

Steel Jobs Under Threat: TORIES SET TO AXE THOUSANDS MORE JOBS

This Tory government and the system they support are destroying manufacturing industry at a colossal rate.

Every factory to close down not only makes the dole queues longer, and reduces the opportunities for youth, it also has a knock-on effect on industries such as steel, coal and railways, as 'demand' slumps.

Just look what British Steel propose for South Yorkshire special steels division. More than 1,700 workers will lose their jobs if BSC are allowed to have their way. They plan to cut every plant in the area and reduce their shift levels.

Take Tinsley Park for instance, where 451 jobs are threatened. Until this year it was making a profit, but now the warehouse are to reduce from three-shift working to one and the bloom and billet section from three to two shifts.

There are also planned cuts in staff, engineering and bricklaying. This devastation is mirrored at Stocksbridge, and other major employers in the area.

The experience of Scotland shows what effect this can have. The steel industry chiefs blame closures on 'overcapacity' when industry is collapsing. But these closures can cause

By Chris Weldon
(ISTC Tinsley Park No.2
personal capacity)
& Jackie Galbraith

'overcapacity' in other industries.

Over fourteen hundred firms have been forced into liquidation in the last year in Scotland but this could almost double says the *Glasgow Herald*, if the Ravenscraig steel plant in Motherwell were to close. A further 1,400 firms could immediately collapse.

The North Lanarkshire area of Airdrie, Belshill, Blantyre, Carluke, Coatbridge, Hamilton, Larkhall, Shotts, Livingstone, Motherwell and Wishaw have lost no fewer than 7,000 jobs as a result of the last three years' steel closures leading to 21.6% unemployment.

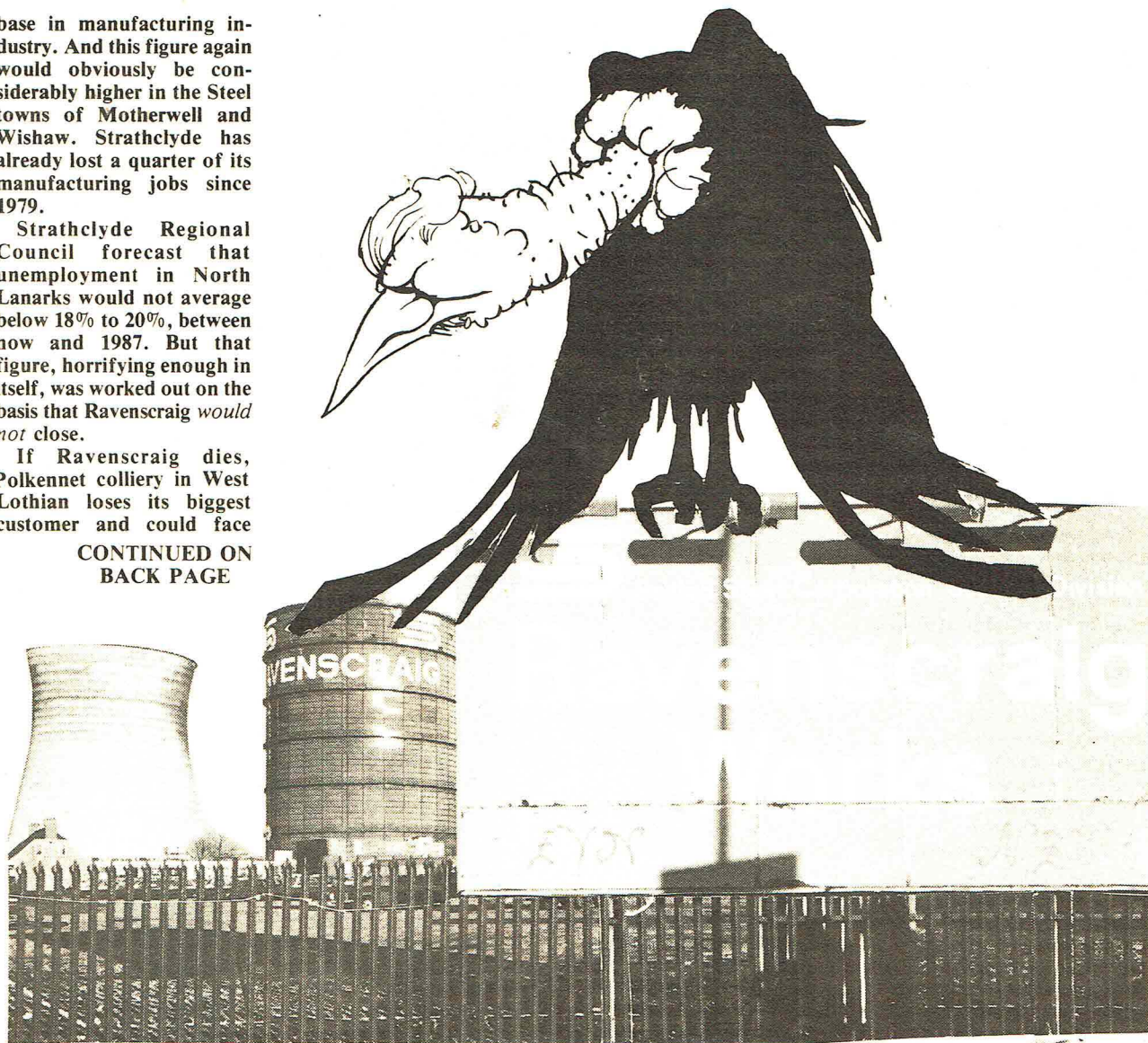
The closure of Ravenscraig would take the unemployment rate in that area to over 16,000, more than 30%! In the Strathclyde area itself, this would mean the destruction of about one-seventh of the employment

base in manufacturing industry. And this figure again would obviously be considerably higher in the Steel towns of Motherwell and Wishaw. Strathclyde has already lost a quarter of its manufacturing jobs since 1979.

Strathclyde Regional Council forecast that unemployment in North Lanarks would not average below 18% to 20%, between now and 1987. But that figure, horrifying enough in itself, was worked out on the basis that Ravenscraig would not close.

If Ravenscraig dies, Polkennet colliery in West Lothian loses its biggest customer and could face

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8 Year cut in living standards

Official figures have confirmed what workers are already painfully aware of: they are worse off than they were in 1973.

According to a study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, whilst wages seemed to rise faster than prices

between 1973 and 1981, National Insurance contributions and Income Taxes have increased to make the working population worse off.

According to the study, wages should have gone up by 265% to take account of the rise in prices and increases in tax and National Insurance contributions. But instead, the average wage has only risen by 234%.

But these figures don't tell the whole story. The Retail Price Index is weighted against the low paid. It includes luxury goods as well as food, gas, electricity and rents. The low paid spend a higher proportion of their income on these basic necessities. But it is the prices of food, gas, electricity and

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

FIGHTING-FUND

This week has seen a massive response to our appeal for financial help. Most dramatic of all was a cheque for £2,000. A long-standing supporter had been waiting for years for an outstanding part of a legacy to come his way. He decided, in view of *Militant's* urgent need for cash, to hurry the payment along and then give it all to *Militant*. Away went his ideas of buying a car and a carpet.

Maybe one day *Militant* won't depend on sacrifices. But during the present battles we appeal to every supporter to give what they can. You probably don't have £2,000 coming your way but anything you can spare today will help assure the victory of socialism tomorrow.

Don't stand
on the
sidelines...

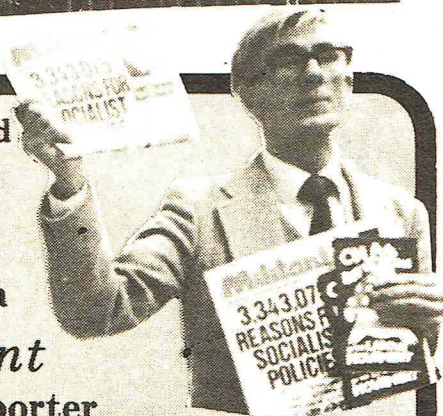
Become a
Militant
supporter

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

Address

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



At eight separate conferences, nearly three thousand delegates from the labour movement pledged their opposition to the witch-hunt now being pursued by the right wing in the Labour Party.

The delegates, from trade unions, ward parties, CLPs, YS branches and women's sections, showed the rank and file's overwhelming opposition to any purges.

3000 Activists Condemn the Witch-Hunt

BY MILITANT REPORTERS

GLASGOW

Over 300 gathered in Glasgow to attend the Labour Movement Rally Against the Witch-Hunt.

Bob Gillespie, (SOGAT '82 and STUC General Council) suggested that it was a pity, but a necessity, that with a by-election taking place in the city, Labour Party members were having to hold a conference to defend democracy inside the party.

Owing to the Queens-Park by-election the rally was curtailed to a morning-only affair with transport having been laid on to transfer delegates over to an afternoon canvass on behalf of the Labour candidate.

Terry Fields (PPC for Liverpool Kirkdale), had opened the conference by saying that if Labour's right wing had their way, speakers at future platform gatherings, such as that present, would require 'brown paper bags' over their heads in order to avoid identification! It was the future of socialism in the Labour Party, Terry stated, which was at stake.

That the question was not confined solely to *Militant*—was testified to by the wide spectrum of speakers from all sections of the Party, both on the platform and from the floor. "Who do I have more in common with," asked Jimmy Devine, Regional Organiser of COHSE, "Bob Wylie or William Gray?"

Sir William Gray is a former Labour Provost of Glasgow who is now involved in promoting a private hospital in the city.

A particular appeal to the trade unionists present was made by Jimmy Livingstone, convenor at the former Linwood car plant and a member of the TGWU National Committee. Any return of proscription inside the Party, he warned, would soon move into the trade unions.

87% of the former workforce at Talbot were still out of work, continued Jimmy. "Labour should be getting people into the Party to fight the Tories, not talking about expelling socialists."

Frances Curran spoke on behalf of the youth. The



Part of the 300 capacity audience at the Glasgow conference.

Photo: Pauline Snyder

right wing suggest that youth such as herself had been taken in by the speeches of people like Peter Taaffe!

"It's the reality of life that makes me a Militant," declared Frances, "I'm not prepared to go down in history as one of a forgotten generation. I'll go down as someone who fought for socialism, who fought for a future."

One speaker referred to an article in the *Daily Record* where John Golding was quoted as describing 'Militants' as "middle class intellectuals." "I thought this was quite interesting," he told the laughing conference, "as ten minutes after reading it I was out on the site mixing cement with my shovel."

Bob McTaggart, MP for Glasgow Central, also spoke from the platform and condemned "the spectre of McCarthyism" that threatened the Labour Party. He warned that the right wing would not stop at *Militant* and called for their defeat.

Summing up the rally Bob Wylie spoke. "If we look back there have been 50 years of right wing attacks on the left. Are you or have you ever been a socialist? That's what we should be asking the right-wing careerists in the Party."

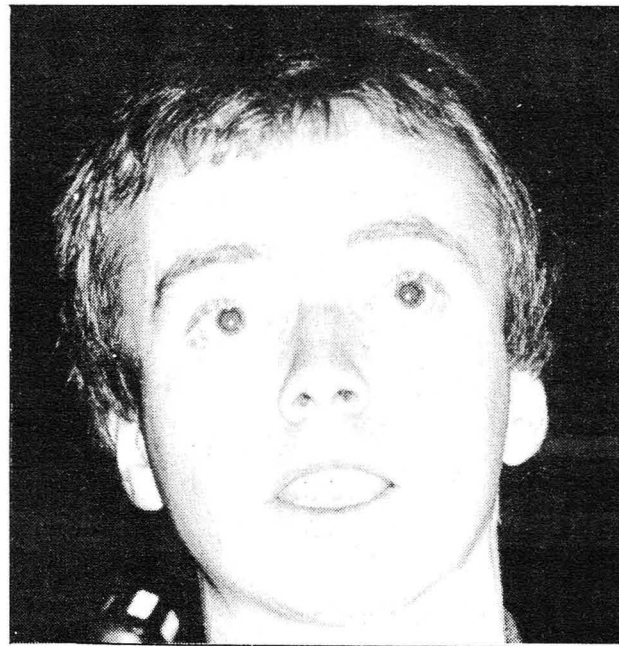
LIVERPOOL

In Liverpool, to give an idea of the representation at the Conference, there were 88 delegates from 54 Labour Party branches, 73 from 34 CLPs (ie. the majority in the North West), 138 from 38 YS branches, 103 from 50 trade union branches, and 18 visitors.

This added up to a total in the morning of nearly 450 but by the afternoon extra delegates arrived which meant almost 500 attending the conference. The collection raised a magnificent £460.

Tony Mulhearne, President of Liverpool District Labour Party and PPC for Toxteth, was the opening speaker and pointed out how the conditions for the British working class had worsened since the last Labour Movement Conference in September.

The Tories' economic policies lay in ruins. The SDP and Liberals were having squalid rows over their seats and it represented a magnificent opportunity for Labour to go in for the kill. But the right wing on the NEC—"this junta" with no real base in the ranks of the Labour Party—seem more



John Hunt (North West Committee LPYS) speaking at Liverpool Conference. Photo: J Smith (IFL)

intent to re-write the constitution through McCarthyite tactics, by-passing the Party Conference, than using their energies to remove the Tories and to return the Labour Party to power.

Eddie Loyden, President of Liverpool Trades Council and PPC for Garston, asked why, in the pre-election period, there was a war against socialists in the Labour Party.

Alan Quinn, member of the Transport and General Workers Executive said that the T&G have been in the vanguard of the key decisions on policy with their opposition to incomes policy, shorter working week and so on, and that Golding and the right-wing on the NEC have organised a calculated attack on conference policies.

Dave Evans, Liverpool NUR No. 5 pointed out how the Labour movement

should investigate those who wish to weaken the organisations of the working class and not those who want to strengthen it.

Laurence Coates and John Hunt, representing the Labour Party Young Socialists, pointed out the threats on the organisation of the LPYS. The attack on the budget, despite the magnificent campaigning work and demonstrations organised by the youth section, will seriously damage the task of winning youth to Labour at the next general election.

Margaret Creear spoke from the platform about the need to win working class women to the Labour Party and said that people will judge those in the movement by their records and not by fairy stories which are kept in black boxes at Walworth Road.

Bob Parry, who is the MP for Scotland Exchange Labour Party said he'd come to the conference to show solidarity with the comrades in the movement who are facing expulsions and purges by right-wing elements in the Labour Party. Richard Venton, Birkenhead Labour Party, closing the conference, said that we should be out to expel the rich and the Tories



Part of platform at Brighton Conference. Left to right: Rod Fitch (PPC Brighton Kempdown); Ray Apps; Nobby Clarke (Secretary, Brighton Labour Party). Photo: Militant

BRIGHTON

The conference in Brighton was attended by 260 delegates and visitors. One of the speakers, Nobby Clarke, a Labour Party member for 50 years and a councillor for 32, praised the attitude of *Militant* supporters in the Brighton area: "I find the loyalty and enthusiasm of *Militant* supporters second to none", Nobby said, "as secretary of Brighton Labour Party, I don't know where we would find workers if the 'Militants' were expelled.

"We have seen all this before, but this time do not hand in your cards. You stay

in the party and fight on. History proves that minorities are often right."

Referring to the proposal of the NEC to hear 'representatives' from the editorial board of *Militant* and the eight PPCs who support the paper, Rod Fitch, PPC for Brighton Kempdown declared from the platform: "It's a kangaroo court. The right wing have announced the sentence and they are now going to proceed with the trial. The Right are resorting to a witch-hunt out of weakness. They've lost the battle of ideas and we are winning. They are the past and we are the future."

The delegates and visitors who attended raised a total collection of £290 to help cover costs.

NEWCASTLE

The Newcastle conference was attended by 250, and was addressed by Ron Brown MP, Rob Clay PPC for Sunderland North, Nigel Todd PPC for Newcastle North, John Aitkin EETPU member in his personal capacity, and Jeff Price candidate for USDAW presidency.

One young visitor who was unemployed summed up the reasons why the *Militant* and the left of the party are gaining ground while the Right are increasingly discredited: "I don't belong to any party", he said "But I can see that only the left will do anything for the unemployed."

B' HAM

"This is the real Labour Party" Les Huckfield told the 300 strong Birmingham Conference against the witch-hunt. He urged everybody to back *Militant* supporters, in their fight because, he said, "they are only the tip of the iceberg and Golding has already said that after *Militant* they will deal with the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and other groups on the left."

The overall mood of the conference was one of bitterness and resentment at the tactics used by the NEC against the left-wing and the *Militant* in particular. It was summed up by T&GWU delegate John Burke who said "the right-wing had as much in common with the party as the Romans had with the Christians."

Other speakers included Les Kuriata, from the LPYS National Committee, Jack Turner, PPC for Selly Oak, and Jack Lanwarne, the divisional officer of the NUR.

These eight magnificent conferences really represent an even wider layer of activists in the labour movement. It is a fact, even acknowledged by the right wing and the capitalist press, that the left can now attract far bigger meetings and gatherings of Party activists than the right.

In Newcastle, for example, while 250 attended the conference against the witch-hunt, only 80 turned up to a meeting organised on the same day as a TUC-Labour Party rally, to hear David Basnett and other speaking on 'economic planning and industrial democracy.'

In every one of the conferences, there were Labour Party and trade union delegations who represented dozens and perhaps hundreds of other members of their organisations.

Every conference committed the delegates present to take up the model resolutions against the witch-hunt for their own separate trade union or Labour Party organisation.

These resolutions must now be put on the agenda of every labour movement meeting. Every corner of the labour movement must be approached to discuss the witch-hunt and the threat that it poses to the Labour Party and its chances at the next election. The conferences must be the launching pads for a massive campaign to force the NEC to fight the Tories not the Socialists.

CARDIFF

A further 250 labour movement activists were present at the Cardiff conference to hear Tony Saunois, Ron Davis (PPC Caerphilly), Ken Smith (LPYS NC), Derek Hatton (PPC Liverpool Wavertree), Llewelyn Smith (PPC Aber-tillery), Andrew Price (Cardiff SE LP) and Tyrone Sullivan (NUM).

Among a whole range of delegates and representatives from the broad cross-section of the labour and trade union movement, there was a unanimous determination to oppose the witch-hunt and purges in the party.



Lesley Phillips speaking at London Conference.

Photo: D Doran

BRADFORD

300 delegates and visitors attended the conference in Bradford, although the *Bradford Telegraph* and *Argus* put the number at 500. Those present heard Pat Wall, PPC for Bradford North, Ted Grant, Terry O'Neill (President of the Bakers' Union) and John Goodby of the LPYS National Committee.

There was very wide representation from the Labour movement in the area, including trade union branches, Labour Party organisations and representatives from the Asian workers' organisations in Bradford.

LONDON

The London Conference was attended by delegates from 23 constituency Labour Parties, 86 ward parties, 64 LPYS branches, the London Labour Party, 4 Trades Councils and 49 other trade union organisations, 4 college Labour clubs and 2 women's organisations.

The total turnout was about 700 and the collection raised nearly £600 to cover expenses.

Audrey Wise, a new member of Labour's NEC and PPC for Woolwich East, said "It's a pity that the TV and press have to concentrate on this attack on the party members, not on the fight for the health workers or against unemployment,

but this isn't our fault. If we had laid down and died when the right attacked, there wouldn't be peace in the party, they would trample over us."

"It's also not the left's fault if we get better justice in the capitalist courts than in Golding's courts. Even the Labour Party NEC members" she explained, "were not shown the evidence given to the Hayward-Hughes report. The verdict was reached before they met *Militant's* editorial board."

Cathy Wilson, prospective parliamentary candidate for the Isle of Wight (which Frank Chapple called the people's republic of Isle of Wight) said she joined the

Labour Party quite recently compared to other PPCs who support *Militant*—in 1974, after nine years in the hotel trade had taught her what capitalism was.

"Mortimer accused *Militant* of being anti-women" she said, "but on the Isle of Wight, the most successful meeting the Labour Party held was against the Corrie Bill. Mortimer said we were against disarmament but our party was protesting when they opened up a nuclear bunker for the rich and powerful on the Island."

"It is all right for us to go knocking on the doors of council flats but not to go knocking on the doors of parliament where we would expose the cosy relationships of many Labour MPs and Tories."

"When I go to the NEC to discuss with them about my candidature we're taking the

Constituency party with us."

In the discussion from the floor, Wally Kennedy (TGWU Hillingdon manual workers TGWU 1/854) denounced the Right for refusing to fight against the Tories, and preferring instead to fight socialists. "They know about Clause 4 like they know about hunger from being late for a posh dinner."

Other speakers included Peter Tatchell, selected last year by Bermondsey Labour Party as their candidate and still under threat; Jeremy Corbyn from Hornsey Labour Party who are threatened with being disbanded by 31 December, Ernie Roberts MP, GLC councillor Valerie Wise, speakers from branches of UCATT, NUPE, TGWU, NSMM, POEU, NUR, EETPU, and ward and constituency parties.

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'

BLACKPOOL The King's Arms Talbot Rd., "Which way forward for Labour." Speaker: Pete Harris, Blackburn CLP at 8.00pm on Thursday 9 December.

TOWER HAMLETS Monday 13 December at 7.30pm at Vernon Hall Roman Rd. Speaker: P Jarvis NGA (personal capacity)

CAMBRIDGE Wednesday 15 December at 7.30pm. Speaker Jane James. Venue: Bathe House, Gwydir St., Cambridge.

ELLESMERE PORT on Tuesday 14 December at 7.30pm in Ellesmere Port Labour Club, Heathfield Road. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

NORTH WALES on Wednesday 15 December at 7.30pm in Royal Victoria Hotel, Nr. Prestatyn Railway Station. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

HUDDERSFIELD Marxist Discussion Group:
Wednesday 8 December: 'Lenin and Trotsky. What they really stood for'
Wednesday 5 January: 'The State'
Wednesday 19 January: 'Ireland'
All meetings start at 7.30pm at Huddersfield Library, Children's section.

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.

TEESSIDE on Monday 6 December at 7.30 pm at Colomba Club, Church Road, Stockton. 'Fight Tories—not Socialists'.

WEST LEEDS Marxist Discussion Group:
Tuesday 14 December 8pm on 'Do wages cause inflation' For further details contact Jon Ingham on Leeds 741961.

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

CLASSIFIED

Saturday 4 December, 2pm. Littlehampton Labour Party Annual Bake-In, home-made cakes, pies, pickles, jams etc. Friends Meeting House, Littlehampton. Entrance 20p (includes tea and biscuits). In aid of CLP funds.

TONYREFAIL 9 December meeting cancelled. Anyone interested in other local meetings, activities phone Tonypandy 437065

Accommodation Wanted: Militant Supporter in Shepherds Bush/Acton area. Contact: Tony Howard. Phone 602-6242 (during the day)

Help yourself by helping us. We need organisers/fund-raisers in all parts of the country. Write now to: National Association of Disabled Writers, 18 Spring Grove, Harrogate, Yorks HG1 2HS.

SOUTHEND LPYS Public meeting "Jobs not bombs" Wednesday 8 December 8.00pm Labour Hall, Cambridge Road, Southend. Speaker: John Mckay.

OXFORD MILITANT SUPPORTERS TOTE RESULTS
Week No 621—No 90 Julie Jacob, Oxford.
Week No 622—No 68 Ian Sugarman, Oxford.
Week No 623—No 65 Roy Ford, Oxford.
Week No 624—No 10 Hugo Donnelly Oxford
Week No 625—No 79 Unsold
Week No 626—No 18 Eddie Evans

LABOUR AND TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL called by Cambridge LPYS. Saturday 29 January. Trade unions in the area are invited to sponsor this school. Contact Chris Ballard: (0223) 211229

HACKNEY CENTRAL LPYS present
* Roger 007 Bond's *
XMAS DISCO
Saturday December 11 8pm - Late
£1.25 (75p unwaged)
WITH FREE FOOD
at: Mead Club, Kingsmead Estate (behind the chip shop), Kingsmead Road, Homerton Road, London E9
(Buses: 6, 22, 22A, 30, 236, 278)

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.

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Jan 8th.
Eastern	943		2700
East Midlands	447		2850
Hants & Dorset	456		2000
Humberside	229		1650
London East	952		3300
London West	353		1650
London South	845		2700
Manchester & Lancs	981		3000
Merseyside	883		3100
Northern	657		3900
Scotland East	379		2000
Scotland West	703		3000
Southern	784		2500
South West	150		1500
Wales East	164		1500
Wales West	168		2000
West Midlands	521		2800
Yorkshire	637		3850
Others	2544		4000
Total received	12796		50000

Target £50,000 By January 8

Five Weeks to raise £37,000

More money is now pouring in as our readers hear the new wave of attacks from the witch-hunters. (see front page)

Members of the CPSA NEC sent us £180, Allan Roberts MP (Bootle) sent us £100, and nearly £300 has come from collections at Militant meetings in a week when many comrades will have been working for, and contributing to, the Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt Conferences.

Many thanks to the above, especially to comrades from Oldham, Wandsworth, Partick, Tranent, Hayes, Harlow and Trethomas. Collections at Labour Party meetings in Prescot and Wythenshawe, together with £40 trade union expenses repaid from members of NUPE, TGWU, ASTMS, IRSF and NALGO, and collections from LPYS branches, paper sales and other activity in Birmingham, Coventry, South Shields, Burnley, Basildon and Stevenage show an excellent response to our appeals.

Another source of income even though the reason for it (the attempted purge) cannot be welcomed, is fees for talking and being filmed by the press—in this case £25 from Channel 4. Amounts of £10 and upward also came from supporters in Cambridge, Cathcart, Bootle (again), Scunthorpe, Coventry SE, and from a section of the Progressive movement of Nigeria.

Can you ask your mates, or anyone you know who reads Militant to consider donating a fiver for our fight? This week's fivers included those from COHSE steward J Breen, C Haines (Plymouth), S Suddaby (Hull TGWU), and Mr Hote (Southall).

Amounts of between £1 and £5 came from three

readers (Blantyre, Lanark), A Roberts and M Stazick (Kirby), A Ingram (Mold, N Wales) D Marshall (Loughborough), S Draper (Grimsby), M O'Connor (Portsmouth), G Wilson (Halifax), A Clark and D McMahon (both Durham), GMWU members K Fife (Sunderland) and K Brown (Glasgow), UCATT members J McKenzie (Edinburgh), and T Corden (Glasgow), pensioner A Navara (Mayfield), Students P Sweeney (Kent), G Mooney and R Miller (Glasgow) "Richard" (Sunderland) and many others.

We've now got over a quarter of our target, but we need another £37,000 by our deadline of 9th January! Whilst we wouldn't refuse a gift of £10,000 or more, the overwhelming majority of donations are far less than 10,000 pence. Even 10 pence from 30,000 readers would be £3,000 of course. If our readers would be prepared to sacrifice the price of a pint each week from now until 9 January we would go well over our target!

And there's the Militant winter draw, where you or your friends could win a £500 holiday for only ten pence, with nine other prizes! Militant 1983 Calendars are being distributed, and supporters in many areas have written to tell us of plans they have for Christmas social events, not to mention the New Year Celebrations over the border.

It's been noticeable that in the current witch-hunt, scarcely any attention at all has been given to our source of finance—you, our readership. At last it seems, we've nailed the lie that you're all working for the KGB, CIA, Libyans, etc etc. The media have realised that the less they say about the ordinary readers of Militant the better from their point of view! Let's keep it that way by reaching our £50,000 target in the next five weeks.

THIS WEEK: £4,576

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS ADVERTISE IN MILITANT

3 col cms (15 words).....£4
6 col cms (25 words).....£6
1/16 page.....£10
1/8 page.....£20
1/4 page.....£40
All greetings must be received by 29 DECEMBER at: Circulation Department, Militant, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

How to get two delegates to LPYS Conference

The 1983 LPYS conference will again be in Bridlington from 1-4 April and will be gearing up Labour's youth for the general election battle. With over 4½ million young voters, many voting for the first time, the LPYS will have a key role to play in winning these youth for Labour.

For the first time LPYS branches with over 25 members will be entitled to a second delegate. To qualify for a second delegate branches will have to get a letter from their CLP secretary stating that their LPYS branch had over 25 paid-up members on December 31 1982.

Once branches have a letter of confirmation from their CLP secretary, they should inform the National Youth Officer. Letters from branches claiming a second delegate must reach the National Youth Officer by January 28 1983.

LPYS branches should also note the closing for resolutions is January 7 1983. No doubt with the present Tory onslaught on youth, with the general election looming and the witch-hunt in the Labour Party itself, every branch will be

taking the opportunity to send a resolution to conference and will be discussing the matter before Christmas.

The LPYS National Committee have agreed to produce two discussion documents for conference. One on "Youth for Labour" and a second on "The Middle East—Which way forward". A number of leading speakers and big-name bands are also being approached.

Last but by no means least branches should discuss now the question of raising money to get unemployed and school student members to conference. There is a massive amount of sympathy for the LPYS in the factories and in the unions. If approached in most cases they'll be only too willing to help.

Letters appealing for sponsorship of young trade unionists/unemployed LPYS members and any further information are available from the National Youth Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Rd., London SE 17.

By Willie Griffin.

BY-ELECTION VICTORY ANSWERS THE RIGHT-WING

Coventry
Evening Telegraph

Issue No. 28,329

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 26 1982

NELLIST HOISTS MILITANT BANNER

By DAVID BRINDLE
Political Editor

CLENCHED fist salutes greeted the Coventry election victory of Dave Nellist last night.

Supporters sang the *Red Flag* as the result from a low turn-out poll was approved.

The Militant Tendency supporter was returned as a Labour county councillor for Coventry South-east with a majority of more than 1,800.

Fewer than 10,000 people — only 19.4 per cent of the electorate — turned out to vote. Labour's share of the poll fell by 8 per cent, but Mr Nellist still took almost half the votes cast.

Answered

He said: "Working people have shown they will respond to efforts to build an honest socialist Labour Party."



Critics answered... Dave Nellist makes a point in his victory speech.

said victory achieved in spite of eight right-wing not canvassing for.

The Militant Tendency now clearly set capital from... Although Labour the poll dropped five per cent in 1981, even candidates have poorly in recent years some people with had expected a far come.

Mr Nellist is a former Parliamentary candidate for Coventry South-east. His new county councillor much more difficult to get him replaced.

Defeated Tory increased his party the votes from 29 last year. But the Tories, who held South-east county 1977 until 1981, expected a better view of their high in the latest national polls.

"Nellist Hoists Militant Banner" was the headline blazed across the Coventry Evening Telegraph, 26 November, declaring Labour's victory in the County Council by-election (see left).

Labour workers enthusiastically responded to the win with victory salutes and spontaneous singing of the 'Red Flag' and 'Internationale'.

Labour's candidate, Dave Nellist, romped home with half the votes cast and a 1,800 majority over the Tories. This is a decisive answer to the Tories, the Social Democrats and the right wing in the Labour Party who say that Marxists as candidates would go down to humiliating defeat!

The overall turn-out of 19.4% (around 10,000 people) was good by county council by-election standards. A few weeks earlier similar by-election victories for Labour in Sunderland and South Bedfordshire saw polls of 17% and 18% respectively.

The boundaries for this county-council seat are the same as at a Parliamentary and Dave is Labour's Prospective Parliamentary candidate as well. If the Coventry result is repeated in a General Election, with an inevitably higher turn-out, it would mean a landslide victory!

Better than Northfield

Even the Tory 'Coventry Evening Telegraph' had to admit "The Militant Tendency is now clearly set to make capital from the result!" The Tory rag has grudgingly pointed out the significance of this Labour victory. The right-wing crowed about John Spellar's gain in Birmingham Northfield but he only managed to get 36.3% of the vote and won by a slim 289 votes!

But in Coventry South-East the three County Council seats were held by the Tories from 1977 to 1981. Even the Coventry Telegraph remarked that the defeated Tory "might have expected a better showing in view of their high ratings in the nation's latest opinion polls".

We waged an excellent campaign over the election period. Our manifesto at-

By Tom Smith
Secretary/Agent Coventry SE CLP

tacked the Tories' destruction of the West Midlands and gave socialist answers to the problems of jobs, housing and services. It was delivered to every household in the constituency. Special leaflets were produced aimed at youth and trade unionists.

Factories and Council Estate Meetings

We selected eight of Coventry's key factories and organised factory gate meetings where our candidate explained the policies. Public meetings were held on the most important council estates. Hundreds of copies of 'Militant' and 'Socialist Youth' were sold.

The highpoint of our campaign was one of the biggest meetings held in Coventry since the war. The city's central hall was packed to its 1,300-capacity to hear Tony Benn, Dave, Jack Lanwerne the NUR's divisional organiser, and Laurence Coates of the LPYS.

Their contributions were received with tremendous enthusiasm by an audience containing many young people and workers from all the major factories in the area. The Young Tories—who had declared they would picket the meeting managed to muster an attendance of just two. They were obviously concerned not to break Tebbit's Law!

Tory candidate Fred Brown's campaign consisted of a card which bore the legend "keep out the red—vote for Fred: don't vote Red, vote Brown". The Liberal/SDP Alliance candidate stood almost exclusively on a witch-hunt ticket presenting himself as an alternative for "traditional Labour voters".

These candidates were backed up by the strong campaign of the local and national press and the right-wing of the Labour Party to discredit our candidate and those who support the policies of Militant. Our victory was possible because it

was "a young people's campaign" as one older party member put it. Young Socialists from all over the Midlands came to support our mass canvasses.

If only their support had been matched by some of the prominent members of the Coventry party. Disgracefully, some right-wing councillors actually told the local paper they would not be canvassing for the Labour candidate. This dis-loyalty is all the more appalling in that Dave Nellist has actually been election agent for all of them!

Some right-wing Labour Party members actually seem to have been prepared to see Labour lose the seat, to try to prove their claim that "Militant loses votes".

Where's the humiliation?

The right-wing's electoral argument for a witch-hunt has been completely smashed by this election result. Austin Mitchell MP has said that where supporters of Militant stand as Labour candidates, they would be "humiliated". We don't feel humiliated in Coventry South-East.

The reaction of many workers to our campaign was typified by the unemployed man who walked into the Labour Party rooms to wish us well and donated a much-needed fiver. Our policies aroused great interest on the doorstep and in the factories—particularly Dave's commitment to live on a skilled worker's wage if elected as an MP. This promise indicates to many workers that our Labour Party is not being used to build an individual's career but to elect representatives committed to fight for them.

Many workers have joined our party during the campaign. Most encouragingly, well over 100 names have been collected for the LPYS. The mood of workers where I work is one of satisfaction that Labour has won over all the odds. They feel that Militant supporters have proved that they've not only good ideas but also the ability to win.

Now we welcome the opportunity to prove that the representatives our party selects are the best fighters for workers interests on the County Council. Given this local election we look forward with increased confidence to an overwhelming win for Coventry South-East Constituency Labour Party's selected candidate and for socialist policies at the next parliamentary election.

AUEW branch opposes purge

"This divisional committee of the AUEW recognises the crucial importance of fighting the Tories with all Labour's resources. We therefore oppose McCarthyite practises, and witch-hunts in the Labour Party and the negation of "natural justice". In particular we oppose moves to expel Militant supporters, which will cause deep divisions in the Labour Party and threaten the publicity in the media right up until the general election."

This resolution from Leeds 6 branch AUEW is now being forwarded to the Regional District Committee for consideration to go on to the National AUEW Conference. District committees can submit more than one motion to divisional committees. This means that district committees who oppose the witch-hunt at all, will be willing to send such a motion as it will not push any of the industrial resolutions off the agenda.

However, engineers who wish to have their voice

heard should ask now as resolutions will be being considered by the district committees around the second or third week of December.

At the last National Committee even the right-wing split on the question of a witch-hunt. This was because even the moderate lay-members of the union's national committee can see how a witch-hunt would wreck Labour's chances at the next general election, and that would mean the decimation of the engineering industry.

NEC kept in dark

Dear Comrades

In their desire to expel Militant supporters and others from the Labour Party, the right wing have trampled over the rights of party members.

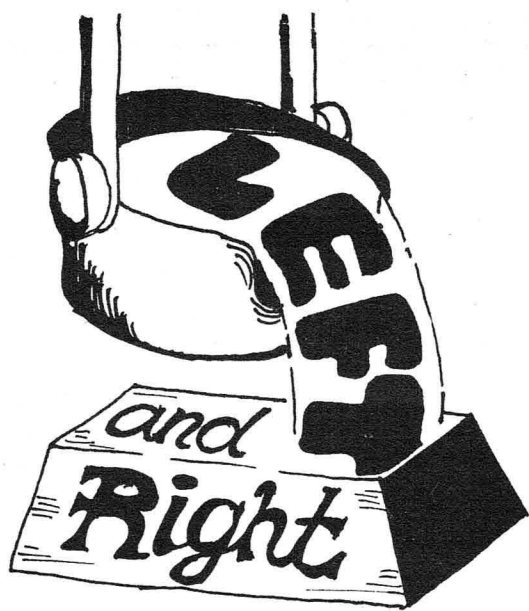
It is worth noting however that they are also asking National Executive Committee members to make a decision about expelling Militant without even presenting before

them the so-called evidence on which the Hayward Hughes report was based!

Yours fraternally
Audrey Wise

11 DECEMBER: BRISTOL CONFERENCE AGAINST WITCH-HUNT
OLD MARKET STREET, BRISTOL

Speakers: Kevin Roddy (President CPSA); Alan Totterdell (FBU executive); Ron Thomas (PPC Bristol NW); Cliff Hall (SOGAT '82 executive); Jimmy Cheek (TGWU sec., Bristol buses); Dave Nellist (PPC Coventry SE); Tony Saunio (Sec., LSCAW); Mike Shaeff (COHSE branch sec); Cllr Derek White (Cornwall County Council); Robin Clapp (South West LSCAW).



Double-talk on Human Rights

It's amazing that Thatcher's talk of human rights does not stick in her throat. Recently she tried to portray herself as a housewife in charge of a nation. She should ensure that justice begins at home. Denis Thatcher is a director of the Quinton Hazell group, whose South African subsidiary has announced that their profits are up 21% on last year, to £173,000.

And blood is on every pound. The Prime Minister's husband's firm more than doubled the number of workers paid below the recommended 'poverty line'. This line is ludicrously low, but 351 of Denis Thatcher's workers in South Africa now scrape an existence below it.

Nuclear Looters

Should the survivors of a nuclear holocaust break into supermarkets to get food? Or shouldn't they have more respect for private property?

At a special meeting of Bridport Council recently, the Mayor said that to maintain food supplies: "We will break into Tesco and we will survive". However, another Councillor, also a shopkeeper, angrily told the meeting: "I don't like the suggestion that organised looting in the short term would be acceptable". So the Mayor hastily retracted his comments and explained what he really meant was that it would be handled by a food committee, like there would be a food committee etc, etc. Have they all gone mad?

Probably. But no more so than the government, with their fraudulent plans for "civil defence". In a recent analysis of Operation Hard Rock, (the largest "civil defence exercise planned in 15 years) Duncan Campbell points out that that exercise assumed that all the missiles missed all the major population centres.

Stalinist leader says 'don't follow us'

For over two decades the Hungarian model of liberal "economic reform" has been lauded as an example for other Eastern European countries to follow. It did not curb inequality. Former Prime Minister, Hegedus, has reported that a recent study discovered that the top 5% in Hungary is 80 times richer than the bottom 5% and the gap is widening.

But it seemed to provide genuine economic growth. Now that is ending. Next summer rents will rise by an average of 130%. Bus and train fares have recently been doubled and the cost of goods in the shops has risen sharply. In its drive for expansion Hungary has piled up \$8 billion worth of debt to the Western banks. Now cutbacks are the order of the day.

To try to rectify the situation the government has abandoned its policy of 'economic reform'.

Janos Berecz, editor of the Communist Party newspaper Nepszabadsag and a member of the party's Central Committee admits: "We acknowledge there is a Hungarian road and that it may be possible to learn from it. But we also acknowledge the possibility that if anyone else follows it, they may go bankrupt."

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The battle for a shorter working week has been a constant thread in the history of the labour movement. To-day British workers have longer hours and lower pay than those in other major European capitalist economies. The bosses have always fought tooth and nail against any attempt to reduce the working week.

In the autumn of 1932 there was a proposal the International Labour Organisation Conference for the forty hour week to be the norm throughout the world. There was then nearly 30 million unemployed in the industrialised countries. But the bosses group at the conference opposed the idea, using the usual delaying tactic that it needed more careful study, and their puppets representing the British government said that it was impractical.

FOOD FOR BEGINNERS

The recent book 'Food for beginners' sets out to answer that question of the ages—why are the many poor?

The idea of the 'Beginners' series is attractive—to simplify complicated ideas by means of cartoons. Not all of the books work out like that. Sometimes you get the same old long words and difficult-sounding names in bubbles emerging out of the mouths of cartoon characters.

No such objections can be made about 'Food for beginners'. It really does explain how landlords, moneylenders and merchants batten on to the backs of the peasantry and reduce to the very verge of starvation the very people who grow the food.

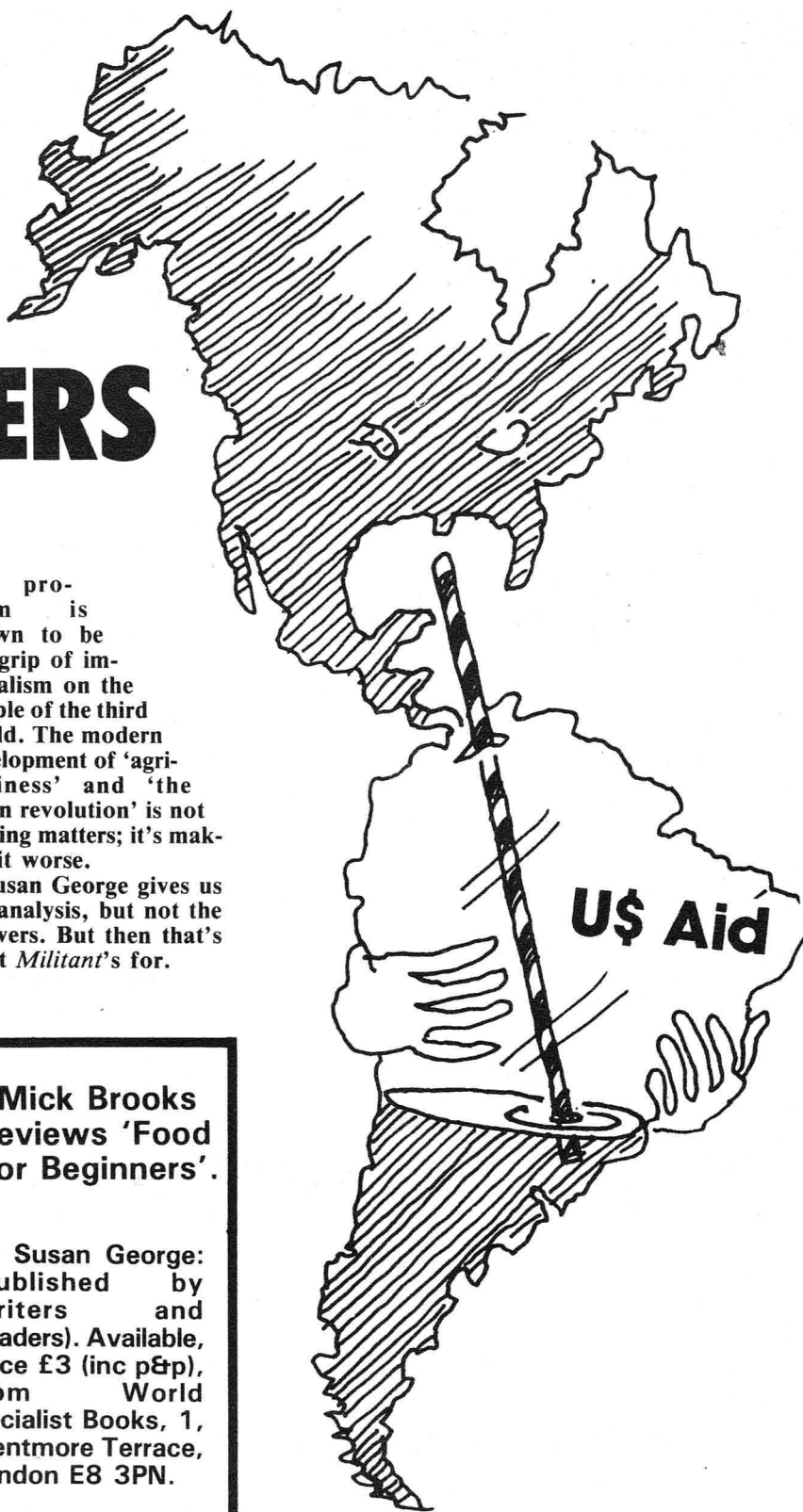
On the way it demolishes common arguments such as, 'the problem is they breed like rabbits' or that 'the answer is more aid'. The

real problem is shown to be the grip of imperialism on the people of the third world. The modern development of 'agri-business' and 'the green revolution' is not helping matters; it's making it worse.

Susan George gives us the analysis, but not the answers. But then that's what *Militant's* for.

Mick Brooks reviews 'Food For Beginners'.

By Susan George: (published by Writers and Readers). Available, price £3 (inc p&p), from World Socialist Books, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.



BUILD LINKS WITH LABOUR MOVEMENT TO WIN GRANTS CLAIM

The National Union of Students this weekend, will have the task of drawing up plans to defeat another round of Tory cuts and win the NUS grants claim. So far the NUS Executive, with NOLS members in the leading positions, has organised the Anti-Cuts 'Week of Action' in October and the national Grants demonstration of over 10,000 on the 19th November.

New proposals are being put forward for 'local activity' as the next step in the campaign. Local action, when linked with the campus workers, can be successful in deferring the cuts.

Earlier this year action by students and staff forced Aston University Senate to defer a 30% cut in the library budget. Lecturers at North East London Poly have won a 'no compulsory redundancies' agreement, after threatening action in May. At Aberdeen University the

By Dave Read
(NUS Conference delegate, Liverpool Univ)

AUT forced the Authorities to postpone any redundancies and to go into deficit.

University Authorities can be forced to go into deficit by local action in order not to implement the cuts. But this can only be a temporary measure. It does however, give a breathing space for NUS to launch a national campaign, linked with the Campus workers, to reverse the Tory attacks on the public sector.

The limitations of local action, except as part of a national campaign, are more starkly revealed in the case of the grants campaign. The grant level is determined directly by the Government without being transmitted through University Authorities or local Councils.

The NUS grants claim totalling £500m is worth more than the 1982 miners pay claim. Any success will only be possible if the NUS links with the Public Sector workers struggling to defend jobs, resist privatisation, de-

fend services and combat low pay. That's why 'Militant' supporters on the NOLS NC have argued that NUS should campaign for the TUC and the Labour Party to convene a 'Public Sector Alliance' Conference of public sector Trade Union branches, Trades Councils, local Labour Parties and Student Unions to draw up plans to defeat the Tory attacks.

But the NUS leaders have made an inauspicious start to enlisting the support of the Labour Movement. In mid-November they went into dispute with their own staff, members of the NUJ and the TGWU!

Staff dismissed

This dispute arose out of an attempt by the NUS management to impose new job descriptions and working conditions on two members of staff, who faced dismissal if they refused to accept the new conditions. It follows the introduction of a new management plan by the NUS Chief Executive, Mr John Garner.

Many Labour clubs have followed the lead of the Welsh Labour Students, the Welsh section of NOLS, in calling on the NOLS NC to support the NUS staff. They are rightly concerned that Garner, appointed last year, has soured relationships with the trade unions. For example, Jack Dromey, South East Region TUC Secretary, visited the staff picket outside the NUS HQ. Moreover, NUS has acquired the 'services' of Garner for an index-linked salary of £20,000—while the Executive has only been able to earmark £6,000 for the Grants Campaign!

NOLS won the leading positions in NUS by a landslide victory at the March 1982 NUS Conference because the old 'Left Alliance' leadership had failed to defend student grants or stop the cuts. NOLS, as the student section of the Labour Party, offered the promise of links with the Labour movement to defend students against the Tory onslaught. If the grants and cuts campaigns are to be won, students will have to join 'Militant' supporters in Labour Clubs to make sure that the NOLS NUS leaders live up to that promise!



Over 150 disabled people and their relatives demonstrated on 10 November at the vicious cut-back suffered by the disabled since the Tories took over Lambeth Council in May. They were joined on the demo by Ted Knight, who has now become the Labour leader of the Council, after the defection of an SDP councillor.

It's the same all Europe over

In June 1981 I set off to conquer the world with my Honours degree in English, Modern Languages and Business Studies.

Stop one Germany. Working to a contract which I had to honour but which my employers (having 'miscalculated' their staffing levels) did not. One month.

Stop two Holland. Twelve hours a day (5pm till 5am) in a seedy night club. Five months.

Stop three Scotland. Home again for the Christmas unemployment figures. I applied for all sorts of jobs—executive posts, sales rep jobs, insurance firms, offices, ordinary jobs in bars, shops and restaurants, jobs in other parts of Scotland, jobs in England, jobs abroad, jobs that weren't even vacant (just leaving an application form on the off chance). Everything I could think of. Finally 'I got on my bike' once again.

Stop four Chester. Prosperous England. Finally a job, after 6 months on the dole. A manageress in a restaurant. For the executive salary of £1.30 an hour. No tea breaks, no lunch breaks

just "grab a bite whenever you can". It was packed out at meal times so I was lucky if I got a 'bite' of anything at all.

My boss told me not to bother signing off and if things 'improved' I would "almost certainly" get a pay increase. Who wants to risk working on the side in Tory Britain?

Stop five France. Hoping for good lifts, my 17 year old school leaver sister and I borrow a couple of rucksacks, leaving mum in a complete panic about her two youngest. Maybe I'll get a job as an interpreter, or a waitress.

I still have 5 cheques in my cheque book (£50 each) so that will keep us going. We'll pay it back when we get a job. My sister doesn't merit a cheque book since she's unemployed but the bank manager is quite patient if you're a university graduate—at first.

All the jobs as British Ambassadors are taken. Dishwashers are ten a penny but after filling in a three page application form, one personnel officer tells us that she should have a couple of vacancies by March/April 1983. No more cheques. Rucksacks on backs.

Stop six, seven and eight, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. You don't have to 'become a professional' to

see the world. In Switzerland we get one day's work picking cherries in return for a bed for the night.

Stop nine Holland. We have a friend who'll put us up. Jobs in a seedy nightclub, full of old men and drunken sailors. The bank has to be paid back. And we have to eat.

Working till 5am in a smoky hole, chatting up old men. The boss breathing down your neck. Yelling his head off at the end of the night (is this déjà-vu, or was this my first graduate post?).

There are tons of young women stuck in this stale atmosphere. Mostly foreign, they come to Holland for work because they have problems in their own countries and end up here

There are many spheres of illegal activity. You see fat 'businessmen' driving around in huge cars. And skinny little junkies standing at street corners, willing to do anything for money to buy more heroin. And they do.

You often see big queues outside tiny little shops. It's not Polish people queueing for bread. They are queueing to be used as sweated labour.

By B. Brown
(Rotterdam)

'Outdated resources forced me to get angry'

When my son was born 15 years ago, the effects of the pregnancy led to the deterioration of an unusual vascular condition, which in turn forced my doctors to amputate my left leg.

For a year I was confined to a wheelchair, unable to care for my baby; he learned to walk by holding on to a pair of crutches! I was assured that once measured for my tin leg, I'd be mobile in no time.

What they didn't say was what kind of 'leg'. It turned out to be a 'Pylon'. Just imagine an electricity pylon upside down and that will give some idea, tastefully finished off with a large lump of rubber for the foot!

Psychologically, the effects forced me to get angry. In the wheelchair the person pushing me would be the only one spoken to; the implication was that along with my leg I'd also lost a brain! Virtually confined to the house, hopping from room to room, the wheelchair was useless.

At least the pylon would get me mobile. It did, as long as you could stand the horrified reaction when stomping down the High Street. Couldn't cover it up with trousers, the 'thing' was so wide.

A Canadian approached me one day, highly embarrassed, he enquired "what the hell this metal thing is?" He was a chief fitter at a limb centre in Ontario; half an hour later he had given me even more reasons to be angry. The facilities, the research, the design of limbs, were light years away from what I knew.

Limbs for Frankenstein

Many months later I was eventually fitted with my tin leg, a gorgeous creation in a choice of two colours—NHS pink or peach! I now had to learn how to walk all over again, I'd spent a year immobile, 6 months walking stiff like a female Frankenstein, now I had a 'leg' that bent where the knee should be.

Months later, bruised and battered from falling over everything I came into contact with, I was walking, with the aid of crutches first, then a walking stick.

S. Doyle asks when was the wheelchair first invented, when was the last time a consumer helped in development? I would ask the same regarding artificial limbs.

My leg was first designed in the second World War, by one of three private firms that work for the NHS; Douglas Bader, the wartime pilot, had his artificial legs made by this same firm. The question needs to be asked, what are such firms doing

By Cathy Wilson
(Prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate for the Isle of Wight, replies to a letter from S Doyle, 12 November, on disability)

within the state health service?

Only the expert advice and gentle attention by the fitters and staff of the Limb Centre allowed certain minor changes to be made, to what essentially are extremely outdated, clumsy and badly designed limbs. Due to lack of resources, and non-replacement of fitting staff, even the quality and dependability of limbs is deteriorating. With only one research establishment in Roehampton, London, the waiting time for replacements and repairs is getting longer.

Only one research establishment

Disabled people need more resources, material, financial and practical. I'm heavy on shoes and they must be good shoes i.e. expensive—the left one never wears out; if I could purchase an extra right one it would save money!

My mother has just purchased a Disabled Rail Card, which gives me half fare for myself and a companion; this is great, but only those on Mobility Allowance for example (introduced by the last Labour government) can get it.

Did anyone see 'Walter', a film on Channel 4 about a mentally handicapped man? The actor, Ian McKellen, described the growth in confidence of the many extras in the film, played by real people.

Confidence gained

"In a disused hospital, there were actors, nurses, ex-nurses, mentally handicapped people, physically handicapped people, a blind man, a legless man. And then there were the technicians with their paraphernalia.

"A lot of the patients came to London from East Anglia. They stayed in a hotel. They were paid £30 a day.

"Suddenly, they'd actually been out in the world earning a living. They could buy a hi-fi, put attachments on their wheelchairs, anything.

"It was hard for them to

go back. They'd found out about the right to work. What you should be afraid of isn't them, but the way they're too often treated.

"We're all frightened of them, and yet so many families in this country have a handicapped person. I'll never go on a plane again without knowing it's handicapped people who put sugar and salt in those plastic bags we rip apart. They've been doing this for years and they're bored. But it keeps them quiet."

So when Fiona Winders says (*Militant* 623) that 'the Labour Party provides the material resources and political will to ensure that disabled people can live independent lives free from poverty and misery', she is correct.

However, Labour governments are rather different. Without socialist policies and leadership, any Labour government is a prisoner to an economic system that deems disabled and able-bodied alike.

Such a government accepted the IMF, cuts, unemployment, etc.. That's where we come in. The struggle to be able to do all that S. Doyle demands will need a total transformation in society, and that means control over the economy in particular.

Only by fighting within the Labour Party as disabled people can we make sure our interests are fought for. A good start is to vote Labour, attend some LPYS meetings (whatever your age, I'm in the geriatric section!) and I am convinced you will join us.

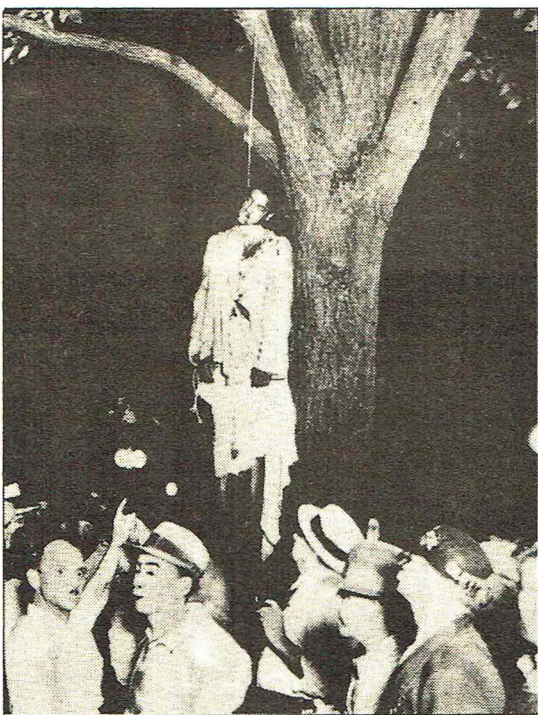
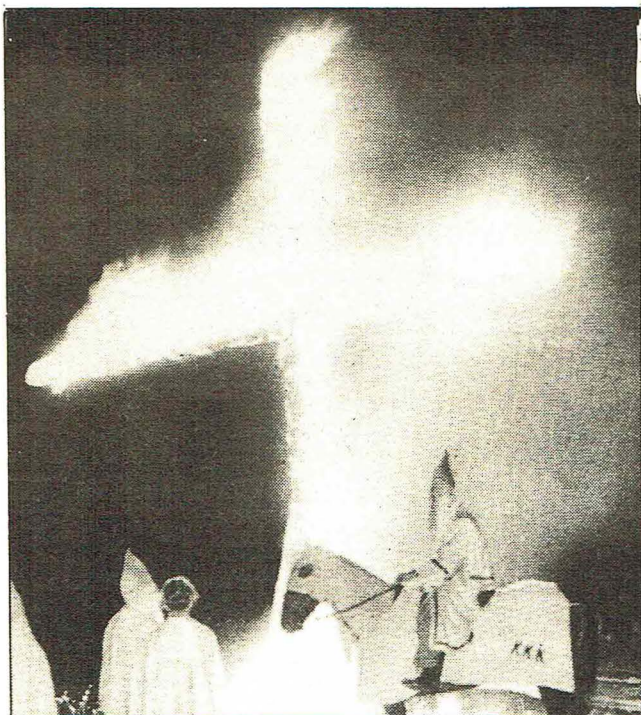
The first step to changing society

Read Clause 4, which is printed on our party card, implement that and we no longer need think in terms of restricted priorities. You and I need practical help, not preaching, and certainly not condescension and charity.

Disabled people have more reason than most to demand the support of the labour and trade union movement, but they also need us. They can change our lives by producing, together with us the consumers, all the marvellous devices that will free millions throughout the world.

We can use our anger and our knowledge to strengthen the demands for a political answer to disability of every kind. If the benefits of a socialist economy were to be campaigned for, that vision of independence S. Doyle demands will become reality.

I look forward to my future as a 'Bionic Socialist', until then my 'NHS Pink' creation gets me to meetings, demonstrations and conferences so that I can play my part in the struggle for socialism. My comrades expect nothing less of me, but without them it would be so much harder. Come in Comrade Doyle and join that fight.



Last weekend violence erupted in Washington DC after a massive police operation, organised to protect the 'freedom of speech' for members of the Ku Klux Klan. Workers who opposed the march—in a city with a black population of 75%—turned out in their thousands.

The last KKK march in Washington in 1925 saw over 40,000 robed Klan members parading through the streets intimidating and terrorising black workers. Despite the murderous history of the KKK the Reagan administration had allowed the march to go ahead last weekend, the Attorney General ordering the FBI and local police to protect the marchers.

But the anger of workers in Washington was such that only a handful of Klan members, 30, turned up, without the white robes, to be ushered around the city under the protection of thousands of police. Many workers in their frustration and anger at the authorities' connivance with the racists turned their attacks on the police who were protecting the Klan.

Black workers have every justification for their hatred of the KKK and everything it stands for. The KKK have been responsible for thousands of lynchings and murders of black people in America since its inception after the end of the American Civil War, and as these pictures show, such murders were usually committed in full view of the authorities, without any attempt being made to protect blacks or bring the murderers to justice.

For over three centuries millions of black people have suffered the misery of exploitation under the profit system.

As Karl Marx explained, world capitalism was built on the plunder of the colonies and their peoples. Through slavery, colonial rule, imperialism and racial discrimination, black people have borne the most terrible and inhuman treatment that the world has ever known.

Today, across every continent, in South Africa, in the United States, in Australia and here in Britain, the black working class is continuing the war to end racial injustice.

Black people have a proud history of struggle against racial and class oppression. But it is history which the ruling classes have at all times attempted to bury or distort.

The duty of the socialist movement is to ensure that histories and novels like Howard Fast's 'Freedom Road' are not hidden away on the top shelves but thrust in the hands of black and white workers alike.

'Freedom Road' concerns one of the most glorious and bitter periods in black history. It is a fictionalised account of the events which took place following the liberation of four million black slaves at the end of the American Civil War.

During the war thousands of these slaves deserted the plantations in the Southern States to join the million-strong liberating army from the North. 80,000 free blacks from the North and 125,000 ex-slaves from the South formed the shock troops of the Unionist Army and, in a war in which 600,000 soldiers died and 400,000 were maimed or wounded, blacks had a casualty rate twice as high as their white comrades.

The defeat of the slave-

By Phil Frampton

owners' armies signalled the uprising of the former slaves in the South. No longer in chains, the blacks rose up and destroyed the symbols of their past degradation.

They set fire to the slave-traders' auction blocks, destroyed their masters' whips and smashed the branding irons. They wrecked the stocks and burned down the churches. After 250 slave rebellions they were free. Thousands seized plots of land and divided up the old plantations amongst themselves.

Ex-slaves sought to build a democratic society

Two years after the war ended blacks were given the vote. This meant that in one State, South Carolina, blacks won a majority in the convention to draw up the new state constitution.

The central character of 'Freedom Road' is Gideon, one of those ex-slaves elected to fill the State House once occupied by his masters. Just as the Bolsheviks were greeted with derision, then horror, when the ex-slaves took power in Parliament they were met with contempt.

Most of them were virtually illiterate, two-thirds of them were too poor to pay taxes. But they formed the most civilised government in the history of the United States.

The convention abolished

all property qualification for holding public office, established the election of all state officials (judges, police chiefs, etc.) ended imprisonment for debt, and gave women the right to divorce and other rights. They set the state on the road to the break-up of the large landed estates, the desegregation of schooling and the establishment by 1871 of education for 250,000 black children.

But this took place within the context of a democratic capitalist revolution—a revolution to clear away archaic privilege and lay the basis for the growth of an economy dominated by big business and the profit system. Gideon represents many blacks who welcomed this revolution as it destroyed the slave-owners.

However, what Gideon, and his 'creator' Howard Fast, did not see, is that once the slave-owners were smashed and big business was in complete control, that was the end of the unity between blacks and big business. Having installed themselves in power in the South, the capitalists chose their moment and wiped out Gideon, his village, and all the best gains of the revolution.

The previous reforms which had been carried out could not be permanently protected from the hostile interests of big business unless the struggle for land and democratic control was linked to the overthrow of big business throughout the USA. Unfortunately, Fast's narrative does not draw this important conclusion and the equally important lesson that Southern blacks were left isolated and defeated in the South because of the failure of the Northern labour movement to adopt a clear programme to unite blacks with white workers against American capitalism.

The backcloth to reconstruction in the South was the titanic struggle being

waged by workers in the North. White workers and every reason to join together with the blacks to overthrow the employers.

During the civil war the Northern industrialists, so keen to liberate the South, pushed down the workers' wages to intolerable levels. By 1865 real wages were just 65% of pre-war rates. Shortages of labour were made up by importing 800,000 immigrants and a new law binding all immigrants in debt to servitude. Other laws were introduced, banning strikes and even unions.

Increasingly, strikes broke out during the war. And, while many workers volunteered for the war, they were incensed by Lincoln's draft laws which, in 1863, conscripted into the army all those who could not find \$300 to pay and get someone to replace them in the army.

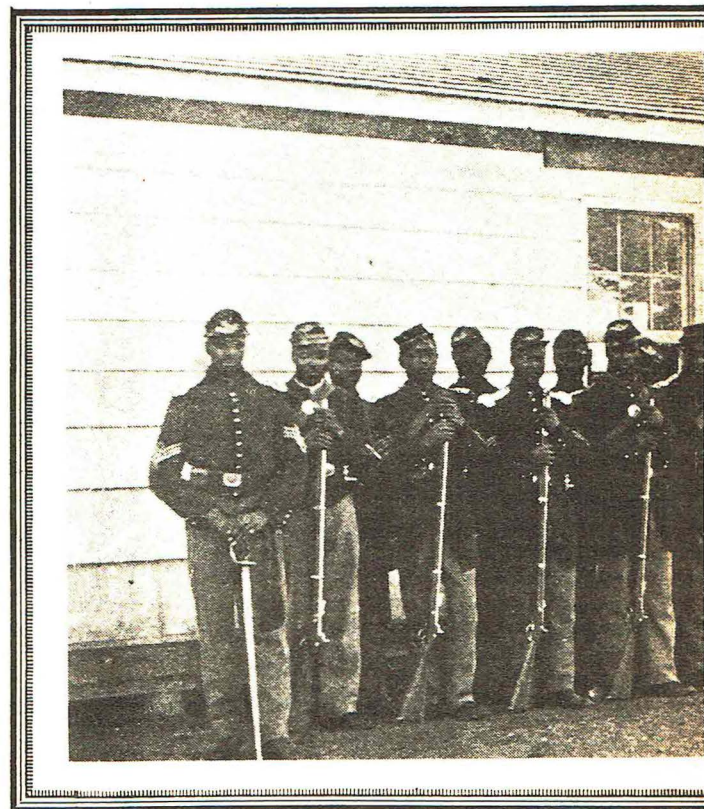
In New York there was an insurrection. For a week the workers took over the city until union troops were recalled from the South to suppress the uprising; 1,000 workers died in the fighting.

William H. Sylvis was one of the brilliant trade union leaders who came out of this period. When the freedom of the slaves was declared in 1863 he said "We are now all one family of slaves together".

Northern workers engaged in strike struggles

The end of the war, the return of the troops to the factories, and the post-war boom in production only fuelled a new militancy, which sent 600,000 workers into his union federation, the National Labour Union (NLU). As production expanded the American industrial workforce grew from 2 million to 3½ million by 1870. A strike wave swept the country doubling wages

FREEDOM



and winning a legal 8-hour day in six states.

"Divide the profits amongst those who produce them," said Sylvis, "and drive the non-producers to honourable toil or starvation".

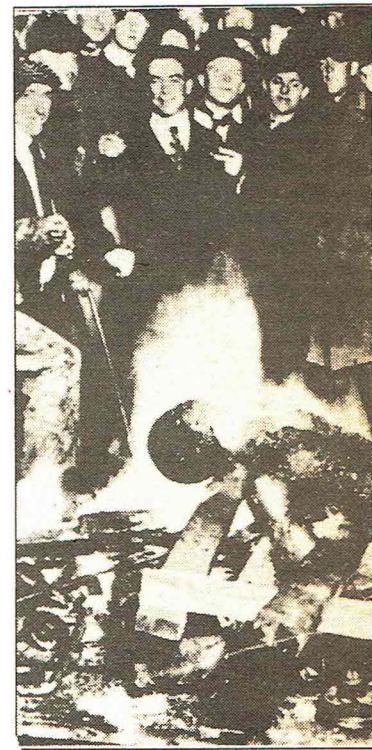
Having been confronted by the Republican government during the war, the white workers in the NLU set up America's first real party of Labour—the National Labour Reforms Party.

Around this great movement there was a chance to unite the black and white workers in the North, and poor whites and freed black slaves in the South. The Northern employers used the blacks as cheap labour and often as scabs to break strikes.

But instead of a drive to organise blacks, many white union leaders tried to bar their way into the trade union movement. Only a forceful union leadership could overcome the centuries of racial prejudice. The most conscious white workers like Sylvis understood the need for unity. Hundreds and

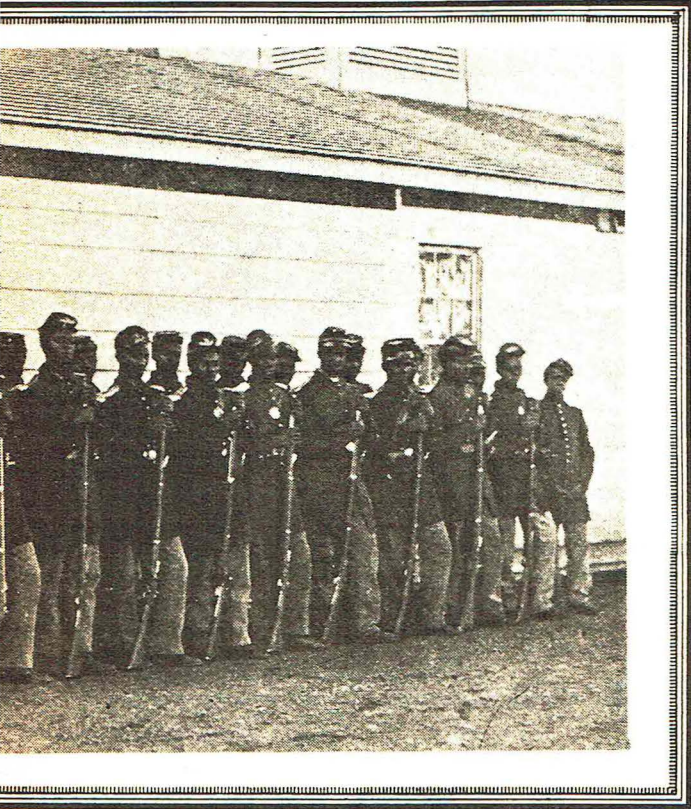
Above: Black infant Civil War.

Below: Another inn Southern lynch law



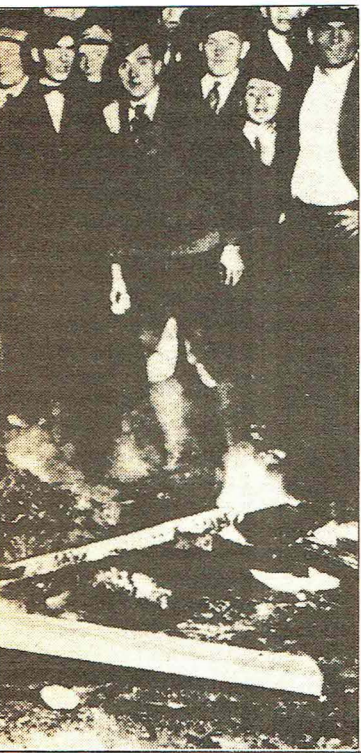
American emancipation

FREEDOM ROAD



... in US army after the

... cent black dies by the
... n the 1920s.



blacks and 'patriation'

of Northern capitalism. The economic intervention and expansion of Northern industries threatened to ruin their cotton-based, slave society.

Lincoln himself tried to avoid the war. He and the industrialists feared a disruption in trade. In 1861, the thought of liberating slaves never entered into his head. On the contrary, he rebuked any generals who freed slaves in the captured territory.

Lincoln was forced to give the slaves their freedom only because his vacillation allowed the Southern armies to gain the upper hand at the beginning of the war. Faced with the worse prospect of a long drawn out war, Lincoln was forced to use the abolition of slavery to get victory.

When Andrew Johnson succeeded Lincoln as US President in 1865, the new Republican leader first denied blacks the right to vote and then allowed Southern whites to introduce not slavery, but a vicious apartheid-type system of control known as the 'Black Codes'.

Republicanism tied Southern blacks to capitalism

But the overriding necessity for industrial capitalism to establish its supremacy temporarily cut across the desire of some employers, bankers and merchants to restore blacks to a condition of superexploitation.

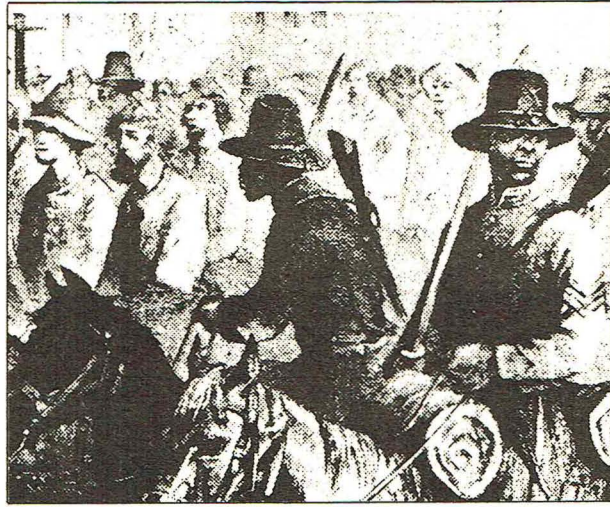
The appeasing President Andrew Johnson was first impeached and many of his powers annulled.

Thousands of former Confederate soldiers were banned from voting and the Southern state governments declared illegal. New states would only be recognised where blacks had the right to vote and where the wishes of the North were met.

The black Republican vote secured the domination of industrial capitalism in the South and the country as a whole. In the years that followed, railroads, industry and finance swept into the South. They bought up land, cotton and industry, effectively unified the country and laid the basis for the emergence of the United States as a world power.

Fast's account suggests wrongly that the slaveholders were restored to power at the end of this 'Radical Reconstruction'. In fact, the slaveowners were destroyed by the Civil War.

Howard Fast's 'Freedom Road' relies on the erroneous interpretation of the



Black cavalrymen bringing Confederate prisoners

Reconstruction put about by the Communist Parties under Stalin in the Thirties. Fast, who in 1944 won the Stalin Prize for literature, fell prey to the Stalinist conception that the peasants, workers and blacks should sink their differences with 'liberal' capitalists who would be reliable allies in the fight against reaction and fascism.

Fast, therefore, doesn't show the real difference between Gideon's liberal capitalist 'friend', President Ulysses Grant, and Andrew Johnson—the reactionary.

The struggle between Grant and Johnson was over how best to maintain and extend the exploitation of the impoverished classes of the USA. The Stalinist strategy of Popular Frontism, uniting behind sections of the ruling class, proved as disastrous to the workers movements of the Thirties as it was for the blacks under the Reconstruction.

Capitalism's interests temporarily coincided with those of the blacks and the workers in abolishing slavery. However, while fighting alongside other classes such as the capitalists for limited aims, the working class must always organise independently. In developing societies, the capitalist class is continually caught between its need to crush outdated conditions and classes which prevent it going forward, and its compulsion to oppress the very classes which it must call upon to smash the old society.

Once the American Civil War was over and the slaveowners smashed then the real antagonism—between exploited and exploiter—broke out on a fierce scale. In the final analysis, black and proletarian support for the capitalists left them defenceless in the subsequent capitalist political counter-revolution in the South.

Southern blacks did not constitute a working class. They comprised a few hundred thousand city and agricultural workers, but the majority had been transformed into small farmers.

Legacy of racism bedevilled labour movement

While their interests in owning land totally conflicted with those of the ruling classes, they formed a fragmented class divided by their individual struggles to develop their own private property. Some achieved their common demand for 'Forty Acres and a Mule', others did not.

With one foot in property and the other in the camp of the oppressed, the ex-slaves needed a firm tug from the working class—that class whose toil and daily existence drives it into evermore united and militant struggle against capitalism.

Had the black and white working class given a firm lead, explained that capitalism is the enemy of the poor farmer, and shown a firm resolve to establish a socialist society by eliminating racialism and the economic persecution of small property owners, then the blacks could have been kept out of the treacherous hands of the Republican Party.

Unfortunately Sylvis's Labour Reform party did not explain that genuine land reform could only be consolidated by nationalisation of the banks to provide cheap credit and nationalisation of the cotton trade. Many active trade unionists faced with the rapid development of American capitalism, could not link up the fight for the eight hour day, proper schooling, jobs and equal rights with the need to overthrow big business.

In addition, the legacy of racism bedevilled the movement.

While Sylvis toured the South trying to recruit blacks, he was hindered by the racism of his fellow union leaders. Where blacks responded to the NLU they were blocked by racial prejudice and had to form their own organisation, the Coloured NLU.

The Coloured NLU never rose above being a mere shell of an organisation and along with the NLU was destroyed by the employers' offensive in the terrible recession of 1873. From this time reaction was in full flow North and South.

Even in the South where racism was deepest, the potential to overcome it had been shown. The end of the war found many Southern poor white in the Union Leagues fighting against the landgrabbing slaveowners.

The poor white farmers benefitted from the civil war's destruction of the large estates and by the resulting 50% fall in land prices. Almost one fifth of the Southern whites voted to give blacks civil rights in the 1867 elections.

In 1871, still terrified of the consequences of black and white unity, the New York Tribune printed a letter remarking on the threat of black and white unity and concluding, "Many thoughtful men are apprehensive that the ignorant voters will, in the future, form a party by themselves as dangerous to the interests of society as the communists of France."

In the Paris Commune of 1871, for the first time in

history, workers had seized power for themselves.

The capitalists had to move decisively to break this alliance. It was they therefore who instituted the terror campaign against blacks and white sympathisers which led to the formation of the Klu Klux Klan. As with the fascist blackshirts 50 years later, the employers took the scum of white society and hired them at lucrative rates to terrorise the whites into aiding, or at least ignoring, the fierce suppression of the blacks.

Reign of terror took away democratic gains of blacks

The only prospect of resistance would have been if the blacks were organised to fight back and able to convince poor whites that they had a common class interest. But black Republican leaders were hitched to a bosses party.

Instead the whites became a crucial tool of reaction.

The betrayal of the blacks by the Republicans, left the blacks politically and therefore militarily disarmed. Instead of uniting into an army of self-defence and thus a force to go on the offensive against the terror, whole black communities were left isolated.

One by one they were picked off. Whole villages of blacks, like the Carwell family in Freedom Road, were wiped out. The capitalists drowned black emancipation in a frenzy of blood letting.

Had the blacks been able to vote, then they might have sought an alternative. But this too was denied, existing in name only. Blacks were terrorised away from the polls, ballots were fiddled and gerrymandered. By 1890, only 20% of Mississippi blacks were voting and by 1940 only 2% of blacks in the South voted.

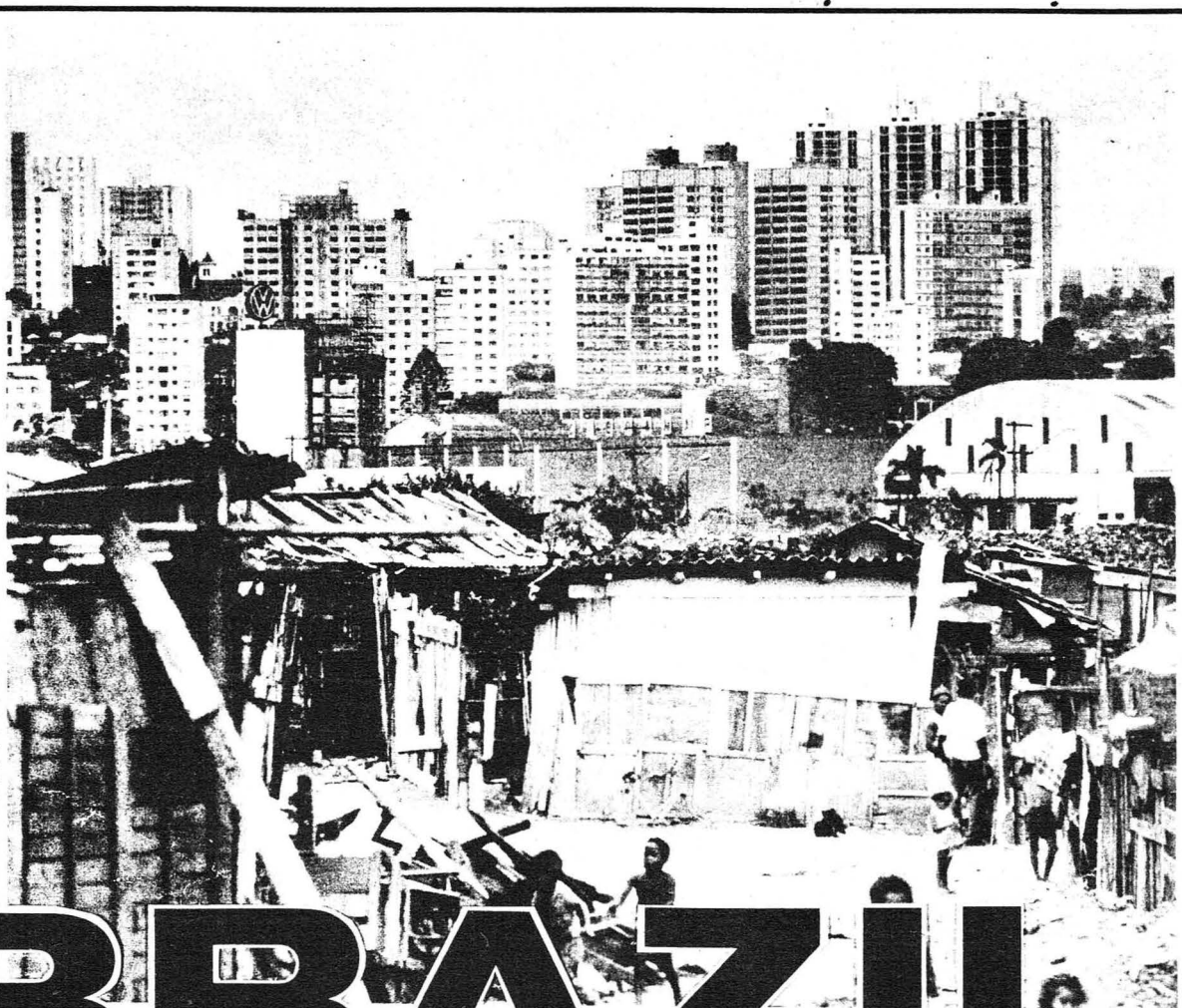
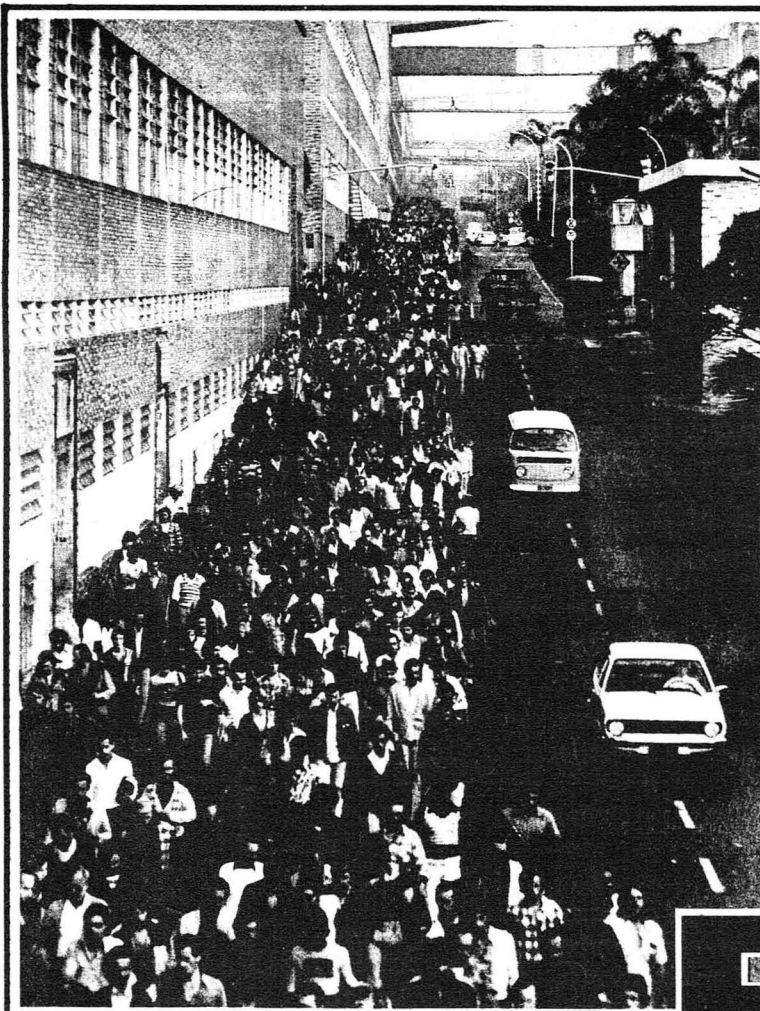
For 100 years a terrible racist terror reigned in the Southern states. Right up to the 1960's blacks were still getting lynched on the whim of rich whites. In the 1890's the Democrats were stringing up more than one black every day.

After a century of racist reaction, the lessons of Reconstruction have still to be absorbed. Trade union leaders still back the big business Democrats and many black leaders have done the same. Blacks have got nothing for it.

Black youth unemployment in the USA today is 50%, adult unemployment at 18%. Discrimination remains rife.

However, in struggle, even Martin Luther King was forced to come to the conclusion that the blacks should form an alliance with the trade union movement. If the efforts of left union leaders to break from support for the big business parties is successful and an independent party of Labor is created, then it will get a tremendous response from not only the blacks but millions of white workers.

This party would be forced to recognise that the only way to end racialism and the capitalist classes' ploy of divide and rule is to get rid of the capitalist class. Only the path of the socialist transformation will put black workers, and white workers, on the real freedom road.



BRAZIL

Opposition win the votes - Government win the count

"I prefer the smell of my horses to the smell of the people" said Brazilian president General Joao Figueiredo when he took office three years ago.

By David Churchley

After the recent election, "the people" will still be less important than the horses of the military when the General's successor is elected in January 1985.

The weighting of the election produced an electoral college dominated by the government party despite the main opposition party getting a majority of the votes.

These were the first elections since the generals seized control in 1964 since when the Army has been in power supported by what is seen as a rigged congress.

Behind this facade of two-party democracy lies the dead hand of General Da Silva who has chosen the 5 Generals who have in turn presided over Brazil. They are backed by Brazilian and international big business, with military officers playing advisory roles as directors of companies such as Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz and Schering.

President Figueiredo heads the ruling party, Partido Democratico Social, the SDP, renamed from its original title ARENA in the 1970s, when it saw, even then, electoral support slipping in favour of the only opposition party permitted between 1966 and 1979, the Brazilian Democratic Movement, the PMDB.

Four factions originally made up the PMDB and today it is a coalition party including the illegal but tolerated Communist Party, without any clear policies.

It used as its main campaigning slogan in this election—"oppose the Foreign Debts"—a staggering 80 billion dollars.

The deputy leader of PMDB stated recently "no modern economy can survive without the participation of the multi-nationals".

Although the voters concentrated on opposing Figueiredo by supporting the PMDB the healthiest most active opposition is the Workers Party (PT), led by

the leader of the motor industry union Luis Inacio da Silva, (Lula).

Support for the PT is mainly concentrated in the Sao Paulo area known as the ABC region, where four-fifths of Brazilian industry is concentrated.

Lula is not a Marxist. His background is one of union militancy in the motor industry where he has worked as a lathe operator.

In 1978 strikes were still illegal in Brazil. The Labour laws dated back to legislation taken from Mussolini's fascist regime in Italy. Lula organised underground union activity and despite imprisonment and attacks on other union militants he forged a strong trade union organisation.

Workers gather strength

Striking again in 1979, the car workers developed their influence throughout the industry and although defeated in their wage claim their organisation gained immeasurably. By 1980 when the workers struck again in the 'B' district of Sao Paulo, the Sao Bernardo district there was no need for pickets due to the social support for the dispute. The workers were in control and for the first time official unions controlled by the army were dwarfed in the eyes of the workers.

These elections were the climax for the more "liberal" sections of the army. The programme adopted by General da Silva known as "Abertura", tries to give some illusion of power back to the population, but inspection of the electoral system shows how far this 'liberalisation' goes.

The elections are not held on a constituency basis. For example, Votero in the Sao Paulo region had the choice of 500 candidates for the State assembly. The Workers' Party were concerned that the electorate would vote for Lula, and on-

The opposition victories in state governorships will have some effect on the lives of ordinary Brazilians but the military controlled executive have placed large constitutional restrictions on the power of representatives and gerrymandered the states to make conservative control more likely.

The main opposition party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) got 44.1% of the votes compared to 39.4% for the government Social Democratic Party (PDS) in November's election. But the inhabitants of the militant working class area of Sao Paulo needs nine times the votes to elect a deputy as the remote Amazonian state of Acre or other rural areas of the North East where intimidation of voters by landlords, state officials etc is rife, and organisation is

ly him, leaving blank spaces on the rest of the ballot paper. This would 'invalidate' the vote!

The electoral difficulties were further compounded by the fact that 1/4 of the population over the age of 18 are illiterate, a percentage which rises to 55% in the countryside. But the elections reflect the changes within Brazil.

Brazil boasted an economy which grew consistently for 30 years. 1981 saw a record trade surplus of \$393 million. The



Joao Figueiredo. Military still have whip hand.

weak.

The electoral college which picks Figueiredo's successor will be dominated by the ruling Party through control of the the senate. The executive even put restrictions on what the congress can take action on, forbidding legislation on economic or financial matters. The executive can push through bills against the wishes of congress and can

even sack members of congress who make "offensive" speeches!

The government used the main television network TV Globo to publicise misleading ideas about who was winning the election, counting the rural areas first and predicting a government victory when only a handful of votes had been counted to try to demoralise the opposition. Protests from journalists in Rio de Janeiro ended this charade.

But all the manoeuvres by the ruling class will not be able to stop an explosion of anger from the working class in particular in the future. The victory of the radical Democratic Labour Party (PDT) in Rio and the mass recruitment noted by even capitalist observers of Lula's Workers Party bodes ill for the future stability of Brazilian capitalism.

Multinationals bleed Brazil dry

The "Economist" said that "1981 saw Brazil as the Number 1 profit area world wide for international banks,

particularly those from America, Citibank and Chase Manhattan".

Brazil, though has become more and more dependent on external finance to maintain economic development. Overproduction and the world recession saw 1 million jobs go in the latter part of 1981. Industrial production has since fallen by 10%

The massive bank profits reflected the excessive interest rates charged nationally and internationally for loans in Brazil. Interest rates ran as high as 125% earlier

Photos: Left. Thousands of workers change shift at Sao Paulo's Volkswagen factory. Many of them leave for homes in the shanties (photo right). The poverty and potential strength of Brazil's workers will give rise to new militancy.

this year with inflation around 100%. There's an awful lot of debt in Brazil! In the election period Brazil's leaders were toting for a huge IMF loan, which will undoubtedly have strings attached detrimental to the mass of the people.

The multinationals are bleeding industry dry. Volkswagen, for example, siphoned \$280 million from its Brazilian subsidiary to the parent company between 1965 and 1975 (continued profitability in Brazil for this, the country's largest private corporation has offset heavy losses elsewhere).

The gains of the middle classes in the 'boom years of the '60s and '70s are going fast. Skilled and craft workers are losing the minimal improvements they obtained and the 70 or so millions of workers and peasants who saw growth but did not experience it see now only hardship and despair. Infant mortality is increasing in Sao Paulo, and over 50% of the population cannot afford the lowest rent.

The liberalisation was meant to provide a stage-managed outlet for the growing anger. It will provide however the working class and the peasants a further opportunity to organise. Despite still being in its infancy the workers held 12 regional conferences last year.

The Brazilian working class have a proud record going as far back as 1906. The more recent activities of the engineering and textile workers in 1978, the car workers in 1979/80 and the Rio bus drivers will turn away from modest wage claims to more concrete demands for a political solution to day-to-day difficulties.

CHILEAN MONETARISM LEADS TO CHILD PROSTITUTION

“The level of poverty means that many people have nothing to eat but bread and tea once a day. They live in conditions of extreme overcrowding, mothers and children are abandoned...Some young girls go out begging at the age of six or seven but when they find little response from the passers by, they often turn to prostitution. A large number of these young girls are found to have venereal diseases before they reach the age of ten...Heavily made-up school girls wait on street corners to sell their services in order to have something to take home.”

The above quote from the Chile Committee for Human Rights gives some indication of the realities of monetarist dictatorship for the Chilean working class.

Loss of work means total loss of income and unemployment now stands at 25-35%. In the two months of June and July alone, industrial production fell by a fifth. Major industries, like the motor industry, are collapsing. In June, with the devaluation of the peso, bread prices rose by 20% and milk by 16%. In Britain that would be the equivalent of bread going up from 44p to 52½p a loaf and milk from 21p to 24½p per pint.

The regime is uncertain of

itself—there have been three cabinet reshuffles this year and resistance is becoming more open. On 19 August 3-4,000 marched in Santiago for bread, work, justice and freedom.

With a US congress ban on arms sales to Chile, Britain is now their ally number one. During the Falklands war secret deals were cooked up giving Britain access to Chilean facilities in exchange for promises of more arms, and respectability.

Moreover, “the Chilean economic experience is very similar to what we are developing here...In the case of Chile it was possible to impose a policy, and regulate its implementation but this isn't possible in our country. Here we have to work with the consent of the majority so we have to proceed with more caution”—Cecil Parkinson, Tory minister on

his return from Chile. The British labour movement has an extra responsibility to build the labour movement in Chile; the labour movement being what stands in the Tories' way here.

The Labour Party Young Socialists Chile Socialist Defence Campaign has received appeals from a Santiago trade union grouping called “Solidaridad” (solidarity), formed only some eighteen months ago to co-ordinate solidarity support for workers on strike and to provide educational, sporting and cultural events for the local working-class community. With the privatisation of education and health and the absence of other facilities, workers have to rely on their own organisations for almost everything.

“Solidaridad” is also funding the setting up of

popular canteens to help workers and their families. Financial donations are needed to aid workers on strike, to fund the canteens, to provide facilities and generally to build the union.”

Support Chilean workers with cash

The labour movement is the biggest obstacle the Tories face in Britain. We must support with cash the reconstruction of the labour and trade union movement in Chile.

We await financial contributions from all YS, LABOUR PARTY and TRADE UNION BRANCHES. Send to:

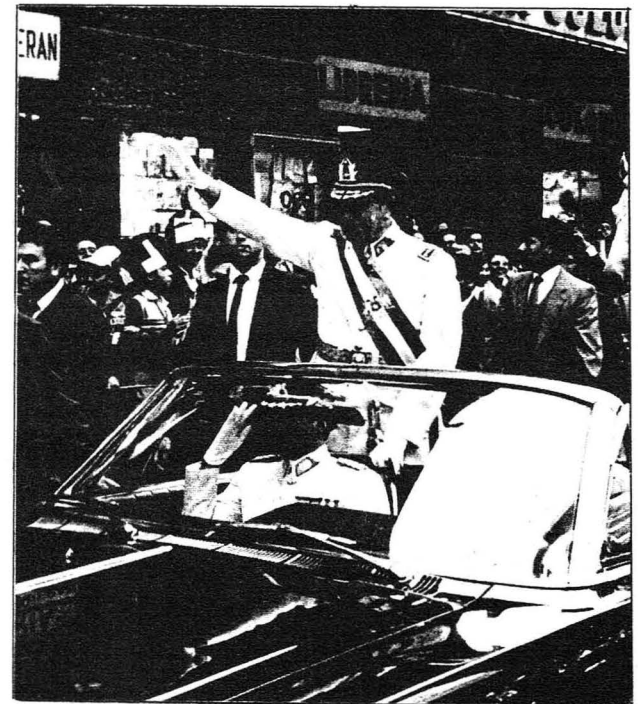
“LPYS Chile Socialist Defence Campaign”,
72 Morshead Rd,
London W9.



Picket outside the Chilean Embassy in London on 11 September this year—the 9th anniversary of the coup in Chile.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (I.F.L.)

General Pinochet—Chile's military dictator.



Unilever attacks trade union rights in Sri Lanka

Last year in Sri Lanka a long and bitter struggle took place to defend the right of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union to represent the work-

place, which ended in an unsatisfactory compromise with several members being sacked but the union remaining intact.

Now a wave of attacks has

been launched against the trade unions by employers and supporters of the right-wing UNP government, with hundreds of trade unionists being physically chased out of the factories by armed thugs.

This latest victimisation of the union at Lever Bros. (Ceylon) Ltd. is part of this attack on democratic trade union rights.

Printed below is a letter from the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union's general secretary.

“Lever Bros (Ceylon) Ltd., a subsidiary of Unilever is a firm supplying 80% of the total requirement of soap, toothpaste, etc. to Sri Lanka and all the workers in this firm are members of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union.

“After the defeated General Strike in 1980, the employers terminated services of all workers at this firm and workers were re-employed with a probation

period of six months. When the Parent Union started strengthening the union leadership at the work place the employers took steps to dismiss the branch officials, consisting of 54 workers.

“After the victory of the capitalist United National Party in the 1982 Presidential Election, the employer firm is now taking steps against the Trade Union leadership at this work place. It is understood by the branch union leadership that the employer is trying to use the same tactic they used against them in 1980.

“While the parent union is taking various steps to save the union leadership at this workplace, letters protesting the victimisations are needed from working class organisations in other countries, since the employer firm is a multi-national corporation.

“Letters of protest should be sent to:

Lever Bros. (Ceylon) Ltd.,
No 259 Grandpass Road,

Colombo 14, Sri Lanka, with copies to the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, 17 Barrack Lane, Colombo-02.

Fraternal Greetings

Sarath Vidanapathirana
General Secretary
C&IWU

A letter has been sent to all unions with members working in firms owned by Unilever Ltd in Britain asking them to use their influence to bring pressure to

bear on the company. The Sri Lankan subsidiary is now 100% owned by Unilever so they can't deny responsibility for this unacceptable anti-union campaign by their local managers.

If you can offer help, please contact me at:
62b Bravington Road,
London W9 or phone 01-739 9195.

By Brent Kennedy
(British Representative,
United Federation of
Labour, Sri Lanka)

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OCTOBER 1982
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Letters

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

MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

BSC chief paid bonus for reducing manning levels

Dear Comrades

Motherwell and Wishaw Constituency has within its boundaries, the giant Ravenscraig steel complex, which is currently under threat of closure. Only the other day the British Steel Corporation announced that 427 workers were to lose their jobs in the nearby Craigneuk works.

Despite the fact that Strathclyde Regional Council recently forecast the loss of almost 17,500 jobs in the Lanarkshire area alone, if Ravenscraig was to close, the Tory government, is still considering shutting plant as part of its 'Rescue' (?) plan.

If we allow it to happen, Motherwell, which already has one of the highest levels of unemployment in the UK, particularly among young people, would not even be a ghost town as the ghosts wouldn't be able to find work either.

In stark contrast to the plight of the steelworkers,

their families and Lanarkshire's working class, is the position of BSC chairman Mr Ian McGregor. The *Financial Times* (16/12/82) revealed the details of his contract with the government. Mr McGregor is paid £65,000 basic and a "substantial bonus" dependant upon his success in reducing manning levels inside BSC.

On this basis alone he must be getting paid in gold bullion or silver pieces, at least (a lot more than the 30 Judas got, too!). Such are the inequalities of a capitalist system.

It was against this background that the Motherwell & Wishaw CLP, a mainly right-wing party, voted by almost 4 to 1 to send a resolution to Scottish Conference demanding "Workers control and management of the Steel Industry" as the only solution to the problems facing this area. Only then would the jobs and livelihoods of present and future generations of workers in Lanarkshire, both within and outside the steel industry, be assured.

Given the correct circumstances even right-wing CLPs like ours can see that

only socialism can provide the necessities of a full life for the working class. Let our call be:

"Workers of the World Unite,"—control and manage!!

Yours fraternally,
Stuart McKay
Secretary, Motherwell and Wishaw LPYS



YS demonstration in Belfast on 6 November this year. They marched through Protestant and Catholic areas and called for workers' unity against sectarianism. Photo: Militant

'Dad we have no future'

Dear Comrades

We were talking about the future of our youngest daughter last week. She is 20 and her husband is 24. She replied, "Dad, we have no future." When I hear that from a young woman who along with her husband was working until this shambles of a government took office, it makes me wonder what future there will be for her child if things continue like this.

This government has inflicted more misery and hardship on working class people since the Tory government of the '30s. I know there are hundreds of

thousands in the same position—not much chance of a house when they marry, and no chance of any decent standard of living if they get one. It makes me sick to see the fit and young of our nation on the scrapheap.

That is why I support the *Militant's* programme, which is the only way to get us out of this mess. That is why I buy your paper every week and donate to your fighting fund every week. I only hope you can reach to more people every week and help the working class out of this mess as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,
G Hodgson,
Bishop Auckland,
Durham

IRA condones death of young socialist

Dear Comrades,

You recently reported the death in a car bomb, of Helen Woodhouse, secretary of Fermanagh Young Socialists. Helen was killed after taking a lift home from her work in a car belonging to an off-duty policeman, who was visiting the leisure centre where she was an instructor.

The Provisional Sinn Fein newspaper, *An Phoblacht*, carried the story under the heading 'War News', along with a large photograph of what little remained of the car which was literally blown to bits. It began, "The past week has seen a welcome resurgence of successful IRA military operations." It continues on Helen's death, that the IRA warn civilians to "stay well clear of RUC/UDR/British Army personnel whether on duty or off" and that "genuinely felt expressions of sympathy for the civilian killed, an accidental victim of war, should not, however, obscure the fact that once

again this week the IRA has unequivocally demonstrated its ability and will continue taking offensive against the Brits".

This 'apology', starting off as a welcome, and presented with a photograph is no more than a disgusting insult to the memory of a socialist. What would Helen's parents think and feel when they read this?

The bombing will not weaken the RUC apparatus at all, nor will it bring forward by a single minute the unification of Ireland. It will help to give the bigots poison to inject into the minds of the working class to keep them divided and be used as the recruiting sergeant for the paramilitaries. Helen Woodhouse knew that the only solution in Ireland was a socialist one based on the unity of workers against their common enemy, the bosses. She was prepared to work to achieve this and the Young Socialists will continue this fight.

Yours fraternally
Ken Aiken,
Chairperson,
Ballymena Trades Council.

100 youth attend LPYS in Littlehampton

Dear Comrades,

On Wednesday 10 November, Alan William MP made a spurious and vicious attack on the Labour Party Young Socialists in a letter to the *Times* in which he alleged that they were an asset to Margaret Thatcher through the policies and ideas they propagated.

I replied to that letter, which the *Times* inform me will not be printed. I stated that it was types like Alan Williams with his extreme right-wing views, which find little or no support among activists in the CLPs and trade unions, with their constant attacks on fellow members of the Labour Party. It is those right-wingers who are a far greater asset to the Thatcher government than the LPYS and *Militant* combined.

It is incredible that members of the PLP such as Mr Williams are so far removed from the rank and file that they can make false statements such as he did to the *Times*. The facts are of course that the LPYS fully supports the policies passed by the last Labour Party conference and will campaign vigorously for those policies in the next general election. Will Alan Williams do the same? Already a number of his fellow right-wing MPs are campaigning against unilateral disarmament and back-peddling on other policies passed by the conference.

Finally, can I say that our local branch of the LPYS held a public meeting in Littlehampton recently when it was standing room only, the

Youth can't afford basic necessities

Dear Comrades,

Out in a pub in Hull's city centre one night, I got talking to three 19 year old lads. All three were unemployed and spoke about how they wished they could find work, but were now so disillusioned.

One of them had just spent two weeks in prison. He had been threatened with being taken to court for owing some money, so he had to steal some to pay it. It is criminal of this system to put someone away because he cannot afford to live and is forced into desperate action.

We got on to discussing

what we would do if we had some money. One lad said he would buy a warm coat and shoes, another said he would buy his mum something nice to cheer her up.

We don't want money to fritter away on luxuries like painting and Lady Diana dresses. We want money to live comfortably, to spend on basic necessities like clothes, shoes, food etc.

We must get rid of this vicious, greedy, sadistic government and their parasitic system to give us all a chance to live, dress and have a little enjoyment that we, the working class deserve. The sooner the better.

Yours fraternally,
Lynne Tice,
West Hull YS Secretary

hall being packed with young people—nearly 100—between the ages of 16 and 25. They gave Laurence Coates a rapturous ovation after his speech, which advocated a job for all, a 35 hour week without loss of pay, a good education guaranteed for all, a good and comprehensive health service and of course the abolition of private education and private medicine, as well as a first class pension for the aged. Our YS having been out on the streets over

the past week with a petition against the 'Claw-Back'. If Alan Williams thinks his ideas will win more votes for Labour than the present Labour Party policies as outlined by Laurence Coates, why does he not challenge the LPYS to a debate and discussion? I am sure they would be delighted to meet him on a public platform to debate the issues.

Yours sincerely,
Stan Natrass,
Littlehampton.

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.

The set comprises of six cards and envelopes and prices are as follows:

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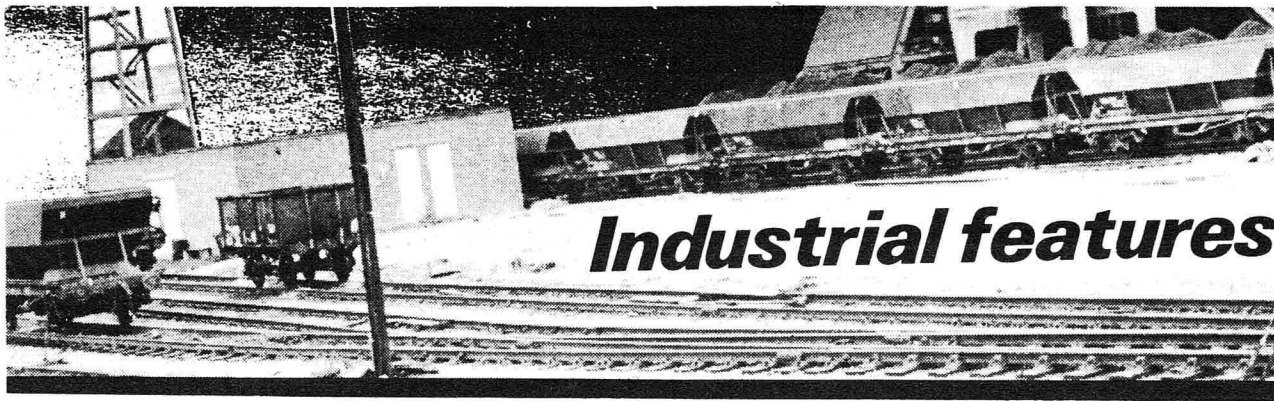
(plus £2 p&p)

Cash must be sent with every order.

Send to Eddie McParland, Revolution Graphics, 81 Troughton Rd, Charlton, London SE7. All cheques/ Postal Orders to be made payable to Revolution Graphics



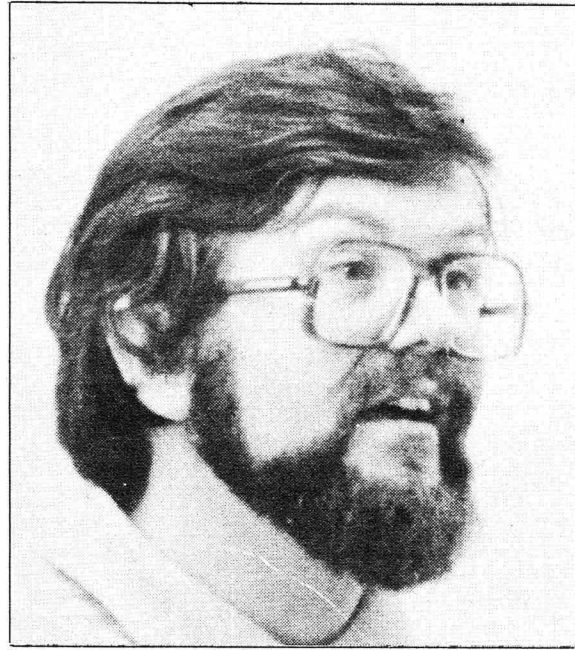
YOU'RE MAD IF YOU BUY THESE CARDS



Industrial features

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 or her work?

These and other issues we hope to feature here. But it is vital 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?



JOHN AITKIN STANDS FOR

- ★ Election of all officials
- ★ Biennial Delegate Conference decisions binding on all members—including the EC.
- ★ Halt to all branch and lodge closures, unless by their agreement.
- ★ Right of all members to stand in elections.
- ★ Industrial Conference decisions on wages and conditions to be ratified by the members concerned.
- ★ Full support to shop stewards against the government's anti trade union legislation.
- ★ 35 hour week, earlier retirement and greater fringe benefits
- ★ Use of union's strength to fight unemployment and closures.
- ★ Return to full employment.
- ★ No bans, proscriptions or expulsions of socialists from the Labour Party.
- ★ Labour to power on a socialist programme at the earliest opportunity.

John Aitkin is standing for election as General Secretary in the EETPU. Brother Aitkin, a Fleet Street electrician, stands for change in the union.

He wants a complete break with the present style of leadership, which under the present General Secretary Frank Chapple, has continually trampled on the democratic rights of the members, such as the wholesale closing of branches without consultation with its members, the installation of full time branch secretaries without the agreement of the branch and the blatant disregard of members' wishes.

At the moment there is only one election that all the members can participate in: the position of General Secretary, while all officials are appointed for life.

Brother Aitkin would change this. He is campaigning on the slogan "Give the union back to the members". He wants to devolve power away from the national executive committee by advocating an all lay NEC, with the election of all full-time officials who would be subject to recall by the members.

To further extend accountability and protect the rights of all EETPU members John

wants a halt to branch and lodge (i.e. plumbers' branches) closures unless agreed by the members in the branch itself.

He also wants the decisions of the Biennial Delegate Conference to be binding on the members including the Executive Committee and the right of all members to stand in elections. (Communist Party members, but not fascists, for historical reasons are debarred from office at present.)

The EC can act on or ignore conference decisions as they see fit. Thus, despite electing delegates to represent their views, the membership as a whole are prevented from effectively determining the policy and activity of the union.

Thus we saw a few years ago the EETPU leadership deal a massive blow to the National Health Service by signing a private health deal with BUPA despite overwhelming opposition shown in a resolution passed at the 1981 Biennial Conference supporting the NHS and pledging to "prevent private practice increasing its influence."

As in the NUR with the departure of Sid Weighell, there is a mood of expectation in the EETPU that Frank Chapple's retirement will signal the end of an era. Members hope that a new General Secretary will return the union to its proud and historic tradition of struggle in the cause both of in-

dustrial and social advancement.

However, there are a considerable number of obstacles that a rank and file candidate must overcome if this is to take place. The other two candidates running for the position, full time officials, have in-built advantages in that they are free in the course of their duties to visit branches, sites, factories, power stations and workplaces at will. Under rule, campaigning by visits to workplaces is not allowed.

Candidates can visit branches but there are 794 in the union. Once nominations have been concluded candidates can request a list so visits can be undertaken but from the time this list is received, in this case October 21st, until the ballot is concluded, December 14th, there is little opportunity to get around a fraction of the branches let alone nearly 800!

Nevertheless Brother Aitkin's demands for a more accountable union and a leadership prepared to attack the social injustices of the profit system while defending members from Tory onslaughts on jobs wages and conditions is gaining an echo within the ranks of the EETPU.

He would like to see the union's strength used to fight unemployment more vigorously, especially where members' jobs are threatened by closures (e.g. Ravenscraig Steel Works) with a shorter working week,

earlier retirement, longer holidays and sabbatical leave as important ingredients in the alleviation of unemployment.

Whilst a steward in Fords Brother Aitkin argued for a strategy to reduce the working week by one hour every year so that within eight years, car workers would have been on a 32-hour, four-day week. Thus with massive new investment in the economy on socialist lines, it would be possible to create new jobs and allow those who have sweated all their life to retire in comfort, with decent pensions and not in poverty as is often the case at present.

By Wayne Jones

Brother Aitkin feels particularly strongly about the present leadership's "lukewarm" attitude to opposing the Tebbit anti union laws. The union along with the Engineering Managers Association were the only two unions to abstain, with none voting against, on a TUC conference motion promising 'outright opposition and resistance' to Tebbit.

The union is therefore not prepared to assure its shop stewards and activists that it will protect them in the face of the Tories who want to disembowel the trade union movement and render it ineffective by smashing basic

shopfloor rights and agreements.

Women members, particularly vulnerable to the capitalist recession and apprentices, also feeling the brunt of the bosses' offensive, must be protected.

As with the jobs, rights and conditions of the members it is only with a strong, active and involved rank and file reflected by a democratic leadership that these can be maintained but to secure the progress achieved in society over the previous decades of struggle there must be the earliest return of a Labour government on a socialist programme.

A Labour government must not be like the last one which imposed incomes policy on wage earners but allowed big business shareholders an unrestricted bonanza. Prices and profits soared whilst wages were restrained.

However Brother Aitkin, a Labour Party member, like the overwhelming majority of Labour and trade union activists is seriously concerned that the right wing of the party and trade unions is conducting a McCarthyite witch-hunt against socialists in the Party, and splitting the labour movement from top to bottom, preventing the unity to fight the common enemy—Thatcher and Co, and jeopardising the election of a Labour government.

Thus John Aitkin is totally opposed to any bans, proscriptions and expulsions of

Militant supporters and other socialists from the Labour Party.

It is obscene to defeat ideas by using the constitution. How can we throw back into the faces of the Tories the false accusation that socialism and the Labour Party deny freedom and democracy when discussion, debate and argument to resolve differences are replaced by intolerance, organisational manoeuvres and purges?

The EETPU is the eighth largest trade union in the country but one of the most powerful. The union's watchword displayed on many union banners is Light and Liberty.

The forerunner of the EETPU, the Electrical Trades Union played a prominent role in the formation of the Labour Party created to give political expression to the bitter struggles taking place in industry to secure lasting peace and prosperity and a just share in the wealth created by working men and women.

Today a fighting, socialist democratic Labour Party is essential if the aspirations of millions of workers and their families are to be realised.

The EETPU must take their place again in the front ranks of the labour movement in the struggle to achieve this. The first step must be to elect a General Secretary who has the will and commitment to give positive leadership.



Fords workers in the EETPU at union HQ in Hayes, Kent in the 1978 strike

Photo: MILITANT

Liverpool GMWU will fight privatisation

By a GMWU member.

On 12 November an advertisement appeared in the Liverpool Echo inviting private contractors to submit tenders for the refuse collection and street sweeping in Liverpool.

The council, which is controlled by an alliance of the Liberals and Tories, has been threatening to privatise the cleansing department, and anything else they can sell off, for a couple of years. It appears that the threat is now to become a reality.

For a number of months the council has been trying to persuade the employees in the cleansing department to accept "new working practices...to become competitive." The new working practices include shedding 140 jobs, accepting revised bonus targets and taking a cut in pay of up to £15.00 per week in some cases.

Despite apparent support for the council's proposals from full-time union officials, the GMWU members in the cleansing department, 1,300 of them, unanimously rejected the council's package of cuts. Drawing on the experience of other council workers who accepted cuts yet still got privatised, the workforce recognise the need to fight.

As soon as the advert appeared in the press, the GMWU Senior Representatives Committee, which represents all 8,000 GMWU members in Liverpool City Council, met and drew up a plan of action. The convenors recognise the fight to stop privatisation involves everyone—if the cleansing is defeated the rest of us are next.

The plan of action includes:—

★ A meeting of all GMWU stewards in Liverpool City Council.

★ The production of 8,000 leaflets for immediate cir-

ulation to GMWU members.

★ The production of 200,000 leaflets aimed at the public of Liverpool.

★ The calling of a mass meeting of all GMWU members to seek a mandate for strike action in early January.

We are determined to win

On Monday 22 November a meeting attended by almost 100 GMWU shop stewards unanimously endorsed the plan of action. A co-ordinating committee with representatives of each department was elected and a resolution which "calls on all GMWU members to participate in an all out strike in the event of the privatisation of any department" was carried unanimously. This will be put to a mass meeting of all GMWU members which will be held in December.

We believe that decisive action will defeat the Liberal/Tory plans of privatisation—an application is being submitted to the NEC to sanction official strike action. We are calling on the union leadership to adhere to the conference policy of giving official support to workers who take industrial action against privatisation.

We are confident that the rank and file will respond to the leadership given by the GMWU stewards. We hope that the union leadership responds to the rank and file. We realise that this is a fight we cannot afford to lose—it is a fight we are determined to win.



Refuse collection is a service to the community, not something to make a profit from.

Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Solidarity for a national minimum wage

Four million people work in retail distribution in the shops, warehouses and cafes. In the 1930's and the 1940's, many of these workers were considered amongst the better off sections of the working class. But today, 'deskilling', automation, self service and direct delivery have removed many jobs and left retail and distributive workers at the bottom of the wages pile.

Besides canteen workers and hairdressers retail shop-

workers are the lowest paid group of workers in the country. Even the minimum protection of the Retail Wages Councils, which are supposed to offer legally enforceable minimum rates are now openly ignored by the employers. A recent survey by officials of the Wages Inspectorate shows that of shops investigated, two-thirds were paying less than the legally agreed minimum of £64.30.

One of the proposals being put forward by Jeff Price in the USDAW presidential elections, the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers, is for a national campaign of all low paid workers for the immediate introduction of a national minimum wage of at least £95 for a thirty-five hour week. A resolution from the

Newcastle F180 branch, of which Jeff Price is the secretary, is proposing to the union's national conference that a national delegate conference be called on low pay to which USDAW would invite other trade unions.

The conference will be given the task of launching the campaign, forming a national structure which would help low paid workers to come together in campaigning bodies and publicising the plight of the low paid and the need to introduce a national minimum wage. It is also hoped that the conference will draw up a time table of action starting with local meetings, leafletting demonstrations, national rallies etc and with a massive press campaign and visits to other branches. It would build up to a 24 hour strike

nationally should the demands not be met.

The health workers dispute has shown the resolve of the low paid to fight. This campaign will give the fight against low pay the muscle it needs. That's why it's vital that every USDAW member backs the Broad Left candidate in the national elections, including the Presidency where Jeff Price is standing.

For details of how to help, contact Jeff Price, Newcastle (0632) 730861.

By George Williamson

USDAW Eastern Divisional Councillor (personal capacity)

Arlington House

At seven o'clock in the morning on Tuesday 30 November three bailiffs and 200 policemen evicted the strikers, members of the Transport and General Workers Union from the Arlington House Men's Hostel in Camden Town North London.

Although the eviction was largely peaceful, the police assisted the bailiffs by kicking in the doors of some of the rooms where the strikers were staying in and some pickets were physically hauled out of the building. Camden council provided the evicted strikers with temporary accommodation. The strike continues; the eviction had been long anticipated by strikers and they are still maintaining their morale. Pickets are also being maintained at all the hotels and hostels owned by the management, Rowton Hotels.

By Ian Pollock
Hampstead LPYS

Teachers unions unite to fight cuts

Anger has been growing amongst Durham teachers as the full extent of the council's £4 million cuts in the education service has become apparent. Now the two major teaching unions are engaged in joint industrial action to secure reversal of the most pernicious of the present cuts.

Durham's Labour-controlled County Council shamefully tried to hide some of the earlier cuts behind the excuse of falling school rolls. Now that excuse has become untenable, the Labour authority lamely bleats "that the teacher associations appear not to appreciate that national government policies in respect of public expenditure have necessitated major reductions in educational expenditure." Durham teachers do not accept this as

a valid answer, they are determined to fight to defend the education service.

To date decisions have already been made by Durham Education Committee to close several small primary schools and Lansdowne Comprehensive at Bowburn, the future of sixth form provision in Durham city is still undecided, and the proposed merger or closure of schools in the Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe area is still

the subject of fierce local opposition. Primary schools across the county are having their teacher:pupil ratios worsened, and balloting is taking place in action on this front too.

Joint campaign of 'no cover'

But the main dispute is in the secondary schools, where staffing cuts have already gone beyond those justifiable on the grounds of falling rolls, and where the county is now trying to cease provision of 'supply' staff to cover for absent staff. The unions therefore regard this as a serious case on which they cannot afford to back down.

Since 18 May NUT members have been refusing to cover for absent colleagues in more than twenty schools. In an attempt to break this action the authority threatened to dock the pay of anyone continuing this action after November 1st. This has back-fired on the authority. Durham teachers have met the threat firmly, and escalated their action in reply. The NUT and NAS/UWT have now started a joint campaign of no-cover action, and members have also withdrawn from all activities such as school meals supervision, staff meetings, parents evenings etc.

Further rapid escalation of the action, including strike action if necessary, will be needed to keep up momen-

tum if the council does not reverse this cut immediately. No-one can be under any illusions about the importance of this dispute for the future quality of the education service both in Durham and nationally.

By Ian Hunter
(Durham Division NUT, personal capacity)

Post Script: The Durham County Council, imitating the methods of nineteenth century callousness, have decided on November 25 to take on 319 extra ancillary staff in order to try and break the present industrial action of the teaching unions. NUPE has declared its intention to black these posts.

DHSS UNIONS TAKE ACTION TO STOP STAFF CUTS

The wave of anger and frustration of workers in the DHSS is now sweeping the length and breadth of the country.

Workers in the DHSS at Basildon in Essex have taken a series of half day strikes over the past eight weeks, culminating in the first one-day strike on Monday 22 November with fifty CPSA members walking out.

Overworked staff have said that enough is enough. With ever increasing unemployment, now over 9,000, and an even greater number of supplementary benefit claimants has meant that the work load has stacked higher and higher.

The extra workload on an already overworked staff has had adverse effects on the membership, with low morale, irritation, and in particular bouts of depression causing escalating sick leave. Nationally, the CPSA has called an overtime ban, due to under staffing, the Basildon section has been working one third of the total overtime for the regional offices.

It is for these reasons that the campaign against overtime has been linked up to the fight for extra staff, and due to the strike action, management have been forced to cut down on the overtime allocation, starting on 14 December. Management have now been forced to the negotiating table, to discuss the possibilities of taking on extra staff, but it seems that their intention is to bring in casual staff. Casual staff, as Jean Gales, a staff rep. for the CPSA pointed out would be used to undermine the position of other workers because they are difficult to organise into the union.

NCB Pit Closures — the truth at last

The National Coal Board has finally produced a list of sixty pits which they want to close, showing the fears of union members to be justified.

Arthur Scargill has described the disclosures as "devastating" and warned that the NUM workforce could be halved to 105,000. The fight to save jobs is now on. Norman Siddall, chairman of the NCB has admitted that they plan to close some pits for economic reasons, and not on grounds

By John McKay
(Basildon LPYS)

On the picket line, the response from claimants has been very good, taking the leaflets and supporting the action. Both the DHSS staff and the unemployed are under attack from the Tory government, and recognise that unity is needed. In the Supplementary Benefit Office there are only four cubicles and each day there are hundreds of claimants. On some days you can queue from 9.30 when the doors open, and not be seen until the afternoon if you're lucky.

As one CPSA member explained, the root cause is Maggie Thatcher and the Tories, as they were only interested in cutting back in staff levels, and attacking workers as a whole.

But as members of the CPSA have shown, the Tories will not succeed in their continuing attacks. Traditionally the CPSA has been a non-militant union but workers are being forced to fight back. Every section of the labour movement must support the struggles of the workers such as those in Basildon's DHSS, but also to link our struggles up to returning a Labour government that will make sure that staff levels are maintained and improved, and that all public services are improved to reverse all the attacks by the Tories on the welfare state.

of exhaustion. But Stan Pearce, a member of the NUM at Wearmouth, Durham, summed it up when he said "The NCB want to close pits because of over capacity in a slump. Well, that's their problem. We're not going to lose our jobs for their system."

The Triple Alliance of the rail, steel and mining unions must now rally together both at leadership and rank and file level to defend jobs in all these basic industries.

NUR
ELECTIONS

Time to break the mould

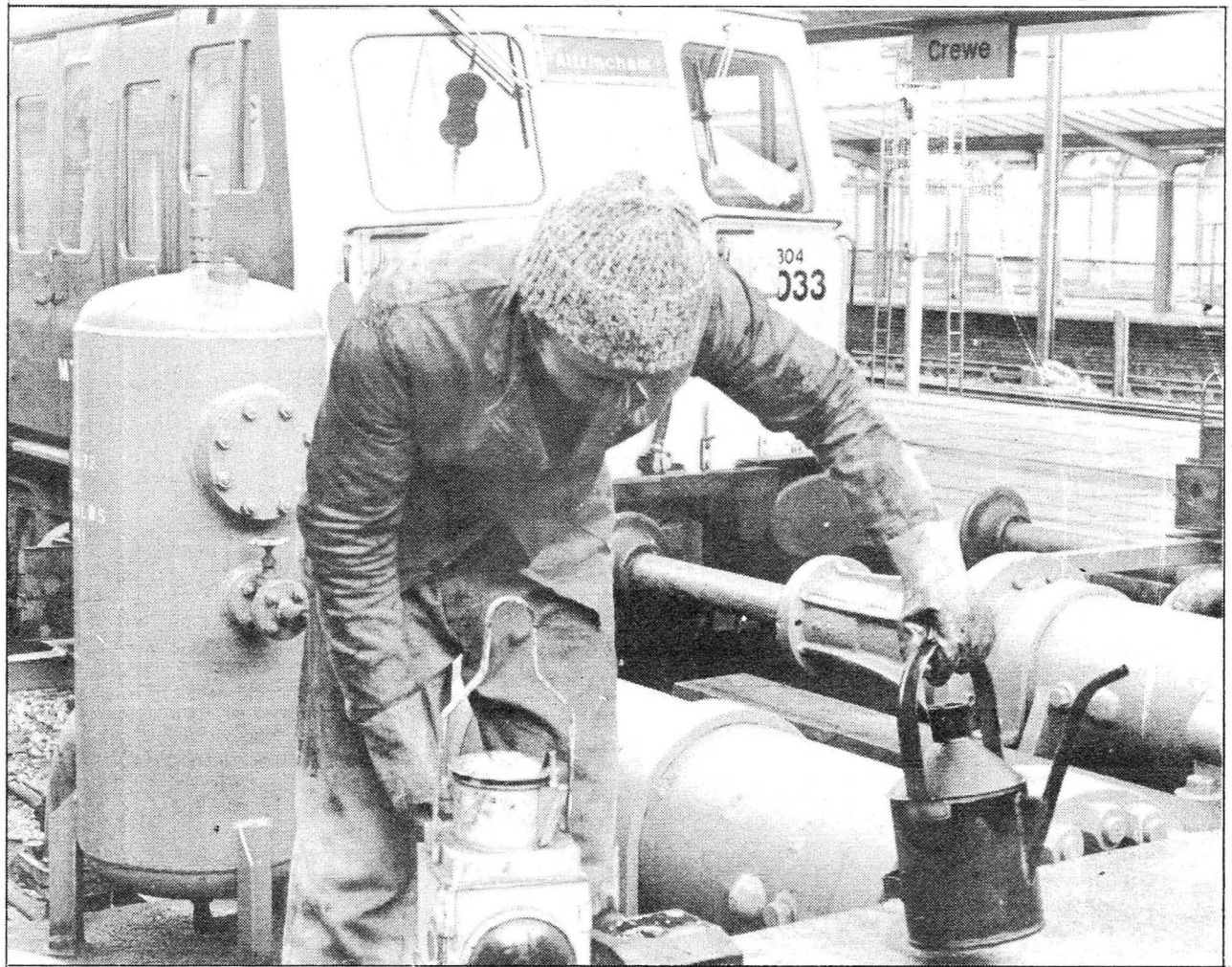


Photo: Militant

NUR Presidential election gives railway workers the opportunity to elect a leader that will lead a campaign to defend jobs and services

The departure of Sid Weighell as General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, lifted a lead weight off the shoulders of railway workers everywhere. It has given new impetus and new life to the growing demands for change coming from the ranks of the NUR.

With the election campaign still only at the nomination stage, support is growing for Jimmy Knapp, who was the Officer for the Southern Region, and is now an official at the union's headquarters. Reports indicate Brother Knapp has already received nominations from around two hundred branches. He is seen as the candidate, who at this stage in the NUR history, represents the strongest challenge to the right-wing's present stranglehold on all the senior officerships within the union.

Above all the membership wants a decisive turn away from the old right wing head officers' apparent attempts to stifle all debate and democratic discussion and activity within the union—what more than one NUR member has described as the "Weighell Machine". Jimmy Knapp is seen as a victim of that "machine".

The end of an era

The departure of Sid Weighell marked the end of an era; The former General Secretary stood for the policy of compromise, under the so-called "Joint Approach". It is this policy which led directly to the continuing erosion of living standards, job losses and worsening of conditions at work. In a year during which the NUR leadership have helped the BRB to force flexi-rostering upon the railwayworkers, done their

best to undermine ASLEF's struggles on that issue, and attempted to carry out a purge against activists within the NUR, Sid Weighell's failure to vote for the NUM candidate in the elections for the Labour Party NEC thereby ignoring the mandate of his own AGM, was merely the last straw. His final fling, arguing forcefully at the Special General Meeting, for acceptance of McCarthy's Railway Staff National Tribunal recommendations over the 1982 pay rise for BR staff, summed up his whole policies and approach.

Whilst the press were quick to declare that the membership had rejected the man, but not his ideas, nothing could be further from the truth. Really the former General Secretary used and abused the members' loyalty to the very last. Branches that have been some of Sid Weighell's staunchest allies have decided to back Jimmy Knapp, in the hope of achieving the decisive changes which they realise are now essential.

The Broad Left for Railway workers, founded only last year and already a growing and a respected force within the NUR, has

now a tremendous opportunity to campaign among NUR members, fighting for the programme and policy which can best take the union forward:—

- ★ A shorter working week of 35 hours,
- ★ A minimum wage of £9.00 for all rail staff,
- ★ No more redundancies, voluntary or otherwise,
- ★ Industrial action if need be to save jobs and services,
- ★ For an end to the disastrous joint approach and productivity deals,

★ For a fighting democratically elected leadership committed to building the Federation and the Triple Alliance in order to defeat the BRB and lead the fight to bring down the Tories.

We believe that this campaign will be best taken forward by the Broad Left giving its full support to the election of Jimmy Knapp as NUR General Secretary. Geoff Hensby, Paddington No.1. Branch Secretary will be viewed by many as the candidate with the soundest credential and best record as a fighter for the membership. However, he is seen as an outsider by many, who believe that Knapp must get their backing in order to break the mould.

No blank cheques

However, after the bitter experiences under the previous NUR leaders, there should be no question of giving any candidates a blank cheque. On the contrary the campaign for a new leadership and new policies must go hand in hand. The watch word of the Broad Left should be; Vote for Jimmy Knapp; Build the Broad Left; Fight for Socialist policies for the NUR.

Whilst giving Jimmy Knapp their support, the

membership should demand a clear commitment on the crucial issues of democracy within the NUR, including regular re-election of the General Secretary and other senior posts. He should also be pressed for assurances on the vital questions of how to defend jobs and the industry from cuts, closures, redundancy, privatisation, and the rest of the BRB and Tory onslaught.

Press will support right wing

There is a feeling that Jimmy Knapp is already going to walk it. But there is no room for complacency. The membership of the NUR is spread out over a wide area and therefore makes campaigning difficult. The capitalist press has always been prepared to give the right wing massive assistance. A poisonous press campaign in the New Year is quite likely.

Recent events within the NUR will send their shock waves through the entire trade union and Labour Movement. One of the most confident and seemingly right wing trade union leaderships has been severely shaken, in a way which will demonstrate to every rank and file trade unionist that change can be fought for and achieved.

The Broad Left will be holding a National Rally in London on 11 December, where it aims to hammer out a strategy of rallies and meetings and publicity to build up support for socialist policies and a fighting leadership.

All left wing activists in the union are urged to attend the conference and then go forward together to campaign in the union for change.

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DHSS DISPUTE -

ALL OUT ON 3 DECEMBER

Living Standards

FROM PAGE ONE



NHS and other low paid workers have had living standards cut in the last few years. Photo: MILITANT



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

The strike of members of the civil service unions CPSA and SCPS in Social Security offices in Birmingham and Oxford has now entered its twelfth week.

The strikers are just as determined now as they were on day one, to win a proper settlement of the dispute. To quote one striker, "We'll still be out in 1983 if need be."

The strike which started on 14 September arose spontaneously in the Erdington DHSS office because of appalling pressures of work brought about by the Tory government's vicious policy of cutting jobs in social security offices, regardless of the effects on either staff or claimants.

Since the dispute started we have had almost continuous negotiations with management. On two occasions management proposals have been decisively rejected

by mass meetings of strikers.

The strikers were particularly concerned that management were not seen to be offering permanent additional jobs, neither did the strikers believe management's assurances that they would provide any additional jobs which the complementing system might recommend.

Given that both the DHSS Executive and the CPSA National Executive committees have previously recommended acceptance of the offer and since that decision is being decisively rejected by the strikers, the left-wing executive of the CPSA, unlike previous right-wing executives, must now campaign and argue for a necessary escalation to win the strike.

CPSA's National Executive Committee has so far held two emergency meetings specifically to discuss the Birmingham and Oxford disputes. At the first meeting the NEC decided by 13 votes to 12 to recommend that strikers accept manage-

ment's offer and return to work.

Militant supporters on the NEC were the only recognised political tendency to argue within the left, strongly against this recommendation, pointing out that the offer was basically no different from the first offer and would once again be overwhelmingly rejected by the strikers.

Our judgement was subsequently proved correct with fewer strikers voting to accept the second offer. In the light of that decision the National Executive Committee decided by a majority of 24 to 4 to escalate the strike. Management have retaliated by withdrawing the offer and negotiations have now broken down.

At the mass meeting of strikers on Friday 26 November, several decisions of the NEC were endorsed. Mass picketing of all offices involved in the strike has now begun, in order to divert the scabs from crossing the picket line and to join the strike. Support from other DHSS branches is essential.

The strike has now reached a crucial stage. In order to win it is essential to escalate to an all-out strike in the DHSS. The union's leadership must be prepared to campaign amongst the membership to deliver such action, possibly not only in the DHSS.

The nationwide DHSS strike call for 3 December is a vital step in the preparation for further escalation. It will provide a real indication of the strength of feeling and readiness of other union members to join the strike.

Every effort must be made to close all DHSS offices, and to send delegations to the march in Birmingham on 3 December.

Delegations from other unions and claimants' organisations will be welcomed. Assembly point at Chamberlain Square, Central Birmingham at 11 am Friday 3 December.

By Roger Castle and Gill Tromans
 (CPSA NEC members, personal capacity)

TORY JOBS AXE

FROM PAGE ONE

closure within the year, given the itchy fingers of some Coal Board officials to pension off pits. Cardowan colliery north of Glasgow would also be hard hit.

Hundreds of firms could fail from cleaning companies to light engineering concerns sending workers out to Ravenscraig on a contract basis.

British Rail would lose revenue, as would the electricity and gas boards. Reduced electricity demand would itself endanger jobs not only with the Board but

again also in the coal industry. The British Oxygen Company's specially-built plant at nearby Carfin, supplying just Ravenscraig, would face immediate close-down and even oil refineries would feel the chill blasts.

If we don't want to see just ugly fossils of abandoned factories, mines and plant in our industrial areas we must fight. The lack of leadership in the past from steel unions must end.

Militant supporters in the steel industry are pushing for a national struggle, bringing

into effect the Triple Alliance, with rank and file activity at local level as well as links at the top. No closures, no selling of jobs, is our basic demand, but this is a political problem.

The National Institute for Economic and Social Research, usually sympathetic to this government, see little sign of recovery in their latest report and they envisage the dole queues still being well over 3.7 million by 1987. The European Commission may recommend to British and Italian steel firms to cut back even further than they plan at present!

The future they offer is horrific. The only way to stop this avalanche of job losses is by fighting for a socialist planned economy where goods are produced to fill real needs — not to keep up profit margins.

There must be a political fight to throw out the Tories and return a Labour government, which must commit itself to the nationalisation under workers control and management, of the top 200 firms which dominate and infect our sick economy. Otherwise our jobs are no more secure than a house of cards in a hurricane.

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