

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

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20p

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## Bermondsey By Election

# SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR LABOUR VICTORY



The same day that unemployment reached its highest figure for over fifty years, stock market shares reached new record levels.

That is the stark reality of life in Tory Britain in 1983—the rich getting richer while working class people suffer mass unemployment, falling living standards, and declining services.

By Bernie  
O'Connor

(Vice-Chairman  
Bermondsey CLP)

Workers face a grim future as long as the economy is run by the rich in the interests of their private profits.

In Bermondsey we're at the sharp end of Thatcher's monetarism. Over one in five are out of work. Industry

has been decimated here. Housing costs are rising and the estates are getting worse. National policies are needed to cure this.

A Labour government is needed that would remove the crippling burden of debt charges and Tory cuts from local councils. Over 50% of council house rents go straight back to the moneylenders in interest charges.

Militant supporters have consistently argued against rent or rate rises and for no cuts in services (see article on Southwark Council, p. 3). A lead needs to be given by the Labour Party and trade unions in local government to confront the Tory government head on. Force the

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## IN DANGER LONDON'S THOUSANDS OF HOMELESS YOUTH

By  
Jim Chrystie

THE GRUESOME hunt for bodies in a North London garden gives a chilling Victorian reminder of the desperation facing young homeless people today.

No secure home, no job, inadequate welfare provisions, and little money. After months of such

deprivation, they can become prey to anyone who offers them a warm place to stay.

"Leave home and get a job" was Tebbit's advice to the unemployed. But his government has made sure that there are no homes to go to, no proper social welfare to provide for needs, and no jobs at the end of the search.

All the charities which try to look after young homeless in London report that an already desperate situation has spiralled out of control

since the Tories came to office. The New Horizon Centre, which looks after 16-25 year olds, has seen the numbers coming to its offices treble in the last five years, from 800 in 1978, 1,200 in 1979, to over 2,500 last year.

One hostel alone, the Centrepoint Night Shelter, had 9,826 requests for assistance in the first ten months of 1982. The West London Day Centre now has 3,000 people coming every month to its doors looking for jobs and



Unemployed and homeless in Central London. Nearly 10,000 people sought help at this shelter in 1982

Ian McIntosh (IFL)

somewhere to sleep.

The Tory government's response has been to slash the Welfare State and virtually demolish the housing programme. Since they came

to office, government expenditure on housing has been cut by 55%.

In their expenditure plans for 1983-4, announced earlier this month, housing

will account for only 2% of all government spending, compared to 13%, i.e. over six times that amount, ear-

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# Militant Kangaroo Courts and by-elections

Last week the editorial board of *Militant* wrote to the Labour Party General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, asking for details of the allegations and substantiating evidence which they were expected to answer at the NEC meeting on the 23rd.

Their letter also pointed out that the meeting was to take place the day before the Bermondsey by-election. "We would therefore urge you and the officers of the NEC", it said, "to reconsider the position and postpone the proceedings against us until after the by-election."

The letter was answered with a blunt rebuff a few days later. "My letter of 3 February 1983", the General Secretary wrote, "gives you particulars of the facts relied upon in support of the allegation that you are a member of the 'Militant Tendency'. It is on that allegation that I invited your comments."

The reply also makes it clear that no evidence will be forthcoming: "In the light of the judgement of Mr. Justice Nourse given on 15 December, 1982, I do not accept that you are entitled to the evidence which was before Mr. Hayward and Mr. Hughes whose report on the nature of the 'Militant Tendency' was endorsed by conference."

This disgraceful reply, specifying no 'charges' other than an *assertion* of guilt, and refusing point-blank to furnish any evidence, has more in common with preparations for a Stalinist show trial than a meeting in the correct traditions of the Labour Party.

It is clear that the right wing of the NEC are determined to go ahead with this mock hearing—the procedure of which has still not been outlined to the five who are to be expelled—against the overwhelming weight of public opinion in the Party itself. Under the circumstances, the editorial board have had no other recourse but to continue to campaign in the labour movement and to pursue legal action.

The action of the NEC is contrary to the constitution and the best traditions of the Labour Party and goes against all the norms of natural justice. It would certainly not be the fault of *Militant*, as Audrey Wise has pointed out, if greater justice could be obtained in the capitalist courts than in the hearings of the NEC.

The odium for the continued splits in the Labour Party lie squarely with the right wing. They now seem completely oblivious of the damage that they are doing to the Labour Party, blinded as they are by their fear of the growth of socialist ideas in the Party.

Jim Mortimer is living an illusion if he believes that the NEC can engineer a 'controlled' expulsion. The witch-hunt will gather a momentum of its own. There is already ample

evidence of the introduction of an alien attitude into the party apparatus—of enquiries, hearings, 'evidence'-gathering (which, judging by the 'evidence' the NEC are afraid to release, will consist of scurrilous gossip and petty tittle-tattle), allegations, denunciations, etc., etc.—not least from head office itself.

The rank and file of the party are absolutely sickened with the debilitating effect of the witch-hunt. It has been reported that the individual membership dropped by 20,000 last year. That alone is an indication of the complete despair of many party members at the continued attacks on the party rank and file and the refusal of the right wing NEC and leadership to attack the Tories.

What makes the NEC show trial all the more scandalous is the fact that it takes place in a pre-election period, and the day before the Bermondsey by-election.

Labour Party members will have noted the absence of criticism of Labour-renegade Bob Mellish from the right wing of the Parliamentary Party and the NEC. John O'Grady, the 'real Labour' candidate has boasted about the fact that he still holds a Labour Party card.

Why has the NEC, which has found time aplenty to hound socialists in the party, not had the time to consider O'Grady's position? O'Grady has announced that he would seek the Labour whip if he were elected. Why have the officers of the Parliamentary party not issued a firm public refusal to O'Grady in advance of the election?

Perhaps the answer lies in Mellish's comments to the *Times* (15 February). "I talk to a lot of Labour Party people", he said, "and you would be surprised at the number of Labour Party people who are praying that John O'Grady will win. And I am talking of a high level."

Like the *Times* correspondent, Party members will conclude "There is no doubt at Westminster that several senior Labour Party figures would like to see Mr Tatchell defeated, if only as a signal to the party's hard left." Moreover, the suspicions of the party grass roots will be heightened by the way in which the right wing are actively sabotaging conference decisions on unilateralism and other issues.

The activities of the right wing will be a big obstacle to a Labour victory at the general election and in Bermondsey, but in the long run the party rank and file will win the day. No witch hunt has ever succeeded in the past in stamping out ideas.

The right may hope to crush Marxist ideas by expelling five individuals. They will fail, and they will seek more expulsions, then more, then more. But in the long run they will discover that far from reducing the influence of *Militant*, they will have enhanced it enormously, and undermined their own support in the process.

# LETTER FROM BENN

Last week Tony Benn wrote to the *Militant* Editorial Board, posing a series of questions, outlined below with the answers.

"1. How long have each of you been members of the Labour Party?

Ted Grant—33 years  
Peter Taaffe—23 years  
Lynn Walsh—19 years  
Clare Doyle—19 years  
Keith Dickinson—25 years  
120 years of membership in all.

2. Do you accept the obligations of party membership, as set out in the declaration signed by all party members?

Yes  
3. Did you enter the party, alone or with others, with the intention of organizing to take control of the Party by a secret conspiracy designed to subvert its constitution?

No  
4. Do you accept that, under the constitution, the policy of the Party is laid down at annual conference?

Yes  
5. Do you believe that Labour's election Manifesto

should include the major policy decisions reached at Conference and that a Labour Government should seek to implement those policies?

Yes  
6. Do you accept that the Labour Party now includes, should include, men and women holding a wide range of opinions about the nature of Socialism, and how it can best be achieved; and that each have the right to campaign for support for their opinions within the Party?

Yes  
7. Are you opposed to the principle of Parliamentary Democracy as a means to achieve social progress?

No  
8. Do you advocate the use of violence to overthrow Parliament and the rights of the electorate?

No  
9. Do you believe that a Socialist society can be achieved or should be established in Britain,

without the support and consent of the British people, as expressed through the ballot box?

No  
10. Do you want to see a Labour Government elected to power and are actively working to that end?

Yes  
11. Is *Militant* newspaper a secret conspiracy organized to damage or destroy the Labour Party or the democratic rights of the British people?

No  
12. Are the supporters of *Militant* newspaper in any way different from those many other groups, which have long existed in the Party, and which publish newspapers, employ staff and organize to promote their views by holding meetings, seminars or conferences?

No  
13. Would you be ready to discuss with the NEC any changes in the practices followed by supporters of *Militant* newspaper which might assist the Party?

Yes  
Tony Benn released the questionnaire and replies to

the press. The *Militant* Editorial Board also issued a statement, saying:

"We have had no difficulty in answering these questions to the satisfaction, we believe, of the great majority of Labour Party and Trade Union members. The right-wing of the Labour Party would have great difficulty in answering these same questions.

"For instance, on the very day we received Tony Benn's letter, Roy Hattersley was advocating 'multilateral disarmament' when he is well aware that the Labour Party Conference voted overwhelmingly in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament. He also supported the introduction of an 'incomes policy' by a Labour government which has been clearly rejected by successive Labour Party Conferences.

"No 'disciplinary action' is proposed against right-wing spokesmen like Hattersley and Denis Healey yet the NEC is proposing to expel *Militant* Editorial Board members who support Labour Party Conference decisions."

## Police and the black community



Arrest on recent demonstration in the on-going Colin Roach campaign.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

The fight against police harassment is not a struggle for black Asian communities alone.

The methods used to abuse these communities are already being used to harass labour movement activists.

In Hackney last Saturday a peaceful protest march over the death of Colin Roach in the lobby of a local police station (details *Militant*, 28 January and 4 February) was constantly being stopped by the police. Right at the end of the march the police moved in and arrested one marcher, and when others protested they were arrested as well; in all nine people were detain-

By Mark Avis  
(Newham North West LPYS)

ed. It is essential that the labour movement really takes up the question for an independent enquiry into how Colin Roach died, and how the inner cities are policed.

In Newham the local labour movement has been active in the campaign to defend eight Asian youth who have been charged with conspiracy. The 'Newham Eight Defence Campaign' has

begun laying plans for a national campaign over the coming months. The Crown Court trial will probably be held in the summer and it is planned to then hold a national picket.

In Newham there will be regular open "supporters meetings" to keep up the momentum of the campaign and to keep supporters informed. The last one attracted over a hundred people, representative in the main of local organisations.

### Socialist support

In other parts of the country the campaign is calling on the labour movement and

black and Asian organisations to set up "supporters' groups" to publicise the case.

Local Labour Parties, LPYS branches and trade unions are already actively involved in the campaign and in nearby Leyton the labour Party has planned a public meeting from which it is hoped to set up a supporters' group.

It is vital that all socialists are active in fighting against police harassment and for the control of the police by representative, democratically elected committees. Without this control Britain may move even further along the road to the "police state" envisaged by Orwell in "1984".

# Bermondsey needs socialism!

## 'Defend our people from Tory attacks'

**AFTER Labour's remarkable sweeping victory in last May's council election, the way should have been set for Southwark council, with a new leadership proclaiming itself socialist, to play a major part in fighting off Tory government assaults on local working class people.**

Militant supporters and other left councillors repeatedly stressed that the role of a Labour council should be to bring together trade unions, tenants and local Labour Parties to resist Heseltine's attacks. We should not be putting the burden on to local working people's backs either by rent or rate rises or cuts in services.

Leading members of the Labour group told us that some councillors had yet to make the leap from Labour Party activists into being "councillors". We were told to "be reasonable" and show a "commonsense approach to running the council". However, left-wing councillors were becoming more and more angry.

Previous motions calling for no cuts, rent or rate rises had been defeated or amended at Labour Group but on 23 January the following resolution was moved and seconded by Militant supporters Brian Kelly (Waverly Ward) and John Bryan (Bricklayers Ward):

"That Southwark Council makes no rent or rate increase for the financial year 1983/84, further it will not make any cuts in services or jobs. To do so will be a betrayal of the working people in Southwark.

"To impose a massive rent or rate increase on people already suffering as a result of this government is to misunderstand the reasons for Labour Parties in Southwark seeking election to the Council last May. We were elected as Labour members, as socialists, not as Liberals, SDP or Tories.

"The only way to defend our people against these vicious attacks is to go on the offensive ourselves:

a) using the anti-cuts campaign committee, the unions, tenants' associations, and local Labour Parties to state where the problems lie; with the Tory Party and the Heseltine Bill.  
b) To organise along with the whole of the London Labour-controlled councils a massive resistance to any increases or cuts.  
c) To force the Labour Party leadership to come out with a firm commitment to defend those councils that fight the Tories. To ensure that one of the first acts of a Labour government on its return to power is to restore the rate support grant stolen from the people.  
d) To further ensure that no government whether it

be Labour or Tory will have the power to interfere with or penalise local authorities for carrying out their legitimate and elected functions...

"In a possible election year we have the opportunity to begin the fight to return to power a Labour government dedicated to the needs of working class people and their families, who will fight on bold socialist policies backed by the power and commitment of rank and file trade unionists."

After a furious debate, in which councillors supporting the motion pointed to the devastating impact rate increases of about 30% would have on working class people, the vote was a 21-21 tie, with only the acting chair's casting vote defeating the motion.

All was not lost, however, as at least a rent freeze was carried to add to the existing no redundancy policy on the council.

We can now begin to see the start of a new mood of militancy amongst the socialist councillors. We must continue to place the interests of working class people above the interests of the people who do not or indeed will not understand the movement that they purport to represent.

**By Councillors  
Brian Kelly  
and John Bryan**  
(Southwark Council,  
personal capacity)



"WE'VE had to suffer it all down here. Every bloody thing has been thrown at us. I can remember as a little girl, in the first war you used to get the zeppelins fly up the river to drop bombs on us.

"You couldn't really hear them coming, but a red light on top of the Town Hall used to come on and we all ran for cover. You'd see kids being dragged down the road with no clothes on because you didn't have dressing gowns in those days.

"Then the second war, and the bombers. You heard them all right. We had a lovely house in those days, we came out one morning and the sods had flattened it.

"My husband, he's dead now, worked on the barges. Used to come home in the mornings soaking wet but at least it was work, then my boys, two of them, they went down the docks. They've moved away now, and the docks are gone.

"Everybody's out of work and I'm stuck in this chicken coop they call a flat. I miss my old house.

"Nobody's ever done anything for us round here. You get lots of big promises but the place is still dead. I wasn't going to vote this time but you lads have cheered me up. I probably won't live to see any changes but my grandchildren might."

**An old lady in a Bermondsey council flat spoke to John Gibbs**

## 'Make Labour a working-class party'

**Jack Murphy, a carpenter, chairman of Bermondsey UCATT and long-standing member of Bermondsey Labour Party spoke to Militant reporters.**

"A LOT of people moved away from Bermondsey. The war started it. Until recently South East England seemed like a gold mine, plenty of work for everyone. That's why there are a lot of old people here, many of the young ones left.

"That was largely due to the lack of decent living conditions and the dereliction of industry. Not long after the war, we were discussing the problem of the disruption Tower Bridge caused to traffic when it went up. Little did we think that 25 or 30 years later the Upper Pool, the docks, would be closed down.

"There aren't many jobs anywhere locally. Unemployment hasn't hit my union branch as much as many others, we've got more members working on local authorities. But the trade as a whole is in a bad state with high unemployment.

"Apprenticeships are being completely run down. Only the local authorities seem to train them, the big private firms don't, they rely on sub-contractors. The big firms look for lads with 'O' levels for bricklayers,

carpenters, painters, they're all really looking for administrative staff.

"There's sub-contractors everywhere, even Southwark Corporation do it and not just for specialised trades. Private firms sometimes only employ the tea boy and the agent, the rest are subbies.

### Attlee— right-wing revolutionary

"We're used to unemployment. In the old days, in one job I was hired at eight o'clock, but I'd been sacked, told the boss I'd take it up through the union, and got my tools in the left luggage office at London Bridge by nine o'clock! All because they found out I was a union activist.

"But the Labour Party has got to look after the working class. A lot of people shout that Labour's not the party it used to be, it's gone so left wing. But Attlee was seen as a right winger in the 'forties but that government got the NHS and nationalisations, these 'moderates' would say he was a revolutionary!

"Years ago, the TGWU had eleven branches in the constituency, due to Surrey

Docks, as a collector I had 250 on my books, and I had a sale of 150 of our magazines. We could afford to pay a full time agent and buy premises with dues and union affiliations.

"But the Labour Party moved away from the working class to middle and upper class people for a long time. Mellish is now supporting John O'Grady whose track record as leader of Southwark Council should condemn him to bottom of the poll. O'Grady ignored people, like when he wanted a new town hall costing millions.

"When I challenged him about the council running down direct labour and using the lump on jobs in their firm Southwark Construction, all he said was, 'It's not illegal'. (Southwark Construction was managed by managers or the private firm Bovis. Sir Keith Joseph was then a Bovis director!—Ed.)

"He agreed to big rent rises and opposed the growth of social services.

"We've gone past the days when people in Bermondsey automatically voted Labour but that's largely due to people like O'Grady. You have to convince people. You've got to be a working class party."



Militant supporters have been in the forefront of the campaign to win the Bermondsey by-election for Labour.  
Photo: Denis Doran (Militant)

### BERMONDSEY MILITANT READERS' MEETING

'Which way forward for Labour after the by-election?'  
Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant)  
John Bryan (Southwark Councillor)  
Chair: Bernie O'Connor (Vice-chair, Bermondsey LP)  
Monday 28 February, 7.30 pm  
Rotherhithe Civic Centre, Albion Street, SE16  
ALL WELCOME

### MASS CANVASS

Sunday 20 Feb  
10.30 am  
Big turn-out vital  
133 Lower Road  
SE16

# ads

**NEW RATE**  
**CLASSIFIED:** 10p per word, minimum 10 words.  
**SEMI-DISPLAY:** £2 per 2 column centimetres.  
 All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

## Militant readers meetings

**SHEPHERDS BUSH, W.** London. Speaker: Clare Doyle (Editorial Board, *Militant*), Wednesday, 2 March at 8 pm at Village Hall, Wood Lane—Bulwer Street junction, Shepherds Bush Green, London W12.  
 (Tube: Metro. and Central lines. Buses: 12, 49, 72, 88, 105, 207, 220, 237, 295).

**STROUD** on Tuesday, 22 February at 7.30 pm at Stroud Library Reading Rooms, Lansdown Rd., Stroud. Speaker: Mick Whale (LPYS National Committee) and Pearl Hughes (ex-TGWU steward, Freemans).

**BRISTOL:** 'The Way Forward for Labour and Trade Unions' on Wednesday 23 February at 7.30 pm. Speaker Bryan Beckingham. At the Swan, Stokes Cross, Bristol.

**SHIPLEY** Marxist discussion group. Thursday 24 February 'Ireland, Sectarianism or Socialism'.

Thursday 10 March 'Women and the Family'. Thursday 24 March 'Socialism and war'. All meetings at Shipley Pride, Shipley at 8 pm.

**BLACKWOOD** Marxist Discussion Group held regularly. If interested telephone Bargoed 834131.

### CLASSIFIED

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE** labour and trade union youth day school. Saturday 19 March, 10.30 am, at Gladstone Community Centre, Cromwell Road, Peterborough.

Speakers: Kevin Ramage (LPYS National Chairman), Dave Nellist (Labour PPC Coventry SE), Brian Richman (Peterborough TGWU), Bob Childs (Cambridge ASLEF). (All speakers in a personal capacity). For further information contact Chris Ballad, 0223 211229.

**BRADFORD NORTH LABOUR PARTY** "Defend Public Services". PUBLIC MEETING on FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY, at 7.30 pm at Textile Hall, Westgate, Bradford.

Speakers: Pat Wall (Labour's PPC Bradford North); Terry Fields (FBU Executive and Labour's PPC Kirkdale).

**JILL** (née Hayes) and **BRIAN** Jones of Southampton are pleased to announce the birth of a baby daughter, Katherine on 9 February. Another reason for socialism.

**NEW MILITANT** leaflet out now! It's an election year special! Advertise your local readers meeting with this new leaflet. Free, from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

**HACKNEY** Youth Rally: '£20 weekly grant for all students over 16'. Thursday 24 February, 7.30 pm, Assembly Room, Hackney Town Hall. Speakers to be announced.

**BRADFORD MASS CANVASS** Undercliffe Ward, 27 February, 11 am. Meet East Ward Labour Club. Details: ring Bill Reed 633374 or J Bawker 306492

**BLACK WORKERS AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM** Black and Asian discussion group.

**MOSS SIDE**, Sunday 27 February at 2.30 pm on "South Africa".

**OLDHAM**, Sunday 20 March at 2.30 pm. on "The fight against unemployment and racialism".

For further details phone: 061-226 3189.

### MILITANT MAY DAY GREETINGS

Show your solidarity with a socialist newspaper. Get your trade union, Labour Party, LPYS, Women's Council, Shop Stewards Committee or Trades Council organisation to send greetings to *Militant*, on the traditional workers' day.

All copy to reach Circulation Department, *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN by WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL. Rates:

3 col cm ..... £4  
 6 col cm ..... £6  
 1/16 page ..... £10  
 1/8 page ..... £20  
 1/4 page ..... £40

# £50,000 needed by April 9

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 9th April
Eastern	402		2700
East Midlands	518		2850
Humberside	131		1500
London East	517		3300
London West	307		1650
London South	436		2500
Manchester & Lancs	442		3000
Merseyside	729		3100
Northern	276		3750
Scotland East	166		1850
Scotland West	272		2800
Southern	577		4000
South West	322		2000
Wales East	190		1500
Wales West	194		2000
West Midlands	474		2800
Yorkshire	406		3700
Others	692		5000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>7061</b>		<b>50000</b>

**EASTERN REGION LPYS conference, after collections for the LPYS Campaign Fund and for the water-workers, also held a collection for the Militant Fighting Fund and £308 is on its way! This is the sort of money we need to be able to stand up to the Tories in all their disguises!**

By Clare Doyle

Other LPYS Branches to support us included Port Talbot, Gosport, Cowie, Sunderland, Wallsend, Blackburn and Newcastle North. Do comrades in YOUR branch support the ideas of *Militant*? Do they support us with cash?

Scottish comrades raised nearly £100 for us at a recent meeting, as well as making a donation of £30 to the Timex workers, and just over £100 has come in from supporters on Merseyside. More and more trade union officers and delegates are putting their expenses where it counts—thanks particularly to comrades in Newcastle (TGWU Youth delegates), Leicester, Blackpool, and

# Make financing Militant your priority

Co. Durham, also to members of Hull no 12 AUEW Branch and TGWU 5/316 Branch (Birmingham).

Many Labour Party members are incensed at the recent attempts to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in Bermondsey, and no doubt this has had an effect in Tuebrook (Liverpool) where the comrades have made a £50 donation(!), in Enfield where £10 came from a collection at a Day School, and in Birmingham Ladywood.

Of course, you don't need to wait for your next meeting

to send us a donation—thanks to C Gwynne (Poole), J Marston (Liverpool), S Cawkwell (Hull), A Campbell (Chester) and P Crack (Bristol) who all donated £10 or over. We can't mention everyone who's given us money: but a few names who'll have to be "proxies" are D Marsden (Uxbridge LPYS), T Roberts (Kirkby LPYS), L Arnell (Maidstone LPYS), C Lawrance (Leeds), H Browning (Llanelli), P Foster (Portsmouth Poly), B Roonie (ISTC, Teesside), A Searby (NUB, Scunthorpe),

E Thornton (Retired, Blackburn), four members of Coventry LPYS, A Shipperbottom (Orkneys) and H Hawkins (Sittingbourne LP).

To everyone else who hasn't had a mention—why not send us a letter saying what you and your mates like (or don't like!) about *Militant*, and how you've managed to persuade them to sell *Militant* and contribute to our funds?

This week's total of £1,683.62 unfortunately does not match up to the resources we will be needing in the coming months. There must be a lot of readers who have got a donation to *Militant* somewhere in their priorities. We appeal to them to copy the LPYS members in the Eastern region: make *Militant* your priority this week!

**TOTAL THIS WEEK: £1,683**

## Militant from Isle of Man to Midlothian

ONE WORKER in NW London when sold a *Militant* said "it's a crime that the labour movement doesn't have a daily, why isn't *Militant* daily?"

To meet the vast machine of the bosses propaganda we have only a 16-page weekly but our supporters have taken up the challenge! Sellers in Swansea, Amman Valley, Neath and Plymouth have doubled their sales since the beginning of the year! Let us hear about your sales success and we will print them in the *Militant*.

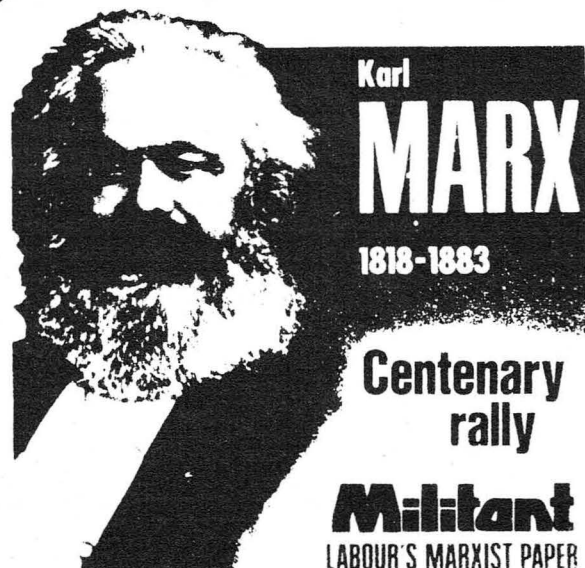
One new reader in the Isle of Man has already found five more since the start of the year and now they are also donating to the fighting fund! From as far apart as miners in Lothian, health-

workers in London, shipyard workers in Sunderland and carworkers in Swansea, workers are reading *Militant* at work.

Why not take out a bulk order for your workmates, minimum 5 (for sale or return) post free. The Tories and Labour's right wing are trying to knock us down; we can only rely on our supporters on the estates and in the workplaces to sell and build *Militant*.

The best way to help us is to spread the ideas of socialism and sell as many copies as possible to your comrades in the Labour Parties, TU's and on the estates.

Contact: *Militant*, Circulation Dept., 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN, or phone 01- 986 3828.



### MARX CENTENARY RALLIES

This year is the centenary of the death of Karl Marx, who died on March 14 1883. Throughout his life, Marx provided the labour movement with an analysis of capitalist society as a preparation for the emancipation of the working class.

*Militant*—Labour's Marxist paper—has organised a series of regional rallies to commemorate the event, and explain the relevance of Marxism today.

**LONDON:** Sunday 20 March. Speakers: L Walsh, P Taaffe, + 'Sam the Man' CAST Theatre Group. Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1.

**BIRMINGHAM:** Saturday 19 March. Speakers: L Walsh, B Ingham. The Assembly Hall, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham.

**NOTTINGHAM:** Sunday 13 March, 10.30 am-5.00 pm. Speakers: K Dickinson, P Jarvis. Byron Lecture Theatre, Trent Poly, Shakespeare Street.

**SWANSEA:** Monday 14 March, 7.30 pm. Speaker: P Taaffe. Dynevor School, Kingsway, Swansea.

**CARDIFF:** Tuesday 15 March. Speaker: P Taaffe. Royal Hotel, St Mary's Street.

**LIVERPOOL:** Sunday 20 March, 12.00. Speakers: E Grant, K Dickinson. AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant.

**NORTHERN REGION:** Saturday 26 March, 10.30 am. Speaker: C Doyle. The Oval Community Centre, Concorde, Washington, Sunderland.

**LEEDS:** Saturday 12 March. Speaker: T Saunois. The Swarthmore Education Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds.

**GLASGOW:** Monday 14 March, 7.30 pm. Speaker: E Grant. The Mitchell Theatre, Granville Street, Glasgow.

**HUMBERSIDE:** Saturday 19 March, 12.00-4.30 pm. Speakers: J Pickard, T Saunois. Trades & Labour Club, Beverley Road, Hull. (Social in evening)

**BRISTOL:** Monday 14 March, 7.30 pm. Speaker: L Walsh. The Swan, Stokes Croft, Bristol.

**EDINBURGH:** Saturday 19 March, 10.00 am. Speakers: R Apps, E Grant. Playhouse Theatre, Edinburgh.

**MANCHESTER:** Thursday 17 March. Speaker: R Sewell.

# NO TO CAMPUS CUTS

The 20,000 young people turned away from university last October due to the Tory cuts will be pleased to know that at least one of their number has got to university.

Prince Edward, despite his 'below average' 'A' Level passes has been spared the pressure of sitting the entrance exam and instead has been offered a place at Cambridge. But for other university students, along with campus workers, the cuts continue to bite.

For this reason the 'Day of Occupations' called by the National Union of Students for 23 February will be a demonstration of anger by thousands of students, who will be looking for the means to defeat the Tories' attacks.

The cuts can be fought providing that the action taken has a clear programme of demands and is linked with the struggles of the labour movement. Last April at Aberdeen, the university authorities attempted to introduce 57 compulsory redundancies. The threat of action by the local Association of University Teachers (AUT) forced the university to postpone a decision on redundancies until December and, in the interval incur a deficit of £200,000.

But eight months later, with no sign of a national lead around a clear programme from either the AUT or the NUS, the lure of voluntary redundancy with guaranteed redundancy payments seemed a safer prospect for some of the older workers.

This shows the need for a clear programme to fight the cuts and the need for a national campaign. If a national campaign had been launched many university authorities could have been forced to defy the government's instructions and go into deficit to avoid making cuts.

By avoiding all cuts and redundancies the confidence of the students and campus workers would have been raised. This would have given a breathing space for the NUS and the campus unions to launch a national

campaign against the Tories' attacks on all aspects of the public sector.

No one could deny for example that the present battle of the water workers is the same fight as that by the bus workers against pay limits, or the students and the campus workers against the meagre offer of a 4% grant increase and the education cuts. The 'Day of Occupations' on the 23 February and the national demonstration on 9 March should be used to explain the strategy of defying the cuts through deficit financing and the need for the fullest possible public sector unity in the battle against the Tories.

Indeed, as a result of joint activity with trade unions against the cuts, NUS Wales now has two observer seats at the Wales TUC Annual Conference.

At the same time the NUS leaders should approach the National Executive of the Labour Party to pledge that any university forced to go into deficit to avoid making cuts would have such a deficit and any interest charges incurred wiped out by a future Labour government. Although Labour's Education spokesman, Neil Kinnock, has dismissed this as a "miracle cure" which "no-one with a brain in their head" (letter to *Socialist Youth*, April '82) could support, a concerted campaign directing students and campus workers into the Labour Party could soon change his mind! A Labour government committed to socialist policies of nationalisation under workers' control could guarantee a massive expansion of resources in education.

With an election only months away, a firm pledge from Labour's NEC could be crucial to the success of the cuts campaign. It would remove any excuses the university authorities may make for not going into deficit—and it would give an added reason, if one was needed, for students and campus workers to join the fight to defeat the Tories and return a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

**By David Jones**  
(Welsh Labour Students Regional Committee)

# FIGHT THE TORIES COME TO CONFERENCE

During their long and bitter pay dispute last year thousands of young health workers became active in the labour movement for the first time.

**By Sue Pearce**  
(NUPE and Brent East LPYS)

Despite the fact that they did not win their full claim they have not become demoralised. Many remember the tremendous unity and will to struggle on the part of the health workers and the whole working class.

At the same time many can see it was the weakness of the leadership that led to the strike dissipating. These young workers see the need for a fighting leadership in the trade union. They are looking for an alternative to what is presently offered.

At this year's LPYS conference one of the most important debates will be on the NHS.

The recently leaked Tory "think-tank" proposals show what will be in store if the Tories are re-elected. They would slash the health service in the same way as they've slashed British Leyland or British Steel to pave the way for privatisation.

Only this time they won't be dealing with cars or steel but people's lives!

It is vital that every health worker gets along to LPYS conference. Nationally NUPE have agreed to sponsor thirteen visitors to conference. NUPE members should contact their divisional organiser and demand to be sponsored.

The LPYS has built up tremendous respect with hospital workers through the pay dispute. The LPYS should now be visiting hospitals asking shop stewards' committees to send a visitor or sponsor an unemployed youth to the conference.

Where this has been done it has met with a ready response. Leaflets, posters and TU letters are available free from the LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

## LPYS Success

The North West Regional Conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists recorded the highest attendance ever. Over 240 delegates and visitors attended from 50 LPYS branches.

At a fringe meeting



Bikers against the cuts.

"I went to the LPYS conference for the first time last year. Listening to the debates there convinced me to join the LPYS.

"Health workers can see every day what the Tories are doing to the working class in their jobs. We face privatisation, low pay, cuts, anti-union legislation, the Tory attacks seem never ending.

"I would urge all health workers to come to the LPYS conference to see that there is an alternative and an organised fight back to the Tories and the lies they come out with every day in the press."

**Kathy Cruise**  
NUPE, Maida Vale Hospital

## A 'great way' to cut wages

The £1 million advertising campaign heralding the new Youth Training Scheme proclaims: "It's a great way to get real training and work experience." But at what expense?

The retail industry have come up against a few difficulties in organising their part of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). 16-year-olds who are taken on in the retail industry at present are protected by the Wages Council's minimum wage of £38 and two weeks' annual leave.

However, the YTS will be offering £25 and 15 days' annual leave. Lawyers representing the retail industry have advised them of these conflicting conditions of service. They have recommended that the industry should only take on trainees

"The LPYS supported us all the way through our pay dispute. I'll be coming to the LPYS conference and I'll be asking our joint shop stewards' committee to sponsor two visitors to conference."

**Ruth Herdman**  
Chairman  
JSSC St Mary's Hospital Paddington

## Socialist Youth in full flood

NEW ORDERS for *Socialist Youth* from LPYS branches are still flooding in.

1,800 new orders have come in in the last month. In fact every copy of the February *Socialist Youth* has been distributed from the LPYS head office.

But new orders are not enough. If *Socialist Youth* is to survive, it is necessary to double the paid sales. Branches are finding it easy to sell *Socialist Youth*.

Erith and Crayford sold 30 copies in two days, 18 at a Labour Party meeting then 12 on a day of action. They sold a further four copies and got two applications to join the LPYS in 20 minutes outside the local FE college.

They also raised £42 from selling sandwiches to pay off their debt for back copies of *Socialist Youth*.

Every branch should follow the example of Erith and Crayford and ensure the present edition of *Socialist Youth* has a record number of paid sales.

**By Peter Mumford**  
(Assistant Editor, *Socialist Youth*)

# FE students hear LPYS

AS PART of the campaign by the LPYS and the NUS to get the next Labour government to commit themselves to give a minimum £20 a week grant for all 16-19 year olds in full time education, Hendon North LPYS took the initiative.

We arranged with the Students' Union to go into Kilburn Polytechnic in Colindale to speak to the students in their lunch break.

About 30 students turned up to hear Caroline Fernandez (Hendon N LPYS)

speak for ten minutes on how they, the students, would get the grant and also on how the Tories were slashing the standard of education for working class youth up and down the country with their cut-backs.

She also pointed out that the gains that the working class had received in the past, such as comprehensive education, hadn't been given to us by 'nice' education ministers and governments, but had been fought for and won by the organised labour

movement.

During the time allowed for questions, there was a good response to the commitment by the Labour Party to implement the grant, but there was also a mood of "the Labour Party doesn't always do what it says it will in government."

When this was raised the LPYS members said the only guarantee that the next Labour government will introduce the grant is if working people like the students themselves joined the

Labour Party and the Labour Party Young Socialists to make it truly representative.

After the meeting six people applied to join the LPYS, other said they'd attend local LPYS meetings to find out more before actually joining. Copies of *Socialist Youth*, outlining the call for the students' grant, were sold.

**By John Dolan**  
(Hendon North LPYS)

# LEFT and RIGHT

## FIFTY YEARS AGO

The cyclical crisis of capitalism means loss of super-profits for the bosses, but disaster for ordinary people. Because the bosses are unable to develop society, they bring a cycle of deprivation in their wake.

Recently 'Militant' has reported on the return of the soup kitchens in America. And a glimpse of what the 1930s were like, is provided by a report from the US magazine, 'New Republic', 1 February, 1933:

"There is not a garbage dump in Chicago which is not diligently haunted by the hungry. Last summer in the hot weather, when the smell was sickening and the flies were thick, there were a hundred people a day coming to one of the dumps, and digging in with sticks and hands. They would devour all the pulp that was left on the old slices of water-melon and cantaloup till the rinds were as thin as paper, and they would take away and wash and cook discarded onions, turnips, potatoes, cabbage or carrot."

### This little piggie

BBC 1 news on 9 February gave a typical example of its unbiased reporting when it comes to industrial disputes. It dealt with the waterworkers' strike in Anglesey, North Wales. There was no interview with a union representative to give the water workers' case, of course. Instead most of the news time was given to a pig farmer bemoaning the fact that his purified water had been cut off.

There were long shots of little piglets panting on their last legs through thirst. It seems rather strange that animals, especially pigs, could die of thirst in the rainy climes of North Wales. And of course, throughout the whole five minute report, not once was it mentioned that all these poor little piggies could expect out of life was to end up as a bacon sandwich and all that was really hit was the farmers' profits.

No, no, it was those nasty bully-boy waterworkers who are killing defenceless farm animals.

### Charles goes mad in the country

Last week after one week's work on a farm, an exhausted Prince Charles proclaimed: "it has restored my sanity". Was he trying to tell us something about his past behaviour? Or was the shock of actually working for one whole week too much for him?

But you can't keep a mad Royal down for long. This week 'old Big Ears' showed that his trauma was behind him. He announced that in addition to the 128,000 acres of farming land, and South London slums, that he owns, he has just purchased a modest little 700 acre farm in South Wales for a cool £1,500,000.



### Tory priorities

The Glasgow Royal Hospital for Sick Children has had to delay the opening of its much needed kidney unit by four years because of cut backs. In the end it had to rely on funds from charity organisations to complete the unit.

But help is at hand. The government has now stepped in with £30,000! Now although that figure could buy six new kidney dialysis machines, it won't be spent on that. It will go on a new carpet and painting and decorating.

Why? Lady Diana is coming to the hospital to open the new unit.

Perhaps someone from the Royal family would like to volunteer to explain Tory priorities to the estimated 1,000 people who will die this year because of the lack of kidney machines.

"In its way, a nation is like a forest and the aim of war planning is to secure the survival of the great trees!" That is how the government's war plan for the NE Thames describes its "civil defence" role in a nuclear war.

"If all the great trees and much of the brushwood is felled, a forest may not regenerate for centuries. If a sufficient number of the great trees is left, however, if felling is to some extent selective and controlled, recovery is swift".

In other words, the majority of the population are to be considered as brushwood.

In his book Duncan Campbell exposes, from official government sources, its plans for civil defence. He shows 'from the horse's mouth' that it has nothing to do with defending the civilian population, but is a propaganda exercise to make nuclear war seem acceptable.

It cynically gives people the illusion that they could survive, and pretends to convince 'our enemies' that the UK could withstand a nuclear attack. Civil defence plans also seek to protect the government's military machine against possible sabotage and obstruction from the general public.

Organising demonstrations for peace before an imminent war is defined as "subversion". 20,000 people are listed to be arrested and interned. CS gas would be stockpiled, to deal with rioting and looting after nuclear attack.

Virtual martial law would exist throughout the country, and offenders would be shot. It is ironic that the government along with the rest of the NATO alliance claim that they possess nuclear weapons to protect "freedom" but as Duncan Campbell concludes:

"If war comes, freedom will already have been sacrificed to the course of making war. That is the ultimate insult, obscenity and deception of what the British government calls civil defence; it asks citizens to die for freedom with their lips sealed and their cries unheard, lest they call out too loudly for freedom and their own independence for choice, thought and action!"

The main advice in the government's pamphlet "Protect and Survive" is to stay at home. For most of the population this would

# AFTER THE BOMB DROPS



No more demonstrations.

Photo: Militant

mean staying inside the major cities, the 'target areas' exposing them to immediate death. There are no plans for large-scale evacuation.

In fact 'rings of steel' are to be placed around the cities, such as London, to prevent refugees leaving. The police and army are to ensure that only essential supplies are moved and routes kept free. Only those with 'second homes' will be accepted into rural area!

Advice to householders is to lay in 14 days of food; even in peacetime supermarkets only stock 3 days food at a time. Yet at the same time 'hoarding food' in a pre-nuclear strike period will be prevented! Troops will guard supplies of food, presumably for key personnel, who will be selected to hide out in deep bunkers.

Amongst the most scandalous of the government's proposals are those for medical care. Even assuming that hospitals and medical

staff withstand a nuclear attack (?), the majority of the population would be denied medical treatment. Staff are instructed to be ruthlessly selective.

Those suffering from "radiation sickness" will be sent to mis-named 'rest centres'. Nothing will be done for them; they will just await their turn to die, amidst piles of bodies. Hospitals are expected to function without electricity, water supplies or basic drugs, such as antibiotics. Those dying would be "called the expectant category and must be dealt with as though expected to live."

Large numbers would lie where they died. In such conditions disease would spread rapidly.

There are some farcical elements. The government is worried that the banking system might collapse after a nuclear holocaust.

And concern is expressed about the availability of

"manual labour". This may indeed be the problem if all the survivors selected for the deep shelters are government officials and wartime leaders (including bankers), who have never done a day's work in their life. Going to be a bit of the problem for 'the great trees' doing without us brushwood.

As socialists we should use the information contained in Duncan Campbell's book to convince people of the suicidal nature of the government's so-called defence policy. The government have shown clearly what future their system has in store for us. We must put a stop to them and their system, which breeds such sickness.

**Barbara Humphries**

(Ealing-Southall CLP) reviews "War Plan UK" by Duncan Campbell.

## RIGHT-WING ATTACK LABOUR POLICY

Labour Party policy on nuclear weapons should be clear. Three successive conferences have called for the closure of all nuclear bases in Britain, for no updating of Polaris and for no Cruise or Trident missiles.

The 1982 conference was quite explicit. Moved by the print union SOGAT and carried with an over two-thirds majority, by 4,927,000 votes to 1,974,000, one resolution

concluded:

"Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to...ensure that the next general election manifesto contains an unequivocal, unambiguous commitment to unilateral disarmament and for the Parliamentary Labour Party, including spokesmen on defence, to actively campaign on this policy, in its first session in office."

But now, judging by press reports of a speech made by Roy Hattersley on 9 February, far from advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament, the Shadow

Cabinet are fixing up a different manifesto altogether. After the expulsion of socialists comes the expulsion of policy.

Hattersley has welcomed the deal, hatched out to ditch conference policy, as "somebody who rose and cheered Hugh Gaitskell to the echo in the 1960s." This reference to then Labour Party leader Gaitskell's speech denouncing conference's decision in favour of unilateral weapons, shows how little the right wing have altered.

To round off the contempt the right wing have for

conference policy, Hattersley concluded his speech with a call for a full-blooded incomes policy; he knows this was rejected at last year's conference. In the coming weeks Labour's rank and file must ensure that the party leaders carry out party policy and ensure that it is in the manifesto. Only a clear socialist alternative can arouse the enthusiasm to defeat Thatcher, not a cobbled together capitulation to the right wing.

**By Colin Barber**

# REGISTER'S DOUBLE STANDARDS

Labour's register of non-affiliated groups, dropped some time ago by the party's right wing in favour of other measures against *Militant* supporters, has become something of a comic side-show to the right's witch-hunt.

With the party offices groaning under the sheer weight of paperwork, and the NEC seeming to spend hours discussing whether to delete offending groups from the Labour Party diary, it is hard to take seriously.

However, for those party members who have taken advantage of their right, according to the annual conference decision which states that "The Register...should be available for inspection by any party member," the blatant bias which was applied from the outset cannot be more apparent.

So far, the NEC has accepted 24 different groups onto its register. These include groups like the **British Socialist Agricultural Society**, and the **Labour Defence and Disarmament Group** which claims "under 30 members", but adds, "the figure rises daily."

Several right-wing 'parties within a party' have had no problems in registering. Whilst for *Militant* it is a crime to have a publishing house and employ staff, this has not proved a barrier to the right.

**Labour Solidarity**, for example, admits a *membership* of 5,265. Whilst it denies employing any full-time workers, it admits to a number of paid part-timers and full-timers on a voluntary basis. Its accounts for the year ending 28.2.82 show a wages bill of £5,506.

But then, when your officers include Roy Hattersley, Peter Shore and Ken

Woolmer, you don't expect to be investigated by the present NEC!

Solidarity's income for last year, incidentally, amounted to £22,408 of which £2,949 was received in standing orders, and £19,459 is explained as others(?). Party members should address their questions to Solidarity's treasurer, Austin Mitchell.

The right-wing **Manifesto** group of MPs does not even reveal its membership, *despite this being a precondition for inclusion on the register*. Its officers: Giles Radice, chairman; Tom Urwin and Arthur Palmer, vice-chairmen; George Robertson, secretary; and Ken Weetch, treasurer, are prepared to stand up and be counted.

But, party members may legitimately ask, who are these other shadowy figures? After all, the Hayward-Hughes report, apparently agreed at Conference by a 4 to 1 majority, insisted, "There must be no secret organisations in the party."

Another right-wing group, **Labour First**, claims to have no strictly defined membership, "but about 45 members of the PLP are regularly involved." Its officers are: Brynmor John, chairman; Peter Archer, vice-chair; Dr David Clarke, treasurer; Derek Foster, meetings organiser; and Dr Edmund Marshall is secretary.

A report of its activities during 1981 reads: "During the past twelve months, we

have sadly lost the support of our former vice-chairman, John Grant, and three other members who have joined the Social Democratic Party. At the same time, congratulations are due to Brynmor John, Gwyneth Dunwoody and Peter Archer who were newly elected to join Gerald Kaufman as 'Labour First' supporters on the Parliamentary committee of the PLP."

labour movement", its application was turned down.

A later letter from Director Valerie Cocks explains: "I would like to tell you that we made a small error in filling in our application form and our £10,000 donation does not in fact come from the Jewish Agency, but from the World Zionist Organisation."

This clearly didn't help matters, so another letter

These cases alone make an absolute mockery of the Register. There is not even the thinnest veneer of "even handedness" to suggest that the exercise was anything other than an attempt by the right to deal with those groups they disagree with.

This is of course denied by the party officials. Jim Mortimer, replying to one enquiry from a party member, states: "If any group is found to be in breach of the rules, they also will be given three months' notice to bring themselves into conformity with the rules. In other words, they will be treated in exactly the same way as the *Militant* Tendency."

And yet, one of the conditions of registration, and an argument falsely used against *Militant* supporters, is paragraph 2(vi) of the Hayward-Hughes report: "We do not wish to curtail genuine discussion and debate by pressure groups within the party, providing that all these groups are *open and free to any Labour Party members to attend and participate in their discussions*." (Our emphasis.)

This stipulation does not

seem to have prevented the Manifesto Group from being accepted, despite its insistence that "Membership is open to all Members of the PLP and to Peers who take the Labour Whip."

Hardly in the spirit of conference decisions! Similarly, we have the **1972 Industry Group**—an organisation of 62 individuals from the business world, whose constitution states: "Ordinary members shall be individual members of the Labour Party invited by the Executive to join the group. Very sinister!"

Whilst the register has now been relegated to a secondary issue in the fight against the witch-hunt, its fraudulent character is a clear warning to Labour's rank and file. The same double standards and outright dishonesty are being applied by the right in their campaign against *Militant* today.

Party members must exert maximum pressure in the coming weeks and days to force the NEC to bury this whole disgraceful chapter in Labour's history, so that the urgent task of defeating the Tories can begin.



The platform of Labour Solidarity Meeting, Labour Party Conference 1982. Left to right; Roy Hattersley, John Smith, Jim Callaghan, Peter Shore. All card carrying members?

## Registration has unveiled a lot of interesting facts about some of Labour's 'friends'.

An NEC investigation of Labour First's financing hardly seems necessary. At its meeting held during the 1981 party conference, a collection raised £16. The same, however, cannot be said for **Labour Friends of Israel**, which has now been accepted onto the register after an initial hitch.

In its original application, Labour Friends of Israel revealed that it receives a donation of £10,000 from the Jewish Agency. Because of this considerable sum from "outside the British

was sent: "This is to confirm that the contribution to Labour Friends of Israel given by the World Zionist Organisation is collected in Britain from Labour Party sympathisers. We trust that this will fulfil your requirements."

Hey presto! That was that! Compare the NEC's acceptance of this pitiful explanation with the continued slurs and innuendo about *Militant's* source of finance—even though it has provided the most detailed of explanations.

**JIM MORTIMER**, General Secretary of the Labour Party, has "deplored" *Militant's* threat to take legal action to prevent the unconstitutional expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

Yet in his recently published *History of the Boiler-makers Society, Part 2* (George Allen & Unwin) he deals with the disqualification by the right wing of Harry Pollitt from standing for election to the Executive Council of the Union.

He writes: "In his autobiography 'Serving my time', Harry Pollitt recalled that following this ruling of the Executive Council he took 'the best legal advice in the country' and was informed that if he cared to challenge it in a court of law 'there was no doubt that the Executive Council would lose the case'.

"Pollitt was tempted to go the law but acknowledged that he was reluctant to take his case into a capitalist court". In his autobiography he stated: 'I see now that I was mistaken'. He felt that he should have gone to law to defeat what he described as the 'unscrupulous tactics' of the Executive Council".

The clear implication is

that the resort to "capitalist courts" is a legitimate tactic to combat a right-wing executive which undemocratically bends the constitution in order to suppress its opponents.

*Militant* has fought a political campaign against the "unscrupulous tactics" of the right-wing of Labour's National Executive Committee. We have won that battle.

This is confirmed by Jim Mortimer in one of the many documents he has presented to the NEC: "a large majority of Constituency Labour Parties are not sympathetic to the exclusion of *Militant*. Labour cannot afford to alienate large numbers of its activists".

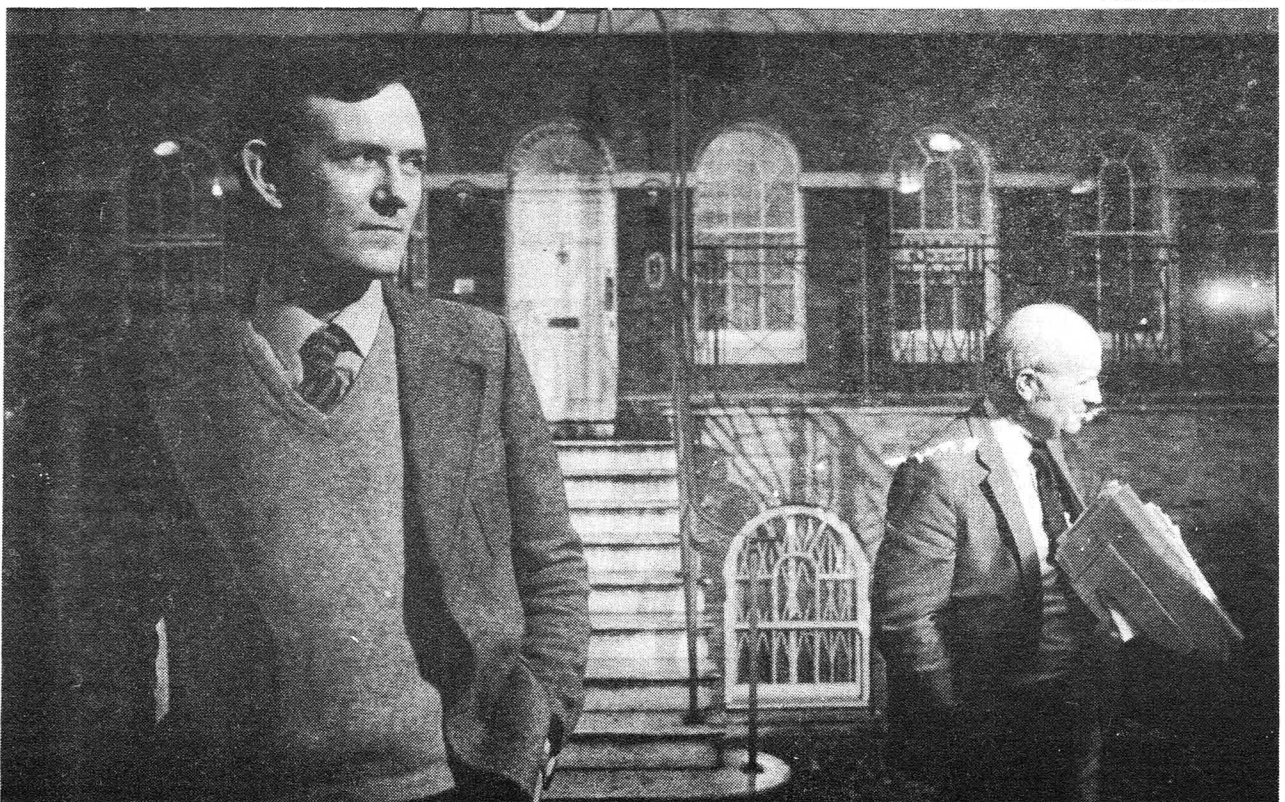
The right-wing, however, have ignored the public opinion of the labour movement. They are, it seems, determined to carry through unconstitutional expulsions. In this situation we will not make the "mistake" of Harry Pollitt.

We have no option but to take legal action against the NEC, while continuing with our political campaign, to prevent and reverse the expulsions.

By Peter Taaffe

## MORTIMER'S LAW AND MILITANT

Photo: Militant



Lynn Walsh (left) one of the members of *Militant's* Editorial Board facing expulsion, and Jim Mortimer Labour's General Secretary (right). The stage is set. See *Militant* for further developments.



# CAMPAIGN TO SAVE

## This week the shipbuilding unions meet to discuss a strategy to fight British Shipbuilders' policies of a wage freeze and redundancies.

Already many of the main yards have decided to back the national leadership and take industrial action if any compulsory redundancies are declared. If this is ratified by the delegate conference then the stage is set for confrontation.

In the Tyne yards the management has asked for voluntary redundancies and has got these in the labourers' sections. In the skilled sections where it seems unlikely that they will volunteer, the management have made it clear that compulsory redundancies will be likely.

The conference meets against the background of the worst crisis of ship building since the end of the second world war. A record number of ships are laid up, affecting all the major shipbuilding nations. The only growth area is in the industry that scraps ships.

Formerly, Britain was the greatest ship-building country in the world, but under the stewardship of private ownership the industry was ruined. Unconcerned with investing money back into the industry and begin more intent on making the fastest possible profit, private owners totally mismanaged, mis-directed and wrecked the industry.

Consequently, they were only too glad to sell off the shipyards to the state, though of course they had the audacity to demand lavish compensation.

Since nationalisation, however, the decline of the industry has continued. The Tories try to use this to argue that it is all due to nationalisation. The reality is that the industry is still being run on the same principles as private enterprise.

The workers have no say, bureaucracy abounds, management worship the "laws" of the market, profitable supply industries are left in private hands, and the industry is drained by debt interest charges, incurred through the need to recover

By  
**DAVE COTTERILL**  
(Gateshead East Labour Party)

from years of neglect and through lavish compensation.

The UK fleet tonnage is falling, affecting orders to British yards, which find it impossible to compete with Korea and Japan. This is reflected in their order books which have remained constant for over a year.

### Crazy logic of capitalism

Even where orders have been obtained, the ship owners are requesting that completion of contracts be delayed—because there is no demand for the ships they ordered.

Merchant shipbuilding is the worst hit sector of the industry. That is why the initial redundancies have been concentrated in the yards of the North East, which mainly build merchant ships.

But this does not mean that the other sectors will be safe from cutbacks. In naval work, British Shipbuilding have already proposed cutbacks which will mean a reduction of half the staff by 1986.

In the ship-repairing sector, management bluntly acknowledge that "In competitive terms, we continue to quote for everything and lose out on the price."

The ship-repair yards on the Tyne are particularly vulnerable. Already the workforce has been reduced from 3,000 to 1,400. Voluntary redundancies dried up in November and now management wants to discuss compulsory redundancies.

The prospect of complete closure is clearly posed. The market will remain in its present disastrous level for a lengthy period."

Against this background,

management argues, further redundancies will be needed in the very near future. The crisis of shipbuilding is deep and severe.

Years of neglect have eroded Britain's position on a world scale. It is impossible now to catch up with the major competitors. Demand for ships has probably fallen by half, but the machinery remains to produce twice the number of ships currently wanted. The Tories' answer is to throw workers on the dole.

Alongside this "natural" solution the Tories see a suitable opportunity to hand back some profitable sections of the industry to private industry.

The naval yards, which are a profitable sector of the industry, would be ideal candidates. Even the British Shipbuilders nationalised board admit that they would like to see the injection of private capital into the industry.

British Shipbuilders' current proposals outline conditions that would mean the first step back into the dark ages.

In 1979, the Confedera-

tion of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions signed an agreement on no compulsory redundancies (known as the Blackpool Agreement) in return for flexibility of working practices. Now the management wants to introduce a pay freeze and a "fundamental radical relaxation of working practices".

In plain English, this means the extension of short-time and casual labour. That is what existed prior to 1969, when pools of temporary labour moved from yard to yard, perhaps only working for six months in a year.

The steel industry is a clear example of what will happen to shipbuilding unless decisive national action is taken to protect jobs and conditions. Many shipbuilding workers no doubt feel that strike action is the only weapon that they have but with the current state of the industry it seems to be like a knife without a blade.

But such attitudes are wrong. Management can be fought. Determined action linking up with other sections of workers can force

the Tories and British Shipbuilders to find other solutions.

All-out strike action, if organised, should immediately be linked up with other sections who are also threatened with redundancies—such as the steelworkers, miners and railworkers. Active picketing of private yards and supply industries would also play an important role. The TUC should also be called upon to co-ordinate such action and prepare a one-day general strike.

### United fight against closures

In all cases mass meetings and leaflets should be organised to involve the membership and explain the case of the shipyard workers.

In this way it would also be possible to take the shipyard workers' case to the local communities to

mobilise the enormous support which exists. Many areas face devastation if the BS proposals go through—even local shopkeepers will give support to such a campaign.

Through the local Labour Parties, meetings, demonstrations and petitions can be organised—but the main activity must be concentrated on strike action and mobilising sympathy support.

If money can be found for the Falklands it can be found to build ships. At present the Tories are deliberately starving the industry of cash, by limiting the borrowing to £150 million, despite a claim by BS for £174m. And of course Sir Geoffrey Howe will find thousands of millions to give to big business in the budget.

In selling off the nationalised ports last week, the Tories priced them at only half the value put on them by most business circles. The Tories, in other words as good as gave away £45 m to their cronies in the city.

The miners proved in February 1981 that if the Tories were confronted with a militant, united workforce

## PRIVATE SECTOR CASUAL WORK DOMINANT

THIS INTERVIEW is a good indication of the fear that is now being generated in sections of the shipbuilding industry. Workers who speak to you won't give their names for fear of being dismissed—such is the power that the management have achieved in some private yards. It's like being back in the 1930s when you did not dare admit to being a union member...And the Tories dare to talk of living in a free society with freedom of speech!

The shipyard described below does exist and the conditions are true. Perhaps if British Shipbuilders get away with their current proposals this is the sort of future that all shipyard workers will

look to.

"In the yard there is a nucleus of 60 hard core workers—the rest are casual labour. But even these hard core workers are on a two-year contract which comes up for review shortly. Work is guaranteed for two weeks for contract labour, after that you can be paid off with 24 hours' notice.

"If you go on the sick you are immediately paid off. I've worked on and off for 15 months, three or four weeks at a time, balancing out at six months a year. Apart from this the conditions such as pay are better than in British Shipbuilders."

And so they should be, when management have the

whip hand over controlling the labour situation. The management are even in favour of trade union representation, probably knowing that they have nothing to fear. Any "Bolshie" raising his head need not be taken back on.

### Managers have whip hand

"Basically it's a return to the old days. Then you used to line up for work and they would come and pick who they wanted. Then you would come up at 4.00 pm and find you were finished. Once when I was picked out of the line the gaffer arranged to meet me at his hut and

then left me standing around for half an hour in the freezing cold."

Such abuses it seemed had been removed by the growth of the trade union movement, but with the return of mass unemployment management are returning to the old methods. With them are brought the dread, degradation and uncertainty.

"You cannot plan for anything, we haven't had a holiday for 14 years, but it's impossible to have one at the moment—you just take things when you know you can get them. It gets you down even when you are working 'cos you know you are going to be finished."

"It's definitely a return to the old days—definitely."



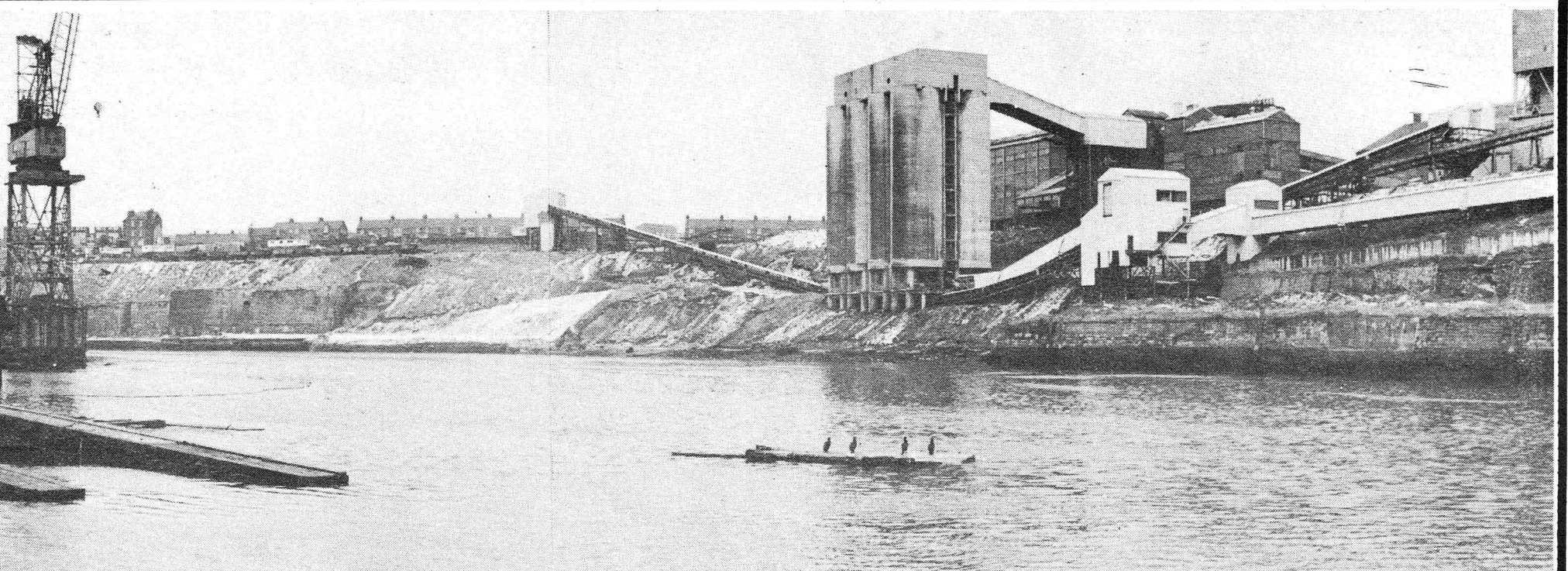


Photo: Denis Doran (Militant)

# WE SHIPBUILDING

they could be forced to backtrack.

But even a victory like that would not mean that the fight had been won...it would be only a temporary victory. As they have with other industries, the Tories would attempt to find new ways to implement redundancies and cutbacks.

Only a political campaign linked to an industrial struggle can offer a way forward.

Foremost in such a campaign must be the demand for a 35-hour week, with no loss of pay, so that work can be shared out. It is also necessary to have a fundamental change in the running and organisation of the industry.

## Take over supply industries

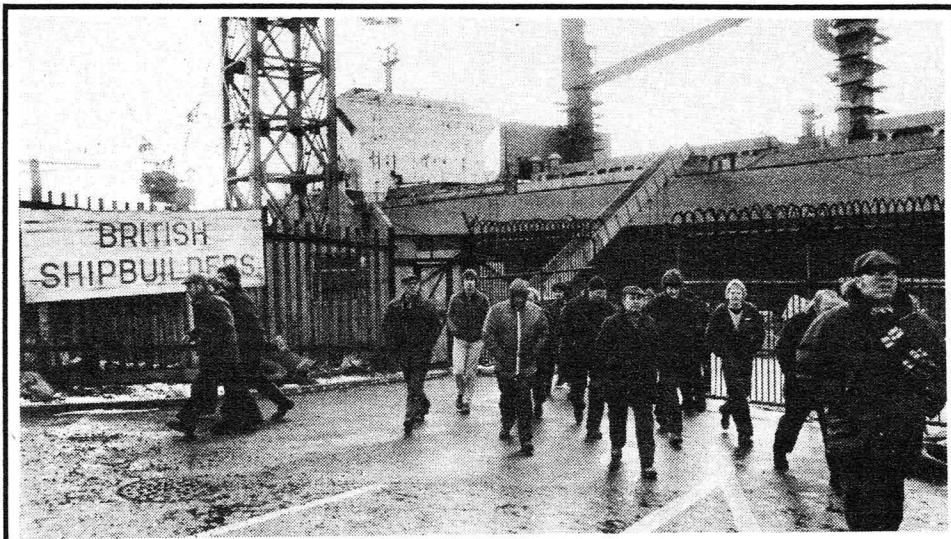
Nationalisation will never work, when the most profitable sectors are left in private hands. All the ship repair yards, shipping lines and allied industries must be nationalised so that they can be properly planned, and dovetailed together. There should be no lavish compensation, only compensation on the basis of proven need.

To overcome the bureaucratic management which currently exists, workers' control and management of the industry should be introduced.

The Boards should be made up of equal representatives: (1) of the workforce, elected through the unions (2) of the TUC and (3) of the government itself. Such representatives should be subject to regular re-election and be paid the same wages as skilled workers.

Above all the task of removing the Tories and returning a Labour government committed to socialist policies is essential if the industry is to survive.

Only if it is determined to end the anarchy of capitalism by nationalising the major monopolies, banks and insurance companies and organising a socialist plan of production, will it be possible to plan shipbuilding and to use the resources and skills of the shipyards for alternative employment.



## 'When the hand's on your shoulder it's too late to think of action'

**"WE'RE ON the slide back to the '30s.**

**I'm a one-parent family with two sons. One will soon be leaving school. The other lad is 18 and gets £20 on one of those schemes.**

He has to pay £10 rent out of that. He'll soon be old enough to join the army and help dictate the country's future. And yet they expect him to live on £10.

"If I lost this job what would become of us? That's the message that has to be driven home to the fellahs in this yard.

"In some ways it's worse than the 30's. We have 4-week contracts. Men are sacked on the Friday, taken back on the Monday for another 4 weeks".

**Gerry Reeves**, platers' shop steward, spoke out the bitter prospects for Cammell Lairds workers. "The British Shipbuilders Report makes it clear that it'll be de-manning of the steel trades this year, followed by de-manning of the outfit trades in the second half of 1983.

"It reminds me of the Geddes report, which said that Cammell Lairds could only be viable with an 1,800 workforce. We're heading that way now with 3,500 and 2,500 of them manual.

"The biggest threat is not closure, but privatisation—being sold at cut prices with redundancies and wage cuts".

We discussed why a mass meeting had recently narrowly voted against supporting the union's SNC (Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee). Some stewards felt it was because the work-force were reluctant to give the SNC a blank cheque and that specific recommendations for action would have got greater support.

They repeated what many members had asked: "What can we do about it?". Others complained they couldn't hear properly at the mass meeting. But Gerry didn't accept these explanations.

"If men are sacked 300 miles away some

think it doesn't really effect us. There's no immediate specific redundancies in Lairds so some imagine it might not happen to us.

"But what frightens me is that if British Shipbuilders saw Cammell Lairds as the only yard not taking action they might conclude that they could have enforced redundancies here. If we don't take action we could see a situation where the boss could put his hand on the shoulder of the men and say 'you're redundant'. When the hand's on your shoulder it's too late to think of action".

## Concentrated campaign

The shop stewards' press committee has now been elected and has produced the first bulletin to keep the shop floor in touch. It spells out clearly what British Shipbuilders have in store for Cammell Lairds workers. When reading this many workers have said "we didn't vote for that".

With a concentrated campaign the Confed. and SNC could convince the Lairds workers of the need for national unity and industrial action to defend all jobs.

Gerry Reeves and other workers gave another reason for unity: "We must fight against competition between yards. We should have *British Shipbuilders* orders and then share them between the yards.

"Each BS subsidiary has to tender at the present and is given to the lowest bidder.

The Lairds' Confed. bulletin points to an alternative to redundancies, calling for reduction in working hours; work sharing between nationalised industries; nationalisation of the British Fleet and industries which supply BS which make great profits.

With the examples given by Lairds workers we could add the need for workers control and management of BS to plan investment and protect jobs and conditions.

By **RICHARD VENTON**  
(Birkenhead Labour Party)

## Youth hard hit

Interviews by  
**Ed Waugh**

(Northern Region  
Chairman,  
Young Socialists)

**"A WHOLE community will be hit." Such was the response from the local paper to the news that British Shipbuilders intend to axe nearly 2,300 jobs, 1,000 of which are on North Tyneside.**

In Wallsend the repercussions will be severely felt where the yards are the major employer. In a town where everyone knows people working in the yards there is obvious fury at the callousness of British Shipbuilders.

"I'm disgusted," said one local resident, a 70-year-old woman who likened it to the "1930s all over again".

The obvious spin-offs of unemployment will hit local traders who in turn lay off shop workers. But in particular it will be youth who bear the brunt of the bosses' failures.

Even more 16-year-olds will be forced on to cheap labour YOP schemes for £25 a week, rather than getting proper training and apprenticeships.

## "I'm learning Dutch at the moment"

As one apprentice told me, "It's terrible. Apprentices now don't stand a hope in hell of getting a job when they've finished their time. I've served three years. I've one to do. I hope I'll be kept on. I'm learning Dutch at the moment. My dad said I might stand a better chance in Holland. Thatcher has totally wrecked my opportunities.

"At one time the yards were the place where all young people could get a start but that's not true now.

Hundreds apply but only a few get jobs.

I watched a TV programme not so long ago. A young lad from Sunderland was interviewed who wanted to be a professional footballer. He said if he couldn't become a footballer he would 'settle for the yards'.

"It turned out that he didn't make the grade at football but to make things worse he couldn't get a job at the yards. I expected this. I still count myself as lucky for the time being."

A few miles up the road on the Wear, where 615 jobs are to be axed, apprentices gave a similar response.

## "I'm going abroad to get work"

A young lad from Sunderland resigned himself to the fact that he and his mates won't be kept on after they have finished their time. Another was even sceptical that he would serve out the rest of his time.

Tragically, another lad added, "As soon as I'm out my time, I will be going abroad because I won't find a job in this country, never mind Wearside."

This is the grim reality facing working class youth in Tory Britain today. We cannot afford to allow the bosses to decimate British industry even further, throwing millions more on to the already unacceptable misery of the dole.

The labour movement must fight back to preserve the future of youth. With over 4 million youth eligible to vote for the first time in the next election, only a bold socialist alternative to Toryism will ensure that Labour gains the votes of these and other young people.

Failure to do so will rest squarely on the shoulders of the whole labour movement and the Labour leadership in particular.

# BEIRUT MASSACRE:

**The report of the official Israeli government inquiry into last September's Beirut massacre has added another major crisis to an already crisis-torn society.**

Israeli society is more deeply divided than at any time before. The war in Lebanon provoked an unprecedented degree of opposition, not least among the serving soldiers themselves, and the inquiry findings will inevitably add strength to the opposition.

Having taken most of its evidence in public, and having seen it repeated in the world's press, the inquiry has been forced at least to declare the obvious—that Israeli military chiefs and the Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon, were "indirectly" responsible for the killings.

Yet there are many aspects of the massacre which were not dealt with at all by the inquiry, in particular the background to it and the methods and the basis of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Yet even within the limited scope of the Commission's deliberations, the final recommendations, given the scale of the crime, are scandalously lenient.

Israeli officers mentioned in the report are variously criticised, but generally for their lack of "foresight" in not anticipating the slaughter of Palestinians by the Phalangist militia which was sent into the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps.

## Israeli involvement

The greatest criticism was directed to Sharon, but once again only for his lack of anticipation. "...it is impossible to justify", the report notes, "the Minister of Defence's disregard of the danger of a massacre".

When Foreign Minister, Shamir, was informed by telephone about the reports of the massacre nearly a day before it ended, he chose not to pass the reports on—this, the report lamely concluded, was "regrettable" and "worrisome".

The report points out that after the assassination of Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel on September 14, Prime Minister Begin justified the Israeli entry into West Beirut "in order to protect the Moslems from the vengeance of the Phalangists" and at a cabinet meeting on the day the massacre began, he ignored warning comments from another Minister. Like the others, Begin is found to have shown a "lack of involvement" and "indifference" to the possibility of a massacre. Incredibly, the report concludes that "we do not believe that we ought to be critical of the Prime Minister."

To lay the emphasis in all these cases on the lack of "foresight" completely glosses over the active participation and involvement of the Israeli military in planning the Phalangist operation in the camps, and, at least as far as some of the senior officers were concern-

By John Pickard

ed, their connivance in the atrocities that took place.

The entry of the Phalangists was planned jointly well in advance and given the record of the Phalangists, the Israeli officers must have been well aware of their intentions.

## Phalangist forces

The Phalangists massacred dozens of Palestinians in the Qarantina district of Beirut during the civil war in 1976. The Phalangist leader, Elias Hobeika, was their head of 'intelligence' and the officer responsible for another massacre of Palestinians, at the Tal-al-Zataar camp in Lebanon in 1976.

Morover, the Phalangist units used in the operation against Sabra and Chatila were mostly drawn from Southern Lebanon, including Damour, a town on the coast which itself had been overrun by Palestinian militias in the 1976 civil war, its Maronite Christian population being massacred. There could have been no doubt, therefore, about the mood of the Phalangist militiamen.

Compared to the 'official' report, the *Independent International Commission of Inquiry*, chaired by Sean MacBride, which took evidence from a much wider variety of witnesses in a number of different countries, gives a much fuller and more complete account of the circumstances of the killings in Beirut and the Israeli involvement.

"By 6 pm, nightfall, (Thursday 16), the Phalange entered the camps...throughout the night (Israeli) flares lit up the sky. They were fired at a rate of two a minute...Israeli-Phalange radio contact continued throughout the operation..."

"at 11 pm the Israeli commander in Beirut was informed by radio contact with a militia officer in the camps that 'until now 300 civilians and terrorists have been killed'..."

"On Friday 17 September...In the early morning Israeli Defence Force (IDF) units saw executed corpses in the camps. Rumours of massacres began to spread in the IDF units... *Le Monde*, in Paris, first received reports of a massacre on Friday morning..."

"At 8-9 am an assistant (Israeli) tank commander saw (500 metres from his post) militiamen killing five women and children in Chatila. He reported this, but was told by a higher Israeli officer 'not to worry'...the militiamen were re-supplied and were allowed to send in fresh men, despite the fact that reports of atrocities had already been made to Israeli officers."

The US magazine *Time* reported, "On Friday afternoon a group of at least 400 people seeking refuge in downtown West Beirut and carrying a white flag ap-



## Israeli ruling class stands condemned

proached Israeli soldiers. The civilians said a massacre was taking place; they were turned back into the camps at gunpoint."

The MacBride Report continues "That same afternoon gunmen started entering the houses, killing men, women and children and dynamiting buildings. Many witnesses confirm this account..."

"On Saturday, 18 September, at dawn, the IDF intervened to stop the massacre, but only by 8 am or 9 am was it actually stopped. Atrocities reportedly continued to occur throughout the early morning."

The report catalogues a weight of evidence far too great to include here, that showed the Israeli co-operation with the Phalange for the 40-hour period of the slaughter.

For example, Israeli units in command of high ground near the camps would have witnessed the killing with the high-powered binoculars with which they were supplied. Other unanswered questions mentioned by the MacBride Report included the presence of Israeli bulldozers in the camps, used for burying the victims, and the unexplained discovery of an Israeli army identity tag among the rub-

ble of one of the Chatila homes. The Israeli sergeant identified by the tag was 'in hospital' at the time of the official Israeli Commission of Inquiry and was not allowed to testify.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the total number of dead in the camps was counted, by September 22, as 2,400, not counting the hundreds of camp residents who were driven away in lorries, still alive, and never seen again.

## Logic of Zionism

The MacBride report, therefore in contrast to the official one, bluntly concludes that: "Israel was involved in the planning and preparation of the massacres (at Sabra and Chatila) and played a facilitative role in the actual killings."

But for socialists, the justifiable outrage at the massacre should not hide the fact that it should be the whole policy and method of the Israeli ruling class which is on trial—not one separate aspect of it no matter how horrifying. In reality, the Israeli, co-operation with the Phalange and their role in the Beirut killings are an ex-

*ISRAEL IN LEBANON*, Ithaca Press, £4.50. Available from World Socialist Books, 1, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

result of Israeli bombings of the civilian populations of Tyre, Sidon and Beirut.

Israeli co-operation with the Phalange goes back many years. They had provided the militia with (by Begin's own estimates) \$100m worth of arms and equipment by 1982 and even in the early stages of the war, the Phalange were allowed, in Israeli-controlled areas, to arrest Palestinian 'suspects' most of whom were never seen alive again.

Even the *Times* commented (9 February) that the "decisions and action which led to the Sabra-Chatila massacre were not an isolated and peculiar series of incidents. They were part of an overall pattern and policy..."

Indeed, the purpose of the war in the first place—planned months ahead by Begin and Sharon in particular—was part of a pattern designed to crush the Palestine Liberation Organisation in order to pacify the three-quarters of a million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

## Interests of Israeli and Palestinian masses

The war and the report have produced a deep impression upon many sections of the Israeli population, but the horror of Israeli workers has been met with a defiant grin by the butcher Sharon. Despite sacking Sharon as Defence Minister, Begin too has shown his contempt for even the mild criticism of the official inquiry by keeping him in the Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the Phalange, responsible even by Begin's admission for the Beirut massacre, still continues to receive the full support and co-operation of the Israeli government. In southern Lebanon today, they are terrorising the local Palestinian population, under the friendly auspices of the Israeli occupation. In Tyre and Sidon, Palestinian men are still regularly being taken away by Phalangist militiamen for execution.

But despite the stonewalling of Begin and Sharon, it is likely that in the long-term, the revelations concerning the Israeli policy in Lebanon and the massacre will have had a profound effect on the general outlook of workers in Israel and internationally. It is only the international labour movement, in any case, which can in the last analysis put a permanent end to the horrors and crimes regularly perpetrated in Lebanon and the Middle East.

The aspirations of the Palestinians for social and national emancipation will not have been blunted by the Lebanon war or the massacre, but it will be the task of socialism internationally to see those aspirations are fulfilled.

**Next Week: the reaction inside Israel.**



## Barbie case -

**KLAUS BARBIE, the Butcher of Lyons, responsible for thousands of deaths (including those of 200 resistance fighters hanged by their thumbs) has finally been brought to "justice".**

So say the newspapers. *The Times* (8 February), "Unforgettable, Unforgivable".

Fine words are employed to gloss over the fact that the Western powers actually allowed many Nazis to escape. Barbie, it now transpires, spent at least six months in 1948 at the expense of an American Security Agency whilst he was questioned. "He was paid £425 a month and later allowed to go free" (*Times*, 8.2.83).

This was because Barbie apparently knew of uranium deposits in Czechoslovakia, which the Russians were using to build an atom bomb. His anti-communism provided a suitable solvent to wash

to blood from this butcher's hands.

The self-righteous British press have hypocritically condemned the Americans' release of Barbie. But all the allies, including Britain, not only saved many Nazis from execution, they ensured that as good "anti-communists", Nazis stayed in their positions of influence and power.

Tom Bowyer's book, *Blind Eye to Murder*, (published by Deutsch, for £7.95) relates Britain's involvement:

"In the schools, universities, hospitals, police forces, civil service, churches and the legal profession, committed Nazis found their return to their previous employment at the expense

of qualified anti-Nazis, considerably less difficult than they might have imagined. In many cases, their return was actually encouraged by British officials."

Britain at first refused to de-Nazify the mines in the Ruhr (where slave labour had been used). Only a strike by miners secured the dismissal of the Nazis.

It was the British judge at the Nuremberg trial who refused the death penalty for Albert Speer (the armaments minister responsible for the slave labour camps) and insisted on the acquittal of Schacht (Hitler's banker).

Montagu Norman (Governor of the Bank of England) during a visit to Nuremberg claimed that "bankers cannot be

criminals"! Hartley Shawcross, the British Prosecutor at Nuremberg, announced that the German industrialists who had financed Hitler were going to be tried for war crimes. That trial was never actually held! Bowyer quotes one British investigator as stating:

"There is abundant evidence that many such persons (profiteers) are escaping the net. Among them are some who materially assisted the Nazi Party in its struggle for power and/or were intimately connected with the building up of the war machine. The British authorities are letting the big men escape."

The capitalist powers wanted to see the German economy working at full

power to aid the West's struggle against communism. Bowyer's conclusion is:

"To those who demand an answer, Mills (British official, later Lord Mills, Industry Minister under Macmillan) would reply that only the Nazis had the expertise to run the industries and that their removal, merely to satisfy a political objective, was in the circumstances an unaffordable luxury."

The Barbies are at last being rounded up, but the gangsters remain free: the capitalists who financed, armed, supported and protected the Nazis before World War II and after.

**'Teargas falls under industrial relations'**

**TOWARDS the end of last year the South African government introduced a new regulation allowing more employers to use teargas on their premises.**

When the public relations spokesman for one company, LTA, was asked to comment he refused, because: "teargas doesn't fall under public relations, it falls under industrial relations."

He was right. In the week before Christmas, the Datsun management got the police to use teargas, rubber bullets to disperse their 4,500 workforce, protesting against the cut in their seasonal bonus. Not surprisingly, the factory closed early for the holiday.

Teargas has also recently been used against workers in Durban. In protest at a 25% fare rise they were walking several miles to catch a cheaper bus to take them to their townships to work.

The bosses have tried to use the recession to drive down the already poor living standards of the South African blacks. Over 3 million black workers, i.e. one-third of the workforce, are without a job.

And at the same time the monopolies which dominate the South African economy have seized the opportunity to take over their smaller rivals. A study of mergers and directorships, published last month in the *South African Analysts' Journal*, reveals that: "The big fish are no longer chasing the minnows, they are eating one another."

Out of the country's top twenty companies, five have three or more directors on one or other of the top 20 companies, two have directors on two other companies in the same elite group and four have directors on the boards of three other top 20 companies. At least seven of the country's top ten have directors on the boards of major banks. "Control of most of the large corporations in this country may be said to be concentrated in relatively few hands and the link between this controlling core and the financial institutions is strong," comments the report's author.

Behind all the misleading talk of reforms in South Africa, this is the class reality of apartheid. On one side stand the big monopolies who built the system and even utilise recessions to extend their grip. And on the other stand the most oppressed section of all, the black working class, the most consistent and determined fighters for a new system, which will end all exploitation.

**By Jim Chrystie**

**Militant has often explained that the arguments over the Labour Party's constitution reflect policy differences. They are over whether representatives of the labour movement are going to carry out party policy or not.**

The argument is given renewed force by the most recent action of de-selected Labour MP for Bradford North, Ben Ford.

On 26 January, he tabled a Commons motion, in company with four Tory MPs and a Social Democrat, "regretting" the resignation of Dirk Mudge, Chairman of Namibia's Interim Council of Ministers. This motion is totally at odds with official Labour Party support for the liberation struggle in Namibia.

Mudge and his band of puppets have for four years loyally responded to the direction of their South African masters. They have played their part in keeping the people of Namibia within a system of brutal exploitation and oppression.

To represent these puppets as the "democratically elected national representation (of) more than one million Namibian citizens", as Ford's motion does, is outrageous. The 100,000 strong South African army of occupation have ruled by vicious intimidation and bloody reprisal. In a population of under a million, the 'policing' of Namibia represents one soldier for every three adult males.

In any genuinely democratic election, SWAPO, the liberation movement, would have gained a crushing majority. Even a recent opinion poll in occupied Namibia, found that less than one in six supported Mudge's government.

The only achievement of these collaborators with

# RIGHT-WING BACK SOUTH AFRICA'S PUPPET

**By Leon Kaplan**  
(LPYS representative on Anti-Apartheid National Committee)

Photo right: The solidarity of these British trade unionists with fellow employees of Rowntrees in South Africa is an answer to the 'solidarity' of the right wing.

South Africa, was 'abolishing' the Immorality Act and replacing it with a law 'prohibiting' all sex before marriage. What nonsense. Yet somehow Ford wants us to believe that the demise of such a government is "unfortunate" and "will delay internationally recognised independence". The forty-odd political factions, which make up Mudge's government were only interested in rich pickings for themselves.

**Support the liberation struggle**

Real independence and social liberation in Namibia will only come through the mobilisation of the workers for the complete destruction of capitalist power and the building of a democratic workers state. Mudge's resignation is a signal of weakness in the enemies' camp.

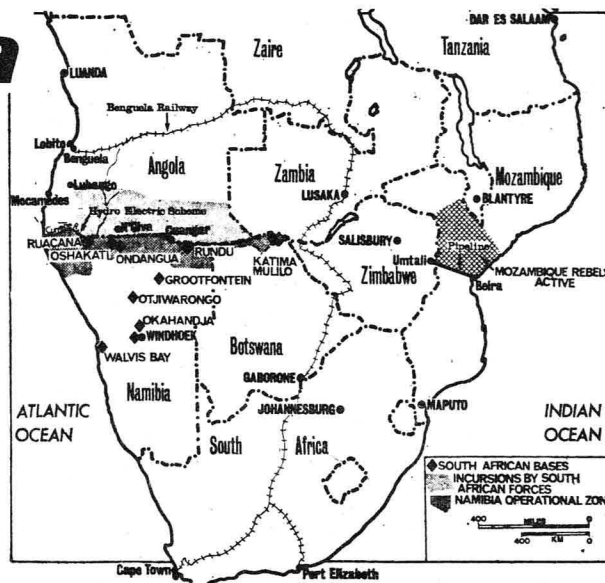
Instead of regretting his departure, the labour leadership must mount a campaign in support of the liberation struggle and the Namibian workers' battle for freedom. And the Labour Party must ensure it has representatives who will carry out that policy.



## Namibia

The Namibia Support Committee are holding a booksale on Saturday 19 March at Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 from 10.30am to 5pm.

If you have books, records or pictures to donate to the sale, deliver them to the main collection point, 567 Caledonian Road, N7 (next door to Caledonian Road tube station) any Wednesday or Sunday 2 to 5pm OR phone 359 3785, asking for Book for Namibia between 10 and 6 OR leave your name, address and phone number on the 24-hour answering machine on 267 1941.



# Letters

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

## Mr Laker regrets...

Dear Comrade,  
Did you see the BBC *Nationwide* on Monday?  
I saw Sir Freddie Laker refuse to answer questions about his former airline debts.  
I hope that all the people who bought Skytrain tickets were watching it.  
And that the people who bought tickets wouldn't buy a holiday off the New Laker Skytrain Holidays, which Laker launched with champagne.  
This is what private enterprise is all about.  
The rich get richer and the poor get poorer and poorer.  
Yours fraternally,  
Patrick Westmore,  
Isle of Wight.

BLACK BOX  
RECOVERED  
..... IN TACT!



# Liverpool speaking....

Dear *Militant*,  
It was the afternoon of Tuesday 25 January and a 'phone-in and grumble' programme was taking place on BBC's 'Radio Merseyside', when a listener named 'John' rang in to complain about "no one caring these days".  
This topic pleased the disc jockey, who invited John to proceed.  
He started off in full voice informing the audience that he was 55 years

old and would never work again. A couple of years previously he had been declared redundant but had not received much redundancy pay.  
In tears, and sobs he related the instructions of the DHSS "Sell your insurance policy and live off the difference between £2,500 and whatever it realises".  
After a period of silence during which time he recovered his composure, he informed the listeners that

this had come to £6,000 which he had hoped would make his retirement a little more pleasant.  
John's final comment was to make the point—amidst a recurrence of his faltering voice—that no one had given Thatcher a mandate for that sort of thing.  
The next caller was Anne from another area of Merseyside. Anne wanted to know about the return of the 'death penalty'. "Go ahead Anne" said the interviewer,

"have your say."  
Anne made one clear and brief point. "Yes" she said. "I'm in favour of the death penalty (there was no faltering in her voice). For one person—Maggie Thatcher"! Anne put the phone down.  
Need anything more be said about the feelings of the working class for this most reactionary of governments?  
Yours fraternally,  
Ted Mooney,  
Liverpool.

## They treat horses better

Dear Comrades,  
I am really glad that I'm in my mid-twenties. I would hate to be an adolescent with little hope of a job, or an old age pensioner living in Tory Britain.  
The World in Action programme on hypothermia really appalled me. The body's temperature should be 98.4°F. One old woman was found, barely alive and 18 degrees under the normal temperature. She died.  
Hundreds of our old people, who have given a life's work to making those who have, have even more, are then cast aside and left in cold and miserable conditions. They actually live in fear, wondering if they'll be alive after the winter months.  
How can we let the capitalist class and their puppet governments get away with this? Retired horses get better treatment than retired old people. I am really sick of this capitalist society, where your value is cast

away with age.  
I want to be able to grow old happily with my husband, not in desperation. The upper classes have no right to ruin our lives and we're not going to sit back and let them!!!  
Lynne Tice,  
Hull.

## Bad news

Dear Comrades,  
Watching the news on TV can often be a frustrating experience for a socialist.  
Occasionally, however, amongst the welter of distortions and trivia designed to divert workers' attention away from the crisis, a few glimpses of the misery caused by Tory policies can be caught.  
On the Welsh news tonight came a horrific item which must, unfortunately, be only too common. Two elderly women, one in her 90s, were found dead in a council house in Cardiff. Presumed cause of death—hypothermia. Apparently, they lived without any heating and slept on bare

boards. The County director of social services admitted that lack of resources prevented them being aware of the case or doing anything about it.  
A few minutes later, *Nationwide* featured an investigation into the soaring number of foreclosures. This is a posh word meaning that people buying a house who, usually through being thrown out of work, fail to keep up mortgage repayments, and are forced to give up their home, often leading to the break-up of the family.  
They then interviewed some smooth Tory, who spoke up for his class as usual. He praised the compassion of the building societies, exonerated the government of any blame, and brushed the human misery aside as easily as sweeping unwanted crumbs off the table.  
Yours fraternally,  
Brian George,  
Cardiff North CLP.

## Sam the Man

Dear *Militant*,  
Having seen the play *Return of Sam the Man* in Blackpool last night, I would agree with Edwyn Wilson who reviewed it in *Militant*, issue 635.  
Where I think the play falls down is that while it makes fun of the system, it fails at the end because they don't say how we can change the system, nor really attempt to explain why we're in the present crisis.  
Even so I think the cast should be congratulated on a very funny play. Along with the rest of the audience, I certainly enjoyed every minute of it.  
Yours fraternally,  
Kevin Taylor,  
Blackpool.

## Yours fraternally

Dear Comrades,  
I joined the Labour Party last year after the YS had been knocking at my door over the previous six months.

## Royal water interest

Dear Comrades,  
The way that the wealthy suck the nationalised industries dry can be shown by a short story a water worker told me.  
The New River is an artificial waterway taking water from Ware to supply London. It was built by a Thomas Middleton in the reign of James I.  
Previously water had had to be carried by bucket from various ponds. The local landowners charged such exorbitant fees for allowing the

waterway to cross their land, that Middleton ran out of money with the waterway only half completed.  
In order to complete it he was forced to approach the Monarch of the day James I to borrow the necessary money. The condition on which James agreed to lend him the money, was that he would receive 50% of the profits for the next 400 years!  
The Water Board is still paying the Royal Family money for a waterway built nearly 400 years ago!  
Yours fraternally  
Simon Cole  
Hackney Central LPYS

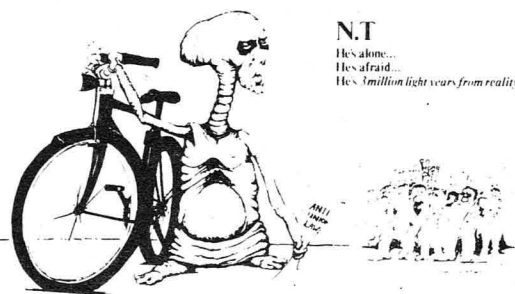
## Tory Reform Groupie

Dear Comrades,  
Nobody should have been too surprised to see Sidney Weighell speaking at a meeting of the Cambridge Tory Reform Group (31 January).  
For anyone listening to him would have understood that Weighell prefers a cabinet of reforming Tories to a fighting, socialist government.  
The "co-operation" and "step-by-step advancement" he spoke of, was clearly just the "step-by-step" removal of the hard won gains of the railwaymen.  
ASLEF and NUR men won't forget his support for the BR bosses over flexi-rostering. Yet he described this attack on working conditions as "the most sensible, intelligent and economic way for management to use staff".

He spoke with derision of those who talk of 'capitalist crisis'. But many workers who have seen the failure of reformism to defend their jobs and living standards, will be quite happy to see Weighell's "sensible, rational arguments" being "drowned by the left-wing".  
Yours fraternally,  
Martin Powell-Davies,  
Cambridge City LPYS.

## Marx for sale

Dear Comrades,  
Mrs Betty Williamson is to sell two letters, written by Karl Marx to her father-in-law Dr James Williamson, at Christie's on 23 February.  
The two unpublished letters "are expected to raise up to £9,000" (*Guardian*, February 4).  
Can someone explain the use-value or labour expressed in them to make their "exchange-value" (price) £9,000?  
Does the fact that someone who has £9,000 to waste on a couple of scraps of paper that contain no great unravellings of the economic system and cares so little about society that they would rather purchase the letters than invest in a co-operative and alleviate society's many problems, show complete ignorance of Marx's ideas?  
Will that purchaser display the ultimate in capitalist irony?  
Would Marx see this as a betrayal of his values, or would he just die laughing?  
Fraternally,  
Chris Dunn,  
Spalding,  
Lincs.



## Bike no pedal

Sir,  
I have been a reader of your paper for some four months and I endorse most of your statements.  
I am not active in politics but very socially motivated and appalled by what has happened under the Thatcher regime.  
The prospect of a further term of her monetarist and uncaring policies positively terrifies me.  
She performs as the Barbara Woodhouse of the Tory Party and when she commands "sit" her party does just that! Where has the so-called tradition of the 'car-

ing' Tory gone?  
I voted anti-Tory for all of my adult life and I am now burning 50 plus candles! The swing to the right in the Labour Party is a denial of basic socialism and plays right into the hands of Thatcher.  
*Militant's* efforts to resist this swing is to be applauded.  
How do the old and infirm 'get on their bike' when they can't pedal them. A large percentage can't afford to buy one anyway!  
Yours Fraternally,  
Mr I M Campbell,  
Iverness,  
Scotland.

After attending the YS for several weeks I went along as an observer to the GMC.  
At the end of the meeting I was standing at the door talking to a member of the YS, holding a copy of *Socialist Youth*, when I was accosted by one of the delegates, and accused of

destroying the party and being a Trotskyite infiltrator.  
This, by someone who'd never seen me before that evening!  
Yours fraternally  
Mick Packer  
South Herts LPYS



## workers' viewpoint

In *Militant* last week, Heather Rawling's article "What price redundancy?" looked at the effect of redundancy payments on the fight against the destruction of jobs.

This week we are reprinting a shortened version of an article which first appeared in *Militant*, 7 November, 1980 on Consett steelworks. It was written shortly after the workers there decided to give up the fight against closure.

By January 1980 only months after the Tory election victory in May '79, steel workers were on the picket line up and down the country in a brave and bitter national strike to defend their wage levels and bargaining system.

The strike, half-organised and half-led by the national leadership, was followed by a series of crucial local battles against steel closures—at Corby, Bilston and Consett.

The commitment of Consett workers in their long fight to resist this shattering blow to a town dependent on steel could never be doubted. 2,500 Consett ISTC members voted unanimously to fight for their jobs in July 1980.

The article asked why did the Consett campaign fail? In spite of the lack of a fighting national lead, could the closure have been avoided?

More than two years later, with unemployment officially a million higher than it was then, with axe-man MacGregor poised to move from steel to coal, the lessons of this struggle are more relevant than ever.

### THE FIGHT was divided between two different leading bodies.

The steel works itself had its own elected works committee which in turn elected a so-called 'mini-committee' representing all the unions and recognised by the management for negotiations.

The mini-committee was given facilities in the works by the local BSC management. This committee was the 'official' body responsible for the conduct of the campaign, its finances and so on.

In addition, there was a 'co-ordinating committee'; open to any steelworkers who were prepared to help. This committee organised the 'nuts and bolts' of the marches, the publicity and so on. By the end of the campaign, the "co-ordinating committee" was far more militant in its outlook than was the mini-committee. But the permanent division of authority—with the official committee always acting as a 'brake' on the other—weakened the campaign.

### Style of campaign

The main orientation of the campaign in the early days was dictated by the mini-committee. It was one of reasoned argument.

The publicity produced by the campaign was based on proving that the workers of Consett were hard-working, that they made good steel, that they had fought to become viable, and that there was no case for closure.

The committee produced a document, assisted by economists from Durham University, called *No Case For Closure* which went into details.

Appeals were made to the new BSC chairman, the EEC commissioners, the North East Development Corporation, and so on. Later the mini-committee produced a detailed "social audit" showing the crippling effect of the closure on the local area, the expected rate of unemployment and other consequences.

In the language of facts, figures and arguments, they strengthened workers' conviction that their fight was justified. And their case for support in the labour movement carried all the more weight.

However, the way in which the mini-committee used this material was to direct it, not at the working class, but towards BSC management. The cam-

paign, in effect, was seen as a debate with BSC management and Industry Department officials behind closed doors.

### Politics and militancy

Although the co-ordinating committee opened its doors very near the end of the campaign to interested Labour Party members, before then it was explicitly 'non-political'.

Though leading steelworkers' representatives were addressing Labour Party meetings, the same people were simultaneously saying that the Labour Party should not get involved, the issue was not a political one! This was in spite of many activists themselves being individual Labour Party members.

'Militancy' was frowned upon by leaders of the campaign and by others. When Roland Boyes, the left-wing European MP, raised the "Lorraine option"—in other words a greater degree of militancy—he was condemned by the local MP, councillors and even some of the campaign committee.

The nearest the campaign came to militant action was in August when the co-ordinating committee, by now more militant than the 'official' mini-committee and open to LP activists from outside, organised a small demonstration in London.

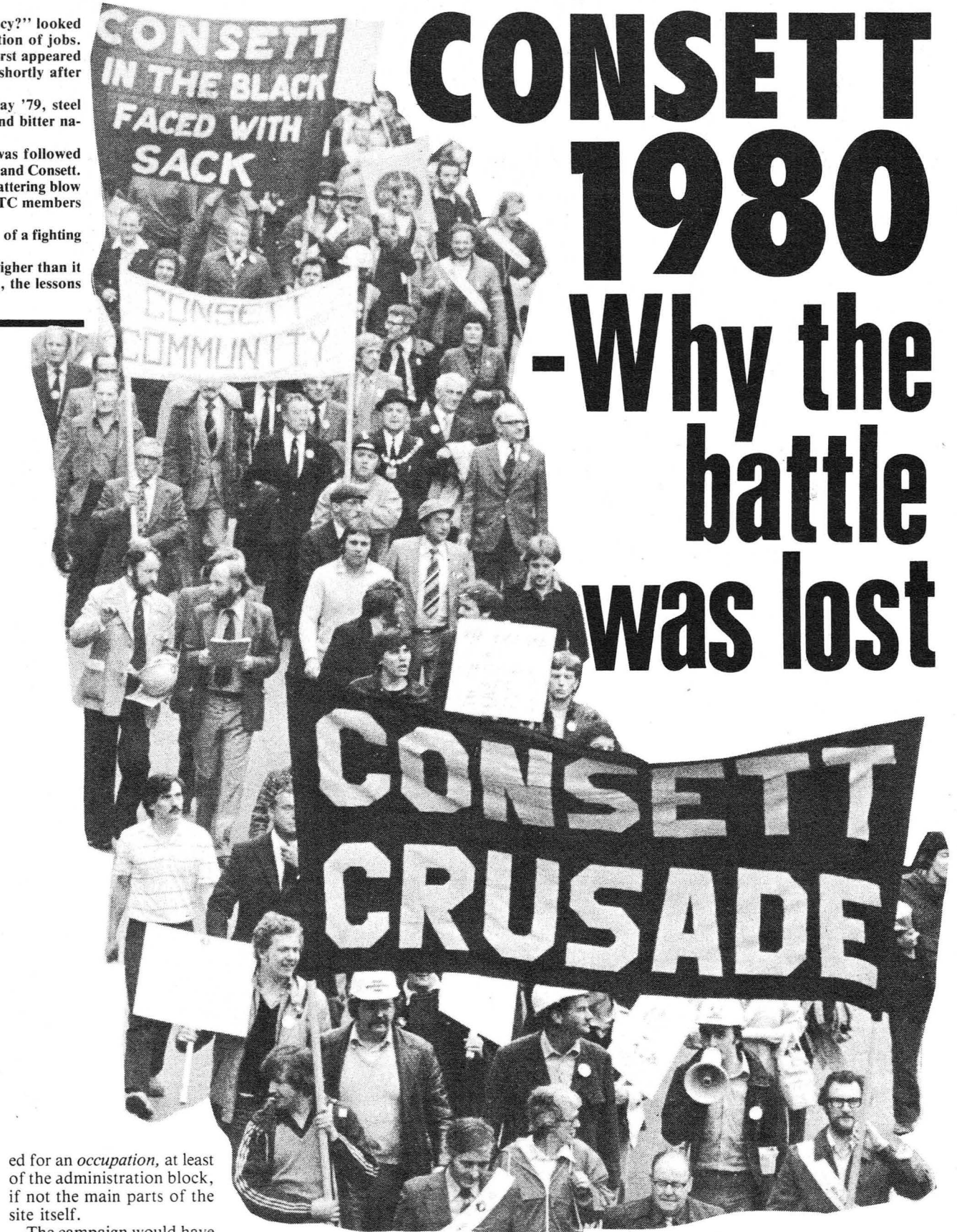
About a dozen steelworkers shouted their defiance from the gallery of the House of Commons and were promptly locked up for five hours. Earlier in the day they had stopped the traffic on Westminster Bridge with their banners for a total of about four minutes.

This was really a token action by some activists who were by this time frustrated at the way the campaign had gone. It was also very late on, the campaign being over four weeks later. Even this modest effort was condemned by some members of the mini-committee!

### Support not tapped

If the leadership of the campaign had adopted a different strategy from the beginning, then the whole outcome could have been different. Support should have been mobilised from the very beginning to a particular aim.

The only way that the mass of workers could have been actively involved from the beginning would have been if their support had been canvassed and mobilised



By John Pickard and Arthur Carter

ed for an *occupation*, at least of the administration block, if not the main parts of the site itself.

The campaign would have involved more workers if it had also sought support from the labour movement more rigorously.

For every trade union or Labour Party branch that had a Consett speaker and an appeal for support, there were scores more that did not.

Factory gate and shipyard collections during the national steel strike showed what support there was then—it would have been even greater if it had been 'tapped' over the closure.

Consett was seen as a 'test case' for the North-East. The potential support was far greater than was ever realised.

### Regional General Strike

Like the Upper Clyde dispute in 1971, the Consett case could have led to a regional general strike and a massive national campaign.

At the peak of the campaign NUPE were talking about putting a motion to the regional council of the TUC for a one-day regional strike in support of Consett.

Only a mass campaign could have forced the

government to alter its decision.

There could be no running away from the fact that this kind of campaign would have been 'political'. Inevitably it would have raised broader, more fundamental issues—how the BSC bureaucracy has destroyed the industry, how the Tories are immune to working class problems like low wages and unemployment, and so on.

This kind of approach was often alluded to, especially as the campaign wore on, but the crucial opening months had no such orientation.

### Redundancy pay

There was always a section of the workforce which wanted to 'get its lot'—to negotiate severance and redundancy payments from the very beginning. But

with the right kind of campaign, these workers—in a minority at first—would have been swamped.

One worker described how he was having great difficulty winning over workers in his own shop. They looked upon him as some kind of freak who was trying to keep open a doomed works.

But after the mass lobby of Parliament—billed as the "Consett Crusade"—with a deliberate association with Jarrow—and given national publicity, the mood in the shop changed:

"I went into the shop the next day with my head held high. This time it was the other blokes, the moaners who were hanging their heads in shame at not doing anything for the town."

That comment by one of the activists speaks volumes. For the majority of workers, it was not a question of whether or not the works should be saved—they overwhelmingly thought it

should be—it was a question of morale and confidence.

Apart from two marches, one lobby and one mass meeting, the majority of workers were not engaged in the campaign in an active way.

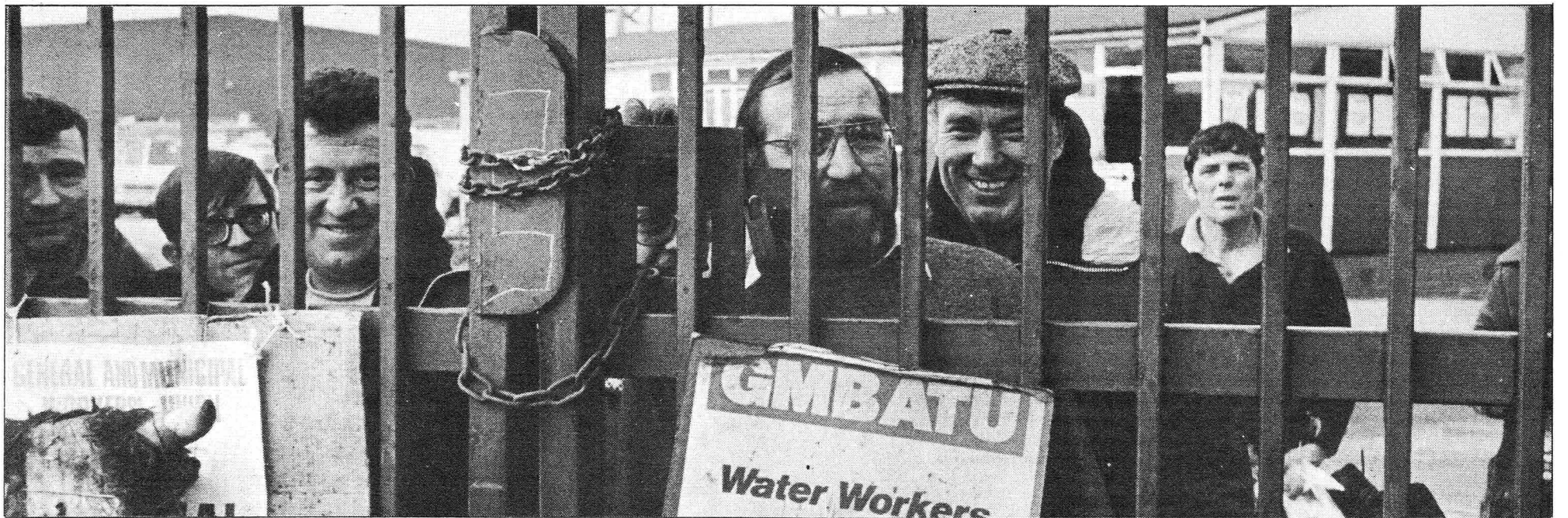
Workers are not keen for a fight unless they think they can win. Unfortunately the orientation of the campaign was never for a 'fight' as such, more for a 'debate' between a small committee and BSC.

With the press and the mass media conjuring up tales of massive severance pay and with the lobbying of BSC management going on endlessly, it seemed, the morale and the confidence of the workers ebbed away.

A mass campaign that involved an occupation from the beginning would have maintained a higher morale. The mood after the 'Crusade' could have been carried on.

Massive support outside Consett—always available, but not realised—would have raised morale even higher. A campaign on these lines could well have jolted the government enough to keep Consett open.

# Industrial Reports



## Water-workers feel their strength

### 'Disgruntled' — you bet!

**THE DANGEROUS nature of the work done by water workers was shown in a report in the Guardian on February 1.**

It told how South Northamptonshire District Council were prosecuted after the death of two sewer workers. They were found dead at the bottom of a tunnel, overcome by carbon monoxide fumes lying in a mixture of effluent and sludge.

A petrol pump had been used to try to clear a flooded pumping station because, as Mr Roy Aston 'prosecuting' told the court, "Their electric pump had broken down a year before and was never replaced." He said that complaints over lack of proper equipment had previously been made by the former cleansing superintendent who had warned his seniors of the possibility of such an

accident.

Mr Roy Walker, 'defending', said that the superintendent who made these statements had been under threat of redundancy and was a 'disgruntled employee'!

Incidents like this occur regularly throughout all industries—management are more interested in profit than in conditions of workers. The fines imposed on offenders are ludicrous—in this particular case, the council was fined £3,000 with £1,000 costs.

Militant calls for democratic workers control of industry. If this was the case, safety conditions would be remarkably improved.

**By Louise Carwell**

(East Edinburgh LPYS)

### Support comes flocking in

**SOME shepherds in Leicestershire have not been watching their flocks by night. They have come out on strike in support of the water workers! The shepherds, employed by the Soar Division Water Authority and who watch after sheep on the authority's land, are members of the TGWU and joined the strike action this week.**

### Scabs out — workers in

IN RETALIATION for management scabbing, members of NUPE and GMBATU last Friday occupied the Howdon sewage works, Wallsend. Ray Gray, NUPE shop steward for the workers explained their action:

"We are prepared to stay here as long as it takes", he said, "...Standing on the picket line day after day, the lads were becoming a bit

despondent. But this has really boosted the mood."

Immediately after the building was occupied, the workers were issued with a summons to appear at Leeds magistrates court, 90 miles away, on February 18.

Support has come from all over Tyneside, with local trade unions visiting them and appeals for financial support have gone out to local trade union and Labour Party branches.

**By Ed Waugh**

(Northern Region LPYS Chairman)

### United Cambridge

ERIC WHITE, GMBATU steward, Cambridge sewerage works spoke to Martin Powell-Davies and Chris Ballard (Cambridge LPYS).

"We should never have had to come out, but Thatcher has provoked this strike. She knows there's too many of us to be mucked about, so

she wants to divide us into regions, by destroying the NWC and the National Joint Negotiating Council."

"There's been 100% support from sewage workers here. As the dispute goes on feelings have grown stronger, and we've had very good support from the local labour movement, and we're prepared to stay out for as long as it takes. Support from the power workers could be the key."



We try to put your case. Read ours.

Photo: Viv Seal

### Oxford of Norfolk

**"SOMEBODY'S got to give Maggie a bloody nose—and we're prepared to do that."** So Fred Oxford of the NUPE National Committee (Water Division) outlined the determination of the waterworkers at an LPYS meeting in Norwich.

Fred, himself a sewage worker, described the appalling conditions that he and his workmates faced. "We're stuck out in the country because nobody likes the smell." He told how the new lads were sick every day for a week until they were used to the filth and the stench.

On the day of the meeting Fred had been visiting pickets, and reported that in Norfolk, traditionally a weak area, workers were 100% behind the strike.

Emergency services were being maintained, Fred himself having helped an arthritic old lady by restoring her water, promising a dozen volunteers from the strikers to help if she couldn't find a good neighbour.

The water workers have

clearly learnt the lessons of the NHS dispute. They want a swift end to the strike. They also know that they, unlike the health workers, have the industrial power to hurt the Tories where it really makes them scream—in the wallet.

When asked what would happen if the troops were used to break the strike, Fred told how the son of one striker was in the army transport division. He had recently been put on alert. "It would be putting father against son", said Fred.

**By Jane Edwards**

(Norwich CLP)

### LPYS support

THROUGHOUT the country, Labour Party Young Socialist branches are supporting the water workers. Just hours before the strike began, the London regional LPYS conference unanimously passed a resolution in support of the coming water workers' battle.

The North West regional LPYS conference collected just under £50 for the strike fund, and regular visits have

been made to the picket line at the Davy Hulme works in Manchester.

In Wales, an LPYS rally was addressed by a water workers' leader, and Kevin Roddy, President of the Civil and Public Services Association, urged support for the struggle.

Local branches throughout the country have visited their local pickets, such as Brent East LPYS branch which collected £14 for the strike fund. And on the Isle of Wight, prospective parliamentary candidate, Cathy Wilson has been fighting to get press coverage for the water workers in order for them to put their case.

### 'Not bothered by strike'

STRIKING water workers in Nottingham are furious at the statements of Sir William Dugdale of the Severn Trent Water Authority. They point out that Sir William hadn't been "bothered" (as he claimed) by the strike—because he had his own private well and sewage disposal system!

Another thing that has

make pickets angry is the stream of 'X' and 'Y' registered cars crossing the picket line. "It makes you sick—they lot (management) driving round in big cars and they say they can't afford to pay us a decent wage".

Management are also using scab tactics to keep Stoke Biddulph sewage works going. Pickets had to turn away YOPsters who management had tried to send through the lines!

**Water workers in Prestbury, Cheshire sent us the following open letter to the Prime Minister signed by the pickets.**

Dear Mrs Thatcher

I am a water worker. I want you to know that before I went on strike, I gave it a lot of thought. I do not jump to orders from anybody, yours or the union's, unless I have just cause.

My average take home pay with overtime is £69. I do not want the taxpayers' money, considering you're on £1,300 per week and your husband is a millionaire, I'm sure you can give us some of yours. Surely you don't need all that money?

Yours sincerely  
Prestbury picket line

### Banbury

Interview with Bill Wilkins, shop steward, NUPE, and Banbury Water Workers on the picket line.

"EVERYBODY on the manual side is out in Banbury both NUPE and GMBATU members. Letters from the management have inflamed the situation and the employers have lost all credibility.

"The Tory government is behind the employers and they want to break up the Water Council. This would end national negotiations and leave workers in the weaker areas like Cornwall to go to the wall.

"We want NALGO to take a strong line and instruct their members to come out. They stand to gain from an improved offer.

"The gas and electricity workers should also support us as it's in their interest to do so. We have been invited to speak at Didcot power station about our dispute.

"The strike action should be escalated. Our strike committee is planning occupations locally to maintain pressure.

"Productivity deals—you must realise that there is no money for the majority of our blokes and more deals always mean job losses.

"We would welcome any support from the labour movement and need more people on the picket line!"

# Industrial Reports

## NEW TORY ATTACK ON TELECOMMS

**Major changes to the Telecommunications Bill have been introduced by Tory Industry Minister, Kenneth Baker.**

**This attack on workers in British Telecom and the private sector ignores normal consultation with union and consumer groups.**

As it happens the changes confirm the prediction made in a secret Department of Industry document first revealed by the *Guardian* last year, which the POEU right wing first dismissed as "ludicrous".

This document predicted 45,000 job losses partly because of plans to drop the exclusive right of BT to supply, install and maintain the first telephone.

With the first Act, we lost our rights over 8 million phones but we kept them on 10 million others. The POEU leadership called this significant loss a "victory" and considered the rights over the first phone as an assurance from the government.

The maintenance of all new call routing apparatus will be open to competition contrary to previous assurances. Similarly, restrictions on Mercury's supply of international services will be eased (Mercury is an alternative telephone line network). There was an 'assurance' that there should only be one such alternative network.

Kenneth Baker has announced that competing public networks should have the right to interconnect to BT. Completely taking away the rights over the first phone and allowing full competition over switching equipment will inevitably take work from BT. But in the past BT ordered 95% of its equipment and telephones from British private manufacturers.

These manufacturers completely reflect the overall sickness of the rest of private industry. Lack of investment has resulted in a huge loss of international and home markets. Both BT and the manufacturers fear a flood of cheaper and superior foreign products with resultant job loss in the manufacturing sector.

Kenneth Baker announced that BT's prices will be restricted to less than inflation to make the proposals seem attractive to the public. It is a further restriction applied to BT but not to its competitors.

Thatcherite control of BT has resulted in prices which directly benefit big business and finance capital at the

**By Phil Holt**  
(Chairman Liverpool BTUC, personal capacity)

pense of the ordinary customer. Sir George Jefferson was appointed by this government and has prepared the way for "privatisation" i.e. denationalisation.

In fact, Peter Benton (the Managing Director) is leaving BT in the hope of becoming a Tory MP!

According to the *Observer*, "Britain's telecommunications charges are amongst the cheapest in the world."

With reduced profits BT's loss making services will suffer and it will be able to buy fewer goods from the manufacturers. Any nationally planned telecomms policy will be dealt a death blow.

Yet this doesn't mean that socialists should support price increases. Public ownership along with public accountability can mean pressure to have price increases deferred or stopped as recent events have shown. However, artificial limitations and restrictions in a capitalist society will mean a totally unbalanced development of BT and inevitably this will even further be at the expense of the ordinary customer in order to satisfy the whims of big business and keep its custom.

**Privatisation — threat to union and public**

Prices can only be kept low by the full public ownership of telecomms where the huge profits, public and private, can then be used to benefit the workers and ordinary customers.

It is proposed to totally reorganise BT at national and area level. If Thatcher had directly told Sir George Jefferson to re-organise BT in order that its most profitable sectors could easily be hived-off, then there could be no superior plan. The future for

POEU members in the short and long term looks serious.

Tory assurance after assurance has been peddled out by the union leadership to lull the members into indifference. No advice or information has been given to the branches over reorganisation which has tremendous implications for work practices, negotiations and the future of public ownership.

Instead they have let one of the weakest unions, SPOE, (the Management Union) hold 2 special conferences to give their verdict before indicating a view. Now SPOE has accepted the re-organisation, the POEU NEC has commenced national negotiations, ie after an obstacle for BT Management has been eliminated. The recent letter even implies that the POEU view will reflect the management assurance that there will be no impact on POEU members. Already there is a developing uproar at this complacency.

In the meantime Liverpool's British Telecom Union Committee, representing 6,500 telecom workers and all the local BT unions, has issued an open letter to the national BTUC slamming them for their disorganisation and lack of strategy around serious action to defeat the government's privatisation plans. The latest Tory intervention underlines Liverpool BTUC's criticisms.

**Action needed**

The POEU Broad Left is also circulating the seminars BTUC has called to discuss the anti-privatisation campaign. A real fighting programme of action as outlined by the POEU Broad Left is needed.

But above all, Special Conferences of the unions need to be called so that the ranks can discuss all the new dangers and problems that have arisen since last year which include the Tory decision to actually denationalise BT.

It is an absolute scandal that the right wing organised the POEU conference in June to prevent decisions being made on Branch propositions. It is an even worse scandal that SPOE can hold two special conferences whilst the POEU NEC resist, like King Canute, the flood of national circular letters on this issue. If a Conference isn't called soon, POEU members are beginning to feel that without firm leadership, like Canute, they will be flooded.



POEU members march against government moves to privatisation.

## ROUQUINET - DERROY

**By Joanna Slattery**

THE DISPUTE at the textile factory in Nottingham over management's attempt to impose a new shift system is now into its fourth week. Most workers at the Dale Side Hadden works are absolutely determined not to go back on management's terms of lower wages as well as accepting the management's new shift system.

At a mass meeting on 11 February, all but 2 workers agreed to continue the fight. A mass picket was organised for Monday, when the management was interviewing the new staff. One person who came for a job told strikers that he didn't want to apply but the Job Centre told him he'd lose his benefit if he didn't go for an interview. But he was easily persuaded to join the picket line instead, and the local CPSA branch, some of whom were on the picket, agreed to take this up.

Even the local radio reporter had to admit that the management were trying to use the unemployed to force the workers back on their conditions, but he said he couldn't put that in his report.

One of the 17 YOPsters out of about 80 workers explained how when the strike started they were asked to come out by the workers. In

spite of management's attempts to tell them that it was none of their business, they all signed up for the union and joined the strike. It is hardly surprising. They work for 40 hours a week with no training or day release. They have to work early morning and afternoon shifts, all for the grand total of £32.00 a week.

The workers here are quickly realising that Tebbit's attacks on the unions

combined with Thatcher's millions of unemployed are building a haven for reactionary management like this. It's vital that this dispute is won and the bosses are shown that workers won't have their lives disrupted just for the profits of the few. Donations and messages of support to the National Union of Hosiery, Knitwear Workers, Union House, Church Street, Baseford, Nottingham.

**Nothing to burn?**

TYNE AND WEAR incinerator men responded magnificently last week when they had discovered that plans were being discussed by the Labour controlled council to close local incinerator plants. All the local plants declared a one-day strike but 100 men also went to the Tyne and Wear headquarters and occupied the building.

Surprised staff turned up to find themselves locked out though the vast majority took this cheerfully. Even passing school children gave support by pointing out that

the police were opening up the windows to let staff in.

Having been 'shocked rigid' the authority finally summoned the Labour leader of Tyne and Wear County Council who came to negotiate with the men. He eventually agreed to take the decision out of the hands of the council officials and hand it back to the sub-committee.

**By Alex Stark**  
(Branch Secretary, Gateshead Central NUPE branch)



Water Workers in Manchester.

## SUPPORT GROWS FOR WATER WORKERS

See other Reports on page 14

**Waterworkers at Green Lane depot, Liverpool have occupied their plant in protest against management, members of NALGO, trying to do their work.**

**They have stuck a list of names of scabs on the gate. Next to it they have put a cow's head from a local abattoir, saying they have found Shergar.**

The good humour cannot, however, hide the anger at NALGO management who are already on £8,000 to £10,000 a year and probably getting £500 or £700 a week for a 12-hour shift. "If they're going to do our jobs, we'll make sure they can't do theirs", is the attitude of the strikers.

"Four yard men here are eligible for Family Income Supplement," said Bro Ridgeway, one of the strikers. "They depend on our bonus. If we have a week of bad weather, they have to apply. The stories of high wages aren't true."

Some unemployed workers were interviewed on TV, offering to do the water-

workers' jobs, so the TGWU Unemployed Workers' branch sent some people to the picket line to show that the unemployed, despite their poverty, support the waterworkers' claim.

Support is growing in the whole movement. GMBATU members in the chemical industry voted at a meeting to stop deliveries of chlorine to water authorities for purification. The Confed unions are recommending their craft union members to support the water workers, if asked to, from Sunday night.

There is enormous admiration for the determination of the strikers.

Although they have, so far, played only a few cards available, the condition of rivers with untreated sewage, standpipes in the streets, and, most vital of all to the Tories, the threat to industry which consumes vast quantities of water and needs much of it extremely fresh shows the importance of the waterworkers.

Kent waterworkers have warned that the authorities in Kent have attempted to minimise the effects of the strike by keeping quiet about water pollution. At Pembury, contractors who went in to clean a sand filter were not given the usual test for typhoid carriers. To the Tories, the strike must be defeated no matter what the danger to public health.

Waterworkers have shown their strength and if they stand firm, can win the dispute, particularly with support from power, chemical and craft workers. They have given new heart to other workers. GMBATU and TGWU members in local authorities have rejected their 4% pay deal. No wonder the government, while officially keeping out of the dispute, have been pushing for a face-saving settlement through compulsory

arbitration. The problem is, what have ACAS or the enquiry got to offer workers? The negotiators have only gone this little way under the pressure of the strike. If there is to be an enquiry the strike must not be suspended in the meantime.

Water workers will be suspicious of any offer from this government. Through the back door, the Tories are trying to avoid changing from a 16-month deal to a 12-month deal and to give any commitment on the vital question of keeping national negotiations. The waterworkers' strike cannot be turned on or off like flicking a switch, to be resumed if an agreement suitable to the strikers is not reached.

We can win if we stand firm, involving the members at all stages through meetings and propaganda. There must be no deal before the full agreement by union members involved in the strike. No bargaining of present gains against the dissolution of the National Water Council. We have a cast iron case. We have the power to win. Let's use that power to win our justified case and deal a blow to the Tories' plans to savage all workers' living standards.

## London's Homeless

From Page One

marked for defence. Behind these raw statistics lies real misery for the ever rising number of Britain's homeless.

The pitiful total of 10,863 houses begun to be built from January-September 1982 is only a third of the figure achieved a decade ago. And in the same period the number of homeless families has more than quadrupled.

Thatcher has proudly talked of taking us back to the values of the Victorian years. Her locust years, hacking welfare and housing, has certainly meant that mass deprivation and worse has returned to stalk our city streets.

Young homeless people are once again thrown onto the resources of charities to solve a problem that the government should solve. But shelter at one of the

charity's hostels is only ever short-term, and then people are back on the streets again.

Some find themselves forced to go the modern-day equivalent of the Victorian workhouse, government 'reception centres,' run by the DHSS. They are given a shower on entry, housed in Single-sex dormitories and given compulsory work to perform.

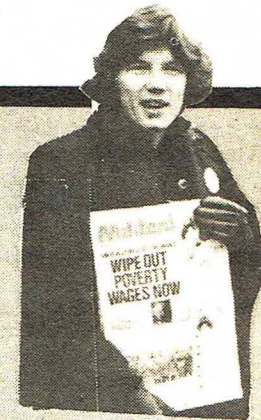
After that it could be back on the streets, doing the round of bed-and-breakfast, sleeping rough. So is it any wonder that some turn to petty crime to make ends meet, or accept the offer of a bed for the night with perhaps horrific results?

No-one would be homeless in Britain if the resources of the economy were put to the use of people not profit.

No matter what the final outcome of the 'Muswell Hill murders' investigation, the responsibility for the apparent homelessness of the victims, lies with the capitalist system that turns its back upon the needs of young people.

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## Socialist Policies For Labour Victory

From Page One.

government to retreat and return the millions of pounds it has taken from Southwark Council and the GLC.

John O'Grady claims to represent "Real Bermondsey Labour", but he was removed as council leader last year because local Labour Party and trade union members were fed up with the way that, under him, Southwark Council had tamely implemented Tory cuts. Unable to win support for his ideas within the labour movement he is fighting a campaign eagerly backed by the same papers that campaigned for Thatcher in '79.

A victory for any candidate except Peter Thatchell will be a victory for Thatcher and big business. A Labour

victory can be a springboard for Labour to launch a mass campaign towards defeating the Tories in the coming general election.

Just as Thatcher has been bold and decisive in looking after the interests of the wealthy, *Militant* believes Labour leaders should do the same for the working class—the people who actually produce the wealth in society:

A 35-hour week without loss of pay could create about a million new jobs.

A £90 minimum wage would remove millions from the poverty line and the need to work long hours of overtime.

A massive programme of public building—a million

new houses a year, new hospitals and schools, and expansion of public services, improving transport, housing repairs etc. These would provide useful jobs at trade union rates of pay to end unemployment. These are the policies *Militant* supporters are fighting for.

The Tories' system cannot afford a decent standard of living for working people. The only way of guaranteeing a decent standard of living is by Labour breaking with big business and fighting for a socialist plan of production, based on the nationalisation, of the 200 largest monopolies that control over 80% of manufacturing industry, with compensation only on the basis of proven need.

With workers' control and management of the industries, production could be geared to the needs of the whole of society instead of

the profit of the few.

The fact that there is even speculation of a Tory general election win, after all they have done to working people, is a condemnation of the recent actions of Labour leaders. Workers must be convinced that Labour is committed to bold socialist action to end the crisis.

Expulsion of the *Militant* Editorial Board will signify the opposite—that Labour's right wing are preparing to repeat the mistakes of 1974-79, trying to prop up the ailing capitalist system, instead of transforming society along socialist lines.

END THE WITCH-HUNT!  
 NO EXPULSIONS!  
 VICTORY FOR LABOUR AND PETER TATCHELL IN BERMONDSEY!  
 SOCIALIST POLICIES TO FIGHT THE TORIES!