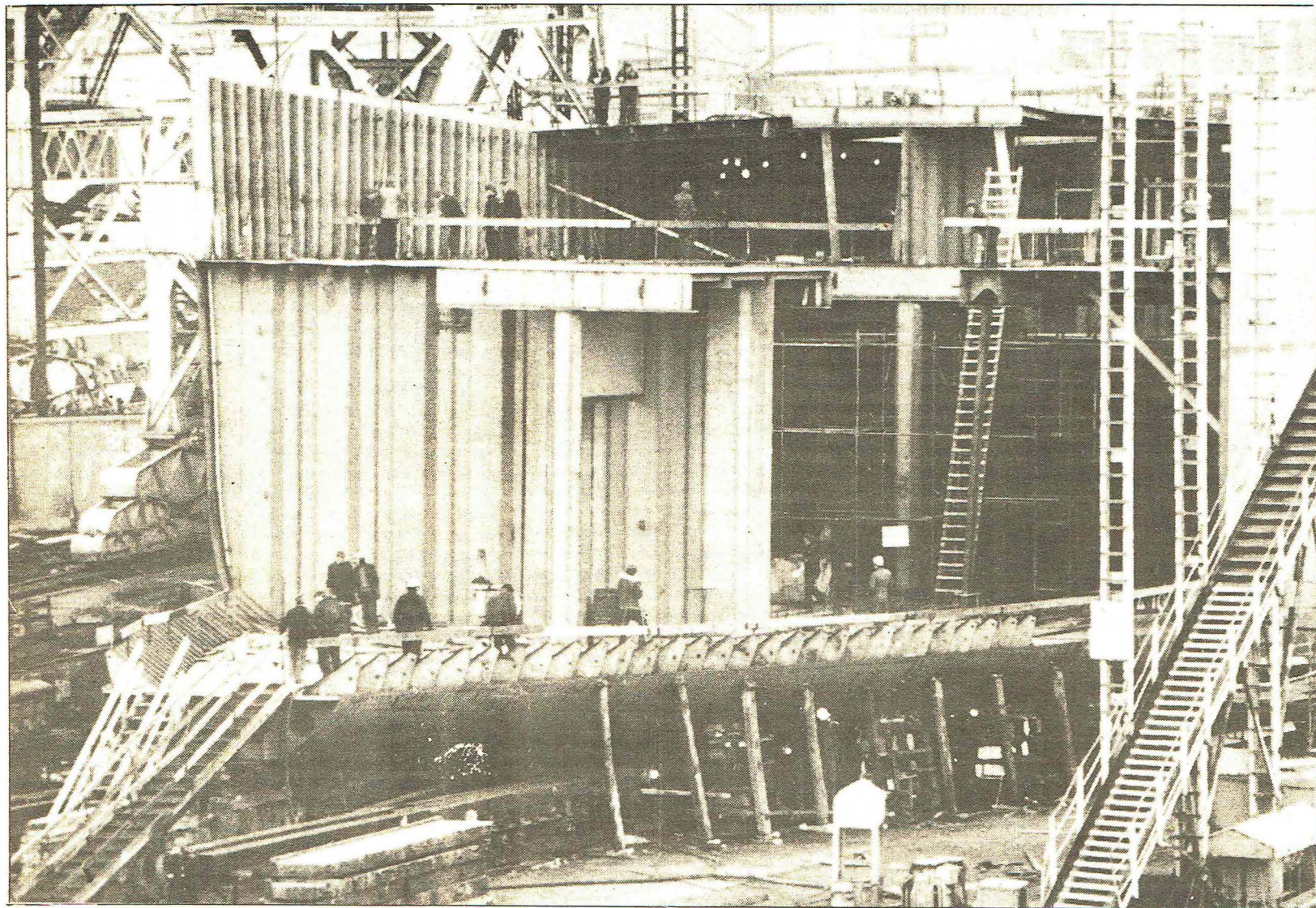


Industrial decline worsens NOW SHIPYARDS FACE TORY AXE



Austin and Pickersgill yard, Sunderland. Thousands of shipyard jobs like these will be in jeopardy if the Tories and BS management have their way. Photo: Militant

How many more jobs will be swallowed up by the seemingly unending crisis of British capitalist industry?

Every month seems to bring a new record total of people out of work. Even with the new and even more dishonest methods of calculating the jobless, there is no escaping from the facts of a dole queue of well over 3 million.

It will be up to the labour movement to fight against

By Tony Carty
(Chairman,
Austin and Pickersgill
shop stewards' committee,
personal capacity)

this disaster. The capitalist system can offer us no hope. The figures for industrial

output in December showed yet another sharp drop to the lowest figure for sixteen years while investment in industry also reaches a new low.

In the shipbuilding industry, we know the effects of neglected investment. We have suffered from it for years since the days of private ownership when the bosses preferred short term profit to long term investment. Now in the middle of a world shipbuilding crisis the British industry is in a terrible condition.

And the crisis in world

shipping is gaining pace. Order books for the first half of 1982 were 6.4 million tons, down from 9.6 million in the same period of 1981. Moreover, by October 1982 a total of no less than 79.5 million d.w.t. were idle compared with 10.2 million d.w.t. in October 1980.

In the face of this slump British and European yards are finding the competition too great despite a cut back in capacity by a quarter in the past six years. Europe still has 30% more berths than are needed to meet demand.

The crisis facing British Shipbuilding is particularly acute, yet another casualty of the reduced manufacturing base of British industry, which needs less steel, less energy, less transportation etc...

With about 90% of merchant orders due for delivery by the end of 1983 the future for shipbuilding workers is bleak. The Sunderland Pallion yard, for example, has already started to build its last ship on order.

British Shipbuilders have

Continued on back page

LONDON SHOOTING

Labour must demand inquiry

The shooting last Friday in West London shows that the Metropolitan police are virtually a law unto themselves.

Nominally under the control of the Home Office, to all intents and purposes they operate outside any democratic control. No elected representative was consulted before the police staged their armed ambush in a packed London street.

And already the excuses are being prepared. One Tory MP, Alan Clark, has explained, with the benefit of Parliamentary immunity, that the police action was understandable because two of the car's occupants were "tainted with criminality". Scapegoats are being prepared. Three policemen have already been suspended, and two of them charged with criminal offences.

But the whole incident last week cannot be understood as just the alleged aberration of a few policemen. The fault lies in the absence of any real democratic control over the police. Examine what actually happened last Friday.

The police thought they had traced David Martin, whom they wanted for the alleged shooting of a policeman during a robbery. Following Susan Stevens, Martin's girlfriend, they thought that one of the two men in the car with her was Martin. In a busy London street, in the middle of a traffic jam, the police staged their attack.

Stevens explained what then happened: "I will swear to my dying day that the police gave us no warning. We heard no shouts and we saw no police. No one in the car made any movement to suggest they were going for a gun. We were just stuck in a traffic jam talking about where to go to eat when suddenly the car was full of bullets."

Fourteen shots were pumped into the car. Stephen Waldorf, whom the police had mistaken for Martin, was hit five times. The most serious shot was fired at point-blank range, whilst Waldorf was semi-conscious, face down, hanging from the car.

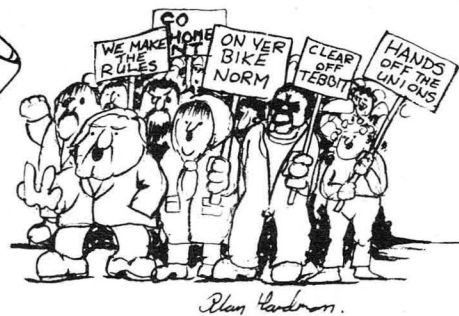
Two witnesses have also stated that they saw

Continued on page 3



N.T

He's alone...
He's afraid...
He's 3 million light years from reality



Tebbits Proposals- Defend the Political Levy

Militant
Editorial

A key element in the Tory Green Paper on trade union reform is the proposal to break the historic link between the Labour Party and those trade unions affiliated to it.

The author of the paper, Norman Tebbit, suggests a number of alternatives that the Tories may introduce: the replacement of the present system of 'contracting out' of the political levy with 'contracting in', frequent postal ballots to reconsider affiliation and measures to end the ban in some unions whereby the leading officers like the General Secretary and President have to be members of the Labour Party.

The Tories, of course, have always been opposed to the trade unions pursuing their objectives through their political wing, the Labour Party. "I think the politicisation of trade unions is unfortunate," Tebbit says, "...I do not see any necessity for unions to be partisan political creatures." In reality, the Tories believe the existence of trade unions to be "unfortunate".

Tory policy, it should be noted, is indistinguishable from that of the Social Democratic Party. When the SDP published their own "Green Paper" on union reform last Autumn it also advocated secret postal ballots for the election of senior posts, as well as "contracting in" to the political

weakening of the ties between the trade unions and the Labour Party, the SDP stated, "would be healthy for British politics." It means of course, "healthy for British capitalism."

The Tories are completely hypocritical over the issue. While they bleat about the "individual freedom" of workers to pay the political levy or not, they hide the fact that they themselves have opposed every measure ever designed to give workers any real control over their livelihoods; they are the party, *par excellence*, of elitism.

If it had been left to the Tory Party, workers in Britain today would not even have the vote. The Tories stand opposed to any measures that give workers any element of control over their industries, or even a presence in the board room. Their "individual freedom" evaporates into thin air when it comes to the rights of tens and hundreds of thousands of workers made redundant by the stroke of someone's pen in some remote boardroom.

And what about the enormous sums of money given by big business to the Tory Party? Did the workers of Rank Hovis McDougall have

any say in their company's donation of £30,000 to the Tories in 1981? Or workers in the Rank Organisation? Or Glaxo? etc. etc. As for "contracting out", the vast majority of working people pay a political levy to the Tory Party every day of their lives when they buy bread, toothpaste, furniture etc.—without any rights to lower the price and "contract out" of the levy.

Putting aside all the false and shallow arguments of Tebbit, the proposed legislation, as David Basnett, leader of the newly formed General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, has said, is "a blatant attempt to cut off the Labour Party's sources of finance while keeping those of the Conservative Party intact."

The Labour Party and the affiliated trade unions must therefore vigorously oppose any attempt to interfere with the link between them. Moreover, the political levy should be strengthened.

The trade unions have

long fought for the principle of the closed shop. Why, in a workplace, they argue, should a minority of free-loaders be allowed to opt out of trade union membership? The trade unions have fought over the years to establish better wages and working conditions and without their presence annual wage rises would become negligible and there would be a rapid deterioration of conditions of work, of health and safety standards, and so on.

Quite correctly, trade unionists do not view the closed shop from the standpoint of abstract 'democracy'—they are a legitimate means, from the point of view of the concrete needs of the workers, of adding strength and solidarity to their members.

But what applies to membership of the trade unions, applies in a similar way to the political levy. Each trade union determines its rules and constitution as a body and it affiliates to the Labour Party as a body, not as an ad hoc group of individuals.

Indeed, the Labour Party is the creation of the trade unions who sought to fulfil their members' aspirations by political representation as well as by industrial struggle. The Labour Party is no more or less than the political arm of the trade union movement.

In his book *Where is Britain Going?* (1925), Trotsky posed the question of what attitude should be taken to non-Labour workers:

"The Liberal or Conservative member of a trade union may say that he regularly pays his customary dues to the trade union, but refuses to pay levies for the Labour Party, as owing to

his political convictions he votes for the Liberals (or Conservatives).

"To this the representative of the trade unions may answer that during a struggle for the amelioration of labour conditions—and that is surely the aim of our organisation—we need the support of the Labour Party, its press, and its representatives; and at the same time the party for which you vote (Liberal or Conservative) under such circumstances always come down upon us, endeavouring to discredit us, to sow dissension in our midst, or directly to organise strike breakers; we have no need of such members as would support strike-breakers!"

Labour Party and trade union activists must carry on, in other words, a systematic campaign of education and argument to win over the minority of trade union members who at present contract out, into paying the political levy.

More than that, the Labour Party should take up more vigorously the facility, now enshrined in the constitution, for workplace branches. While the Left in the Party have always advocated workplace branches, the right wing have dragged their feet or have openly opposed them. Active groups of Labour Party members, organised and campaigning in the workplace, would provide an invaluable aid to convincing workers of the need to support the Party.

Unfortunately, also, many of the arguments put by the Tories are given credence by the attitudes and policies of the right wing of the Labour Party. In the past, right-wing campaign groups, forerunners to the SDP and Labour Solidarity, sought to break the historic link between the trade unions and the Party. Many right wingers today have the same view or, at best, they play down the significance of the trade union link. Some on the right believe that it is necessary for the state to subsidise political parties, the reasoning being that the party and the Parliamentarians would thereby be less dependent on the monies from workers, and so less

accountable.

Militant supporters would argue, on the contrary, that the Labour Party should be dependent on the money received from the pockets of trade unionists and workers in general: it should be responsible and accountable to ordinary working people and not independent of them. Moreover, Militant supporters, despite the climate of witch-hunting in the last year, have campaigned in non-affiliated unions that they should affiliate. The Labour Party must rest on the foundations of the trade unions above all, or it has no foundation at all.

But the issue of political affiliations and finance is more than just a constitutional one. If there are workers who opt out of paying the levy and who have become disillusioned with the Party, the blame lies with the right-wing policies of successive Labour governments who have often resisted legitimate trade union demands with no less vigour than the Tories.

It was because of the policies of the right wing in the last Labour government that some members of the FBU opted out of the levy in 1977, and that NHS workers did the same a year later.

In the final analysis policies are the key, not constitutions. In 1945, when "contracting in" was in force the percentage of trade union members paying the political levy was much less than it is today, but the Labour Party won a resounding victory in the General Election because of its radical policies.

A Labour Party whose public representatives, whose leadership and whose policies were based on the standpoint of the working class today, would be guaranteed loyalty and finance from the vast majority of trade unionists, no matter what legislative obstacles the Tories tried to throw across its path. Fighting off the Tory anti-trade union laws should not deflect Party members from the internal debates on the need for real socialist policies.

A page from history shows Tory thinking

The *Daily Mail* in 1906 noted how: "these working men by the simple device of collecting one penny per month per man from their trade unions, had placed themselves on so firm a financial basis that they are able to meet the representatives of capital on even grounds at the polls...their present success will be found to prove the beginning of a movement that will require much watching..."

This attack by the right wing press on the trade union political levy to the Labour Party was made after a ballot of members of the Associated Society of Railway Servants (forerunner of the NUR) had resulted in an 81 per cent majority for such a political levy.

FALKLANDS WHITE- WASH

By John
Pickard

The Franks Committee, including two former Labour Ministers, Lord Lever, and Shadow Cabinet member Merlyn Rees, has whitewashed Thatcher of any responsibility for the Falklands war.

For six months now Thatcher has basked in the 'glory' of the Falklands victory. Not one single opportunity has been missed to exploit the war to boost the opinion poll ratings of her government which in social and economic terms, is one of the worst on record.

The victory parades in London and elsewhere (carefully excluding of course, the many maimed and injured servicemen), the visits to service personnel and the visit to the Falkland Islands themselves could not have been better arranged by Saatchi and Saatchi to take public attention away from the collapse of industry and mounting unemployment.

Now the Franks Report, which was expected to be critical of the government's handling of the issue before the invasion, has given the Tory press yet another opportunity to sing Thatcher's praises. But in the eyes of socialists the Franks Inquiry makes no difference: Thatcher and the Tories cannot avoid their responsibilities for the war.

The issue is not whether or not the British government could have foreseen the Argentine invasion or whether decisions made about the naval vessel *Endurance* were made by individual ministers or in Cabinet. Michael Foot's ringing condemnation that the Franks Report showed "the collapse of effective Cabinet government" has all the hall-marks of a Don Quixote tilt at a windmill.

The real issues lie where they always were—in the general policies of the Tories and the capitalist class and their irreconcilable hostility to the interests of all workers, whether Falkland Islanders, Argentines or British workers.

The British ruling class were never interested in the well-being of the Falkland Islands, which were denied investment, adequate communications and even



Troops prepare for the assault on the Falklands during the war. Now the Tories have released parts for Argentinian warships. Photo: PA.

despite their small population, democratic government. Weeks before the Argentine invasion, the Tories' Nationality Act even deprived a substantial section of islanders of their right of British citizenship.

During the war Tory speeches and papers were full of condemnations of the "fascist" Argentine Junta. But as *Militant* pointed out at the time, the Tories had been happy to trade with and to sell arms to that same regime right up to the period of confrontation.

Their fake opposition to "fascism" and their devastating exposures of repression in Argentina were purely temporary, for the consumption of public opinion, in the attempt to create the impression they were "fighting fascism". Yet even during the war, the British ruling class was prepared to rely upon the support of the Chilean regime—no less bloody and barbaric than its counter-part in Argentina.

British businessmen and bankers carefully kept their links with Argentina during the war—even if they were a little coy about it at the time—and no sooner had the war ended than trade, via third parties, has resumed again. The Tories recently released British engines and parts for Argentinian warships being constructed in Germany. Where now are the speeches and the press accounts about the oppressive military-police state in Buenos Aires?

In the final analysis the British ruling class went to war in *their own* interests—

to recover the enormous loss of prestige suffered by the invasion, what Lord Carrington had described as a "national humiliation". *Militant* supporters had always opposed the military regime in Argentina and condemned the invasion by which Galtieri sought to head off growing opposition at home. But nevertheless, at no stage during the war did *Militant* give any support to Thatcher and the Tories. The Tory government cannot be relied upon to support the interests of workers at home—4 million on the dole are a living testimony to that—and neither can they be relied upon to fight for the interests of workers abroad.

By the end of four years, it is estimated, the Falklands war and the construction of the elaborate "Fortress Falklands" will have cost £3 billion. One estimate has it that by 1985 total defence spending will have risen as a consequence to about £21 billion a year. No expense was spared, in either money or lives, for the Tories to win back the lost prestige of British capitalism.

Franks Inquiry or not, working people will be asking why has Thatcher not set up a "task force" to deal with unemployment? Why have the apparently available billions of pounds not been put to regenerating industry and jobs? These will be the thoughts of most workers as they go into the election period, not as the press would wish it, an image of the gallant knight Thatcher on a white charger.

NEWHAM 8 CONSPIRACY CHARGES

The case for the Newham Eight—a group of Asian youths who were allegedly set-up by the police whilst defending themselves against racial attack—has entered a new stage. The Eight have now been charged with conspiracy.

This is a more serious charge than previous ones and clearly a more political one. There are obvious parallels to the case of the 'Bradford 12'.

The 'Newham 8 Defence

Campaign' has held two large pickets of the Magistrate's Court where the Eight were appearing, and a successful school strike on November 5. On 17 December over 100 youths stayed away from school even though an official strike wasn't called for that day.

The campaign will now be taken nationwide and asks Labour Parties to write for further information, send donations and hold public meetings on the case at

which the defendants will be prepared to speak.

It is important that all socialists are active in support of victimised groups like the 'Newham 8'. Racist attacks and Police harassment are a threat to the whole labour movement.

Details can be obtained from Unmesh Desai, c/o Newham Monitoring Project, 285 Romford Rd, London E7.

Black anger at police

In the last week there have been two, over 100-strong pickets of Stoke Newington Police Station in North East London, in protest at the mysterious death of Colin Roach, a 21 year old, unemployed black man.

Colin was found dead in the doorway of Stoke Newington police station with shotgun wounds to the head, just after leaving a friend's car near the station on Wednesday, 12 January.

The police claim it was suicide, but their credibility is so low amongst the local black community, and their actions after Colin's death so

callous that local anger has boiled over.

His father was not allowed to view the body for eight hours and family say they were subjected to physical and verbal harassment. Before he was told of his son's death, the police reportedly asked the father how many sons he had.

Stoke Newington has a poor reputation locally. One local family was even awarded over £50,000 in damages because of harassment and damage caused to their home by Stoke Newington Police officers.

The latest protest this

Monday resulted in a police baton charge with 12 people being arrested.

A support committee for the Roach family has now been established. This has stated that it does not accept the police explanation of Colin's death, and has called for an independent enquiry by the labour movement, including black organisations.

By David Shaw

(Hackney North
Labour Party)

LONDON SHOOTING

(continued from
front page)

policemen then batter Waldorf around the head with their guns: he now has a fractured skull.

Yet just before the police staged their ambush, Waldorf had been standing for ten minutes, whilst his companion went in to hire a car. No attempt was made by the police to challenge him.

It is not surprising that there have been accusations, like that of Labour MP Andrew Faulds, that "the police went out intent not on detaining a suspect, but on killing him". On New Year's Eve, Susan Stevens alleges, she was told by a senior detective at Paddington police station: "You know that if we see him (Martin) we are going to have to kill him. This time there can't be any mistakes."

The whole incident has only become a scandal in the eyes of the Tory press, because the wrong man was shot. No doubt if it had been Martin in the car, we would have been treated to stories about meticulous police planning, a car chase, and the suspect being shot 'whilst resisting arrest.' The police version would have been accepted at face value. Yet it is important to recall that Martin has not been convicted of any crime.

Last Friday's shooting shows how far the police's role has altered in recent years. Guns are now issued to London police, on average, sixteen times a day, excluding the normal security guard mounted on buildings like foreign embassies.

That is a 700 per cent increase over the figure for 1970, yet armed crime has risen by only 50% in the same period. One in six Metropolitan policemen are now authorised to use guns.

From January 1980 till September 1982, 15,387 guns were issued to the Metropolitan police on 195 occasions. Special training is given by the elite D11 gun



Guns are now issued to London police, on average, 16 times a day

squad. No democratic control is exercised on any of these operations.

It is not surprising that the man that Home Secretary Whitelaw thought most appropriate to be in charge of the new-style Metropolitan Police was Sir Kenneth Newman, formerly in charge of the RUC in Northern Ireland.

This week Whitelaw said that there would be "no cover-up, no whitewash." But what trust can anyone have in a secret inquiry conducted by the Metropolitan Police themselves? Two years ago, after West Midlands police shot and killed pregnant Gail Kinchin as she was being used as a shield by a wanted man, all that happened was that an internal inquiry withdrew firearms licences from two policemen—and even this was reversed by order of the Chief Constable.

Last Friday the London police broke all the supposed guidelines on the use of weapons, i.e. first asking the wanted person to surrender, and only firing if threatened.

But these guidelines have never been subject to public scrutiny. The whole procedure and control of firearms remains hidden, outside democratic supervision.

Whitelaw's promise that nothing like last Friday must happen again is meaningless. He has rejected the call for an independent inquiry, because "it must be correct to do what has always happened in the past."

Nothing will change unless the labour movement mounts a campaign for the democratic control of the police. The London labour movement should conduct its own inquiry into the Kensington shooting and the light it throws upon police operations in London. Nationally, the Labour Party must ensure that proposals to introduce democratic, public control of police activities are contained in the next general election manifesto.

By Jim Chrystie

Glasgow festival

A festival of Labour will take place on Saturday, 22 January, from 10.00 am until late evening, in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

The festival has been organised by the Labour Party Scottish Council, and the main event will be the rally at 11.00 am with Michael Foot, Gavin Laird

and a French Socialist Party member speaking.

In the afternoon, there will be several seminars, including a youth debate between the LPYS, Scottish Organisation of Labour Students and the Scottish TUC Youth Committee.

The 7:84 Theatre Company will round off the day with a performance of "The

best of 7:84" starting at 7.30 pm.

Throughout the day there will be music, a bar and catering.

By Stephen
Wright

(LPYS Scottish
Committee)

Make '83 another record

Last year's record £148,000 for our Fighting Fund, including a magnificent £18,000 in the final week, is even more of an achievement when you consider it has also been a record year for unemployment and low pay.

Yet despite the hardships of the Tory system, the money came pouring in from trade unionists, Labour Party members, unemployed and young socialists. Working people want socialist policies and are prepared to make sacrifices to get them.

The money has been sent in because ordinary people want to see our programme put into action. Many thanks again to everyone who contributed throughout the year, and especially to all those who made donations in the final week.

Thanks to a CPSA member who donated £100, Bradford supporters £166, P Maniscalco (NALGO Leicester) £50, P Rogan and D Taylor who donated £40 and NUR members from Nottingham for donating £30.

Thanks also to all the individuals who made contributions, A Smith (Cleethorpes) who donated his NHS strike pay £25, D Whitehead (Mid Lothian UCW) £15, R Surrey (Hackney South) £10, C Sneddon (Govan) £10, H Erasmus (Caerphilly LPYS) £10, L Bhawardi (Birmingham APEX) £10 and S Johnson (Stafford) £10.

Thanks to J Bleaken (South Gloucester GMWU), C Graham (Deptford Labour Party) £7.50, S Renilson (Wavertree) £6.

Thanks to everyone who managed to donate fivers, including: R Crowe (Poole), M Riley (Chesterfield Labour Party), J Atkinson (Secretary, West Hull Labour Party), M Iqbal (Leyton), D Matthews (Lambeth), G Hortley (unemployed young socialist, Burnley), S McGrady (Netherton), K MacGregor (Motherwell), L Arnell and T Sams (Maidstone Labour Party Young Socialists), J Baker (NUPE, Port Talbot), H Shields (Small Heath Labour Party), J Kreft (Handsworth), A Hawley (farm worker, Barnsley) and M Rafferty (Brodsworth NUM).

Thanks to D Evens (Eastbourne Labour Party) for donating £3.70, L Renise (Scunthorpe) £3, J Leigh (Wigan CLP) £3, Mr Simon (NUPE Bethnal Green) £2, L

By Kath White

Workers want socialism and have shown they are prepared to make great sacrifices to achieve it



Midlands Labour Party demonstration against the Tories

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target Jan 8th.
Eastern	2546		2700
East Midlands	1786		2850
Hants & Dorset	1795		2000
Humberside	873		1650
London East	3838		3300
London West	1195		1650
London South	3188		2500
Manchester & Lancs	3282		3000
Merseyside	2479		3100
Northern	2797		3900
Scotland East	1010		2000
Scotland West	2302		3000
Southern	3067		2500
South West	1610		1500
Wales East	702		1500
Wales West	1579		2000
West Midlands	2540		2800
Yorkshire	2579		3850
Others	6094		4000
Total received	45,272		50000

FINAL CHART FOR LAST QUARTER 1982

Meredith (Leyton CLP) £2, J Stanley (Bexley, NUPE) £1.50 and two school students from Plymouth LPYS who donated £1.43. Thanks finally to all those who donated a £1; M & T Vallin (Chesterfield CLP), J Lester (Blackpool South), J Phillips (old aged pensioner from Burnley), J Owen (Wythenshawe) M Young (Sittingbourne LPYS), C

Poole (Bristol), B Arnott (Coventry) and R Francis (COHSE, Gravesend) for giving £1 for his paper.

Some of the Labour Party Young Socialist donations this week included; £20 Withington YS, £5.50 Harrow West YS, £5 St Helens YS, £6 Port Talbot and £2.80 donation from two Keithley YS members.

Trade union donations this

week included; £20 Birmingham East TGWU 5/909, £20 GEC supporters, Ardwick, £8.80 NGA supporters Toxteth, and £3.50 from Hull West AUEW No 12 Branch members.

Keep up the good work! Keep the money pouring in and let's see if we can make 1983 another record year. This week make a point of asking every reader you

know to double their donation or if they can't afford it to give us an extra 50p each week.

Make sure we reach our target this year and bring a daily Militant nearer. Next week will see the new chart for the first quarter of 1983—make sure your area does not begin with a blank entry.

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'

HEREFORD: Hear Jeremy Birch on Tuesday 25 January at 7.30 pm at Eygnbrook Church Hall, Eygn Street, Hereford.

BISHOP AUCKLAND: Speaker: Kevin Gent. Thursday 27 January, 7.30 pm, at Henknowle Estate Community Centre, Bishop Auckland.

GLASGOW: 'Which way forward now for the labour movement?' Speaker: Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant) at McLellan Galleries, Glasgow, Thursday 3 February, 7.30 pm.

HACKNEY on Tuesday 25 January at 7.30pm at Stamford Hill Library. Speaker: Bob Faulkes (Hackney Central Labour Party). All Welcome!

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.

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

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

WASHINGTON: Details, Washington 478424.

CLASSIFIED

CROXTETH COMPREHENSIVE desperately needs teachers qualified in the following subjects: woodwork, metalwork, engineering and childcare, to offer their services free of charge to help educate the pupils at the school. Contact Phil Knibb (Chairman of the Action Committee), 051-548 8923.

BERMONDSEY Labour Party canvassing. Help required on: 16 Jan, 11 am, 79 Balfour St, SE 17. Phone 701 7637. 18 Jan, 7.00 pm, 133 Lower Road (LP HQ Bermondsey). Phone 237 7637. 23 Jan, 11 am, 156 Union St, SE1. Phone 261 9119. 25 Jan, 7.00 pm, 133 Lower Road. 30 Jan, 11 am, 133 Lower Road. 1 Feb, 7.00 pm, 133 Lower Road.

For further details contact Dave Fryar, 743 8275, Ann Colthart, 231 9572, Peter Tatchell, 403 1790.

SHARE FLAT in EALING, London, W5. Rent £75 per month. Suit Militant supporter. Ring 01-579 6836

COME TO LABOUR'S YOUTH CONFERENCE

A record number of 215 branches have sent in resolutions to be discussed at this year's LPYS annual conference.

With the new rule change allowing branches with over 25 members a second delegate, there should be a record number of delegates present at conference.

Those branches with over 25 members who haven't claimed a second delegate should do so now. To qualify for a second delegate a letter from your CLP Secretary confirming your LPYS branch has over 25 paid up members must be sent to the National Youth Officer by January 28.

This year's LPYS conference will be more important than ever before. Coming in the pre-election period it will bring together over 2,000 of the most energetic

By Willie Griffin

and active party members.

The LPYS are the shocktroops of the labour movement, and the annual conference will have the job of preparing Labour's youth for the decisive battles against the Tories that lie ahead.

The LPYS conference gives youth the opportunity to discuss their ideas on all the issues facing working people in Britain and internationally. The LPYS National Committee will be presenting a document on "Youth for Labour" which will be fully debated at the conference. LPYS conference is a conference of working class youth.

In previous years over 200 young workers have been

sponsored to conference by their unions. Young trade unionists should approach their branch officials and ask for union sponsorship to conference.

For young trade unionists, YOP trainees, school students, unemployed youth, students: for all sections of working class youth the LPYS conference is simply the best possible introduction to the labour movement and the ideas of socialism.

The conference is from Friday, 1 to Monday, 4 April (Easter weekend) in Bridlington, North Humberside. The conference will have leading speakers from the movement including Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn and a full programme of social events.

For further information contact: A Bevan, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17



Photo: Militant

Benn urges Socialist Youth support

I hope that shop stewards' committees and trade union branches will consider the bulk ordering of *Socialist Youth* for their young workers.

Now that the Tory attacks upon industry, industrial workers, trade unionism and our public services are reaching a new peak, *Socialist Youth* is a very powerful instrument for getting the truth across and persuading people of the necessity for democratic socialist policies carried through by the labour movement as a whole.

The Young Socialists are growing in strength and the Labour Party is anxious to help them to recruit young people into the Party. I hope you will give *Socialist Youth* your full support.

—Tony Benn MP

Every trade union and Labour Party branch should take the advice of Tony Benn and order *Socialist Youth* for their young members.

Every day, in millions of copies, the Tory press pour out their poison. The *Sun*, the *New of the World*, the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* are all owned by millionaire Rupert Murdoch. While the Tories talk about "freedom of the press", the leading ten daily and Sunday papers are owned by just three companies.

Each day they spew out their lies and distort the truth, attempting to demoralise and confuse workers and set back the labour movement.

In contrast *Socialist Youth*, the paper of the Labour Party Young Socialists, aims to reflect the life and conditions of working class youth in all aspects of their life. At school, at work, on the estates, in leisure, sport, music, and humour as well as the struggles and hardship of working class life.

LPYS branches should be drawing up plans for the *Socialist Youth* week of action from 5-13 February. *Socialist Youth* rallies, days of action, factory visits, estate and dole sales should be organised now.

A bumper 16-page February edition of *Socialist Youth* is being produced with a four-page pull-out on further education, interviews with Labour Party General Secretary Jim Mortimer and Alex Kitson on Ireland, as well as the regular features on young workers, YOP trainees, LPYS events, reviews, letters, international events and much more.

Branches should follow the example of Aberavon LPYS who have taken an order of 40 copies of *Socialist Youth*.

If you want to hear the voice of Labour's youth get *Socialist Youth*—NOW.

London YS take up the fight

The attraction of the big city lights is growing dim. Over 400,000 are unemployed in London. Despite living in the capital city, we have to fight the hospital closures which are being forced on us, such as the East Ham Memorial at present. In Ealing as elsewhere schools are being amalgamated to satisfy the Tories' lust for cut backs.

With these facts in mind is it any wonder that sections of youth are becoming cynical about the possibilities that the future holds? This is reflected in the alarming numbers of youth who can't see things changing and so don't bother registering for the vote. In some inner city areas 47% of 20-24 year olds haven't bothered to make sure they can vote.

The London region of the LPYS faces a huge task in the coming year to reach working class youth who are becoming embittered. Only our ideas put across with clarity and determination can earn the respect of youth and offer the alternative from unemployment, low wages, bad housing and disintegrating social services.

Our regional conference will play the role of working out, democratically, a clear programme and so build the determination of our members to struggle to implement it.

In the build-up to conference the LPYS have distributed two leaflets. One is for health workers, because of the good in-

tervention made by YS members in the recent dispute. The response has been very good with many younger workers saying they will come along to our conference, to hear a political debate about the lessons of the dispute and the way forward.

We have also had a good response, with ASLEF applying for tickets.

Our other leaflet was more general, aimed at convincing working class youth to come along from the YOP schemes, schools, youth clubs and dole queues, with special attention paid to the areas where black youth go.

Tony Benn has agreed to speak on the Saturday and many of the CLPs who were invited to come will send people. In the build up during the last week we are approaching the TV, radio and papers.

The debates range from the Middle East to defending ourselves against the witch-hunt.

The disco if it is as good as last year will be a laugh and will raise some money to go to the LPYS campaign fund along with the money from collections we're already having. In fact, two MEPs have sent us £20 for our appeal.

This conference is one of the real bright lights left in London, and people who come won't be disappointed. Make sure you're there!

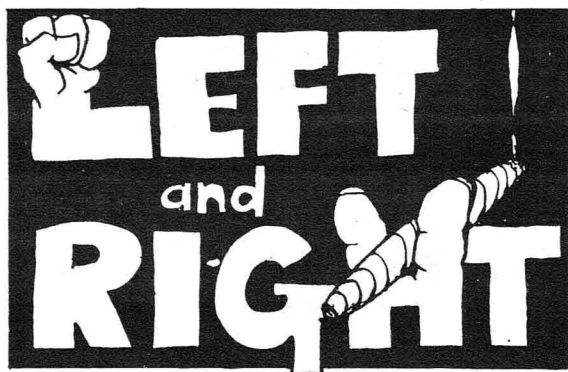
LPYS Regional Conference dates

London—22/23 Jan
East Mids,
Southern—29/30 Jan
North West—5/6 Feb
Wales, South West, Northern,
Eastern—12/13 Feb
Scotland,
Yorkshire—26/27 Feb
West Mids—5/6 Mar.

For further details of LPYS regional conferences contact A Bevan at 150 Walworth Road, London SE 17 or phone 01-703 0833.

Last year's annual conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists in Bridlington. Photo: Militant





Who said this, eighteen months ago?

"I'm frightened that we are going into a position in the party where only one point of view is allowed to prevail. That seems to me to be wrong..."

"I want a party where threats and dictation do not have any part." It was John Silkin MP who recently helped organise the 'shareholders' takeover' of *Tribune* and is currently threatening legal action, to wrest control of its left-wing editorial staff. It seems he doesn't agree with their 'point of view'.

Education, Texas style

Recently the *Sunday Times* reported on an aging couple in Texas, the Gablers, who are the scrutineers and censors for books for Texan schoolchildren. They make Mary Whitehouse look the epitome of liberal radicalism. Thanks to the Gablers, Texan school children are taught the "Creation" as opposed to the theory of evolution. Children mustn't know about the Great Depression of the '20s, otherwise "it will only succeed in raising doubts about our system." They mustn't be told that living standards are better in Sweden and Switzerland than in the good old US of A, in case youngsters get to think there are "benefits to socialism as practised in socialistic countries" (!). Pictures of people protesting isn't on in case it gives students ideas, and nor are books about medically beneficial drugs as this could instil "that the term drugs refers to a beneficial product." The battle of the Gablers is to stamp out children having any ideas of their own. As Norma Gabler put it, "Ideas will never do them as much good as facts."

Gone mouldy

This Thursday sees another desperate attempt by the Social Democrats to re-launch themselves upon the British electorate. Last year's re-launch failed, so this month they are trying to concoct a media event to generate publicity. Their fortunes have flagged since the heady mould-breaking days of their birth. In the last six months of 1982, they have won only two of the 58 council by-elections they contested.

A tale of two pay-offs

When a Swedish firm took over Letraslet last week, they wanted a change at the top. Businessman Bill Fieldhouse had four years of his contract to run, so the firm paid him off—with a reported £700,000; Tote worker Phyllis Ashworth in Doncaster was also 'paid off' last week, after 50 years of loyal service. She got £82.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

January 1933 saw the coming to power of Hitler. Future issues of *Militant* will analyse how this happened and the lessons for the labour movement today. But part of the blame must lie upon the failure of the leadership of the workers' parties in Germany, the Social Democrats and the Communists, to unite against the Fascists.

The Social Democrats equivocated. And the Communist Party attacked them as being social fascist. On 1 February, the day after Hitler came to power, the *British Communist Daily Worker* stated: "the part played by the Social Democrats is in fact one of support for Fascism."

The CP's scenario was that Fascism would quickly disappear and be replaced by a workers' state. Even as late as 1 April, the *British CP's* leading theoretician, Palme Dutt, stated, in the *Daily Worker*: "The Hitler coup represents not the close, but the opening of new revolutionary struggles".

This tragic misreading of events, was not an aberration but flowed from Stalin's imposition of an ultra-leftist line to safeguard the bureaucracy's position in Russia. Trotsky's writings at that time showed the advantage of a clear Marxist perspective which explains unfolding events in their context. In that way workers are not caught totally unawares. The advantage of Marxism over reformism and ultra-leftism, is the advantage of foresight over astonishment.

TADWORTH HELPED ME

By Jean Webb
(Hackney Central
LPYS)

Having been a patient at Tadworth Court as a child, I would say it stood as a model hospital for the treatment of long-term patients providing the kind of standard a socialist society will establish throughout the NHS.

Yet the Tories are now threatening it and other branches of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children.

Tory Health minister Kenneth Clarke, who visited the hospital, said it is half-empty and the patients should be transferred to save money. But there are children on waiting lists and in hospitals which were built as workhouses with appalling facilities, being denied modern treatment.

The two wards at Tadworth Court are modern buildings specialising in long-stay orthopaedics and chest complaints, particularly cystic fibrosis. Having to spend a lot of time in a wheelchair often confines patients' movements in hospital, especially if they have to share a chair with others.

In Tadworth, the two wards were huge, bungalow-type buildings with wide floors, french doors opening onto gardens and sloping walkways, toilets large enough to get your wheelchair in and out, and sliding doors. No child was left lying in bed in one place unless they were chronically ill.

There were always different types of wheelchairs, bath-chairs and trolleys to suit every child's needs. There was more nursing staff on hand than anywhere I've seen since. There was a school on site, nursery classes and separate teachers for those who were too ill or infectious to attend these.

Contrast this to being confined in a ward which is too crowded to manoeuvre a wheel-chair properly, constantly being told to sit still because the chairs are getting in the way, having to be lifted in and out of the conventional size toilet or even worse, being given a bottle or bedpan because it is less



TUC Regional Day of Action in Liverpool last October in support of decent wages for health staff

Photo: J. Smith (FL)

trouble for the few, overworked staff. This is the experience of many hospital patients including children, but for children who spend a lot of their life in hospital it is even more frustrating and humiliating.

Special homely atmosphere

The homely atmosphere at Tadworth is special. One six year old boy had no parents and had always been too ill to get into a children's home. He had been in the hospital since he was six weeks old; the nurses and patients were his family.

When nurses were transferred to the main hospital they could come on the daily mini-bus that brought visiting parents. He had learnt to read and write and could run around and play as much as any child does. I have worked in more typical hospitals since and a normal feature is having children clinging onto staff like, pleading to be taken with them and literal-

ly peeling their fingers off as they beg you not to go, believing they will never see you again.

These children probably get put in a completely different ward on every admission. There is never enough money to provide sufficient play material or staff, let alone teachers, so they are often educationally backward, and some develop emotional and psychiatric problems.

Most hospitals are multi-storey and the children cannot even sit outside unless the staff take them down and stay with them, which often means other staff being even more overburdened.

As a patient in 1972 in Tadworth Court Hospital I received the treatment and care that should be provided for everyone in the NHS—i.e. the patient-centred care for which all NHS staff constantly strive.

Hypocrisy of rich

Admissions have been greatly reduced since I was a

patient in Tadworth Court because of cuts, but the Queen the richest woman in the world, condescended to do her bit, after recording her Christmas message of support for the Falklands war. She very kindly gave up a whole evening to go and watch 'Peter Pan' because the copyright belongs to Great Ormond Street Hospital. After that bit of charity she can sleep soundly in her bed.

Some of the patients of Tadworth today hardly know what it is to sleep soundly—spending their nights over a foam wedge, choking and being pummelled by the always busy night physio. At least up to now they have had some relief by getting some clean country air and peaceful atmosphere a few times a year.

I wonder what the wealthy would make of the philosophy they apply to Tadworth, if we used it on them—gradually empty their mansions of furniture, heating etc and then explained we could provide them with the same facilities in a small council house.

The £170m NHS robbery

The Tories are refusing to implement a plan put forward by an independent working party which recommends that chemists should be allowed to substitute unbranded versions of expensive brand name drugs in doctors' prescriptions (called 'generic substitution'). This would cut the NHS £1,700m drugs bill, 'at a stroke' by 10%.

The fact that unbranded drugs are much cheaper is well known to anyone who has compared prices in a chemist's shop. For instance a packed of 'Disprin' costs

70p at Boots where as 'Soluble Aspirin', which is chemically identical, costs 34p for the same number of tablets. Similar price differences exist for antibiotics, drugs for treating blood pressure etc.

The Tories' unwillingness to implement the working party's proposals is nothing short of scandalous—the £170m saved could obviously be put to good use in the NHS. The 'not a penny more' attitude only seems to apply to those who work long hours on low pay to make the NHS work.

Throughout the recent health service dispute,

workers were told that no money was available to pay a living wage. However, the Tories appear to be more than willing to allow the NHS to be fleeced by the drug companies.

Representations made by the capitalist drug firms are viewed rather more sympathetically; Health Minister Norman Fowler has been told that the working party's recommendation would damage the industry's £300m profits.

Whilst the working party's proposals are a welcome move, the profiteers in the drug industry would soon find a way round them.

After all, it is the same firms who make the unbranded drugs!

All activists in the Labour movement must campaign now to commit the next Labour government to bring the drugs industry into the NHS (that is to nationalise it!) and end the disgraceful milking of our service in the name of profit.

By John Creswick
(Chairman, Boughton branch, Chester CLP)

In Orwell's nightmarish novel (1984), the totalitarian state has files and controls the thoughts of all of its subjects. Hypocritically talking about freedom, the government tramples on democratic rights.

As the articles on this page show, members of the British ruling class would see Orwell's novel as a model to follow—if the labour movement lets them get away with it.

THE SHADOW OF '1984'

Police computers

'The Police use of Computers' by the Technical Authors Group is a disturbing enquiry into the current state and future direction of police surveillance and intelligence.

In a careful analysis of the existing computer systems in the UK it finds a transformation taking place behind the scenes, just as significant and far reaching as the formation of the Special Patrol Group and the use of riot shields.

By Gavin Dudley

There are 'Command and Control' computers, such as those used in the West Midlands. In 1979 there were 24 such machines in use in the UK police forces.

The Technical Authors Group point out that as "direct descendants of machines produced for the military they place all police resources under central control...The largest command and control computer ever, was built by the USA in South East Asia...Whether any development of such systems is appropriate to the police is an open question."

Computers are being developed to help in 'Unit Beat Policing'. Areas are identified as zones of criminal activity and groups and individuals suffer increasingly discriminatory policing as they become "branded" as criminal elements by the information gathered in the collators' files.

Lothian & Borders police even use a system which Sweden is considering banning. Called free text retrieval (FTR), it is very sophisticated as it allows vague queries to be answered by searching a descriptive text for particular words and their synonyms.

The Lindop committee on data protection (1978) said: "There seems to be no way of regulating systems of this kind...FTR systems will clearly present special problems of definition and control." Lothian & Borders

police must be confident that no legislation similar to that proposed in Sweden will be introduced in Britain.

Access to 20 million entries

The main source of computer information for all 51 Constabularies is the Police National Computers (PNC), installed at Hendon in 1975. It contains files on Stolen/Suspect vehicles (about 20,000 entries), vehicle owners (a copy of the DVLC licence file at Swansea, with 20 million entries), criminal names (about 4 million), wanted/missing persons, etc. It can store 8,000 million alphabetic characters, and allows 21,000 enquiries to records per hour with a maximum delay of 5 seconds between a request for information (at a remote computer terminal) and the return of an answer.

It probably has 20-25 million accesses per year with a potential of over 90 million. About 70%-80% of enquiries on the PNC are vehicle checks. "Currently, of the 15 to 18 million checks on cars carried out on the PNC only 1% prove to be of interest, but why check the other 99%? It is clear that the PNC is used to keep car users under surveillance."



Keeping 'up to date' on labour movement activists. Photo: Militant

Special Branch

Some entries have special information added to them, indicating Special Branch interest. "When an enquiry is made on such entries a bell rings in Special Branch headquarters and a message is

sent to indicate the 'sighting' of the vehicle."

This 'bell ringing' facility could clearly be extended to the names' file. If police powers were increased to 'stop and search' and the right to demand names, Special Branch would have a very powerful surveillance tool.

The authors of the report see the possibility of an increasingly sophisticated network of computer files, based on the PNC, linked to criminal intelligence computers in the Constabularies, with access to information on non-police files, such as DHSS, immigration etc. If developed alongside increases in police powers in other areas, mass surveillance of the population could be carried out.

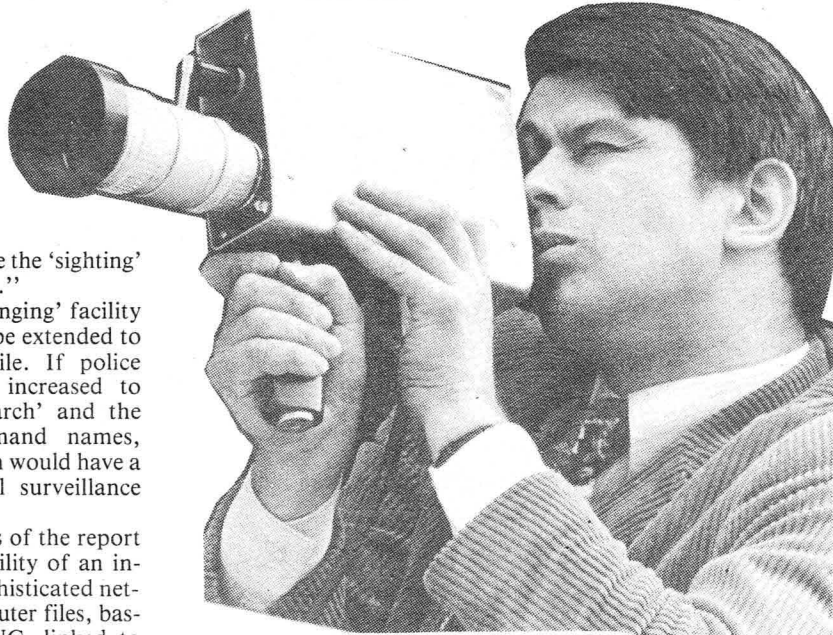
N. Ireland and W. German models

This may already be the case in Northern Ireland, (The authors could obtain no information about the Royal Ulster Constabulary's use of computers) and is certainly the case in West Germany, where a highly integrated computer system is used in conjunction with "Berufsverbot", to victimise individuals "hostile to the constitution".

Summing up, the authors state: "In the UK many of the political activities of the police and security services...are first justified on the grounds of fighting 'terrorists'. Usually linked in the same phrase are words like 'extremists', 'sympathiser', 'Marxist', and 'criminal'...it is left to the police to define and to determine what 'extremist' means and who the 'extremists' are..."

"Home Secretary Merlyn Rees' famous comment that the 'Special Branch collect information on who I think cause problems for the state' can be seen as a carte blanche for uncontrolled information gathering on 'subversives'...the state's equation of criminal violence and subversion (and thus to extremism and terrorism), to almost any political or industrial activity is almost complete."

It is essential that the labour movement acts to stop the authoritarian abuse of new technology. Special Branch must be abolished and all police activities placed under full democratic control.



Cameraman operating from police station during Essex students' demo. Photo: P Harrap (Report) (II)

SNOOPERS

The one public department which receives the whole-hearted support of the Tory government is the 'Specialist Claims Control' (SCC) section of the Department of Health and Social Security.

This is a team of professional snoopers whose aim is to pry into the affairs and personal lives of unemployed people and ensure that 'public money is being well spent'.

A circular stamped 'for Official Use only', which was distributed to all Regional DHSS officers

By Alan Baker
(Newham NE LPYS)

recently fell into my hands, and throws some light on the activities of these teams.

The SCC appears to be a regional body who move specifically into an area to assist the local office fraud section and "allow a selected proportion of the office's leads to be investigated by a Regional team in greater depth than is normally possible."

The criteria which the SCC uses for selecting its victims includes cases when "...a suspiciously high standard of living" gives the SCC "a lead which the local

THE WHITEHALL FRANCOS

During the Falklands conflict, TV film took up to three weeks to reach our screens, heavily censored. Last week Thatcher's electioneering visit there had full and instant media coverage.

The government ensured that a BBC TV crew, which had been filming on the islands, was kept there an extra week so they could cover the surprise visit. Then the Tories forced the BBC, against all normal practice, to share their film with ITV.

The government warned the BBC of "incalculable consequences" if they refused. This is not the first time that the Tories have tried to control the media, and whilst we have this government it will not be the last.

A recent meeting between military chiefs, civil servants and TV bosses showed how

far the government would like to go. The meeting, aimed at smoothing out censorship problems during Falklands-style crises, ended with the BBC representatives vowing never to attend another such meeting.

An official BBC minute about the meeting, quoted in the *Daily Mirror*, 12 January, states: "The Assistant Director General (of the BBC, Alan Protheroe) said that some of the views expressed at the seminar were so fascist that he might have believed General Franco lived...One individual had expressed the opinion that in time of conflict the broadcasting of various dissenting voices should be treated as treasonable."

By Pat Edlin

fraud section has not yet been able to follow up."

Not in abject poverty, then...

Such leads apparently constitute a "fraud awareness" report by the Visiting Officer. It appears that if, by remarkable frugality, you manage to maintain a "suspiciously high" standard of living while on the dole, you immediately become suspected of fraud—a serious criminal offence. In other words, if you do not live in abject poverty, then the government pays people to ensure that you very soon will.

In the case of single women claiming benefit, "signs of a man's presence" immediately make you suspect. Having children of school age, which allows you free time during the day to work, may well put you in line for a visit from an SCC team member.

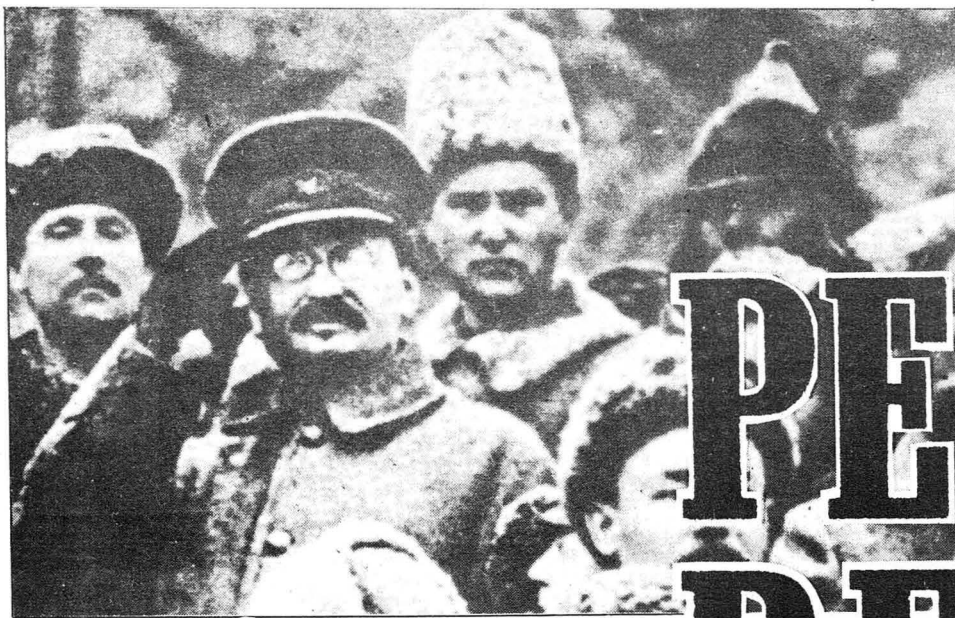
Other people likely to awaken "fraud awareness" in a visiting officer include women whose husband has deserted them because of "economic circumstances" such as rent arrears or unpaid bills. Unemployed households which contain signs of "unexplained affluence", and people who have previously worked in a "significant money earning part-time basis" are also suspect. The report gives pub work as an example of the latter, which is remarkable when it is remembered that bar staff are amongst the lowest paid of workers.

DHSS secret checks

But it is the second half of the report, concerning methods of investigation which gives the most cause for concern. The methods recommended by the report include "checks of other Departmental records, discreet enquiries of employers, business associates or neighbours", as well as, and this is real 1984 stuff, "observation, shadowing, liaison with the police and checking of vehicle numbers" (see article on computers on this page).

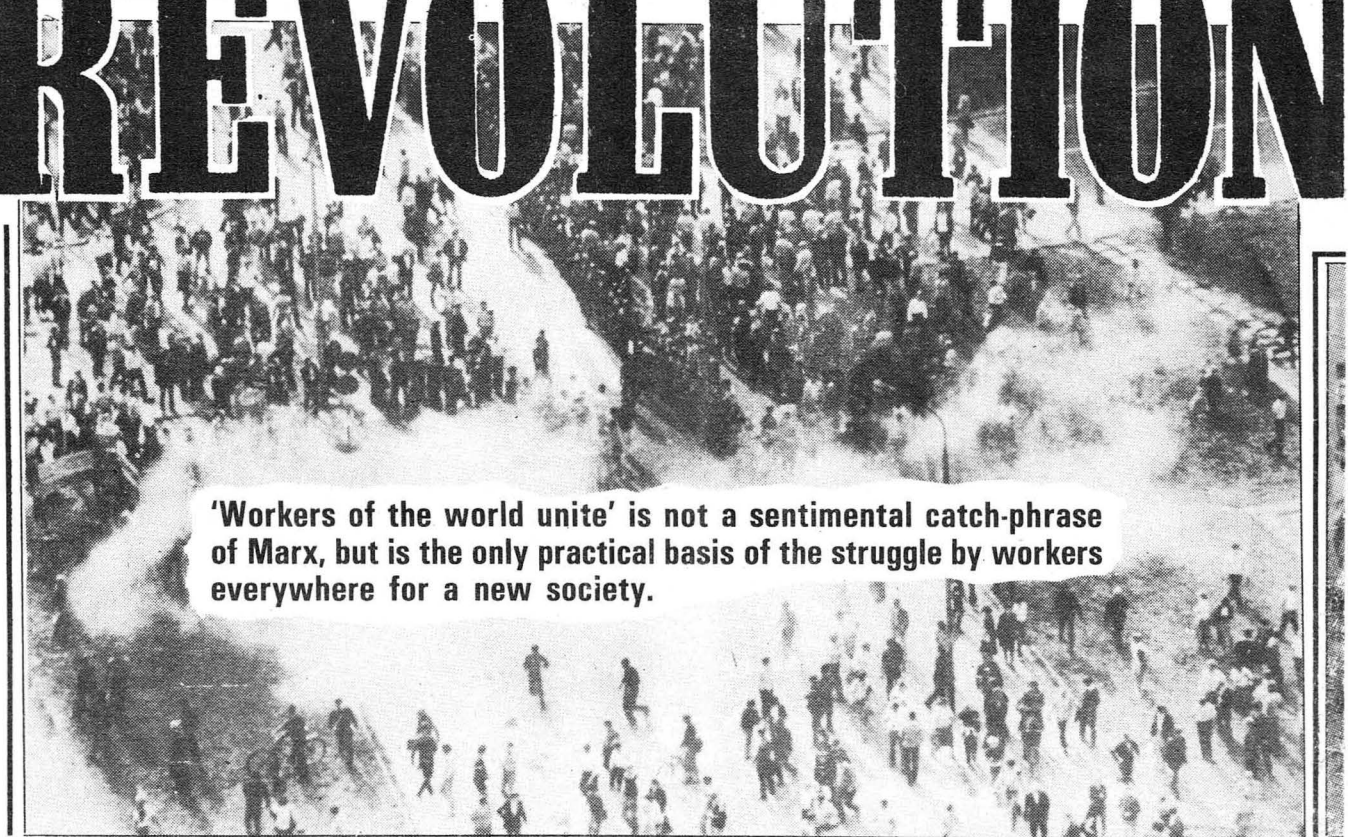
Once the victim has been chosen, the main aim of the team is to either prosecute for fraud if sufficient evidence exists, or else intimidate the person involved into withdrawing his claim.

It is difficult to believe, while reading this report, that it has been produced by a public 'service' department and not by MI5 or some kind of secret police force.



THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

This article by Roger Silverman is reprinted from the 8 December, 1972 issue of *Militant*, which explains the Marxist theory of 'the Permanent Revolution'. Such is the clarity of Marxist method and perspective that the passing of ten years has only served to strengthen these ideas with the hard facts of reality. All that has changed is that the world tempo of events has rapidly increased; the capitalist west, the third world and the Stalinist states are being racked with one new crisis after another. Indeed, to the last two paragraphs of the article could be added the many momentous events that have marked the ten years since 1972—the struggles and revolutions in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa; the recession that has plunged the capitalist west, including the 'capitalist fortress' of USA, into crisis; and the events in Poland and the Stalinist states in South East Asia.



'Workers of the world unite' is not a sentimental catch-phrase of Marx, but is the only practical basis of the struggle by workers everywhere for a new society.

Every workers' party in the world stands, in name at least, for a fundamental change in the social system. The ideas of socialism go back to the very birth of the modern working class and generations of advanced workers have lived, fought and died to see these ideals realised.

Karl Marx provided a scientific basis for this spontaneous aspiration of organised labour. He explained that a classless society is only possible on a certain material basis.

The first primitive communist societies stood defenceless against the merciless ravages and caprices of nature.

All their waking life was devoted to the far-flung search for the next meal. The development of science, tools, technique—the development of civilisation itself—depended on the creation of surplus wealth, over and above the subsistence needs of the population. Thus class divisions arose. The irresistible impulse of history is mankind's growing power to subordinate the world to his own needs.

Each stage of the development of the productive forces required new social forms, new property relationships, new exploiting and new exploited classes. Slavery, feudalism and capitalism in turn opened new vistas of human progress, flourished, exhausted their potential, stagnated,

rotted and were finally superseded and overthrown for all time.

Capitalism affected history like a tornado, replacing the timeless stagnation of feudalism with constant turmoil. In feverish bursts of activity, it revolutionised the means of production time and again, yanking the whole planet into its whirlwind pulling the world together into a single economic unit with an international division of labour.

At a dizzying pace, capitalism within the space of a few generations quickly exhausted its potentialities, and "free enterprise" gave way to the age of imperialism, the domination of the banks and the cartels.

All capitalism can offer in the twentieth century is the horror of world wars, catastrophic slumps, and the eventual destruction of civilisation itself.

Private ownership of the means of production, on the one hand, and the limitations of the nation state on the other, block any further advances.

The parasitic sponging of the monopolies on the state, the enormous wastage of resources on military projects, and the unlimited practice of "built-in obsolescence" emphasise the

reactionary effect of blind market forces on economic progress.

But meanwhile capitalism has polarised society into two mighty hostile camps. On the one side there is the shrinking handful of monopoly capitalists, who have concentrated the wealth into national productive units; on the other hand the growing mass of proletarians, who own no property and live by hiring out their capacity to work.

All the intermediate strata have been all but wiped out in an orgy of mergers, take-overs and bankruptcies through boom and slump alike. If the productive wealth of society were owned collectively by the workers, the capitalist class would be wiped out—and where there is only one class there are no classes.

Workers internationally understood the importance of 1917

Under workers' rule, there would be no limitations on Man's creative potential, and the economy could stride rapidly towards superabundance. Freed for the first time of material want, humanity could dispense with the barbarities of the past—the rule of money, the coercive apparatus of the state etc.

As capitalism created the nation state, so socialism will dismantle the artificial barriers of national frontiers. The slogan of "Socialism in one country" was a nonsensical invention of Stalin, hurriedly concocted in 1924 to placate reactionaries, and used subsequently as a

theoretical justification for a bureaucratic elite.

Workers of all countries unite! was not a sentimental catch-phrase of Marx, but was the only practical basis of the struggle by workers everywhere for a new society.

The Russian revolution of 1917 blazed a trail into the future and the workers of the world proved in heroic solidarity action that they understood its significance.

But terrible problems afflicted Russian society. They were later crystallised in the rise of a murderous tyranny which super-imposed itself on the socialist economic gains of the October revolution. Russia's economic backwardness had caused a ferment of a discussion within the Russian labour movement from its very birth in the 1880's.

The question was posed acutely and urgently: what is the future for the toiling masses in two thirds of the world, where capitalism has not burst asunder the feudal shell and where the creation of a large proletariat and of an advanced technology remain unfulfilled? How are these societies to be dragged out of the Dark Ages into the twentieth century?

The Russian Marxists had rejected scornfully the pipedreams of the populists who thought that the peasantry could usher in a peculiarly Russian, idyllic rural variety of communism, avoiding the new-fangled eyesores of Western industrialisation. The growth of an industrial proletariat in a few towns—a fresh and militant proletariat who had travelled a thousand years overnight from the medieval wooden plough to the modern sophisticated

production-belts—established Marxism on a firm foundation.

Many pro-capitalist elements attached themselves to the Russian workers' party (the RSDLP) because they considered that Marxism sanctified their cause as the next historical stage for Russia.

Russia could not have become an 'independent capitalist' country

The Menshevik right wing of the party, faithful to the letter, if not the spirit of Marxism, argued that the workers could only support liberal democrats to fight against Tsarist absolutism, and establish a bourgeois state, and then three centuries or so of capitalist economic development would build the basis for a future socialist revolution. Had Marx in his day not supported the most progressive forces at hand, be they bourgeois revolutionaries or American industrialists in the Civil War?

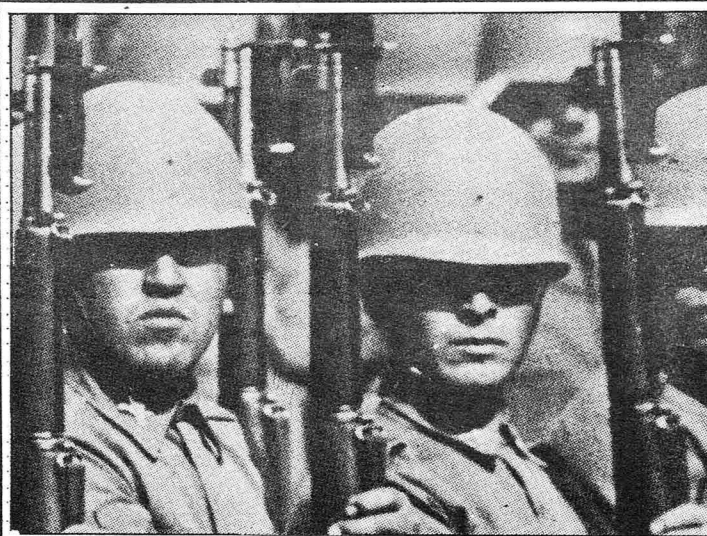
The Bolshevik faction rejected these neat mechanistic apologies for passivity. They saw that disgruntled though the Russian capitalists might be at paying out taxes to finance the stupid, mystical palace clique, they feared the mysterious hordes of the oppressed masses a thousand times worse. The shock of the 1905 revolution had taught them that even the most timid plea for a consultative voice at the royal councils could burst open the floodgates and lead to a torrent of rioting, strikes, land seizures, mutinies and insurrections.

Far better for them to cling to the stability of the age-old autocracy than provoke a movement that would sweep them aside together with the Tsarist state. The Bolsheviks saw that it was the masses who would lead the revolt against absolutism, and that the overthrow of Tsarism would throw the whole world into a period of turmoil. Until the victory of the socialist revolution in the West, Russia would be led by a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

The theory of the *permanent revolution* was put forward before the 1905 revolution by Leon Trotsky. Trotsky rejected the sterile formulae of the Mensheviks, and analysed the organic composition of Russian capitalism.

He demonstrated that it was inextricably linked with the ruling aristocracy. The banks had a stake in the landed estates, the landowners had investments in industry, and the autocracy ensured the world's capitalists a ready supply of cheapest possible labour, so flogging and torturing rebellious workers.

Just as capital today flows to the colonies and to police states like South Africa and Spain, in search of the cheapest possible labour so Russia at that time attracted enormous investments from the French, British, American and other monopolies. Russian industry and finance was utterly dominated by foreign capital. There was no question of the Russian capitalists taking a road independent of the aristocracy—they were huddled together in fear of the masses.



Neither was there any question of them establishing an independent national capitalism which could compete with the giant western corporations which had already carved the world up between them. Russian capitalism had arrived too late to play a virile, healthy revolutionary role: it began life at the historical stage when capitalism on a world scale was sick, decadent, senile.

The dynamics of Russia's social crisis would inevitably throw the proletariat to the head of the movement as the vanguard of the democratic revolution. However, it would be impossible for the workers to confine themselves to these elementary political tasks. It could defend these gains only by pressing onward to the socialist revolution.

Only under workers' rule could the tasks of capitalism (the development of industry, the land reform, the growth of the proletariat, etc.) be implemented in the backward countries.

Trotsky's definition of the permanent revolution

The working class would have to draw the millions of poor peasants behind the socialist revolution to achieve power, and to maintain their rule in the primitive conditions of Russia, they would need the solidarity of the workers of the world, and a rapid spread of the revolution to the advanced countries.

Trotsky defined the permanent revolution as "a revolution which makes no compromise with any single

form of class rule...a revolution whose every successive stage is rooted in the preceding one and which can end only in the complete liquidation of class society...For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations undergo transformation. Society keeps changing its skin...Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and everyday life develop in complex reciprocal action and do not allow society to achieve equilibrium."

In criticising the "democratic dictatorship" formula, Trotsky remarked that, while the reactionary side of Menshevism was clear before the revolution (in assigning to the workers a passive role), the reactionary side of Bolshevism would only be manifest after the overthrow of Tsarism. The crisis that afflicted the Bolshevik Party following the February overturn confirmed his prediction.

Stalin, Molotov and the other local Bolshevik leaders were preparing to fuse the Party together with the Mensheviks, announcing that there were no further differences between them. They greeted Kerensky's "provisional government" and urged a continuation of the war with Germany—"in defence of the revolution!"

From the day of his arrival back in Russia in April 1917, Lenin had to fight single handed over the heads of the leading Bolsheviks to throw overboard worn out slogans and adopt the programme of "All power to the soviets!"

Lenin abandoned the old imprecise perspectives, and Trotsky realised his error of standing aside from the task of constructing the

Bolshevik Party as the spearhead of the proletariat, and the two came together. Thus the Russian workers did take power out of the hands of the capitalists and carried out the first socialist revolution in history.

Today, over one-third of the surface of the globe, capitalism and landlordism have disappeared from the stage, and the material basis of socialism is being built by conscious rational planning at unprecedented speed, under state ownership of the economy.

What lessons does the theory of the permanent revolution hold for us today?

Clearer of all is its application to the colonial world. We have seen in the last three decades a storm of national revolt—Macmillan's so-called "wind of change". Hundreds of millions of people have entered the stage of history for the first time.

But those nations which have escaped from formal colonial occupation only to face continued economic exploitation in the clutches of the capitalist world market—let us take India as a glaring example—face stark crisis, with starvation, unemployment and misery even worse than was the case under the British Raj.

Those large "Communist" Parties in underdeveloped countries who pursued the Menshevik policies of "two stages", supporting "progressive national capitalists" as the dominant force in the revolution—let us take the Chinese CP in 1925-27, on Stalin's instructions, or the powerful Indonesian CP up to 1965, following (ironically) Mao's similarly

disastrous advice—were slaughtered literally by the million as a result.

Only on the basis of state ownership and a plan can even the most trivial reforms be achieved. Now we have a new twist in the unfolding of the permanent revolution: such is the remorseless logic of colonial instability, that in the absence of a genuine revolutionary party of the proletariat that can lead the peasant masses out of the impasse, there is a convulsive succession of uprisings, civil wars, genocides and coups and the socialist revolution can be delivered in the most grotesquely deformed shapes.

The failure of the 'two stages' theory

A vast mass battering ram of peasants, discontented yet passive, can establish Stalinist regimes under the domination of Marxists-turned-guerrilla (China), army officers (Syria, Burma), or former petty-bourgeois radicals (Cuba).

Unless the socialist revolution in these countries is seen in organic inter-connection with the struggles of the working class in the world centres of economic power, then a bureaucratic elite is bound to crystallise at the top. The isolation of the revolution must be paid for with future political revolutions to establish workers' democracy.

The Menshevik conception of "stages" has been applied quite cynically even to the workers' struggles in developed countries. The suicidal policy of forming "popular front" alliances

with the 'progressive' capitalists has been responsible for countless defeats of the working class.

Kerensky in Russia formed, in effect, a "popular front" with the *Cadets* (Liberals), and thus paved the way to the attempted coup of the counter-revolutionary monarchist General Kornilov.

It was the Bolsheviks' brilliant and courageous defence of Petrograd in a **united front** with the other workers' parties that established their leadership of the Russian working class and their power to overthrow the ruling classes.

In Spain in the '30s, the Menshevik trap of allying the workers to the "liberal" capitalist politicians, at a time when the capitalists were hell-bent on a bloody settling of accounts with the working class under the jackboot of Fascism, led to a terrible defeat. The uprising of the Barcelona workers pointed forward the only possible defence against Franco. The workers of Spain, France, Italy and other countries will have to be vigilant to avoid new disasters of the same kind!

In Ireland today, both Republican and Stalinist elements talk of dividing the movement into "stages"; "first" they say, is the question of a capitalist united Ireland, "then", perhaps, we can set about achieving socialism. In reality, Irish capitalism is utterly entangled with British capitalism, while on top of that the majority of workers in the North are repelled by the reactionary theoretic Irish Republic. Only on the basis of socialism can Ireland be unified.

In this country too, we

Photos, left to right clockwise: 1. Leon Trotsky; 2. Polish workers defend the occupied Gdansk shipyard; 3. Pinochet's troops; 4. A Sandinista guerrilla in Nicaragua; 5. Chilean workers demonstrate before the coup in 1973; 6. Polish workers battle with the police.

need to understand the international rhythm and dynamics of events. The prospects of reforms in British society depends on British capitalism's position in relation to its foreign competitors (and this in turn is affected by the erosion or the British Empire and by events abroad) and on the vicissitudes of the world market.

The reforms of the 1945 Labour government were founded on the economic upswing. The abject failure of the 1964-70 Labour government to live up to even the paltry reforms promised in the election manifestos similarly was based, not on the Labour leaders' insincerity, but on the sickness of British capitalism. Even elementary struggles today on wages, jobs, or conditions bring us up against the dead-end capitalist world crisis.

Recent events, East and West, show that the world is on the brink of a new red era. The inspiring actions of the French workers in 1968 affected society's mood and tempo far beyond French national boundaries.

Today more than ever we live in one world, where any local struggle comes down to the key issue of socialism. Over the next decade or two, class society the world over will be swept aside and the permanent revolution can at last rest.

The humiliating defeat of Congress (Indira), Mrs Gandhi's party, in recent state elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka strikingly confirms the political volatility of India today, as consistently explained in our pages.

Until days ago, the world's capitalist press represented India as one of the most politically stable countries, under a prime minister unchallenged throughout the political spectrum. They only permitted themselves to question to whom the succession would pass following the reign of Mrs Gandhi's son and chosen heir, Rajiv!

But every election since 1971 has witnessed a violent landslide swing from one party to another.

It would be fatal to misinterpret the fecklessness and mediocrity of the innumerable squabbling cliques of bourgeois opposition parties as a sign that Indira Gandhi and her personalised party will survive the current tornado of mass discontent.

The pre-revolutionary social crisis is shown in a massive strike wave unparalleled in any country, a fragmentation of every capitalist political party and state institution, a rash of religious, communal, nationalist and caste pogroms, civil war in the country side, rioting and police mutinies in the cities, a sprouting of new political formations, a succession of sharply contrasting regimes, a mushrooming of secessionist regional movements threatening the Balkanisation of India, and demoralisation and corruption of the state machine.

Marx explained that British imperialism conquered India using Indian troops, by playing off the rival Maharajas. That national consciousness that bloomed briefly at the time of the liberation movement has become eroded, along with the brief boom of Indian industry on the basis of parasitism and speculation.

The disintegration of capitalist India results from its complete incapacity to solve a single task in transforming India into a modern nation, and in particular the terrible slump today afflicting the economy.

The masses of India are giving their verdict on Mrs Gandhi's contemptible record. Since her return to power in 1980, on the basis of the capitalists' panic at the mounting revolutionary pressures of the Janata period, she has tried to create a network of loyal puppets in every state. The Chief Ministers are mostly sycophantic buffoons.

Mr. V.P. Singh, Chief Minister of India's biggest state, Uttar Pradesh, with a population of 120 million, confessed: "Frankly my failure is total. I have not been able to involve myself in the business of Chief Minister. Perhaps I lack the brains...unfortunately U.P. is trapped along with me."

The recent Chief Minister of Maharashtra, India's richest state, Antulay, was deposed for embezzlement, only to be succeeded by a Mr Bhosale, who promptly pro-

claimed: "Indira is a goddess, I prostrate before her and I will continue to do so."

Their counterparts, Jagannath Mishra of Bihar and Gundu Rao of Karnataka are openly branded as gangsters, and the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chenna Reddy was removed after protests at his bouts of lavish corruption rivalling the legendary Emperor Bokassa, to be replaced by the tame lickspittle Anjiah, who expressed his hope that Indira Gandhi would "last as long as the sun and moon shine or earth!"

Mrs Gandhi's most craven toadies are laughing up their sleeves at her. The situation was crisply summed up by the businessman Suresh Jain, intriguing in Maharashtra for the return of his crony, the criminal Antulay, who retorted to threats of disciplinary action by the party high command: "I was born a multi-millionaire and I will die a multi-millionaire. No government can take away this power!"

After all, Mrs Gandhi is only in office today because the millionaires put her there.

In 1980, all that was necessary for a candidate to be elected to office was to bear Mrs Gandhi's official seal of approval. Today, the electorate will vote for anyone who stands against her!

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were the only states

Gandhi crushed in state elections



CAPITALIST INDIA FALLING APART

By Roger Silverman



Sikh separatist demonstrators in New Delhi demand their own state. The police opened fire, but the secessionist regional movements carry on growing

in India to remain loyal to Indira Gandhi after her spectacular overthrow in 1977 following the collapse of her ill-fated emergency regime. Her failure to maintain power there is a crushing proof that she is now irrevocably tarnished. It heralds her final downfall.

Fever of regionalism spreads

In Andhra Pradesh, the Teluga Desam party of Rama Rao was only founded a few months ago. Congress (I) filled practically every seat in the State Assembly. At a single stroke, the new party now has two thirds of the seats! The fact that it is

led by a popular film star habitually portraying Hindu Gods is a mark, not of the masses' political immaturity, but of the extent of the unpopularity of Indira Gandhi.

Significantly, particularly in the Southern States, resentful of domination by a narrow Hindi clique in Delhi, political cults have sprung up around film stars—M.G. Ramachandran who has been Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu now for several years, Rama Rao the new Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and similar figures gaining in influence in Kerala and Karnataka.

In a country where television is inaccessible to 99% of the population and where cinema halls are booming in every village, these film stars are acclaimed as standard bearers of the local languages and national cultures. It is yet another

symptom of the universal fever of regionalism.

The defeat of Congress (I) in Karnataka shows, however, that nationalism is insufficient to explain this defeat. There it was the relics of the utterly discredited Janata party, together with some even less viable political groupings such as the reactionary Hindu communal BJP, and even the clique surrounding Mrs Gandhi's disgraced daughter-in-law, Maneka, victim of a recent family brawl, which the masses picked upon as a convenient tool by which to rid themselves of Gundu Rao and his government of wealthy crooks.

Even more so, the renewed victory of the Communist Party (Marxist) in the backward tribal state of Tripura in the North East shows that Indian society can be salvaged by the work-

ing class, the strongest, most durable and most dynamic force in Indian society.

This week marks the end of a year of the strike of the 250,000 Bombay textile workers—the biggest strike in world history! Every section of the working class, from the long-suffering *harijan* landless labourers of the countryside, mounting today a struggle as heroic as that of the black youth in Soweto, against a heritage of thousands of years of caste degradation, to the tribal miners in Bihar and the jungles of Madhya Pradesh, to the Bangalore engineering workers and the educated bank workers of Calcutta, has sprung into militant action.

Workers' parties can provide solution

Not even the police have been immune. In 1979 a million policemen throughout the subcontinent were on strike, occupying their arsenals and defending their picket lines bullet for bullet against army strikebreakers. In Bombay last August the streets were taken over by an unprecedented alliance of mutinous police, striking textile workers and unemployed youth, who joined forces to loot the fashionable department stores!

Even the Intelligence Bureau, India's secret police, is riddled with discontent. The "Intelligence Bureau Employees Association" commands the support of 10,000 of its 12,000 "labour force", and its members have been accused of withholding information and even sending in false reports in order to sabotage the work of their political masters! There have been

strikes and public demonstrations of secret policemen behind union banners!

The landless labourers, amounting to half the rural population, have begun a struggle combining the democratic campaign for an end to caste discrimination and oppression, with a proletarian programme of guaranteed labour, decent conditions, a minimum wage, etc.

Even the small peasants, representing most of the other half of the rural population, have demonstrated in their hundreds of thousands for writing off of their debts, lifting of taxes, cheap credits etc, and even for nationalisation of the land and the payment to them of a wage!

No peasantry in history, not even in China in 1949 or Russia in 1917, has attained so proletarian a consciousness. The whole of society is straining towards socialist solutions.

Indira Gandhi was swept back to office in 1980 by a capitalist class hell-bent on a bloody repression, on a Chilean solution. But how to impose a police state when you cannot count on the allegiance of the police, or even the secret police? Mrs Gandhi will be tempted today, with her back against the wall, to adopt the same solution carried out with such panache and audacity in 1975, when she declared an emergency without consulting the ruling class or even her own Cabinet.

But today, older, greyer and wiser since her shock in 1977, she has patiently explained to the capitalists, howling for blood, that "if you try to clamp down the lid on every daily small explosion all you get is one big explosion later", and "we are caught in quick sands". "Anything we may do can make things worse. So we have to tread very slowly."

In 1982, strike figures exceeded a world record. Mrs Gandhi has at her disposal a corrupt intriguing web of palace courtiers, a corrupt, demoralised and mutinous police force, a bureaucracy completely lacking in any faith in their state, a nation breaking into pieces at every nook and cranny, a working class which is visibly not cowed by her draconian labour laws. With what is she expected to crack the whip and "restore authority"?

Even a military coup would only embed a keg of dynamite into India's foundations and finally blow it into pieces, just as the Ayub Khan dictatorship in Pakistan paved the way for the division of Pakistan into two.

The impotent bourgeois opposition cliques, shattered into a thousand fragments, can offer no alternative. Only the workers' parties, united on a socialist programme and exposing all the capitalist politicians as political frauds exploiting the working people can adequately articulate the revolutionary stirrings of the mass of the population.

In recent years the workers have proceeded with brilliance and energy to construct new democratic instruments of struggle, and it is they who will provide the solution linking together the struggles of the exploited masses in town and country. The latest elections will embolden them with confidence in the weakness of their tinpot tyrants and the ultimate triumph of their cause.



USA

LOW PAID WORKERS VICTORY IN BOSTON

Last month saw a tremendous victory for 4,000 hotel and restaurant workers in Boston, Mass.

Local 26, Hotel, Restaurant, Institutional Employees and Bartenders Union, AFL-CIO, represents workers in nine of Boston's most prestigious hotels, and is the largest union in the metropolitan area.

It consists of some of the lowest paid immigrant and minority workers in the city. In their strength and unity, these workers challenged the bosses and emerged the victors.

The struggle, however began long before negotiations. For years the hotel and restaurant workers in Boston have been represented by a leadership who, along with the hotel owners, kept the workforce divided and underpaid. The leadership of Local 26 had more in common with management than with the workers they represented. This entrenched leadership, negotiated contracts that had nothing in common with the workers' needs.

Many of the workers in Boston's hotels and restaurants are immigrants who speak Spanish, Portuguese, French, Greek, Chinese, etc. Many do not speak English. "Often the hotel management determines a workers' job by his or her nationality. If you are Puerto Rican you operate the laundry, if you are a black woman you clean the rooms, if you are a white, Irish male you are a bartender, and if you are young, female, and mediterranean, then you are a waitress in the exotic restaurants." (Dan Clifford, Secretary Treasurer, Local 26).

In hotel language, there is the front of the house and the back of the house. It is the lower paid, and often immigrant worker who is assigned to the back, while the higher paid workers greet the public and operate the front of the house. However, none of these workers, whether in front or the back of the house, received equivalent pay or benefits compared to other unionized hotel and restaurant workers.

Pension funds were as low as £48 a month. While the health plan, which constantly delayed payments to its recipients, was administered by an insurance company that apparently had investments in several of these hotels (contributing to some conflicts in interest). There were no sick days.

First, the union needed to be transformed

In March 1981, the struggle began. Rank and file leaders emerged after a bitter struggle with the opposi-

By Marcy Barnett
District 65, UAW,
AFL-CIO,
(personal capacity)

tion, and took control of their union. However, the test was their ability to transform Local 26 into a united force to win a decent contract in 1982. The international supported their efforts by providing \$1 million in a strike fund, personnel to organize community support, media and press coverage, and education of the members in preparation for a strike.

There had never been a hotel strike in Boston, and the task ahead was monumental—organizing in four different languages and uniting a work force that had for years mistrusted the union. Their slogan, "Justice for Boston Hotel Workers—1982 is the Year!". Their demands, "Change the system of health insurance that does not give us medical care and has delays in paying us;

"Change the disciplinary system which humiliates, punishes and degrades us;

"Change the grievance system that postpones decisions and harms us through delays in justice;

"Change a pension plan that we cannot understand, we cannot oversee, the local hotels will not audit and is not responsive to our needs as Local 26 members."

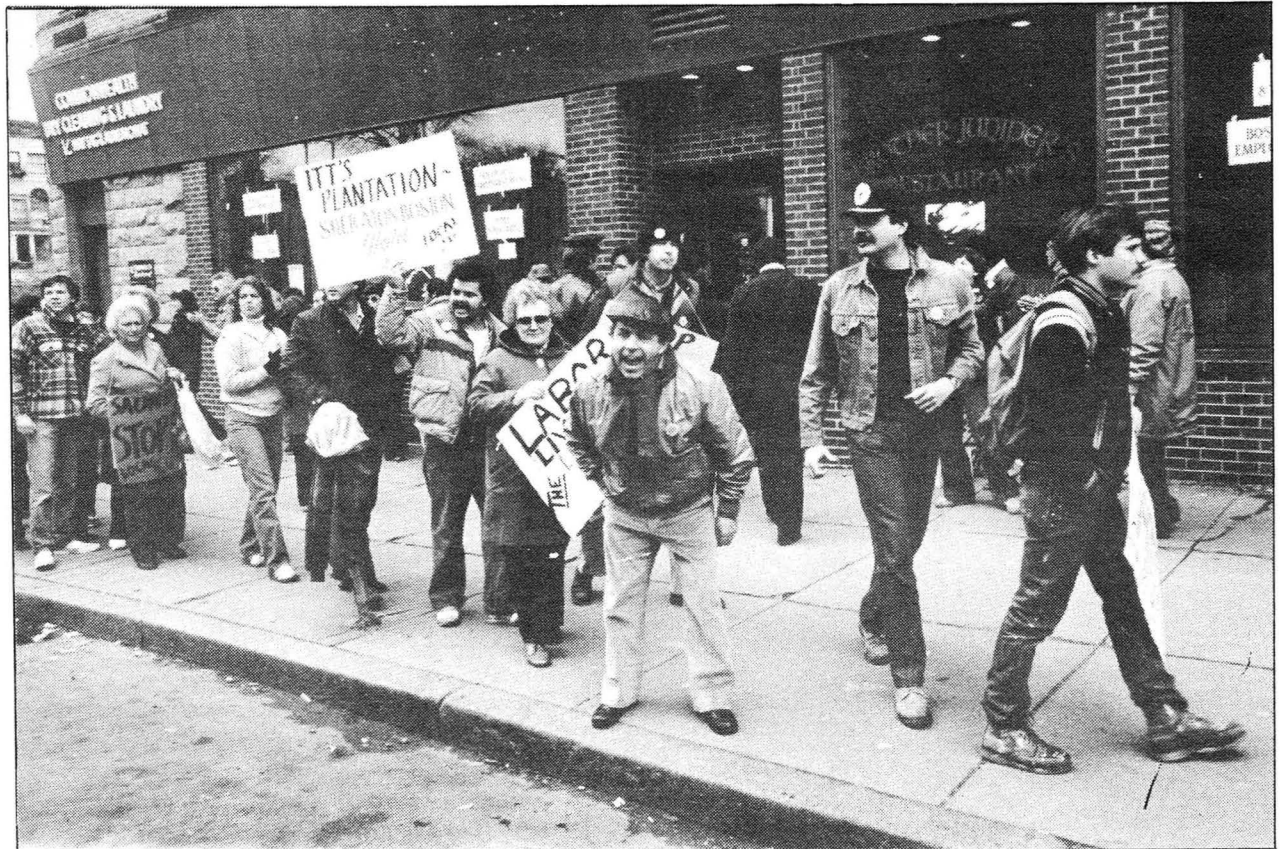
(Local 26, *Unity*, Nov. 1982). And of course a wage scale that is up to par with other hotel workers.

Managements' tactics were futile

The hotels waged a bitter fight. As the days came nearer to the expiration of the contract, the owners opened up a hiring hall for scab labor, and advertised in the Boston papers to create public sympathy. Their tactics were futile. A picket line was immediately set up in front of the hiring hall, turning away those who came to apply as scab labor.

The community, local trade unions, and labor council came out in full support of the hotel workers. There was little possibility for the hotel owners to convince the community of hard times when Boston has become a major convention and tourist industry, with new hotels and restaurants appearing everywhere to accommodate the growing trend.

They also could not disguise the fact that they have been paying slave wages to their workers. A chamber maid was paid \$1.50 to clean an extra room, after she had completed her required 16



Hotel workers in Boston picket in support of their wage claim.

Photo: Michele Keno

rooms for the day, while the hotel took in as much as \$160.00 for the rental of that extra room. The money a worker earns in a week's wage is easily spent by the rich in one evening at a hotel, and at the same time adds to the profits of the hotel owners.

Management's efforts to break the workers were in vain. As the President of Local 26, Domenic Bozzotto, explains, "there was no way the hotels could subvert it. It was like a snowball—it just kept growing. People began standing up for each

other. The hotels couldn't see it, the media couldn't see it, and the politicians couldn't see it—but we sure could. The union inspired the people, and the people inspired the union." (*Fighting Worker*, Dec. 1982).

Workers can celebrate this victory with pride

Some of the gains include a new health plan with den-

tal coverage, disability benefits doubled (\$100 per week), pension increases, and an agreement to have an audit of the entire pension plan, an improved expedited grievance procedure, and wage increases, (for non-gratuity workers \$1.65 per hour over three years bringing the average wage to \$6.15 an hour, and for gratuity workers an increase of 90 cents over three years, bringing their hourly wage to \$3.10). The tremendous accomplishments by these workers, not only in their successful contract, but in

their transformation of the entire local will provide the needed impetus to organize non-union hotels and restaurants in the Boston area.

Their victory also represents a time to come when workers in the US will again organize in the tens of thousands. Local 26 has won an important battle that all working class people can celebrate with great pride; and in that pride a knowledge of the tremendous power and strength organized labor, in this country and in all countries possess.

SRI LANKA

Repression of Tamils growing

I visited Jaffna today to ascertain the situation that prevails here, particularly after the arrest of some members of the clergy including Rev. Fathers Singarayar and Sinnarasa and Jaffna University lecturers Mr and Mrs Nithiyandandan, all of whom are in the custody of the army.

In the city of Jaffna I noticed protest satyagraha (sit-down) campaigns being carried on in different places. I understand that a series of such campaigns have been spontaneously carried on over the last few days in several parts of the Jaffna District, involving over 50,000 people irrespective of racial and religious differences.

The UNP government's oppression of the Tamil speaking people has now taken a different dimension.



Photo: Militant

The army was used during the state of emergency in 1980 to repress the people. Oppression is escalating again.

I met and spoke to people from different walks of life. Almost all of them are of the opinion that ever since the UNP government came into power, the Tamil speaking

people have been subjected to the worst kind of oppression and humiliation. Further, they also fear that there might be a holocaust after the so-called referendum on

22 December 1982.

We of the Nava Sama Samaja Party will campaign at national and international levels to explain the plight of the Tamil-speaking people. We will also explain that the working class in this country, the oppressed Tamil nation, and all oppressed sections in the South should combine their struggles to overthrow the UNP government. Unless the UNP is overthrown, the oppression of the Tamil-speaking people in particular, will, if not escalate further, at least continue for the foreseeable future.

By Vasudeva Nanayakkara
(Leader, Nava Sama Samaja Party)

Letters

IEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO
MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Socialism, not pale blue Toryism

Dear Comrades,

I am a regular reader of your paper. I find it most interesting. It speaks the truth. I am over sixty and have been through the mill under the Tories in the thirties so I really know how youngsters feel today.

Then it was Hitler threatened the world with war, now it is that stupid Thatcher and that cowboy Reagan threaten the world with nuclear weapons. I was disgusted to see on TV news the senior citizens living in poverty and dying of hypothermia due to lack of fuel and warm food when Thatcher would rather spend money on death and destruction.

It is time we had this lot out of Westminster. They have done more damage to this country than Hitler's blitz did. I used to be a lifelong member of the Labour Party. Now I find the moderates of that party a bunch of Pale Blue Tories who haven't lifted a finger to help the low paid or the mass unemployment. That's why the majority of the people are disheartened and disillusioned.

That's why I support *Militant's* struggles to get rid of poverty, mass unemployment and the Pale Blue Tories in the Labour Party.

Yours comradely,
J Philips,
Burnley.

Tories' closed shop

Comrades,

I read your article about the old lady getting off the bus giving you a donation. I also am a pensioner and know what it is all about; in 1925 waiting at the pit at Platt Bridge, the miners coming up, saving us some of their jam butties they had left.

When I started work at Bickershaw Pits, who started the 'closed shop'? Not the

unions but the Tories; Me and my brothers paid sixpence a week to the union but we had to pay another sixpence a week to what we termed the "Blue Button Club" out of our pittance of a wage or get sacked.

My brother lives at Westhoughton and has lived there nearly forty years. They have no gas in this day and age. It's unbelievable. £4 for a bag of coal, North Sea gas for everyone, what a shambles.

MPs are not worth candles, you can also blame Labour as well. You are doing a great job with *Militant* and I hope it goes from strength to strength, which I am sure it will when people get to know the facts which you print so well. Fight the Tories and the witch-hunt. PS I will give what I can to help.

Yours,
A Pensioner,
Wigan.

The truth for a change

Dear Comrades,

Anyone reading the January issue of the women's magazine, *Over 21* will have been as surprised as I was to see the feature on the youth groups of the major political parties.

Four groups were focused on in the article, and by far the most favourable report was on the Young Socialists. We were described as the "angry young men and women of the eighties" (they got that slightly wrong, I think, as Young Socialists have always been angry) and that most had joined because of their belief in socialism rather than for the socialising as was the case with the Young Tories and other groups.

Throughout the article it was stated that the clarity of our policies and dedication to 'the cause' was the overriding factor. It left me wondering if the editor and owners of the magazine hadn't all had brainstorms, allowing the truth to be printed for a change.

Labour's Youth Officer, Andy Bevan was allowed a quote in the piece "most of our members subscribe to the views expressed in *Militant* and I think they'd be scandalised to describe themselves as moderates", but if the reporter Sally Angel hadn't been quite so taken up with Andy's "childlike eyes", etc., we might have had some more quotes!

All in all, though, it was quite a good advert for the LPYS and showed that a lot of interest has been stirred up for *Militant* and the YS through the witch-hunt.

Yours fraternally,
A Scott,
Newcastle.

A socialist school play!

Dear Comrades,

As Christmas is traditionally the time for the annual school play which parents endure with a gracious grin and tell their children they deserve an Oscar with their marvellous acting, it was no surprise when the school I attend put up posters for auditions for actors and actresses.

But shock, horror. What's this? Not for the traditional Cinderella, Aladdin or even Shakespeare. The play decided on was 'Close the Coalhouse Door' by Alan Plater, a play with, wait for it, a socialist message and vulgar words like revolution, nationalisation and horror or horrors, Marx (not the Brothers either).

The play centres around an almost dead pit village when an old miner and his wife are celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. The miner and his old mates are hard bitten cynical men due to the hardships they had to endure from 'Them' whether they be Tory, Liberal, or Labour from the defeats of 1831, 1844, etc, through two world wars and the 1926 General Strike to the date the play was written (1968) when the working class were again betrayed by the PLP.



Demonstrators on a CND march last year. Tory propaganda says CND are a bigger threat to education than all their cutbacks.

Ban the badges?

Dear Comrades,

As part of the government's campaign against unilateralism, Dr Rhodes Boyson has pointed out a grave threat to the education of the nation's children.

No, it isn't the lack of books, paper and pencils, it isn't the lack of teachers, nor is it the lack of job prospects for school leavers. It seems that small pieces of metal—about the size of a five pence piece—have been attaching themselves to teachers' lapels

and distracting pupils from learning the right values.

It seems that these "CND badges"—probably sent over by the Russians—"detract from the responsibility and dignity of the teaching profession" and "betray the neutrality of classroom and school."

One wonders what Dr Boyson is doing for the "responsibility and dignity" of teachers by throwing them on the dole queue where, presumably, it is still legal to wear political badges.

The good doctor also complains that English

language books published in Moscow are being sent free of charge to British schools. It is hardly surprising that he feels shamed by this act of charity, but whose fault is it that schools cannot afford to buy books?

Is it not interesting that the Tories, with all their talk of "individual freedom" are seeking to control the curriculum of every school by banning "peace studies" and to control the lapels of individual teachers by banning CND badges?

Yours fraternally,
Derek McMillan.

The play was well worth our effort. I learned a lot about the miners' history of struggle, so I'm sure people who went to see it came out with a little more knowledge about socialism.

Perhaps if more plays of this nature were shown in schools and theatres more people would come to our banner seeing an untarnished view of socialism rather than the lies of the Tory media.

Yours fraternally,
Michelle O'Neill,
Washington LPYS.

The privilege of being exploited

Dear Comrades,

On 9 January, *Weekend World* presented some interesting statistics about the British economy. Figures were given for the additional wealth produced per hour by workers in various countries. In the USA the average figure was £10, in West Germany £9.30, France £8.80 and in Britain £6.00.

Why is Britain so far behind? The Tories like to blame the workers for 'laziness' but the true reason

is the woeful lack of investment in industry. The British bosses invested a mere £7,500 per worker in 1979 while their German counterparts managed three times that amount.

Another point is that, however low a figure £6 may be, it is about two or three times what the average worker receives. The rest is pocketed by the bosses.

Of course the capitalists say they have supplied all the machinery, the factory and raw materials so they are due remuneration. In fact it was the labour of the working class that built the factory and machinery and produced the raw materials. They even produced the bricks and steel that made the factory and the machines. The capitalist has not added one penny additional wealth.

As it was over a hundred years ago, when Marx wrote, the capitalist's profit is nothing but the unpaid labour of the worker. The capitalist is a parasite on the labour of others.

But it is the workers, who are often living from hand to mouth, who are blamed and told they should consider themselves lucky to be in such a position as there are many millions even less for-

unate from whom the capitalist class has withdrawn the 'privilege' of being exploited!

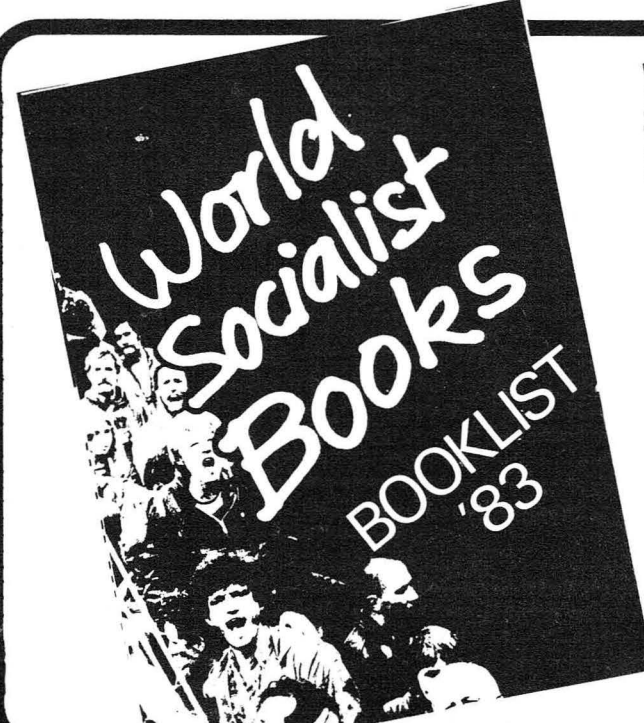
Yours fraternally,
Keith Mc Intyre,
Glasgow Cathcart
Labour Party.

Ready to discuss socialism

Dear Comrades

We decided to have a paper sale in one particular street in Leith. The first time we went we could only do a few doors because of the amount of time we spent having discussions with people who wanted a regular copy. A week later we came again and sold 23 papers and got two names for the Young Socialists. We now have regular sales going with potential recruits for the Labour Party. People are ready and willing to listen to the ideas of socialism if you go out and explain them.

Yours fraternally
Keith Mackie, Edinburgh
North LPYS.



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1 Mentmore Terrace
London E8 3PN



A depressing picture of industrial wasteland in Bradford—but the story could be different.

Photo: Militant

Fighting Redundancies...

The lowest paid worker in our factory is on £90 per week and the rate for skilled workers is £109.28. The semi-skilled workers fall in the middle at approximately £100.

The factory at one time employed about 400 workers. We're now down to just less than 250. At one time the tool room completely controlled the Shop Stewards Committee. It was the tool room that actually began trade union organisation at the factory, but their control of the shop stewards committee meant that the interests of other workers weren't represented properly.

The skilled workers were far higher paid than the majority at the factory and this was divisive. By making concessions to the skilled workforce the company could get away with relatively cheap semi-skilled labour. The toolroom had a craft position and wouldn't accept that time-served maintenance men should receive the same rate as the toolroom, and it took a long struggle to achieve parity of earnings.

The earnings difference could only be resolved on the basis of a thorough transformation of the factory's organisation. Myself and another steward who was more experienced than me had to take the shop stewards committee head-on over a pay claim.

It was at the time of the Labour government's pay policy and the leadership of the shop stewards committee hid behind the social contract to avoid organising a struggle. We argued we should have had a militant campaign to secure higher wages that exceeded the government's pay limit.

The shop stewards committee resigned in the hope that myself and the other shop steward would be unable to cope. We suspect that this was done in collusion with the management. Such was the anger on the

By Steve Davidson
(AUEW Convenor, Anderton International, Bingley; Chairman, Aurora shop stewards' group)

shop floor over the position of the skilled workers that they were prepared to back us. After a lengthy struggle, we began the process of rebuilding the shop stewards' committee.

Shop stewards' committees should be active in the wider labour movement

The old shop stewards committee had no involvement of any degree inside the district organisation of the union, the trades councils or the Labour Parties.

We have changed all that now. We have delegates to the District Committee, Trades Council and a number of stewards who are active in their Labour Parties. We see this as an extension of our union work. The shop stewards committee is a relatively political body. We have been active in all the campaigns of the Broad Left.

Our main problem now is the decline in manufacturing industry which has tested our strength as a trade union. Since '79 we have had three redundancy exercises. At each stage we have fought against redundancies, against even our own members at first who wanted to take the money and run.

We argued that no worker had the right to sell a job. They were merely the custodians of that job for future

generations. The SSC maintains its complete independence from the management in organisation, agitation, and ideas.

The initial struggle on redundancies was successful. Despite having over 20-30 volunteers for redundancy, we managed to get away with eight. The company wanted 45 redundancies. The three exercises have taken place on the basis of volunteers leaving the factory.

Since then we have maintained a period of 14 months on short time working.

Initially we accepted this as an alternative to redundancies. But, having seen in the Bradford district the loss of almost 50% of the AUEW membership since 1979, short time working has meant having one foot in the grave. Workers had greater and greater financial problems like gas and telephones being cut off and electricity bills not being paid, rent arrears and all those problems, so that when a fight is necessary over redundancies, the workforce is already demoralised. So now, we are not prepared to accept short time working.

"We don't accept that the crisis in the industry is any of our making"

In fact to put the position in a nut shell. We don't accept that the crisis in the in-

the role of a shop steward

This is the first in a series of articles by Steve Davidson about his experiences as a shop steward. We would welcome other articles by shop stewards about their role in the trade union movement.

dustry is any of our making. Our people have made sacrifices in the last two or three years. The end of making sacrifices has come. We will fight any erosion of wages, be it in the form of wage cuts, short-time working or redundancies.

We have settled for three per cent as an interim agreement for 1982 on the basis of a return to full time working. This was a tactical decision by the shop stewards' committee. We had sections of the workforce on shorttime working and sections on full time, having had a shop stewards' recommendation defeated on the slogan of work or full pay.

The policy of the shop stewards committee is that if one is laid off then we're all laid off, and this has got an echo of the workforce and we believe we'd now command about 90-100% support. There has been no work for sections for periods on end and yet we sustained five day working, showing that the management are afraid to take us on.

The most important distinction between a shop stewards' committee now and a committee in the sixties and early seventies is that you can no longer be a credible leadership without being involved in the wider labour movement. When the economy was expanding, you could quite easily use all means and tactics to increase earnings.

Now in a period of decline, especially in companies that have consistently shown a loss over the recent period, where it is quite apparent that there is no kidology about the decline in order books and the declining role of British industry in the world market, then it demands an entirely different approach from the shop stewards committee.

First of all, we have to deal with the day to day issues successfully. As more and more of our membership are having economic problems, you have to become experts on social security, legal aspects rent and rate rebates, the problems of securing mortgages etc.

Then we have to pursue political objectives and that means having the links with the wider labour movement and with the sympathetic Labour MPs and Labour Parties.

Then, when a crisis occurs, such as a closure or redundancies, pressure can be brought to bear from a number of sources.

Regular shopfloor meetings essential

But primarily, it's necessary to see that the shop stewards committee, is literally the general staff for the workforce, and needs to be extremely well organised. In the present climate of uncertain circumstances that means the stewards committee must continually discuss all possibilities so that they will always be in a position to respond effectively to any management offensive. It is absolutely vital that the shop floor is consulted regularly and to continually have feedback meetings, not only on the objectives that are being pursued but also the means of achieving them.

We have to explain in detail, the prospects in front of our members, what response we could see forthcoming from our members and brothers and sisters in

the district and what response, if any we would see from the Trade Union leaders. It also requires an understanding of the tactics that the company is prepared to adopt, that of all the possibilities, such as lockouts, dismissals, or of any other attempt to break the trade union organisation in the factory.

The shop stewards' committee must have a day to day assessment of the changes that take place inside the factory. And that may mean the calling of special stewards committees as soon as there are any changes in the situation and to relay that information back to the workforce.

Therefore the stewards committees become in my opinion, not only the policy making bodies but also the tactical decisions as to how to best prosecute the claims of the membership.

The traditional understanding of a 'militant' is one that is always on strike or is always leading a strike, and can often become a term of derision. My understanding of the term 'militant' is that its a relationship we have to our class. Any supporter of the *Militant* is impeccably opposed to the aims and ambitions of the ruling class and the employers. It means that we maintain our complete independence and we don't accept the logic of the banks and the employers when they say that working people have to accept cuts and make sacrifices to preserve the profit system.

'Militant' doesn't mean that you're continually on strike or urging the membership to get up out of the trenches and to go over the top, because anybody with any experience in industry knows that the only reason working people go on strike, is that there is no alternative left to them.

Therefore the job of a militant shop steward is to pursue the aims of his or her membership without having to resort to industrial action if possible, but never being afraid of resorting to industrial action if it is necessary. The decisions policies and tactics are based 100% on the interests of the workers, both inside of the factory, of the families at home and the whole of the working class.

Industrial Reports

On 29 November, it was announced that 1,700 jobs would be lost at BSC plants in Sheffield and Rotherham. For the workers in the special steels industry it is just another nail in their coffin.

This is part of a long drawn up plan by Ian McGregor and the Secretary of State for Industry to dismantle the public sector, and help the private monopolies. I work at Johnson and Firth Browns, the pioneers of stainless and special steels in this country. Redundancy is nothing new to my members. In the past two years over 2,000 jobs have been lost bit by bit.

Firth Brown and BSC River Don have drawn up plans to merge the two companies and by doing so, cut capacity even more in our depleted industry. When everything is completed, a further 2,000 more jobs will be lost forever.

This is not the start of my story of gloom, but about the middle. The story started in January 1981, although plans were drawn up much earlier.

I worked in the rolling mill at Firth Browns which consisted of 1,400 men if we count the departments that fed off it. In January 1981 we were informed that the mill would be closing. There was uproar but no fight. The mill was old but had a high level of production, the management said that because the rates and energy costs were so high, the mill would have to close or it would affect the rest of the workforce in the future. The mill did close in June 1981 with a loss of 1,150 jobs, 250 were saved due to the workforce accepting a worksharing scheme. This left Firth Brown with a workforce of just over 3,000.

I was one of the lucky ones who got redeployed, I became a labourer in the machine shops. The ancillary side of the workforce (GMWU) had no real representation so I became their shop steward. It wasn't long before we were fighting for our jobs again.

On 18 January 1982 the management announced their decision to cut employ-

SOUTH YORKSHIRE SPECIAL STEELS

The time to fight is now



Steel workers at Tinsley in Sheffield on one-day strike against closures last October. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

ment costs by 25%. This meant short-time working and any jobs that were saved when the mill closed, the equivalent (250) would have to go now. The trade unions could not accept the reasons the management had given and called for action.

The management immediately issued 220 notices in Sheffield and 21 in our Glasgow factory called Beardmores. We had a mass meeting of the workforce, and were mandated to fight any job losses in any way we could. We went on an immediate overtime ban and pulled out key areas of the plant at random, in a bid to solve the problem, but this did not work.

Representatives of the Firth Brown shop stewards committee went to the House of Commons to see

the Secretary of State for Industry Patrick Jenkin. However, this meeting did not take place so they saw Labour MP Eric Varley. It was to put to him that we needed £6 million to save jobs for 12 months or £9 million for 18 months, Mr Varley said he could not see any reason why we should not get what we wanted considering the government had given the De Lorean car company £20 million. This was raised in parliament and the government sent one of their junior ministers (Mr Lamont) to Firth Browns.

We were very optimistic we would get the money but, the minister said it was not viable and the answer was no. The shop stewards committee then decided that the only way we could win was a total withdrawal of the

workforce. We called a day of action which would include a mass meeting to decide what further action we should take. The day of action was the first strike at Firth Browns in 52 years.

We put to the workers our proposal for an all out strike and it was rejected for fear of losing more jobs. Shortly after, I went on hunger strike for eight days, after the government announced they would be spending £9 billion on the Trident missile project. I ended my fast after union talks.

It was announced in June 1982 that there were plans to merge BSC River Don with Johnson and Firth Brown and the new company would be called, "Sheffield Forgemasters" and the company would be owned equally by BSC and JFB. In the

process, Beardmores in Glasgow would close with the loss of a number of jobs. It would also be announced that one of the melting departments in Sheffield (Norfolk) would be closing with the loss of over 100 jobs. A campaign committee was formed involving, BSC River Don/River Don Stampings and Firth Brown. This resolution was drawn up. *This campaign committee recommends to the BSC River Don/River Don Stampings and Firth Brown workforces through their relevant shop stewards committees, that the movement of people, equipment and work will not take place until the agreement is reached which safeguards present manning levels and production capacity.*

Norfolk Melting is an old

melting shop but is capable of producing the best steel in the world. The management recognise this but in their eyes, quality does not count. The redundancy notices were handed out, not only to the Norfolk lads, but to some of the men in the Atlas melting and maintenance departments.

The men in the Atlas had already had a meeting, and decided that if one man should receive a compulsory redundancy notice, they would walk out. "One out—All out!" The management would not accept voluntary redundancies, they wanted to say, who they wanted to go, thus the men walked out.

The shop stewards called another mass meeting and day of action. It was to put to the men just what the management were playing at and if the Atlas should close, other departments would soon follow. A strike was called for and we lost on a 50/50 split decision.

However we went back to management and told them that if they went along with their proposals of no voluntary redundancies, the men in the Atlas would not return to work, and that we would be heading for an all out strike. The management gave in and said they would only accept voluntary redundancies and would try to cross match some of the jobs. The Atlas men went back to work after two weeks on strike. The management refuse to disclose their future plans for the other departments till the merger is completed. My calculated speculation brings a figure of 2,000 jobs lost, jobs lost forever. The time to fight is now.

By Arthur Millward
GMWU Firth Brown Sheffield
(Personal capacity)

USDAW - BROAD LEFT FIGHTS FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

The need for a fighting leadership in the shopworkers union, USDAW goes hand in hand with the need for full democracy and accountability at all levels.

USDAW has a democratic structure which formally enables the rank and file a considerable say in decision making.

Through the USDAW Annual Delegate Meeting (whose delegates are elected direct from branch level), the membership can exercise authority on wages and conditions, general policy, delegations to labour movement conferences, political matters, union organisation

By Rick Grogan
(London CRS branch)
personal capacity

and administration and formally can approve or reject appointment of all officials.

The arrival of the Thatcher government and the loss of jobs and attacks on members' wages, conditions and rights make a fighting union essential. The union's officials, being paid generally far higher wages than the workers they represent, with the best will in the world cannot appreciate the gravity of the members situation.

The bosses' determination to hold wages in check and shed labour mean that the days when negotiation and compromise by USDAW officials brought gains are

over. USDAW is beginning a process of radicalisation never before experienced.

The fight to extend democracy is not merely a constitutional matter of the rules, but a question of representing our members interests. The USDAW Broad Left have to offer an alternative leadership and alternative policies.

The Broad Left has raised two democratic demands in particular. USDAW being the sixth largest affiliate of the TUC, and the fifth largest affiliate of the Labour Party is entitled to approximately 80 delegates to these bodies.

Every year the union branches elect 18 Labour Party Annual Conference delegates and 26 Trades Union Congress delegates. The Ex-

ecutive Council can appoint as many additional delegates as it sees fit, so it can make far more appointments than the membership can. This is clearly unacceptable.

Policies to stop Tory attacks

The Broad Left argues that all elected delegations in future should be increased in size by 50% with the E.C. limited to no more than seven additional appointments.

Another bone of contention is branch finance. Many branches have little or no direct control over their own funds, when they are ad-

ministered by the Divisional Office. Their political funds are administered by Central Office. A branch may decide to make a donation to a group of workers in dispute, only to have their decision overruled by an official at Central Office.

The Broad Left has raised this issue in the union, but clearly a campaign in the union to bring about a change on these and other issues is necessary.

The forthcoming union elections could be a start in the campaign for more accountability. With a vote for Jeff Price for President and Broad Left candidates for the Executive Council the membership could arm themselves far more effectively against the attacks of the bosses and the Tories.

USDAW BROAD LEFT RALLY

★ End low pay in USDAW
★ For a fighting democratic union

Sunday, 30 January
1pm-5pm
County Hall, London
Nearest tube and train station:
Waterloo

Speakers:

- ★ Tony Benn MP
- ★ Ken Livingstone, Labour leader GLC
- ★ Audrey Wise, PPC Woolwich East
- ★ Jeff Price, USDAW Broad Left Presidential Candidate
- ★ Plus E.C Broad Left Candidates



Industrial Reports

Weighell tries to influence NUR elections

"I am proud and delighted to have done my bit on the behalf of my members to bring back a measure of sanity to the Executive and give it a chance to take on the militants."

"I make no apologies for what I did and I would do it again, even if I knew the price would be the same."

This amazing statement from the ex-General Secretary of the NUR, Brother Sidney Weighell, referring to his conduct during the NEC elections at the 1982 Labour Party Conference, vindicates completely the membership's decision to accept his resignation.

Gone is all pretence about "not receiving assurances from the NUM." Here he appears to admit that the decision to ignore his union mandate, to ensure a right-wing majority on Labour's National Executive was deliberate and premeditated.

This revelation was part of an interview which appeared in the *Daily Mail* 4 January. It was predominantly the type of red-baiting and attacks upon socialists in the Labour Party which Sid Weighell is notorious for.

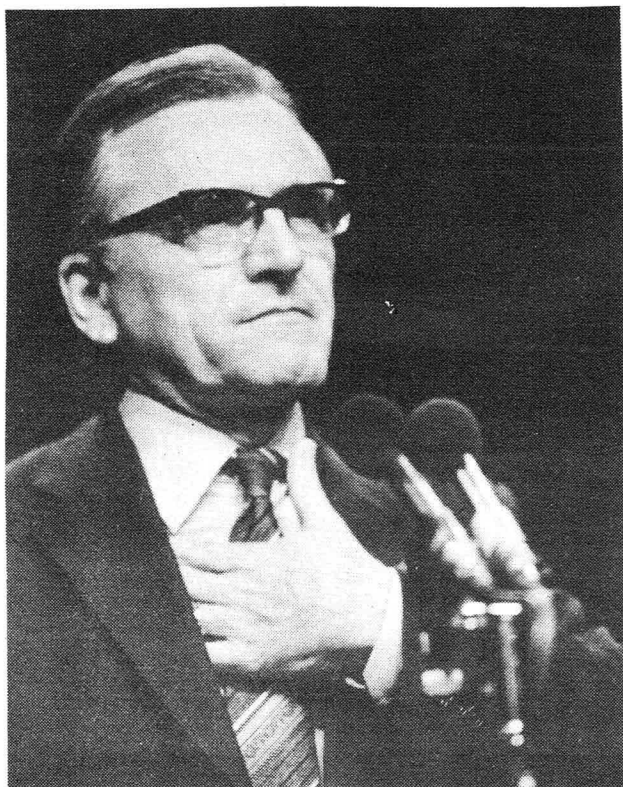
However, he also grasped the opportunity to use this most rabid of Tory rags to try to influence the result of the election for a new General Secretary, the balloting for which opened this week. In particular he stated, "They have to decide whether the man the Militant Tendency wants to win, Jimmy Knapp, will lead them down the right path."

This is but one in a whole series of attacks by Weighell and the right wing in general upon Jimmy Knapp's candidature, including appearances on television and radio and quotes in many newspapers. Such attacks have been going on from the day that Brother Knapp first announced his decision to stand, after Weighell's resignation was accepted.

Support for Jimmy Knapp

At that time Weighell used television interviews to publicise the fact that Brother Knapp had earlier failed an examination for Assistant General Secretary. In fact Jimmy Knapp's failure of the exam was treated with suspicion by many NUR members, particularly as he had then gained more nominations than the other candidates put together.

When this was pointed out by the *New Statesman*, Brother Weighell took it upon himself to have all NUR branches circularised with a letter attacking the ar-



Former General Secretary Sid Weighell Photo: Militant

ticle. He also had Bro Knapp's exam paper sent out too!

The refusal of NUR headquarters to authorise distribution of this poison didn't stop the intrepid fellow; he employed an agency entitled Letterstream to do the job. It is believed that they are non-union and furthermore, some members have wondered who financed this operation.

"Dirty tricks"

So the right wing, and in particular the former General Secretary, after years of pulpit thumping about the sanctity of ABM decisions; after attempting to use the rules, especially regarding "unofficial circulars" as grounds for a vicious and vindictive witch-hunt; after constant complaints about "outside influences" in the union, shows scant consideration for such worries now their own positions are at stake.

Most bizarre of all have been the unsigned poison letters which some Branches and NUR members have received. These have included articles from *Militant* about the present elections and written by members of the NUR.

They have been sent out by right-wing elements, who are now claiming, absolutely falsely, that *Militant* have circularised them to influence the election. In this way the right wing are attempting to prepare grounds for disqualifying Knapp in the event of his winning the vote. This has been followed by further copies of the articles but with attached notes describing it as *Militant's* "dirty tricks" etc.

This filth is all unsigned and has been sent

anonymously, presumably by those who are ashamed to reveal their own identity but are desperate to prevent the changes now coming in the NUR.

The constant outbursts against Jimmy Knapp—far from hindering—will assist his chances. Many NUR members are sceptical about all those who are standing for General Secretary. They are demanding to know where the candidates stand in relation to fighting British Rail and the Tories' Serpell Report.

New leader must defend jobs

They want a union committed to defending jobs, conditions and the industry, a union which is fully democratic with a leadership accountable to the members. They want a break with leaders who have used the rule book in a way which threatens democracy and discussion within the union, while running to the media to attack sister unions and the Labour Party.

That is why the hopes and aspirations of the membership have crystallised around support for Brother Knapp. Although he has not given a clear commitment on many of these issues, many railworkers hope he will be a break with the past.

Meanwhile, whatever leader is elected in the immediate future, no doubt support for the policies of *Militant* will continue to grow within the rail unions.

By Richard Sheppard

(Bristol No 4 NUR, personal capacity)

Timex workers fight redundancies

The American Timex Corporation have announced that 1,900 jobs are to go in their Dundee factory. They say it's because Timex has lost the contract to manufacture the Nimslo 3D camera.

It is the multinational Fred Olsen Group that holds the key to the future of the entire 4,300-strong workforce at Timex, Dundee. Mr Olsen just happens to own a large share if not the largest in the company that controls Nimslo International.

The camera is now to be made by two Japanese companies, Sunpak and Ricoh, who, according to Nimslo, will produce a better and cheaper camera than the Dundee factory.

A French company, Fralsen, has agreed to pay Nimslo FFr 26 million now, and a further FFr 17.6 million a year over the next 14 years so they can manufacture and distribute the 3D camera in France and Belgium. By the way, Fred Olsen also owns Fralsen.

The Dundee workers have not taken this lightly. They voted to take strike action if the company try to make any compulsory redundancies.

By Ali Hughes
(Tranent LPYS)

As quick as the workforce made this decision the bosses got together to try and frighten the workers.

Mr Clive Sinclair, of Sinclair Electronics, whose computers are manufactured at Timex's Dundee factory, said if the strike threat was no lifted and the workers did not behave better, it would affect plans for manufacturing a new pocket sized flat television set at Dundee.

Olsen's Timex Corporation has the exclusive selling right on all Sinclair products in the United States. The Olsen empire is in a position to dictate whether Sinclair remains in Dundee, or moves production elsewhere.

Therefore one man can

control the future of hundreds of workers. These workers had no opportunity to elect him. Norman Tebbit would like to curb the power of the trade unions, but we would like to see an extension of democracy in industry, with the nationalisation of such major companies under democratic workers' control and management. The threat to jobs at Timex shows the vital need for international solidarity of the labour movement to prevent these men of power from moving jobs around the world to suit their profits and play off one section of workers against another section.

Dundee itself is almost an industrial wasteland and like the whole of Britain cannot afford the loss of these jobs. Workers at Timex must not be left to fight alone. Giant monopolies cannot be allowed to destroy the lives of working people for the sake of making a quick profit. The labour and trade union movement must rally support for the Timex workers.

★ No redundancies!
★ Nationalise Timex!

Pay the Gasworkers

On 1 December union negotiators on behalf of 42,000 manual gasworkers submitted a seven point claim for a substantial increase on base rates, the consolidation of General Obligation Payment, longer holidays, better holiday pay, reduction in hours, improved shift and stagger payments and the introduction of a paternity scheme.

Despite the claim being submitted on 1 December, the Corporation did not reply until 6 January when they made an offer of around 4%. Given that the Gas industry is inherently prosperous and Gas prices have increased by 100% in the past three years it is not an offer gas workers find worthy of consideration.

A further meeting has been arranged for the end of January. We hope this is not the repeat of last year's fiasco where the annual increase was not announced until the first week in June, seven months after the claim was submitted and four months after the rise.

Gas workers are concerned that when compared with manual workers in other power industries they lag behind miners, electricity and oil refinery workers. It is worth noting that despite a reduction of 7,000 manual workers in the last ten years Gas sold has actually doubled from 8,040 million therms per annum in 1971 to 16,517 million therms p.a. in 1980.

A further point concerning many gas workers is that the negotiating council has

been arranged for the end of January. We hope this is not the repeat of last year's fiasco where the annual increase was not announced until the first week in June, seven months after the claim was submitted and four months after the rise.

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A GMWU gas worker spoke to Bob Wylie

set up a working party to design improvements to the redundancy payments. We should be fighting any moves towards redundancy, not re-negotiating redundancy payments.

We should be ever vigilant to ensure no job losses. In our fight for improvements in pay and conditions we must repeat the unity shown in the fight that saved Gas showrooms from closure.

AG Standard

Just fifty yards away from the new premises of the notorious anti-trade union firm Grunwick, another battle for union recognition is taking place.

The screen printing firm AG Standard at Borehamwood Hertfordshire has sacked members of the print union SOGAT '82 for forming a branch, and even called in the police to remove them from the premises.

One SOGAT member had been made redundant earlier in 1982 after recruiting to the union and suspicions of victimisation were confirmed in the autumn when a newly elected FOC (union convener) Arthur Bluestone and another union member were made redundant, given half an hour to leave the premises and were finally evicted by the police for "trespassing"!

Another rally and mass picket is being organised on Wednesday 26 January at 12.30 pm at AG Standard & Co factory Stirling corner, Stirling Way, Boreham Wood Herts, The London machine Branch of SOGAT 82 are organising coaches leaving the branch office Caxton House, 13/16 Borough Road, London SE1 at 11.30 am.

Broad left conference for trade unionists

The undemocratic use of the union block vote at last year's Labour Party conference caused a great deal of concern. Many rank and file activists felt that the democratic decisions taken by the membership at union conferences and policy making meetings were being flagrantly ignored by union leaders.

The Broad Left Organising Committee (TU) has called a conference of Broad Left supporters in all trade unions to discuss ways of making the union leaderships answerable to the rank

and file. Particularly, extending rank and file control of the use of the block vote will be discussed.

The conference will be held on 19 February at County Hall. The main topic for discussion will be 'The fight for the extension of trade union democracy'. Tony Benn will be speaking.

Delegates can be elected from Broad Left organisations and bona fide trade unions. Credentials can be obtained from: Phil Holt, 108 Princes Boulevard, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside.

WATER WORKERS...

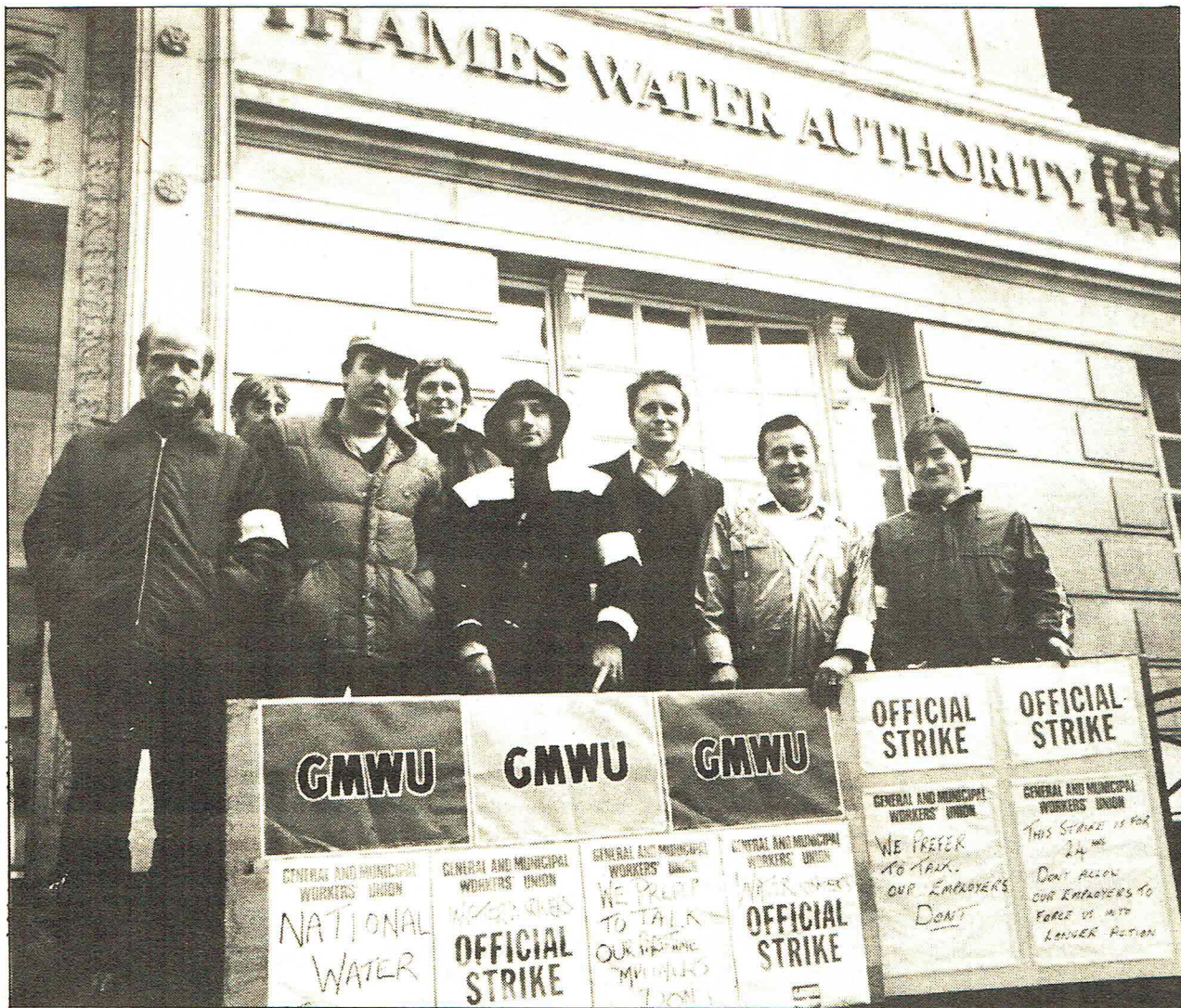


Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL) II

Water workers picketing in October last year

'WE NEED 15% AND NOTHING LESS'

By Steve Feely
 (AUEW Beckton STW
 Thames Water Authority)

Water workers are now set to strike from Monday for a decent living wage.

In rejecting, by 4 to 1 in the case of NUPE, the 4% offered by the Tories they have taken a lead in making up ground lost in living standards under the Tory government.

Dirty and dangerous

The claim itself is a justified one—15% on the basic wage plus payment to keep up with inflation. This would bring the pay of water workers into line with the pay of other public service workers. Water workers are out in all weathers and at all times of the day and night many of them doing a dirty and dangerous job. Thatcher is willing to give a 15% pay rise to the heads of nationalised industries but not to people who have to work hours of overtime to keep their families.

Apart from pay, there is another issue involved in the strike. The Tories are proposing to abolish the National Water Council. This will mean that in future there

will not be national wage negotiations and therefore less likelihood of effective national action to defend wages—weaker areas will be picked off one by one.

To act as "undertaker" for the NWC, the Tories have appointed a loyal puppet as chairman of the Council, to replace Sir Robert Marshall, who was known to oppose the 4% offer.

Three unions are involved in the strike, NUPE, TGWU and GMBATU. The National Committee of NUPE has already passed a resolution calling for tightly defined emergency cover and maximum inter-union co-operation at national and local level with other unions in the industry.

However, many of the workers have expressed concern at the lack of information and guidance coming from the union leaderships.

The Tory government has been a disaster for all workers. Given a bold leadership backed by an informed and involved membership the claim can be won in full and the Tories humiliated. Many workers will rightly see this as the beginning of a fight to force the Tories from office.

Workers take on bosses

Last year, when management at GEC Higher Openshaw said they wanted to introduce a computer system called Mecca, the joint staff unions (including APEX, ASTMS, MATSA and AUEW TASS) put in a claim for all members based on its introduction.

Management have refused this and on 11 January a failure to agree was reached at full time official level. On 12 January, management said that workers would be instructed to operate this equipment and if they refused they

would be taken off the payroll.

That day, members of staff were suspended so as agreed at a mass meeting the rest of the staff stopped work. On 13 January the joint staff unions tried to get suspensions lifted so that meaningful negotiations could take place, but management refused. About 500 union members are now on strike.

By Reg Sidebottom
 (AUEW TASS, GEC,
 Higher Openshaw)

Lorry Drivers

A meeting of Transport and General Workers Union shop stewards called last weekend for a regional lorry drivers strike in London and the South East to start from 31 January.

By an overwhelming 20 to 1 majority the stewards recommended strike action in rejection of the new £3 a week offer from employers in that area.

The offers from road haulage firms range from nil to 4% (basic pay at present is £87.40 a week). There has been an angry attempt to this further attempt to use mass unemployment to keep wages down. There will be strong attempts to get further strike action in the 20 other road haulage areas.

Miners

Just two days after a narrow decision by Snowdown colliery miners to accept a compromise deal to keep their pit open, a thousand NUM members from the entire Kent area voted to reject the Coal Board Plan.

Many miners who originally voted to accept the NCB offer to keep open the face but cutting the workforce by 250, later voted to fight for a better deal. Jack Collins the Kent NUM secretary said "should the Coal Board refuse to reopen negotiations on Snowdown the area will convene another mass meeting to decide what further action to take."

TORY AXE

Continued from page 1

been preparing its workforce for yet more redundancies. Also, the possibility of yard closures loom large.

Most of the volunteers for redundancy have already been taken up so British Shipbuilders are now looking for compulsory redundancies to give them an easy passage for yard closures without having to increase the redundancy pay as a carrot as they tried after Robb Caledon workers brave resistance to closure in Dundee.

The Sunderland Echo reports that 415 redundancies are looked for on Wearside itself, with a total of 1,800 jobs at risk nationally. All of these redundancies are threatened by March.

This is the background to the present round of negotiations between British Shipbuilders and the Unions, which began in London on 5 January. Undoubtedly at this meeting B.S. presented the unions with such a programme of retraction involving thousands of redundancies.

Incredibly, the union leadership agreed to keep the details of the national meeting secret until 20 January when a national meeting of shop stewards is being held in Newcastle. Such a meeting should have been called with days!

Instead, workers on the shop floor have been faced with a fortnight of uncertainty, of constant reminders by the press of the crisis facing shipyard workers.

But it is still not too late. The 20 January meeting

must refuse to accept further redundancies or yard closures. Since nationalisation British Shipbuilders have shed over 20,000 jobs—enough is enough!

The 20 January Conference should instruct all shop stewards to launch a campaign in the shipyards based on one to one discussion and on section meetings where the issues can be discussed in detail, leading to a mass meeting at each yard.

A campaign of this nature is the only way confidence could be restored in the mass of shipyard workers so that a fightback against redundancies can be successful.

On 17 February another Conference is to be held to report back from the area meeting. Such a conference could be armed with a mandate to fight redundancies on a national basis, to call if necessary, a national strike of all shipyard workers (Naval as well as Merchant).

It is wrong to think that a national shipyard strike could not be successful. A well conducted campaign would gain the ear of other workers who are also seeking to lead in the fight for redundancies. Shipyard workers for example, could appeal to British seamen, who are losing jobs at a rate of 100 per week, to support them with positive action. To be successful the fight has to be broadened out.

The time has come to stand and fight. At stake is the future of Merchant Shipbuilding. Failure to fight now would undoubtedly sound the death-knell of Merchant Shipbuilding in Britain.

A decisive victory however, would safeguard the jobs of many thousands of shipyard workers, and give new hope to millions of others under sentence of the dole, due to the crisis of the capitalist system.

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