousands in the Stalinist purges, that Brezhnev himself rose to prominence. From being a rank and file party member in 1931, he rose to become vice chairman of the Dneprodzerzhinsk Communist Party in 1936.

But the passing of Brezhnev, will mark no fundamental change in the social and political structure of Russia. Stalin may be long gone, but the system of totalitarian bureaucracy with which his name is associated has lived on. Brezhnev was a product of the Stalinist system, and that system continues, now with a new bureaucrat, Andropov, at the head.

are actually members of the capitalist International Monetary Fund and Poland has also applied to join. Yet Socialism is supposed to abolish all national antagonism, and to overcome once and for all the limitations of the nation state on the fullest development of the mean of production. As Marx put it, "the working-class has no nation", but the national interests of the rival bureaucracies are as strong as those of any capitalist class in the countries of the West.

From every point of view only the removal of these ruling cliques could liberate the economies of the East from bureaucratic stranglehold. "Soviet democracy is not the demand of an abstract policy, still less an abstract moral. It has become a life and death need of the country." (*Revolution Betrayed*)

**Workers' democracy is not an optional extra, nor required just to rectify some sense of injustice. It is essential if further progress is to**

**be made in production and the economy, and not least real progress made towards Socialist equality.**

The economic impasse in the East clearly testifies that Stalinism can no longer take society forward. Just as in the West, that fact strikes the consciousness of the masses.

The struggles of Hungary of 1956 and on a number of occasions in Poland, will be put into the shade by the battles to come. The dramatic struggle of Polish workers, though for a period of time at least thrown back, the strikes of Rumanian miners and the reported strikes in Kiev and elsewhere in Russia are the precursors of a new movement.

The strong working-class in the East will fight to re-establish in Russia, and to introduce for the first time in the rest of Eastern Europe, Socialist democracy.

Economic failure has ushered in, in both East and West, an era of massive upheaval in society and brings forward the date of the triumph of the socialist revolution.

Last week we printed the first part of an article on the United States of America, which dealt with the crisis in the US economy. The second part of the article is about the American labour movement and the tasks facing it in defending living standards and jobs.

During the late 1940s and the early 1950s the shop steward movement and the Union movement as a whole suffered under the blows of the red scare of the Cold War period and a combined employer/government offensive.

Many leading activists were driven from their positions and the CIO was split. It would however be a mistake to see these events as the major reason for the weakening of organised labor in the US over the past 35 years.

In 1946, 37% of the American workforce was organised. This was the peak of union organisation. The figure has dropped to 20% at present. The decisive reason for the decline in union membership has been the enormous increase in living standards experienced by US workers over the years of the post-war boom.

By 1972, American workers had the highest living standards in the world. Unemployment was also reduced to a new low level. Compared to the poverty and starvation of the 1930s the conditions of the majority of American workers were entirely transformed. Even during the years of World War II itself living standards had increased.

Many American workers could no longer see the need for strong union organisation. Those workers who remained organised no longer saw the need to be active in their unions. As a result the percentage of the workforce organised declined.

At the same time unions in the main came under the control of leaders who at best saw their role as mediators between the workers and the employers and at worst attempted to play the role of making the unions safe and dependable supporters of American capitalism. The activists in the unions found themselves in many cases fighting the employers and their own leaderships as well.

**From the highest living standards in the world, US labor has now fallen to fifth position.**

The situation is now beginning to change. The decisive factor in the initial period will be the economic crisis. From the highest living standards in the world US labor has now fallen to 5th position. With attacks on living standards from all sides and union organisation under assault the union and leadership will have no choice but to take action.

During the years of the post war boom the AFL/CIO's lobbying power

By  
**Rob O'Neil**  
New York

was tolerated in Washington. Reagan has made it clear that this is no longer the case by smashing of PATCO (the air traffic controllers union) and breaking of the BLE's rail strike. Along with this, management's union busting offensive and the shift of industry to the south is putting the union leaderships power base under threat. The union leaders now have no choice but to take steps to organise to build and to strengthen the unions.

The AFL/CIO has sent 70 full time organisers to organise there. Solidarity Day in 1981 was also a demonstration of the beginnings of the revitalisation of labor. The strengthening of the opposition movement in the UAW against concessions and the campaign to unseat UMW leader Church also reflects the beginnings of this process.

**In the course of the coming struggles, all the best traditions of American labor will be rediscovered.**

This movement will only really gather strength when the economy goes into an upswing. This will most likely be in 1983. The rank and file of the unions will have more confidence to organise and strike and the lead of the activists will begin to win more support from the membership of the movement as a whole.

The 1980s will therefore see an increasing turn to union organisation and also a transformation of the existing unions as the membership becomes more active and moves to select a fighting leadership at plant, local and international level. Just as the prolonged economic upswing and dramatic increase in living standards of the post war decades saw a decline in labour activity, so the recessionary period will now see workers turning to their traditional organisations to defend their living standards. The years ahead will see the percentage of the workforce organised rise to its previous height of 37% and on to 50% in line with other major industrial countries.

While one effect of the post war boom was an unhelpful climate for union organisation another and this time positive effect was the enormous increase in the power of the American working class. The giant industries and firms with employees of 100,000 and more, the increased monopolisation and

# Democrats and Republicans offer nothing to US workers

# PARTY OF LABOUR NEEDED!

technology all have put much greater power in the hands of US labor. The growth in living standards has also raised expectations.

No class gives up what it has gained without a struggle. American labor is no exception to that rule. In the course of the coming struggles all the best traditions of American labor will be rediscovered. It will be with the vigour, speed and energy of the Wobblies and the building of the CIO in the 1930s that the movement will go forward. City and State labor Councils will be transformed into fighting bodies responsive to the membership. The AFL-CIO itself will be transformed as new leaders are developed and as some of the present leaders respond to the new mood. A whole new layer of US workers and youth will enter the ranks of organised labor.

Of course this process will not develop evenly. There will be advances and retreats, there will be periods of lull and periods of offensives, there will be defeats and victories. But as the economic crisis offers no way out then the working class will have no option but to organise and to fight.

**Powerful support will build up for a Labor Party**

Out of these struggles the unity of the working class will be strengthened. The black and Latino workers will unite in struggle with the white working class. Men and women will take action together to defend their standards. The struggles of the specially oppressed minorities will merge with the struggle of the labor movement as a whole, as it is clearly seen that only organised labor can show a way out for all sections of society suffering under the heel of American big business.

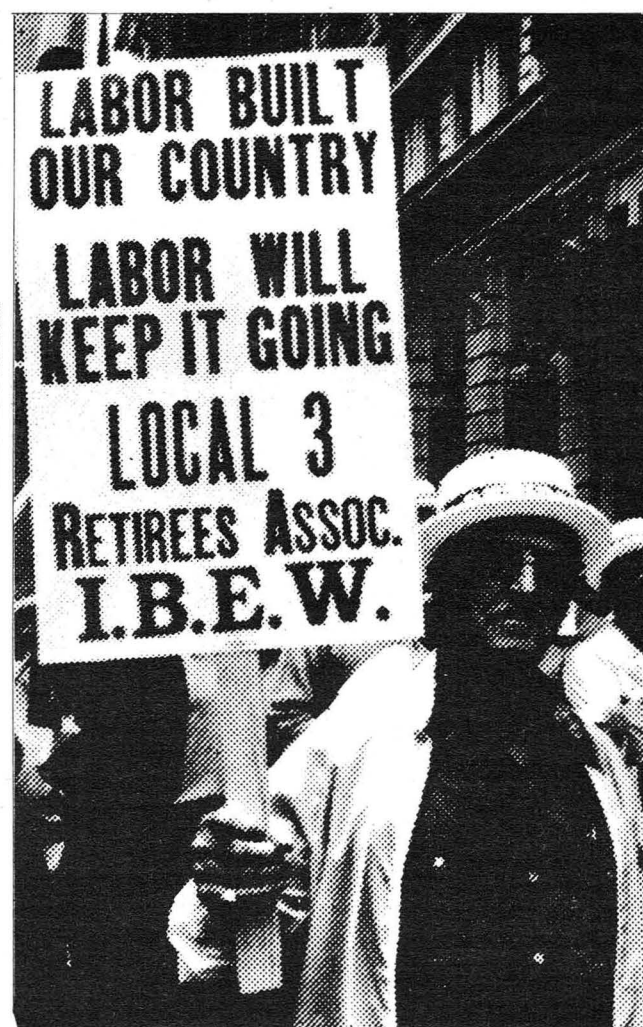


Photo: Lou Howort

New York City Labor Day march reflects the traditions of the American labor movement.

ty. Such a Democratic administration, in power against a background of a crisis ridden economy, would pursue the same policies as the Republicans. Kennedy who is on the so-called liberal wing of the Democrats showed his true colors when he voted with the Republicans for legal action to break the rail strike and force the BLE members back to work.

Out of this process will come an unstoppable movement for a Labor Party. It will come out of the union locals, out of the state and Labor councils and out of the international unions themselves. With mass unemployment and falling living standards the newly organised layer of younger workers, the re-vitalised sections of the existing unions, the social welfare recipients and the pensioners, the homeless and the specially oppressed minorities will combine in one unstoppable tide for a mass Labor Party based on the trade unions. American political life will be transformed by this development.

If union leaders of the AFL/CIO would organise

their resources and give a lead now by convening a conference of the labor

**51% of the electorate would support a candidate who was against big business.**

movement and representatives from the specially oppressed minorities a party of labor could be created which could deny victory to either the Republicans or the Democrats in 1984 and elect a Labor President.

The lack of support for the Republicans and Democrats is shown by the low poll in elections. Only 52% of the electorate voted in the last Presidential elections and only 38% in the November 2nd elections. Young people in their early 20s mostly did not vote. And one opinion poll showed that a majority of every social class except the very rich opposed the Republicans.

Another opinion poll in *Business Week* in June 1982 also showed the potential for

*Continued on page 11*

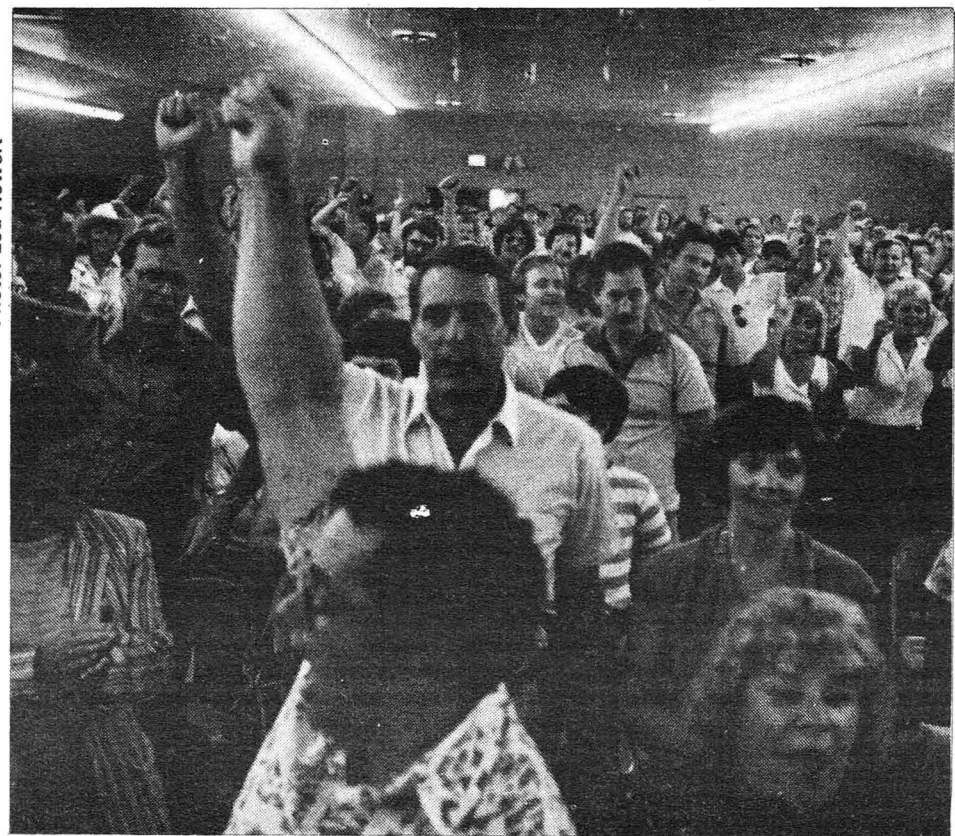


Photo: Lou Howort

Air traffic controllers in America voting to strike last year in defiance of an ultimatum from Reagan

Printed below is a letter from an activist in Sri Lanka giving details of the brutality of J R Jayewardene's supporters

With the announcement of the victory of J R Jayewardene in the Presidential Elections, victimisations started over the island, especially in workplaces.

In several CTB (Ceylon Transport Board) depots, a number of workers were assaulted by UNP thugs who are leaders of the UNP trade unions. The workers were chased out of their workplaces.

Workers were transferred to other places, but the management of the new work place refused to accept them. Then they were not allowed back to their former work place, and the result was they lost their jobs. In

### From an NSSP member Sri Lanka

the State Oil Corporation and the State Ceramics Corporation, UNP thugs chased out over 200 workers. The gang of thugs are still watching the gates of these workplaces. Fourteen workers who were recognised as sympathisers of the opposition were banned from the State Engineering Corporation. In Plywoods Corporation the management used the same tactic which they used on the CTB workers.

Incidents of this sort are still going on all over the country. Two watchers who were on duty at the gates of a worksite of the State Graphite Corporation, at Eppawala were chased by UNP thugs, who had shot guns, swords and iron bars. One of the workers had to run through the jungle, swim across a river in the night and came to Anuradhapura Town and from there he had to take a bus to Colombo the following morning. This incident took place on 1st November.

Several leaders including the Presidential candidate of the SLFP were questioned by CID and their passports were impounded. Numbers of SLFP supporters were remained and questioning by the CID is still going on. The daily paper of the opposition 'Affna' is sealed by the government who have stopped the functioning of the press. Another press belonging to the opposition was also sealed. A party of CID officers came to the Nava Sama Samaja Party

# In the wake of Sri Lankan election WORKERS 'REWARDED' WITH VIOLENCE



The crowd at Eheliyagoda (near Colombo) gives Vasudeva Nanayakkara (NSSP candidate) a warm reception during the recent Presidential elections. Jayewardene would like to make gatherings like this a thing of the past.

(NSSP) office twice. They wanted to get a list of names of the party leaders. This seems to be a State suppression against the left.

### UNP MPs Lead Thuggish Attacks on Workforce

Several MPs (UNP) have given the lead to thugs in some incidents: the MP for Polgahevela lead a gang of thugs and he himself snatched an infant from the hands of the mother and smashed the child on the ground. This MP was under custody of the army under emergency regulations, and was later released.

One deputy minister who was leading a gang of thugs was met by the police and the thugs were arrested but the Deputy Minister disappeared. The police are unable to arrest him.

At Dirulapitiya electorate a house was attacked by the UNP thugs. As a result two women were killed and two children were seriously wounded.

While all this is going on the President announced a referendum to postpone the Parliamentary elections. The NSSP appealed to the opposition parties to boycott this so-called referendum and get ready for a joint campaign for a democratic general election.

## Help defend labour movement

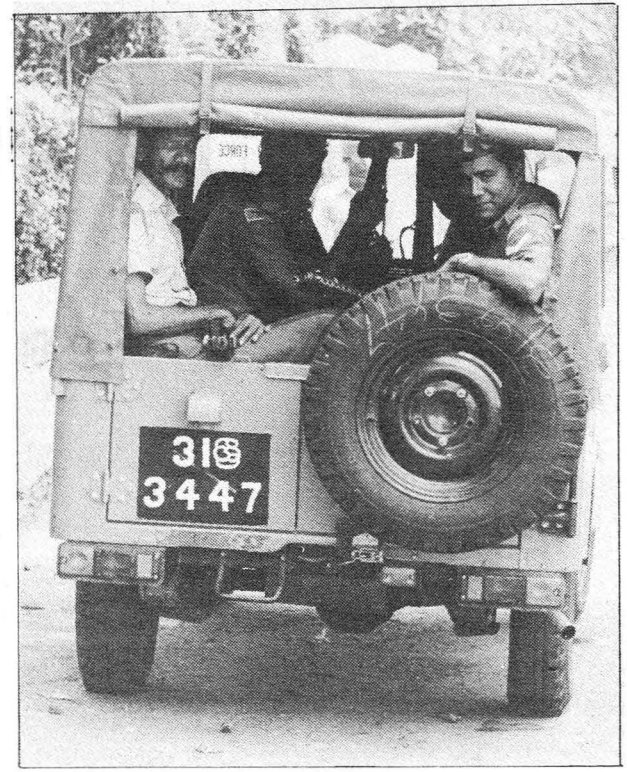
We have received an appeal from Brent Kennedy, the British representative of the Sri Lankan United Federation of Labour, regarding the new wave of repression. We have printed extracts below. We hope that readers of this paper will do all they can to assist our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

Dear Brother or Sister,  
President JR Jayewardena is now finally embarking on the establishment of a complete dictatorship in Sri Lanka. 150 members of the main opposition party, the liberal Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka which supports it, have been arrested. Five opposition newspapers have been banned and their presses sealed. Now the General Election due next year is to be done away with and the present Parliament extended for 6 years. Trade unionists and political opponents of the regime are being physically driven out of the workplaces

by government thugs. Bands of the ruling right wing United National Party roam the streets armed with shotguns, swords and metal bars, some led by UNP MPs and even Ministers, driving opponents into hiding. (see letter from Sri Lanka. Editor)

Parliamentary democracy, in the tradition of the last 30 years is now dead. Executive power is now concentrated in the hands of one man.

The pretext under which this move to outright dictatorship has been presented was the discovery of a "plot" to organise a coup. This story is ridiculous—apparently the coup was to



The army on the streets of Sri Lanka during the state of emergency in 1980. There is a danger they will become a permanent feature.

have been launched by the SLFP leaders IF they had WON the Presidential Election!

The SLFP candidate, who won 39% of the votes, was arrested last week and had his passport withheld. Although our Federation did not support this party in the election (we urged our members to vote for our own Federation President, Vasudeva Nanayakkara who stood as the candidate of the

ings and the seizure of union property which we suffered in the last few years, we must be prepared for further repression against our Federation soon. In such an event we will contact your organisation and our fraternal organisations throughout the British and European Labour movements immediately to appeal for defence.

Although we are not asking for specific help at this stage we ask you to keep an ear open for further developments in Sri Lanka and please be ready to act urgently in our defence, and in defence of all trade unionists in the country, should we need it. Thank you.

Any campaign which may become necessary for us to conduct in Britain in defence of the democratic rights of the SL labour movement will be organised by myself and by one of our Sri Lankan brothers in London: Paul David, 36 Oakwood Avenue, Beckenham, Kent.

Yours Fraternally  
Brent Kennedy  
British Representative,  
UFL.  
62B Brevington Rd  
London W9

### We must be prepared for further repression

socialist party, the NSSP) we are naturally concerned at the arrest of several leaders of the opposition, the closure of opposition newspapers and the consolidation of dictatorial powers, and we demand the reversal of these measures.

Already the CID have interrogated some of our leading organisers and comrades of other unions. Judging by the arrests, mass sack-

## USA - PARTY OF LABOUR NEEDED Continued from page 10

a Labor Party. 51% of those polled said they would vote for a candidate who was critical of big business if they had the choice and only 40% said they would vote for a candidate favourable to business. What these figures show is the potential support that already exists for a Labor Party. All that stands in the way is the refusal of the Union leaders to break finally with the Democrats and mobilise the power of the labor movement.

The task now facing the activists in the American labor movement is to build a movement to oppose

Reagan and his big business backers. This has to be done by transforming and building the unions in a struggle against concessions, the cuts and the rising unemployment. Opposition to all concessions on wages and safety and opposition to all plant closures and the nationalisation of all industries threatening redundancies should be organised labor's program. This should be linked to the struggle for a 35 hour week with no loss in pay and a useful program of public works to rebuild the cities and the country's infrastructure and to build

homes, hospitals and facilities for the elderly and the young. This scheme should be at trade union rates of pay and under trade union control. And of course American labor must take

up the struggle for the ending of control of society by the major corporations and banks. The nationalisation under workers' control and management with compensation on the basis of proven

US coal miners last week elected a militant union lawyer for a five year term as president of the United Mine Workers Union (UMW). Richard Trumka (33) was elected with a two to one majority over his opponent Samuel Church, the outgoing president. The defeat of Mr Church reflects widespread dissatisfaction at a time of growing unemployment in the coalmining industry. Trumka's campaign promised a more aggressive attitude to negotiations. Last year the rank and file had rejected the settlement Church had negotiated with the bosses.

need of the banks, the finance houses, all major industry and mineral, oil and gas wealth would make possible a socialist plan of production. This could provide a free health service, end slum housing, poverty and unemployment.

With the development of a mass Labor Party fighting on such a program and linking up with organized labor, the youth and the specially oppressed minorities the rule of US capital could be ended. The basis could be laid for the establishment of a Socialist United States of

America.

A Socialist United States of America would mean the end of capitalism and landlordism in the Americas and on a world scale. It would give a lead to the workers in Eastern Europe and Russia to overthrow the bureaucratic elites who rule there and establish democratic socialist regimes. A victory for US labor in the coming years would lead to the socialist transformation of the world and an end to starvation and want and the threat of war. This is the challenge and the opportunity now facing US labor in the 1980s.

# Letters

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

**MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN**



*"Come to me all ye that Labour and are heavy laden and I will give ye rest"* Inscription on workhouse

## Tories lean on workhouse

Dear Comrade,  
Whilst on a locally organised march for jobs and peace from Wallasey to Manchester, we stopped off at Widnes and spent the

night in the city hall. We were right opposite the Conservative Party HQ and immediately next door to it was a work-house. This is a classic example of how the capitalist class rely on the workers.

I don't know if Conservative HQ in Widnes would collapse if we knocked down

the work house, but if the TUC and Labour Party had called for a 24 hour general strike in support of the NHS it certainly would have shaken their foundations.

Yours faithfully  
T Burns  
Birkenhead CLP

## LPYS—Don't go back to the stooge days

Dear comrade,  
I was horrified to read reports that the new hard right majority on Labour's National Executive Committee intends to carry out attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Presumably Dennis Howell, John Golding and other witch-hunters on the NEC don't like the present leadership of the LPYS. The fact that this leadership is supported by the overwhelming majority of LPYS members, and that this leadership has succeeded where others have failed in building a mass LPYS are small details to these witch-hunters, as their purge gathers its own momentum.

From 1965 to 1970 the LPYS had a stooge leadership imposed on them by a constitution drawn up by Reg Underhill (yes he was at it in those days as well). This leadership, whose ideas would be applauded by Denis Howell today, was as representative of LPYS opinion as John Golding is of CLP opinion today.

Militant led the fight to democratise the LPYS, and when in 1970 the LPYS was eventually allowed to elect its own National Committee Militant supporters won a majority.

In 1970, I spoke at a national demonstration organised by the LPYS. As I recall around 500 youth

were in attendance. A few weeks ago I marched with the LPYS from my own CLP in a demonstration of over 8,000 youth in Liverpool.

On the South Wales train there were over 300 young people. Many of them were new to politics, but by the end of the day all of them had been signed up for the LPYS and the Party. This demonstration was a magnificent tribute to the dedication of those young comrades who lead the LPYS, nationally and locally.

In the mid 1960's when I joined the LPYS I remember Frank Field being active in the YS. Presumably he remembers a pathetically small organisation, incapable of campaigning on

youth issues, a leadership totally repulsive to any self-respecting youth, and a tiny movement policed by Underhill and Bessie Brad-dock. Is this what this erstwhile 'left' MP wants a return to when he calls for the suspension of the LPYS leadership?

Capitalism has sentenced million of our youth to a life sentence on the dole. More than ever before the Party needs a strong youth movement. In the unlikely event of Howell, Golding, Field and company getting their way in their proposed purge of the youth—the ranks of this movement will never forgive this abject betrayal.

Yours Fraternally,  
Andrew Price,  
National Vice-Chairman of the LPYS (1970-73)

## Ludicrous comparisons?

Dear Comrade,  
I consider your paper very good and I congratulate you on your photos, especially Thatcher's. But the thing I dislike intensely is your continual attacks on the USSR. I happen to admire them as the only real socialistic country in the world. Even they admit to the shortcomings in their system which only time can eradicate.

Most Westerners com-

plain of the lack of freedom to take photos. Even in open country, I'd be interested to know how you obtained photos of Brezhnev's swimming pool and the comparison you make with the photo of the canteen are ludicrous.

The canteen photo in the Militant is very much like any canteen in Britain and I should know having worked in industry for 47 years and eaten my lunch daily in the canteen.

Yours,  
Amy Smith (Miss),  
Stronsay,  
Orkney.

## Sewage river in our garden

Dear Editor

Reading the article 'Life at Tommy Whites', I thought I would tell you my experience. Just outside our back door we have a main drain which all the houses in our street join in to.

When it rains, the manhole cover lifts as if it were plastic and sewage water pours out, you'd think there was a river in our back garden. This has happened many times with the promise that the borough surveyor would come and look at it. We've reported it each time and it has been cleaned; the first time we get a bill which we refuse to pay.

This time was the worst,

there was excrement all over the garden, there were contraceptives and worst of all a rat coming up with the swelling water.

As the water subsided the manhole closed and the rat got its head chopped off. As this was a Sunday we couldn't do anything, but prompt at nine next day my husband went off to see the engineer and twenty minutes later he turned up with two cleaners.

While the drain and garden were cleaned, the engineer explained why it kept over-flowing. The Whole drainage system in Cleethorpes is inadequate and needs replacing but because of Tory cuts they can't do anything about it. The Tories would rather spend billions on war.

Anyway, he suggested we seal the manhole cover down, then it will go up everybody's toilet except ours as it is too far off the ground! Now what do we do? We have four children to think of; when will people open their eyes and see what's going on?

We have a right wing Labour MP, Austin Mitchell, in this area who thinks the Labour Party have now got it right—import controls and incomes policy are two things he mentions. It should be a socialist programme to get rid of our problems. Workers are becoming disillusioned. We must fight to gain our rights.

Yours comradely  
Pat McEwan (Mrs)  
Cleethorpes

## Reduce the working week

Dear Militant,

With regard to Allan Telfor-Fox's letter in Militant issue dated 29th October, lowering the retirement age is a bad idea. People should be allowed to retire early if they wish, but many people are still able and willing to continue working after retirement age.

We MUST reduce the working week—in my opinion to 30 hours. Then the work load will be spread, dramatically reducing the level of unemployment—even if the 'recession' turns out to be permanent. With a shorter working week we'll all have more time to start really living, so by the time we reach 60 or 65 we won't be so worn out, ready to become a complete

"burden" to society, a useless non-person for 10 or 15 years (if lucky) before dying.

I do agree that £80 for a 40 hour week is not bad—but why be content with this when some people e.g. Peter Parker have been getting more in a fortnight than some workers earn in a year. And how many hours do you think that these greedy leeches 'work'?

Yours faithfully,  
Joanne Childs,  
Yeovil LPYS.

## Poland—the real struggle

Dear Comrades,

At a recent meeting of Cardiff University Labour Club a motion was proposed supporting the students struggling for workers

democracy in Poland and condemning the links maintained by NOLS and the NUS with the stalinist controlled Polish student union the SZSP.

At the same meeting the NOLS Women's Officer spoke on 'Women and Socialism'. A Welsh Labour Students petition was handed around at the end of the meeting. The NOLS Women's Officer, Lesley Gillingham, refused to sign the petition on the grounds of "having to maintain links with the SZSP to find out what's going on".

Doesn't Lesley watch the television and understand that students and workers are being suppressed in Poland—and that the answer is to support those struggling against the bureaucracy for real socialism and workers' democracy?

Yours comradely,  
Simon Kežić.

# GET YOUR XMAS CARDS NOW

Following the tremendous success of last year's cards we are again offering a set of Xmas cards featuring original Alan Hardman cartoons.

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# Industrial Features

## GEC: Behind the window dressing

There has been no recruitment for the past two years at my workplace which is part of the General Electric Company (GEC).

As the company is looking for increased productivity, jobs are being eroded through "natural wastage" and in some areas redeployment has taken place, with attempts at job amalgamation.

Attempts to negotiate improved conditions for shop floor workers are having negligible results, despite management claims of modern factories and a move towards staff conditions.

In a recent piece of 'window dressing', from Management entitled 'GEC is working' it is explained how a transformation has taken place within the Hotpoint Company. 'Eight years ago Hotpoint Management faced a falling share of the market and a reputation which was declining.

'They made three decisions. Hotpoint would rapidly improve its after sales service from 3rd rate to 1st class. Product reliability would be raised. Some products would be imported from Germany and Italy and sold under the Hotpoint brand name until Hotpoint could invest in new factories and new products'.

'Reliability rose when the new management eliminated piece work in the factories. Shop floor workers were given conditions previously confined to staff. Management offered more than it was asked to prove that commitment and trust was a two way matter. A profit sharing scheme was started. Also at Rodco, a new factory owned jointly by GEC/Pirelli, the workers have been granted staff conditions.

### Tokyo Rose tactics

A headline in 'Info', the journal of the GEC National Shop Stewards Committee, sums the situation up in the following way:—"GEC PLAYS TOKYO ROSE".

They explained, "Tokyo Rose was the Japanese lady who through radio broadcasts, tried to seduce members of the US armed forces from their duties during the Second World War."

"GEC, and a number of other employers are trying to bring into industrial relations some of the methods which Japanese employers have found so successful in shackling the Trade Unions and destroying shop floor organisation and the shop stewards movement.

"Group discussions—Quality Control Circles—Floor Committees—whatever name they choose, the employers are trying to introduce these Japanese methods which, they claim are part of the reason for that nation's success in the world's markets."

"The basic idea is that normal procedure for any



Photo: Militant

GEC management have taken an increasingly belligerent anti-union approach in the past years, with attacks on active trade unionists.

change in work practices: i.e., discussion with shop stewards, who may then wish to consult with union officials, is done away with and the workers on the shop floor are consulted by management over the heads of the stewards and their unions, by-passing experienced negotiators in industrial relations."

Meanwhile in some older GEC factories, such as mine, a complete overhaul of the 'bonus scheme' is being carried out. The existing schemes do not give management the total control they want.

The workforce are very sceptical of current negotiations on productivity based schemes, (piece work under another name). There is a growing awareness of the inequalities that exist despite the claims of GEC, of these "new deals" for their employees.

Demands have been made for improved sick pay schemes, fairness in the discipline procedure, the seeking of an agreement on New Technology and more stringent checks and controls on Health and Safety. In certain areas of the factory where new technology is being introduced (on a trial basis) this has caused some concern on the shop floor. The supervisors have been shown how to programme computers and as yet there are no plans to include shopfloor workers in this new development.

From discussions with Shop Stewards from other GEC, units, it appears that GEC management at Stanhope Gate will not recognise new technology

agreements with the unions. Recently management have taken a much tougher line, evidently striving to limit the effectiveness of shop stewards.

No real negotiations are entered into, as management seek to impose working practices on the work force, particularly with regard to new manning levels. There is firm opposition to this although as already stated, jobs are being lost through natural wastage but redeployment and secondment at present are filling the vacancies, when necessary. GEC workers should recognise that the only real job security for the future depends upon the workers' own efforts to organise against the monopolies which dominate their lives.

All the modern Japanese

management methods will fail to modernise the firm with their total failure to invest the huge sums of money which lie idle in the banks.

And even if there were investment in new technology, under capitalism, such modernisation means boosted profits for the bosses but the stones for us...the development of new technology should be for the benefit of all not just for the rich few. This is a political question and GEC workers nationally need to come together and start campaigning for a socialist answer to our problems.

By Mick Appleby

GMWU Shop Steward  
(Personal Capacity)

## Ford workers need strong unions

It is well known nowadays that British car workers are the lowest paid in Europe but our use as cheap labour is not new.

Indeed that is the major reason why Fords set themselves up in Britain at the height of the depression in October 1931. They opened the Dagenham plant at a cost of £5 million, while the 310 acres of land had been bought in the '20s for £167,695.

In the 1960s large scale factories were introduced into Merseyside. Fords went to Halewood, Vauxhall to Ellesmere Port and Standard to Speke "mainly because the area had a large pool of unskilled labour and a tradition of low wages" (AUEW TASS pamphlet on Merseyside Motor Industry).

The drive for profits pushed Fords to the cheapest and worst organised sections of the working class, but the unions built themselves by fighting for better wages and conditions.

This really needs to be driven home because an argument I frequently encounter is that management would have raised living standards anyway, and the unions are irrelevant.

But you only need to look at the experiences of our fellow Ford workers in some of the company's foreign operations to see the way they treat the unions there and why strong unions are essential to safeguard the most elementary of rights against our rapacious bosses.

The TGWU Record

(January 1982) reported the formation of links between the Transport and General Workers Union in Britain and workers in Brazil where Fords have four plants around Sao Paulo.

"Workers...had been kept out of touch with one another by corrupt union bosses appointed by the military regime...The 11,000 workers in the largest plant...belonged to one of the few Brazilian unions where workers had managed to elect their own leaders—the Sao Bernardo Metal workers union.

...(The TGWU) had already raised with British Ford management the sacking of 11 Ford Brazil workers, following a two hour stoppage. This had been in protest at the sentencing (in November 1981) to 3½ years prison of Lula the former president of the Sao Bernardo union (released during 1982—eds) and of 10 other union leaders for leading a 41 day strike in 1980. The company agreed to reinstate the 11 sacked men only after a two day strike".

The working class will always fight to improve the condition of its members—as Ford have learned in Britain and are re-learning in the third world.

Incidentally Tebbit's bill makes the TGWU action "illegal" but Fords and the Tories might have had more lessons to learn if they had tried to use the law.

By a Ford worker

**Write for Militant.  
It's your paper!**

On this page, the editors hope to have regular features on trade union and industrial issues. What is work like in a factory, office, shop or shipyard? How have strikes been conducted, successfully or otherwise? How does a union activist conduct his work?

These and other issues we hope to feature here. But it is vitally important that our readers participate in producing these features. Why not write to Militant about your union organisation, your workplace or issues discussed among your workmates?

# Industrial Reports

## HEALTH DISPUTE

### Reject insulting offers

By a NUPE member

**"Insulting and derisory," is the way to describe the latest government offer to the NHS workers.**

The membership of the unions will be balloted on the pay claim over the next two weeks. They have three "options", none of them particularly attractive:—

**Either,**

★ For ancillaries, clerical and ambulance workers 6%, and 7½% for the nurses from April 82/April 83 and then a measly 4½% for all workers from April 1983/April 1984.

**Or**

★ For the ancillaries 10.8% and 12.3% for the nurses from September, but not back dated to April.

**Or**

**The only other alternative is to reject both 'options' and step up industrial action to secure a decent offer.**

If the present offer of 12.3% for nurses was accepted, a student nurse whose basic at present is £63.10 at the moment, would receive £70.86 gross, but after reductions this would only be £50.12. An ancillary Grade 1 whose basic is now £59.05 for a 40 hour week would only get £65.40 Gross, £47.36 net, if the offer of 10.8% is accepted.

"Nobody wants to accept the offer," said a NUPE member in the North East, "but there's a mood that we might have to unless we're given a strong lead from the leadership. There's a lot of criticism over the November 8 Day of Action being called off, but most of the anger of the members is directed against this Tory government.

"Some people are saying 'that woman Thatcher, she's taken on the miners, she's taken on British Leyland, she's taken on the dockers so what chance do we have?' But it would be hard to find anyone who actually agrees with the offer.

"Even if the present offer is accepted, then the local health authorities will have to find nationally, £150 million this year, and £150 million next year, because the government have said that they will finance only a certain proportion of the offer.

"That's a staggering amount of money. It will have to come from somewhere and the Tories say it must be from the health service.

"So we can expect the local health authorities to try and make massive cuts to make up the shortfall. That means that whatever happens in this dispute, whether we want to or not, there will have to be a campaign next year to defend the NHS. It's inevitable.

"But this dispute can still be won. We should be win-

ding the campaign back up again. That means the leadership nationally should be organising a massive campaign up and down the country, holding mass meetings and urging the membership to reject the latest offer. But most health workers will be looking to the TUC for a lead, and the TUC leadership should step up the campaign in defence of the healthworkers.

"This is urgent because there's a limit to how long any group of workers can continue the struggle. The dispute has already lasted seven months.

"The role of the union leadership has been worse over the last couple of weeks. When the movement should have been building up for November 8, they were engaged in secret discussions. Rumours and counter rumours were rife. The day of action was announced and the whole movement geared towards that, but preparations were blunted because of the negotiations and discussions that were going on behind the scenes. Then the action was called off at the eleventh hour. At the end of all that is this insulting offer.

"It is still possible that despite having taken industrial action for over seven months now, the offer could be turned down. If this is the case, the union will then have to step up the campaign especially after Christmas.

"Nobody can deny that the health workers have demonstrated their willingness to fight to defend their living standards and the NHS. All-out action with emergency cover only is what is now needed with other workers in key industries taking strike action in sympathy, on a national basis. In this way justice can be won for all health workers.

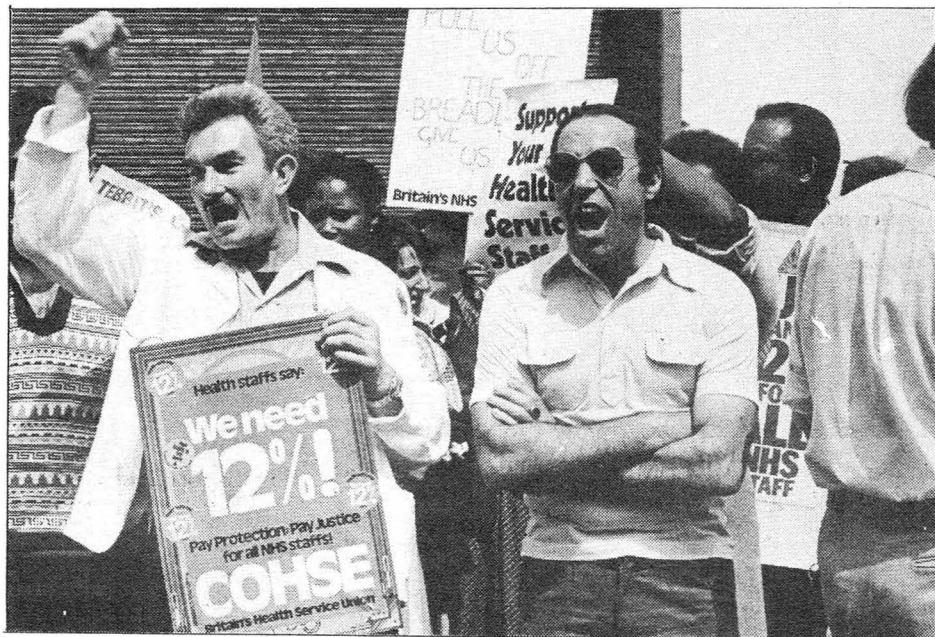
## SOLIDARITY

**Peter Doyle's excellent article on organising the health workers' struggle contained many important lessons.**

I would like to restrict myself to just one of them—how to turn vague appeals from the TUC General Council for days of action into firm instructions by all the unions that all their members cease work.

Trade unionists raising the demand for a 24 hour general strike will often come up against the argument by the right wing and fainthearts that the TUC has not the power to call a general strike, or the union executive cannot according to the rule book instruct all the members to come out without a secret ballot.

It is certainly the case in my union the TGWU that a



NHS workers are still angry at the series of insults Fowler and Co. have hurled at them

Photo: MILITANT

## PADDINGTON

**Working as a nurse I have learnt many lessons during the current dispute. We have had a marvellous turn out in our hospital every day of action and we have maintained a laundry strike both in support of our 12% claim and in an effort to close a private ward.**

We have only been able to do this because we are all working together as health workers in defence of our service and living standards.

Our Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) is meeting weekly and as we pointed out in last week's *Militant* we have a Paddington workers group which meets weekly where workers in all sections of local industry including

British Telecom and Civil Service workers join together to coordinate action to fight back against the cuts and privatisation.

What we health workers are fighting for is our 12% claim back-dated to 1 April and many nurses at our

**NHS workers are more united than ever**

hospital are saying that Fowler must have gone completely insane.

His offer of an extra ½%, an extra 50p a week and a review body to keep nurses under the sledge hammer of Tory low pay should be decisively rejected by all

nurses, in the Royal College of Nursing and in TUC affiliated unions. Both the Paddington workers' group and the JSSC will be sending resolutions to the TUC Health Service Committee to stick out for the 12% back-dated.

But despite media distortion we in the health service are more unified than ever and will fight together against NHS cutbacks and private medicine.

We will be pushing for our union and the Labour Party to stop witch-hunting Marxists and start witch-hunting Fowler and Co. who offer us poverty wages, privatisation and cuts.

**By Ruth Herdman**  
(NUPE shop steward, St Mary's Hospital, Paddington)

**By Bill Mullins**

strikes in the car industry in the past have been unofficial, led by the shop stewards.

Even though many unions have shifted to the left, the rule books lag behind events. Nevertheless examination of history shows that in periods of heightened class struggle even the right wing, under pressure from the rank and file are forced to put aside the rules and call ("instruct") the unions into strike action.

**The lesson of Pentonville**

This was the case in 1926. The General Council voted by 3, 653,527 to 49,911 to call a general strike. If they had not, then undoubtedly there would have been a

massive unofficial strike in support of the miners.

Similarly in 1972 when the Tories' courts jailed 5 dockers in Pentonville, an enormous strike wave developed and the TUC was forced to call a one day general strike (for fear they would lose control). It is interesting to note that despite the TGWU rule book, Jack Jones seconded Hugh Scanlon's resolution calling for a general strike.

As it turned out the Heath government backed down in face of the unofficial strike wave and released the dockers before the date set by the TUC for the one day general strike.

Obviously union activists should campaign to bring their rule books up to date, but at the same time not allow the constitution to stand in the way of solidarity action.

## USDAW: Fight seven day week slavery

The recent announcement in the Queen's speech that the Tories plan to abolish Sunday trading hours is a declaration of war on shopworkers' working hours.

It will mean our conditions reverting back to the '20s and '30s, being at the mercy of the bosses, being told to work when they want you to, not knowing when you are going to get your next day off.

Some two thirds of shopworkers are women and a social life with their families would cease to exist. They would be required to work Saturdays and Sundays until 8, 9, or 10 at night to line the pockets of the bosses.

While workers' living standards are deteriorating, we face an attack on the 39 hour week. In the same way that railway workers went on strike to defend their eight hour day, our fight also is to defend our working week.

Although USDAW have set up a working party on Sunday trading, that is no solution. We must unite the trade union movement behind the struggles of shopworkers. National solidarity of all unions in retail and distributive trades involving USDAW, TGWU, and GMWU is needed to defeat Tory laws which encourage seven day, twenty four hour trading.

Put up motions for support to trades councils, constituency Labour Parties, linked to a 24 hour strike of all shop workers, fight against the extension of the working week and unite together for a 35 hour week.

A first step forward is to support USDAW Broad Left candidates in the forthcoming elections for President, executive and divisional councils who will campaign against any lengthening of the working week and move to unite the trade union movement against Sunday trading. This would be a major advance for USDAW members.

USDAW branches should also send in nominations for Jeff Price as the Broad Left candidate in the presidential elections. We need a strong fighting union if shopworkers are to fend off these Tory attacks.

**By Mick Wainwright,**

Blackpool Woolworth, USDAW branch secretary.

**Industrial feature on GEC and Ford's page 13**

# Industrial Reports

## 'FORK OUT FOR FARMWORKERS'

Between 450 and 500 farm workers converged on London on 10 November. Why? To lobby the Agricultural Wages Board for their demand of £120 for a 35-hour week and a fifth week's annual holiday.

At present basic pay is £70.40 for a 40-hour week and four weeks' holiday, making agricultural workers 121st in the League Table! After a demonstration outside the headquarters of the National Farmers Union (i.e. the bosses) the farm workers then moved off, with banners flying, to roars of "What do we want? 120—when do we want it? Now!" which certainly turned a few heads in affluent Knightsbridge.

As Parliament was sitting, we couldn't march but had to catch the tube, leaving

"Fork out for Farmworkers—£120" plastered over lampposts, posh cars, and trains.

At the Agriculture Ministry, Jack Boddy and others on the union side of the Agricultural Wages Board, came out on to the steps to inform us that the farmers had offered the princely sum of £3! Later in the day they brought this up to £5.

This is an industry which has had a bumper harvest and often marvels at its loyal workers, prepared to work all hours to get the harvest in. They expect skilled workers to operate very expensive machinery (a combine harvester costs £55,000) for £75.20 a week!

While farmers' profits increase at the expense of the farm worker, the latter remains the largest group of male workers in any one industry to claim FIS!

Joan Maynard had been

told by Mr Butler, of the NFU, that they were able to cut young farm workers' wages because they could always replace them with YOPs if it didn't suit!

She also pointed out that the banks were more ready to give farmers loans than anyone else because they knew they were guaranteed a good return. For every 50 companies that had gone bankrupt during the year there had been just one farm. This represented 0.047% of farmers!

There was a suggestion that the claim should be re-timed so it came in July/August when the farm worker had a bit more bargaining power. An overtime ban alone would be catastrophic to the farmer.

A shop steward from Buxted Chickens in Gainsborough related their struggle to us. 1800 had been thrown out on the stones by the Buxted empire, leaving the re-

maining workers on a 13-hour day. They were also building a new factory.

An old stalwart of the union pointed out that farm workers were better off 50 years ago than they are now. A week's wages would buy a ton of coal. You could also buy 140 portions of fish and chips, or have 70 haircuts with your week's wages then but now you would need £120 per week to be able to do the same.

Farmworkers' isolation has held them back for a long time, but sooner or later they will say, "Enough is enough!"

**By Teresa MacKay**  
(Agricultural and Allied Workers National Trade Group, Suffolk Area, Transport and General Workers Union)



Agricultural workers in the North East. Long hours, working for a pittance.

Photo: Militant

## Freeman's

After thirteen weeks on strike for union recognition, the TGWU members at Freemans poultry processors, of Newent, Gloucestershire, are still determined to win.

Recent violent incidents on the picket line have persuaded the pickets to limit their presence to the daylight hours only. This followed an assault on one of the pickets

by Freemans' "security" guard, who was immediately sorted out by one of the other pickets.

The deputy steward was knocked down by one of the scab drivers and in another incident, the driver of the scabs' mini-bus drove at one of the strikers—trying to crush him up against the factory gate.

The strikers have also taken their caravans away because of vandalism by people "known and unknown" as Pearl Hughes

the steward put it. Pearl herself last week (16 November) appealed for support at the T&GWU agricultural workers conference in London. She was given a standing ovation and £120 for the strike fund.

On 11 November, stewards visited several factories in the Birmingham area and the city's meat market in order to arrange blacking of Freemans chickens which are still being handled there.

A mass picket has been

called for the 16 November but more support is still needed on the picket line and in the way of finance. As Pearl said to us: "It's most important that we win this to prove that solidarity works."

Messages of support and cash to Pearl Hughes, 19 Knights Way, Newent Gloucs.

**By John Ewers**  
(Gloucester CLP personal capacity)

## COWLEY: Strike back against victimisation

BL workers at Cowley assembly plant have been subjected to another serious offensive.

While waiting for their ultimatum which expires on the 16 November, demanding an apology from the management for its disgraceful conduct in the 'swearing strike' (See Militant 12 November) they heard that left wing shop steward, Alan Thornett was

dismissed for driving a lorry after his HGV licence had lapsed.

No Leyland employee has been dismissed for a minor traffic offence such as this for many years. As a matter of fact, employees committing more serious traffic offences have been offered alternative jobs by the company.

Alan Thornett has been a shop steward for over twenty years, and for the last few years, management has

refused to recognise him as deputy senior shop steward, despite his election by the membership. TGWU leadership at Cowley had an extended conference on November 12 and management has refused reinstatement. As a result of that, TGWU have given 5 days notice of possible industrial action.

Meanwhile BL drivers at Cowley assembly plant met on Monday 15 November and overwhelmingly decided

to resort to industrial action. In the light of this situation, BL is embarking on a vicious campaign. This bad, inhuman, employers' policy must be resisted with all the might at our disposal; failure to get Thornett reinstated would be a disaster for all workers at Cowley.

**By TGWU member BL Cowley**

## London Transport

Workers at our garage welcomed the news that the Greater London Council (GLC) intended to cut London Transport bus and tube fares by 25% and would embark on investment of £350 million.

We realised, though, that to say the least the Tory government would be less enthusiastic than us. Government restrictions on local authority spending threaten transport authorities in Sheffield with a seven-fold increase in their minimum fare—plus cuts!

Our garage put a resolution in support of the GLC action linking it to the need for a wider campaign to defend public transport. The resolution was to go to the Garage & Craft Alliance monthly meeting.

We called on our officers in the Alliance to support the Garage committee (comprising all sections of workers involved in the garage) and the setting up of committees where there were none. We called for a conference of all LT staff garage reps from platform staff to semi-skilled to craftsmen throughout LT together with full-time officers to decide future campaigns.

We need to resurrect the enthusiasm of earlier this year when the first LT bus-tube stoppage since the 1926 general strike occurred. This was largely lost through later inaction.

The resolution also called for local and national leaflets



Photo: Militant

to explain our case, and explained the need for accountability in the union, the need to fight through the union for greater subsidies for an effective transport system and for workers' management and control in the industry.

Although our garage's resolution to the craft alliance was deferred to next month's meeting because the officers of the Craft Alliance had not had time to discuss the issue, there is a strong feeling in the garages favouring clear moves against Tory attacks on public transport jobs and services. Co-ordinated action by bus and tube workers in London and nationally is vital.

**By Pat Atkinson**  
(TGWU Stamford Hill, personal capacity)

## Manchester Steel

A three-company Consortium, one partly owned by BSC, is attempting to take over Manchester Steel, a major employer in East Manchester, with the sole purpose of closing it down and throwing the workforce on the scrap heap.

The consortium are hoping to attract at least £4 million from the government's steel rationalisation fund, in order to carry out their plans.

The effect of the closure would be devastating in an area already ravaged by redundancies and closures, such as Laurence Scott, Walkden Makin and B and S Massey. As one steward commented, "It would be a terrible blow, particularly for the workers who thought they had escaped the dole."

Understandably, the workforce are angry that the taxpayers money is to be used to destroy jobs rather than to create them. It's a sad indication of the future the Tories envisage for British industry as a whole.

The management has put forward a survival plan for the company which includes a wages freeze and inevitably at least 170 job losses. Some of the workforce see these proposals as a solution to the present problems of the company. But the management argument that one

more cut will suffice is beginning to wear thin. Manchester Steel is one of the most productive plants in Europe. The workforce have already made great sacrifices, including a freeze on wages and the introduction of unsocial shifts.

The present crisis is merely a reflection of the anarchy of the capitalist system of production, where to increase productivity means to increase your chances of being made redundant.

Leaders of the ISTC must now build on the success of October 22 and organise a campaign, linking up both private and public sector workers in a united struggle to protect the steel industry, and to ensure the election of a labour government committed to the introduction of a socialist plan of production.

**By Mark Davies,**  
(Openshaw CLP)

PS: The parent company, Elken, have turned down the bid for the firm. The Manchester factory will remain open, though management and unions have agreed on about 140 redundancies.

The workforce have not, at the time of writing, agreed to this. Other firms in the private steel sector are still at risk due to "overcapacity" in the present deep crisis of capitalism.

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## Unite to win a decent grant

By Terry Hopkinson  
 (Welsh Labour Students rep. on NOLS NC)

The Tories' recent 'mini-budget' came as a severe blow to students.

Three weeks ago the leaders of the National Union of Students launched their October 1983 grants campaign, demanding a minimum £25 a week grant for Further Education students; the raising of the parental income threshold so that students whose parents earn less than £9,000 a year get a full grant; and increase in the full grant of £207.

The NUS leaders were confident that the claim could be won. Neil Stewart, the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) President of NUS, speaking at a recent NOLS National Committee, stated that NUS had the government "over a barrel" and was "onto a winner," especially if they conducted a battle of ideas to convince the government of the justice of the NUS claim.

### Tories offer nothing new on grants

Unfortunately, the mini-budget announcements showed that the "idea" of student poverty proved quite attractive to Keith Joseph and the Tories! The 4% increase in the grant is worth just £64 a year for those with a full grant; less than the rate of inflation.

The partial contribution income threshold is to be raised by 8% from £6,600 to £7,128. At first sight this takes 20,000 students out of the 'means test'. But this merely cancels out the Tories' decision this year to freeze the scale of parental contributions which meant an extra 20,000 students came into the 'means test'!

In addition, the majority of students, those in FE Colleges, get no grant whatsoever. And the Tories' grants announcement didn't even mention the FE grant claim!

How will the NUS leaders respond to this? Their original plans for the Grants Campaign centred around an all-night vigil outside the House of Commons. They argued that this would be "a change from the usual 'demonstration'." (NUS News, 20 September) However, pressure from many Student Unions forced the NUS Executive to reconsider their plans and organise for a major demonstration on 19 November.

This demonstration must be the first step in a major campaign to win the whole



Students demonstrate against Tory cuts earlier this year

Photo: MILITANT

The NUS claim for a minimum grant of £25 a week for all FE students was entirely reasonable—why should FE students get less than the £25 on the government's youth training scheme?

Unfortunately the leadership of the NUS Further Education National Committee has no realistic strategy of achieving this demand. It is claimed that "for too long the FE Sector has been used as a political football by groups in NUS."

Not surprisingly then the FENC has scored too many own goals in the face of the Tory onslaught. They have

claim. It can only be won through linking the issue of grants with the education cuts and the general offensive of the Tory government against the public sector.

As the next step in the campaign the NUS leaders must approach the 'Education Alliance' (a committee of the NUS and trade unions involved in education) to organise a 24-hour national shut down of all Universities, Polytechnics and FE Colleges on the issue of the cuts, student grants and College workers' pay.

At the same time the NUS

failed to get trade union and Labour Party activists' support for the £25 demand.

This contrasts with Militant supporters and LPYS members who have taken up the demand for the FE student grant to the labour movement and linked it with payment to YOPS and YTS workers through the LPYS 1981 'Youth Charter'. As a result of our pressure, the Labour Party NEC has committed itself, in Labour's Programme 1982, to giving all 16-18 year olds in full-time education a grant of at least £20 a week.

The conclusion is clear. FE students who want to

Executive must take immediate steps at a local level to forge unity between College workers and local Student Unions—through monitoring the establishment of College Joint Trade Union Committees with Student Union representatives. This would give the NUS a lever to mount a campaign amongst the ranks of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

This should be geared to getting the TUC and the Labour Party to convene a 'Public Sector Alliance' conference of Trades Councils,

fight for a decent grant should link up with the labour movement. As a first step they should join the LPYS.

In addition, all LPYS members at FE Colleges should stand to go as delegates to the NUS FE Sector Conference on 7-9 January in Manchester. The deadline for motions and the appointment of delegates is 8 December. See your Student Union President now to find out how you can go as a delegate and join the campaign for a fighting leadership for FE students.

public sector trade union branches and shop-stewards committees, including campus trade unions, Labour Groups on local Councils, local Labour Parties, Student Unions and tenants organisations. It's task would be to draw up plans to defeat the Tories' attacks, and link this struggle with the need to return a Labour government with socialist policies as the only way to permanently defend and expand the public sector—including the achievement of a living grant for all students.

## TORY PLUNDER

continued from front page

sold at a fixed price, but by auction, but nevertheless when the Stock Exchange dealings begin, they will almost certainly increase in price as their real value is assessed by the market.

The Britoil company is no small cheese. It will probably emerge as the UK market's third biggest company, after British Petroleum and Shell.

Its reserves of oil and gas are among the largest in the North Sea, with interests in 10 commercial oil and gas fields and others in many undeveloped fields. Altogether, it has interests in 39 separate oil and gas discoveries on the UK continental shelf. It has proven reserves of 643m barrels of crude oil and 645b cu. ft. of natural gas—and these are reckoned to be underestimated!

The sale of Britoil represents nothing less than the plunder of a vitally important national asset, the profits of which should be going to the regeneration of industry and the promotion of employment. Even the sale itself is reckoned to be costing the tax payer £15m in commissions and fees to the City wheeler dealers.

The Tories' claim that the sale of Britoil is "aimed at the man in the street" is a joke. Preference for the sale of the shares, at a minimum of 215p a time, will be given to the "small investor" buying up to 2,000 shares.

But thanks to the Tory strategy of slashing living standards, there are not many ordinary working people who can afford to lash out £43 for 20 of these shares, never mind £4,300 for 2,000 of them! The Tories understand full well that the real winners in the sale will not be the so-called

"small investors", but the big finance houses.

Even the *Financial Times* in its usual style of understatement commented "City institutions, however, are expected to dominate the sale."

The Labour Party conference agreed this year that the next Labour government should re-nationalise on terms that compensation would only be given on proven need and at a level which ensured that the recipients did not gain from their investment."

Re-nationalisation, with compensation on only proven need must indeed be the policy of the Labour Party, but it must also be accompanied by a determined assault on the economic power and privileges for the City institutions as a whole.

Isolated sectors of the publically-owned industry will always be easy pickings for the get rich-quick boys of capitalism, as long as they remain isolated sectors. But the enormous assets of oil, industry and wealth in Britain could easily be turned to the benefit of the majority of the population, if the next Labour government carried through a programme of public ownership of the major industrial and finance houses and introduced a socialist plan of production. The power of the City and the chaos of the capitalist market place stand in the way of any real planning of resources and any increase in the living standards for the vast majority of the population.

The plunder of the assets of Britoil is yet one more indication of the misuse of resources under capitalism. Workers are looking forward to a Labour government that will be as loyal to its own class as the Tories are to theirs—a government that will not bow the knee to the City, but will take over its wealth and power for the general good.

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