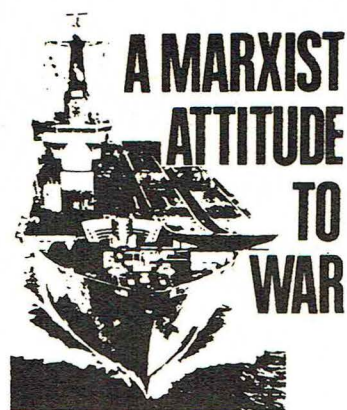


Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 646
15 April 1983

20p



Falklands
Feature
p8-9



Photo: R Matthews (IFL)

Timex workers occupying their Dundee plant. Closure would mean one in five in Dundee would be out of work

TIME FOR TORIES TO GO

The sooner an election comes and we can get rid of Thatcher's mob the better. Whether in a job, on the dole, or facing cuts, working-class people are sick and tired of the Tories. In Dundee, Timex workers occupied their plant last weekend to save jobs. In Liverpool, Croxteth school has been occupied and kept open since last July. No-one can afford more Tory cuts.

Timex workers say... CLOCK OUT NOW THATCHER

"There is no way we will unoccupy the factory until the redundancies are withdrawn," declared John Kidd, deputy convenor of Timex, speaking at the NUJ conference in Dundee.

"We are in a strong bargaining position with several hundred workers in control of plant material which is amongst the highest technological equipment in Britain."

He stressed the need for a political solution and attacked the distortions in the press, especially the local DC Thomson publishing firm which has a virtual monopoly in the local newspaper market.

The American Timex Corporation are making workers redundant because they say they have lost the contract to manufacture the Nimslo 3D camera. Multi-millionaire Fred Olsen owns a large

share of Nimslo International and also Fralsen, the French company, which now intends to manufacture the camera. Olsen has decided to take advantage of the cheap grants being made available in France and cheap labour in Taiwan.

Over the past 90 days, explained, Willie Leslie, a shop steward at the Milton Craigie plant, "we have exhausted all possibilities available to us. Our backs are to the wall and we now have no option other than to take the present industrial action". So the fate of the workforce depends either on the likes of Fred Olsen whose main concern is profit making or the collective strength of the labour and trade union movement combining to fight the threat to jobs.

By Eddie Donaghy

(Scottish Executive, Labour Party, personal capacity)

The position at Timex shows the burning need for international solidarity of the labour movement. Otherwise multi-millionaires like Fred Olsen will be free to move factories around the world unchallenged whatever the social cost to the workforce. But a determined fight with workers uniting internationally to defeat the likes of Fred Olsen, would strengthen and improve the position of trade unionists internationally.

It is clear that the workforce at Timex is determined to save jobs. The labour movement should take strength from this. If

Olsen and his crew want to pull out of Dundee and make workers redundant, then their companies should be nationalised under democratic workers control and management.

Already the workers have received support from the Scottish TUC, the Scottish Council of the Labour party and Dundee City Council who have donated £10,000 to their campaign. However, cash is still needed and messages of support and financial donations should be sent to Mr John Kydd, c/o Timex occupation, Milton and Craigie Road, Dundee.

£42,802 for Militant

A magnificent £12,000 in the last week has meant that we have raised £42,802 in the first quarter of this year. This is a record for the first quarter, and £10,000 more than was raised in the same

period last year.

Many thanks and congratulations to all our contributors. Final chart for the quarter will appear next week. Report page 4.

Croxteth occupation teaches Tories and Liberals lesson

By Mark McMenimen and Phil Knibb

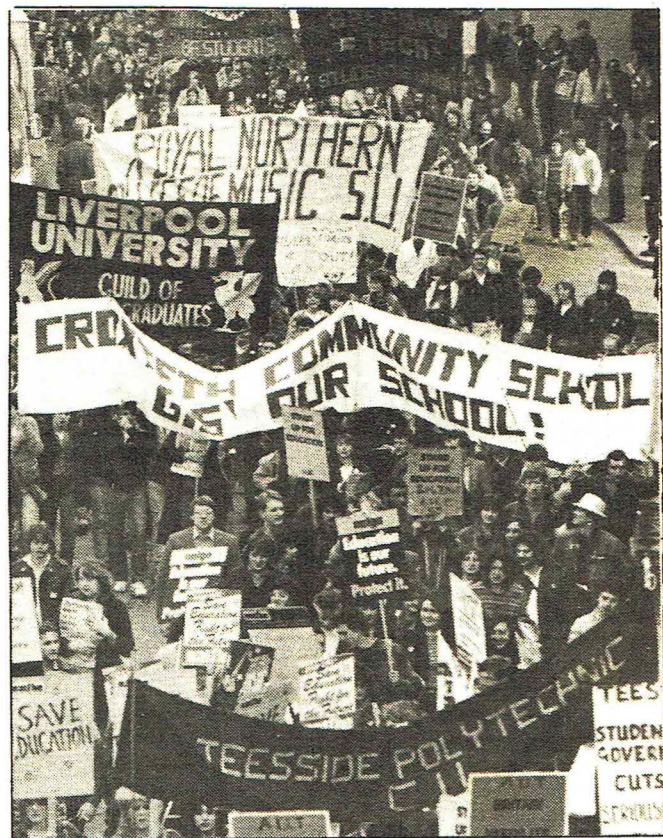


Photo: Militant

Croxteth banner on education cuts demo, 9 March

Croxteth Comprehensive has been occupied by the community day and night since July 1982. Everything

from washing walls, teaching pupils, organising school discipline and raising cash, has been

Continued on back page

James White MP and Militant

IN *Militant* 639 (25 February) we reported a dispute at Glasgow Car Collection Ltd. Based in Bathgate, West Lothian, the firm is owned (jointly with his wife) by Mr James White, Labour MP for Glasgow Pollok. In response to our article, which reported the facts of the dispute and the workers' anger at their treatment by the firm, Mr White issued high-court writs claiming libel against the five members of our Editorial Board and Cambridge Heath Press Ltd.

Militant printed the report believing it to be true. Having thoroughly checked all the facts, we consider the report was accurate and fair, and we will be vigorously contesting Mr White's court action.

Mr White has also taken out a writ against the *Glasgow Herald*, which followed *Militant* in reporting the dispute at his firm. Senior *Herald* editorial staff

have told us that they independently checked our report, are confident that their stories were accurate, and that they will also be fighting Mr White's action.

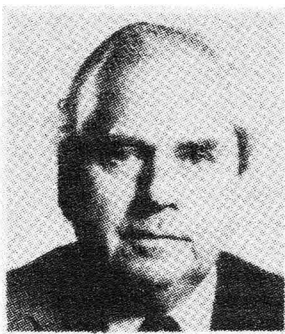
Our original report related that the workers were offered a 5% increase on their £1.43 an hour rate. Unless they accepted 5%, they were told, the company would be closed down. The workers decided to work just 8 hours a day according to their contracts, but were then told that unless they continued normally there would be no work.

The threat was carried out. We reported one of the workers, Alan McLachlan, who has worked for the firm for 6 years, as saying: "We were 'locked out' for 5 days with no work and no pay". This reflected the view of the majority of workers in dispute.

We also reported the workers' anger at this high-handed treatment. What

particularly scandalised the workers is that "the boss", the firm's managing director, was a TGWU member and a Labour MP.

Without any warning and without Mr White attempting to make his views known to *Militant*, we received notice of the writ



James White MP

from Mr White's solicitors, the big City firm, Lovell, White & King. "This article", they wrote, "is serious-

ly defamatory of Mr White in that whilst reminding readers that Mr White is a socialist and a trade unionist Member of Parliament it then goes on through a series of inaccurate and damaging allegations to suggest that Mr White is hypocritically exploiting the workforce at his own company".

We have not yet been served with Mr White's "Statement of Claim", in which his solicitors will have to set out the specific grounds for his allegation of libel. However, in various statements Mr White has particularly complained of the allegation that he "locked out" his workers.

Militant now has statements, sworn before a public notary, from several of the workers involved in the negotiations at the firm. They all confirmed the crucial point. When the dispute came to a head, Mr White told them: "You do it my way, or not at all", and

threatened to close the company if he had to pay more than 5%.

The workers then state that they reported for work every morning and stayed all day, and put in time sheets for 8 hours a day. At the end of the week, however, they were paid no wages, only a tax rebate.

High Court writs

Under pressure from these threats, the workers voted 5-5 on continuing their action, agreeing on the chairman's casting vote to return to normal working and submit the dispute to ACAS, which is still dealing with it.

Now our dictionary, the *Longman Modern English*, defines a lock-out as "a refusal on an employer's

part to admit workers except on his own stipulated conditions of employment". In the opinion of the workers at Glasgow Car Collection, and in the opinion of *Militant*, the situation at the firm was a lock-out.

Nevertheless, Mr White has a different view and we are making him an offer. *Militant* is always prepared to open its columns to correct inaccuracies or give the right of reply. If Mr White considers our report inaccurate and defamatory we hereby offer him space in our columns, without prejudice to his legal action, to put his case before the readers of *Militant*.

Meanwhile, we will confidently continue to prepare our case. But as everybody knows, legal action is expensive, and we appeal to all our readers urgently to send cash to back *Militant's* defence of its right to report truthfully the case of workers involved in industrial action.

CLP ASKS MP TO STAND DOWN

"You'll do it my way or not at all".

That was the statement read out at last Sunday's meeting of Pollok Constituency Labour Party.

But the man alleged to have said this was not Ian MacGregor or even Michael Edwardes. This was the response of Jimmy White, Labour MP for Pollok, when dealing with an industrial dispute at the company owned by him and his wife (*Militant*, 25 February).

The General Management Committee delegates listened with growing anger as the letter from the firm's shop steward and depot committee members was read out. Paid the princely sum of £1.43 an hour as car delivery drivers, they had to work around 80 hours a week to make a living wage. Five of the workers had to rely on Family Income Supplement and rent rebates!

The CLP secretary reported that an investigation had shown the MP and his wife to be the sole shareholders and directors of the company, the Glasgow Car Collection Company. Directors' salaries for the last four recorded years, that is 1978-1981, totalled £58,030 and profits for the same period, £45,000, suggest that on the basis of the ten full-time drivers, the White household would be making the best part of £50 a week from every driver in the firm. Yet when the workers ask for an improvement on the 5% rise offered, the MP reportedly threatened to close the company down!

No wonder, then, that one of the three party branches had called a special meeting to discuss the affair. Despite warnings by the MP of legal implications, the branch went on to submit a motion



Campaigning MPs are needed in the fight against unemployment. (Above) LPYS members on Labour Party Glasgow demo.

of "No confidence" to the GMC.

At the GMC meeting the branch delegate explained that the issue was what kind of society we wanted to build: a society free of exploitation of workers by shareholders. It was about the kind of party that we needed to fight for those changes. It was also about the fighting, campaigning MPs needed to assist us in this fight.

It was argued that, despite the constituency's housing and unemployment problems, there had been virtually no consultation between the MP and local party workers on important issues. It was impossible, the delegate argued, to maintain two such full-time—and incompatible—interests.

In reply, James White said he would answer no questions on the dispute or on his income. He warned delegates of possible legal implications of anything they said. There was already a libel action taken out against a certain press for their reporting of his affairs, he said.

Delegates criticised Jimmy White for refusing to answer to the movement on the

allegations and for paying low wages to his employees.

The meeting agreed by 28 votes to 9 a motion of "no confidence" in Jimmy White as a Labour MP.

The CLP Executive Committee then tabled its own resolution asking the MP to stand down as a candidate at the next general election. This was carried by 29 votes to 9.

Delegates might have expected that after such an overwhelming censure the MP would have felt morally obliged to stand down. As the CLP secretary pointed out, if the MP is prepared to accept the verdict of the selection conference that made him the Labour candidate, he should accept the overwhelming view of the CLP at this stage.

But the MP has made it very clear to the press that he intends to stay on no matter what the views of his own constituency. Obviously, many political and democratic questions must arise from this affair.

By Davy Dick
(Pollok CLP, personal capacity)

Witch-hunt in APEX?

Last week's meeting of the organisation sub-committee of the Labour Party NEC decided to defer any further action on the 'Militant Tendency', a fact no doubt related to the 85 resolutions in front of the committee opposing the expulsions of the *Militant* editorial board two months ago.

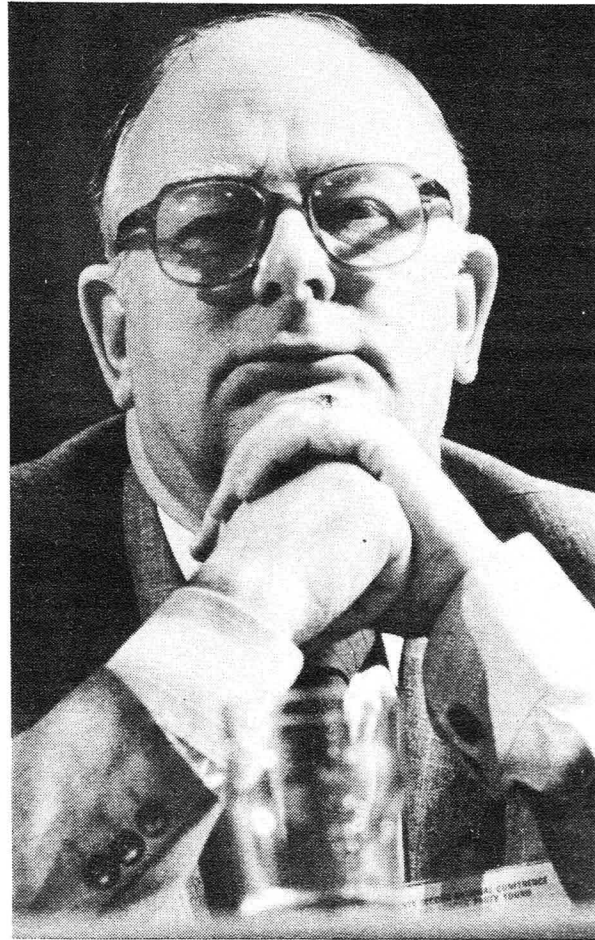
No such inhibitions, however, seem to be holding back the Executive Council of APEX, the clerical union.

At their last meeting in March, they decided "That *Militant* be added to the list of proscribed organisations."

The list of proscribed organisations in APEX includes fascist groups and others such as the Communist Party, the SWP, WRP and IMG, and it can be added to by the Executive Council. It is disgraceful that the union should have such a list at all, lumping left wing organisations together with fascist groups, but this is the first time, apparently, that a newspaper has been added to the list.

The rules of APEX state that any members seeking office in the union, or standing as union delegates, should identify themselves on the ballot paper, indicating what proscribed organisations they belong to, if any. Failure to make this disclosure, or giving false information can lead to punishment under another rule, including possible expulsion.

It seems, therefore, that by transgressing the rule on proscribed organisations, it is possible for a union member to be kicked out—and where they are employed in a closed shop, lose their livelihood. But how, APEX members will ask, does a union member describe their relationship with a newspaper?



Dennis Howell, APEX MP, speaking at this year's LPYS Conference. Photo: Militant

Do members of APEX standing for office have to state whether they sell the *Militant*? Do they have to say whether or not they read it...if so how regularly? We would guess that even Roy Grantham has read *Militant* from time to time. Would candidates have to say whether or not they agree with *Militant*? If so, how much of which articles and which policies they agree with?

APEX members will interpret this vindictive decision as no more than a frantic continuation of the witch-hunt against *Militant* by the right wing of the Labour Party. The decision virtually gives the Executive Council powers to debar any *Militant* supporter from holding office in the union.

Banning fascists is one thing, but the trade unions should be prepared to tolerate all shades of opinion and tendencies apart from fascists within their ranks.

Members will see this decision as an attack on the democratic rights of union members. There is, for example, no likelihood that right wing groups like 'Labour Solidarity' will ever be proscribed.

It is a measure that will be opposed by the majority of union members when they see the implications. Moreover, the right wing in APEX should be aware that this decision will not stem the growth of Marxist ideas in the labour movement or, for that matter, in this particular union.

IRISH LABOUR ON THE MOVE

General strike in the South

A half-day general strike in Southern Ireland has been called for Wednesday 13 April.

The strike and huge demonstrations in most cities have been called to protest at the burden of tax that working people face and the evasion of tax by the rich.

After three years of wage restraint, during which living standards have fallen by 15%, the government has introduced what even it admits is the "toughest peace-time

budget in the history of the state".

Income tax increases, social insurance and VAT charges will cut living standards by a further 3% to 4%. On top of this the government is cutting the entitlement of workers to related unemployment benefit, from 40% of wages to 25% for the newly unemployed. This will mean cuts of up to £20 a week for many workers who have just lost their jobs.

But what has made most workers' blood boil has been the continuing scandalously

high level of tax avoidance by the rich self-employed and big farmers. While workers are forced to pay through PAYE (pay as you earn), the rich have avoided tax almost completely.

In response workers are overwhelmingly supporting the stoppages and some groups have even gone further. Two and a half thousand workers in the Amalgamated Transport and General workers Union at Waterford Glass, instructed their fellow members in the wages office to refuse to deduct any tax for the government and are committed to continue this protest until the government makes concessions. They have said that any victimisation of their fellow workers will be met by strike action.

Workers in the South of Ireland have begun to gain a new confidence. Workers in Ranks, jailed for occupying their factory which was threatened with closure, were freed by the government. The mood of the trade union movement was building up to a general strike.

But no matter how strong the working class, a campaign on tax alone will not be sufficient to change the system. Government policy is dictated by the huge indebtedness of Irish capitalism.

Labour, now playing a scandalous role in a Fine Gael dominated monetarist government, must break from coalition and fight independently on socialist policies.

Given the mood of anger of workers, Labour could quickly become a majority and sweep aside the parasites who now run Irish society.

By Pat Smyth
(Dublin Labour Party, personal capacity)



The Labour and Trade Union Group, formed in 1974, has won big support for the formation of a party of labour in Northern Ireland

North - Stop the Tories

A MAJOR step forward in the campaign to help stop the Tories and the lay the basis for a Labour Party in Northern Ireland was taken at the weekend (9 April).

The conference was sponsored by the Labour and Trade Union Group and prominent local trade unionists. Thirty trade union and other labour movement organisations had 55 representatives in attendance along with 60 observers.

George Doherty from the National Union of Railwaymen brought fraternal greetings from his general secretary, Jimmy Knapp. He pointed out how the Doncaster resolution adopted by the NUR brought sections of the labour and trade union movement together to build the Labour Party in Britain to fight for working class people at the beginning of this century.

Two other fraternal speakers addressed the conference. Tony Mulhearn, President of the Liverpool District Labour Party, gave his organisation's support, explaining how Labour in Liverpool had effectively

combated sectarianism. John Rhyeman, an activist for a Labour Party in America, spoke of similar struggles there.

A resolution moved by Derry Trades Council called on the ICTU to stand trade union candidates in the forthcoming general election putting forward the socialist alternative to Thatcherism. This resolution was unanimously passed.

The call for a conference of labour of trade union bodies, trades councils, Labour Groups and community organisations with a proposal to set up a trade union based Labour Party was also overwhelmingly passed. Support for a conference of labour in Northern Ireland to set up a Labour Party is also official policy of the British and Irish Labour Parties.

Two resolutions calling for the extension of the British Labour Party to the North were defeated by a 12 to 1 majority. This demand is the property of a few isolated individuals in N Ireland.

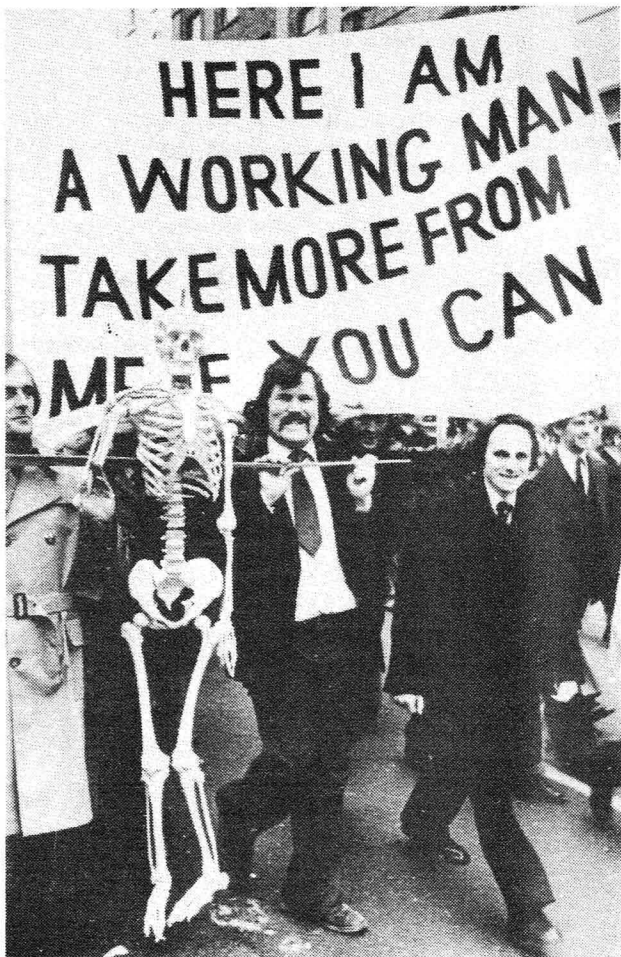
Other decisions taken by conference were to continue

to build the 'Stop the Tories Campaign' and convene a further conference to discuss standing non-sectarian labour candidates at the general election if the Northern Ireland Congress of Trade Unions refuses to act itself.

The conference was imbued with absolute opposition to the Tories. Delegate after delegate condemned the record of the Tories for inflicting suffering on working class people.

Bill Webster in his summary remarks explained that the conference was in no way an attempt to divide, split or step outside the official labour movement. Every one of the existing parties in the North is sectarian, Tory, or both. Only the labour and trade union movement, politically mobilised, offers any hope of a future for Northern Ireland workers.

By Manus Maguire
(Derry Labour and Trade Union Party)



Banner carried by hospital workers on previous demonstration in Dublin against the burden of taxation on workers

From the Militant's mail-bag

"MILITANT IS DOING A GREAT JOB! Millions now are interested where before not all that many knew of your existence."

So wrote E Edwards from Devon. The media's attempt to damage the Labour Party and the Militant has taken us into millions of front rooms, offices and factories.

The hundreds of resolutions we have received show there is enormous opposition to the witch-hunt in the labour movement.

However our mail bag also shows hundreds of people outside the labour movement writing to us to express their "solidarity".

One letter, graciously forwarded by the Labour Par-

ty, complained about the unavailability of the Militant at the newsagents! The writer also comments on the Face the Press programme with Peter Taaffe, "you missed your vocation, you should have been an MP"! Well comrade, you never know!

Mrs A Ursell from Kent also wrote to congratulate Peter Taaffe, "What a refreshing change to have someone answer 'straight on' these stupid beliefs that Militant are literally a terror gang..."

Mr H Penman from Leith wrote, "I am already engaged within my local Labour Party...in the fight to stop the witch-hunt of those who

fight for a socialist Britain...I am secretary of my union branch and also a convenor of the joint shop stewards committee in the factory in which I work. Whatever I can do to help in the campaign to defend Militant I will do."

Offers of support

These welcome but sober remarks were more than once restated in more vigorous form by members of the older generation.

Mr F Armstrong from Essex began his letter "Foot and the Blood Suckers" "I am 73 years of age...Through all my life I've been left wing of any union I've been in...M Foot

I've followed and admired all my life, but not any more. He let them corner him. He should have gone out fighting on the left...When I say Bloodsuckers I mean just that. Labour MPs made a good living out of us going out and canvassing for them."

Some people had to go to some lengths to communicate with us: we have received letters addressed to the Labour Party, Tony Benn, Peter Tatchell, Ken Livingstone, the Wembley Conference Centre (!), Labour Party conference at Blackpool or just simply for Militant.

Leaflets given out on September 22 on the NHS day of action resulted in a number of new subscriptions, but by far the most popular way of writing to us has been to fill out the "Become a

By Mike Waddington

Militant Supporter" form—hundreds have been returned (even from the Western Isles!).

Gavin Coles from Penarth added, "It's a pity you can't publish every day to keep us in touch with what's going on while its happening. Maybe one day someone will get a left wing daily together."

The question asked by these comrades is an important one for the labour movement. A daily Militant is a vital necessity.

A pensioner from Wigan summed it up: "You are doing a great job with the Militant and I hope it goes from strength to strength, which I am sure it will when people get to know the facts you print so well. Fight the Tories and the witch-hunt."

Working class fighter selected in Broad Green

The new Broad Green Labour Party selected a working class socialist, Terry Fields, who is a leader in the Fire Brigades Union, to fight the general election.

To ensure Terry is introduced to the electorate, the constituency has wasted no time in organising a mass canvass for this coming Sunday, 17 April, when it is our intention to canvass the whole constituency and to show the electorate of Broad Green that at least the Labour Party has a candidate behind whom it is united and who is more than willing to campaign against the excesses of Thatcher.

By Lyn Caldow
(Sec, Broad Green LP)



Final chart for the quarter will appear next week. (Above) selling the paper at LPYS Conference.

Fighting Fund-Target almost reached

What a great achievement yet again.

We did not quite reach the target but the sacrifice and the commitment of every person who sent us a donation is clearly one in the eye for the Tories and the right wing of the Labour Party.

Despite the latter's attempts at LPYS conference to silence *Militant* every debate mentioned our ideas and programme. You cannot rid the movement of Marxist ideas. That's why, week in, week out, workers, unemployed, housewives all make donations to our fund.

It is socialist policies which win this support. A letter received this week emphasises this point:

"Dear Comrade, Yardley Branch LP recently resolved to express its support for the *Militant* newspaper and its stand against expulsions of socialists from the LP." Enclosed was a £5 donation.

By Kath White

Every week we receive letters enclosing donations from people coming into contact with *Militant* for the first time. Despite growing unemployment the number of donations we actually receive each week has gone up. There can be no doubt that we are gaining more and more support every week.

Thanks to all of you who sent donations, from the £100 from C Sauter, Hull, to the 20p from a 90-year-old pensioner from Blackburn. Every donation counts—so send it in! Thanks to NUM members at the Annual Mining School, Perth, £45; Guinness Export workers, Walton, £10.50; workers at British Aerospace, Macclesfield, over £8; and four drivers from Glasgow Car Collection, £2.

Thanks to all those people who attended the Karl Marx Centenary Rally in Washington which raised

£104; South Herts LPYS £10; Birkenhead LPYS which donates over £1 a week regularly; Andy Flett, ASLEF Waterloo, £10; Mr and Mrs S Talbot, Dulwich CLP, £10; Kath Kempton, Walthamstow Co-op Women's Guild, £5; Harry Fenner, Stockport hotel worker, £5; Tony and Gina Nicholls, Melton Mowbray, £5 each; Rob McNeill, Preston LPYS, unemployed, £3; Saeed Malik, Cardiff, £3; I Etherington, Chingford EETPU, who gives us £3 a week; Lynn McRobert, Lanark, £2; Mrs A Ursell, Sittingbourne, £1; Malcolm Cansick, East Kilbride, £1; Julie Packer, YOPster from South Herts, £1; G Keats, student, 50p; and a 10-year-old girl from Melton who gave her 60p pocket money.

Thanks to all those who gave £1 for their paper: A Woodward, Ashby NUHKW; Bob Malaney, Chorley; J Goodby, Leeds; G Narnell, Leeds; and Chris and Barry Butterworth, who give £1 for their paper every week.

A lot of readers held last minute events: a sponsored

stop smoking by a Cardiff supporter raised £42, with more to come—an excellent way of raising cash; an Easter raffle got over £20; a sponsored run by an Ealing supporter collected £20; a social in Edinburgh £30, while a sale of drawings raised £15 for Shettleston supporters, and a 'timed nappy change' has so far raised £9 for Barnsley supporters.

Now a new quarter has started—plan early. Although we did well last quarter we can do much better this time if supporters organise events well in advance: socials, sponsored events, bazaars, jumble sales, video nights, etc. So plan yours now.

Make sure every person reading *Militant* for the first time is asked to support the paper financially, in fact, ask every reader for a donation. Ask your local CLPs, trade unions, LPYS branches and Labour Clubs for support too. We need to build and it can be done if the same enthusiasm is applied to this quarter as was the last quarter. Help us by making a donation NOW.



Over 250 papers sold at Greenham Common CND demo

SELL SOCIALISM

There was a great response to *Militant* and *Militant Irish Monthly* at the LPYS conference with hundreds being sold over the weekend and almost everyone obtaining a copy before the conference was finished. The next step is to build a mass LPYS, and *Militant* is the best way to do

that. On the streets, estates, dole queues, techs and at the factories and offices there is a ready audience for the ideas of socialism. Make sure your LPYS has bulk supplies to use in the battle for socialist ideas.

At the various anti-nuclear

demonstrations *Militant* sellers had great success in selling our paper. Our Southampton sellers sold 250 papers at Greenham Common and dozens of others were also sold. For the first time *Militant* was sold at the Co-op Party conference in Llandudno and met with a

good response from the delegates and visitors.

Will you sell *Militant* and start the fight for a Labour government elected on socialist policies? Orders (minimum 5) are obtainable from: *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

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 MEETINGS

BASILDON: Picsea Leisure Centre (Behind Sainsbury's) on Thursday 21 April at 8.00pm.

HALIFAX Marxist Discussion Group. Fortnightly Wednesdays, beginning 6 April at 7.30 pm at AEU Club, St James Street, Halifax (near bus station). For more information phone Phil Crossley, Halifax 822814.

MAIDSTONE MILITANT SUPPORTERS: Maidstone Marxist Economics Day School. Speakers Mick Brooks and John Edwards, at Wheelers Arms, Perry St, on Sunday May 8th, 10.30am to 5.00pm.

NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:

Benton: Details Ged Grebby, 0632 662374.

Wallsend: Contact Ed Waugh, 0632 341284.

North Shields and Whitley Bay: Contact Robin Jamieson, 0632 523441.

RAYLEIGH Speaker: Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board). At Room 5, Civic Suite, Rayleigh Council Offices, Rayleigh High Street (opposite the church). On Monday 25 April, 8 pm. All welcome.

SOUTHEND: Speaker Bob Edwards (Harlow CLP) on Tuesday 19 April at 7.30pm at Southend Central Library, Victoria Avenue, Southend.

BLACKWOOD Marxist Discussion Group. Telephone Blackwood 220051.

ACTON: Speaker Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board) on Tuesday 19 April at 8.00pm at Acton Town Hall, High St, Acton, London W.3.

CARLISLE: Marxist Discussion Group held fortnightly. For further information contact: Ian Campbell on Carlisle 21068.

CLASSIFIED

MERSEYSIDE LPYS Weekend of Action.

Saturday 16 April: 11 am—Demonstration to save Croxteth School. Evening—social, Gillmoss Labour Club. Stay the night at Croxteth School, evening tea and breakfast laid on.

Sunday 17 April. 11 am—Mass canvass, Broad Green constituency.

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.

MILITANT PAMPHLETS

'Capitalist Crisis or Socialist Plan', by Andrew Glyn, £1.20
'Marxist View of History', articles by Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, 50p

'General Strike', articles by Trotsky, Taaffe, Grant, £1.20
All prices include p&tp. Orders to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

STICK WITH MILITANT
Yellow advertising stickers

1,000 for £11; 500 for £5.60; 200 for £2.30. Send cash with order, cheques payable to *Militant*. From *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Left Book Club books. Over 80 available. Offers to Box No 69, *Militant*. Proceeds to Fighting Fund.

WEST NOTTINGHAM LPYS Public Meeting: Socialism or War? Speakers: Willie Griffin (National Chairman LPYS), Alan Simpson (Nottingham for Nuclear Disarmament). Thursday 28 April 7.30pm. Venue: International Community Centre 61B Mansfield Rd Nottingham.

On the centenary of Marx's death, 14 March 1983, Peter Taaffe spoke in Swansea on the relevance of Marxism today, and of *Militant* in the labour movement. Tape cassette available £2.25. Orders to D L Davies, 10 Page Street, Swansea. Profit to *Militant* Fighting Fund.

WRITE OFF THE TORIES WITH US

Militant biros with slogan: "Read *Militant*, Tories out, Labour to power on a socialist programme." Normal price 20p (plus 20p p&tp). Bulk orders: 10 at £1.30 (post free).

NEW POSTER

Historic 'Murmansk poster' featuring Bolsheviks' appeal to British troops who invaded Russia after the revolution. 25p each (+ 15p p&tp) or 20 for £3 (including p&tp). Available from E Phillips, 66 Sprindale Road, Broadstone, Poole.

SNOWDONIA: Bed and Breakfast in comfortable cottage. £4.50 nightly, £28 weekly. Telephone Llanheris 870062.

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 cms £4; 6 col cms £6; 1/16 page £10; 1/8 page £20; 1/4 page £40.

Despite vicious attacks on them in the local labour party Militant supporters in Blackburn continue their work on the real issues...

Asian Brotherhood in Blackburn

A 1978 survey found that in the Blackburn district there were 11,172 Asians, who had come from three main areas: Gujarat in India, Punjab in Pakistan and various countries in East Africa.

Most had come in the early and mid-60s, to escape from the horrors at home, which ironically had mostly stemmed from years of super-exploitation by British colonialism.

They came looking for a better life and work. At first many ended up working in the textile industry, but now

the recession has bitten, the mills have closed and the prospects are bleak. In addition they have faced racist and fascist harassment.

Recently a new organisation, called the **Asian Brotherhood of Blackburn**, has been formed in the town, with 600 members. In this interview, three of its leaders, Abdul Razaq, Wasi Ahmed Khan and Harry Atwal, explain why they came together and what they are fighting for:

‘We talked about our problems and recognised that they were common to us all whether we were Indian or Pakistani. At school or in contact with the police, they made no distinction between our race or religion.

We recognised the need to organise a body to represent all Asians rather than sections.

In the Brotherhood, we respect all religions and aim to collectively fight problems commonly faced by Asians: 40% unemployment; inferior treatment at hospitals; religious problems regarding the food in hospitals and schools.

One of our biggest problems is the police. We are all treated as illegal immigrants and in a totally different manner to the white population. The police seem to take undue advantage in pressuring us, because they know that not all Asians are aware of their legal rights. We are particularly an-

noyed by this Tory government, which is attacking our basic cultural rights (and we have one of the oldest cultures in history). The Nationality Act is one of those attacks. Why should our children born in the UK, be treated as second-class citizens?

The Asian Brotherhood fully supports and works with the labour and trade union movement and sincerely hopes that the Labour government will make changes to the Immigration laws. We believe that racism should be combatted with the unity of the working class.

PETER HARRIS (Former Chairman, Blackburn Labour Party's Ethnic Minority committee) and **DES MULCAHY** (Blackburn LPYS) spoke to the following members of the Asian Brotherhood of Blackburn: **ABDUL RAZAQ** (Vice-chairman), **WASI AHMED KHAN** (General Secretary) and **HARRY ATWAL** (spokesman).

WELL WOMEN CLINIC

Prevention better than cure

Militant supporters in Blackburn have been busy recently with a campaign for a well-women clinic in the town.

The Women's Council and the Young Socialists have worked hard on publicity. An excellent day seminar on Women's Health has been held and a public meeting where 62 women heard speakers from the Manchester well-women clinic and the Burnley well-women campaign.

The Burnley Pendle and Rossendale Health Authority have just agreed to set up well-women centres at their eleven existing clinics. A steering committee will be set up shortly to launch the campaign for such a centre in Blackburn.

A local NUPE branch secretary has offered financial assistance and support. Other groups who are participating are the Community Health Council, the local Health Education Officer, the trade union representative on the local health

By Rossina Harris
(Blackburn Women's Council, personal capacity)

authority, as well as numerous midwives, health visitors, nurses and home-helps.

The philosophy behind a well-women centre advocates preventative care for the well-being of the whole person. It aims to reach women who may stay away from their doctor because of class, cultural or religious differences. It attempts to cover the full range of women's health problems.

The greater percentage of women passing through these clinics are from the worse-off sections of society which is the strength of this particular service. Counselling and advice are given and a person does not have to be ill to inquire about any problem.

Such a centre would be invaluable to Blackburn which has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country and a large number of low birth-weight babies. The local hospital only has limited resources due to the lack of space and staff. The maternity unit, for instance, was built to deal with 2,500 births a year and is now coping with 4,000 a year and increasing.

The Manchester clinic also runs discussion courses and self-help groups for older women on relaxation, healthy eating, premenstrual tension, menopause and also offers a "well-women" library service and monthly training sessions for all the staff to interchange information and skills.

It took Manchester four years to get their well-women centre, and Burnley two years. In Blackburn we are confident we can get the centre in approximately a year by building on the activities of other areas. Anyone who is interested in the campaign contact Rossina Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancashire or ring Kay Wright, Blackburn 673415.

Long struggle against racism. Trade union demonstration and rally against racism, Blackburn, 1976.



Photo: J. Sturrock (Report)

Co-Op conference goes unilateral

Easter weekend, while the LPYS were meeting, the annual conference of the Co-operative Party was taking place.

This Conference rejected by 2 to 1, on a card vote, the proposal to support Labour Party Policy on withdrawal from the EEC and for Co-op sponsored candidates for the EEC elections to fight on this programme.

The big votes of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) were used to defeat this resolution after delegates had voted 112 to 48 in favour on a show of hands. The amendment to Resolution 29 supporting Labour's position was substantially carried on a show of hands. The Co-op Party is therefore for withdrawal but against making sure their sponsored

candidates follow this decision.

Conference carried a composite resolution backing the Labour Party Conference decision in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament and that this commitment should be included in the Manifesto.

After three attempts, discussion was taken on the witch-hunt in the Labour

Party. Reference back of the section of the Annual Report on this item was moved by Helen Bulaitis of the South Suburban Co-op. The Conference unfortunately substantially rejected this appeal with delegates and NEC members attacking *Militant* as a vote loser, not part of the working class, all teachers and social workers!

This debate really showed

the right-wing in their true colours. All the smears of the capitalist press were used and comments included "they should all be shot!" A Co-op sponsored prospective parliamentary candidate agreed with this quite loudly.

Conference then went on to discuss how to build firmer links with Constituency parties and unions, and work for party unity to win the next election.

Although at the moment

the ideas and apparatus of the right wing are clearly in the majority, 32 copies of *Militant* were sold together with 11 copies of the LPYS document on nuclear arms.

Most members of local Co-ops are working class people under continual attack through joblessness and rising prices. The Co-op Party will before long see the same shifts to the left shown in other sections of the labour movement.

By Alan Watson

LEFT and RIGHT

Freedom from what?

The South African business magazine, the *Financial Mail*, 'celebrated' the anniversary of the death of Karl Marx with this statement: "Marxism is, and always has been, a disaster. In the interests of freedom and the prosperity of ordinary people, it must be resisted with all the force at our command". Black workers in South Africa will no doubt be glad to know that the decades of racism and apartheid have been carried out in their 'interests' and to protect their 'freedom'!

Homes fit for people with a lot of money

Socialists are in the business of creating new homes for workers. However, it seems Labour MP John Silkin has taken this to heart. Taking time off from his trying to railroad the *Tribune* into becoming a tame mouthpiece for the present Labour leadership, he is now (according to the *Guardian*, 30 March) going to sell off half an acre of his back garden in Staplehurst, Kent, and build four houses on them. They will be worth an estimated £250,000.

Flight from reality

Sad news for Norman Tebbit. Despite having its inaugural meeting attended by officials from Tory Central Office, the new breakaway rail 'union' has run into trouble. The Tory Party's house magazine, the *Daily Telegraph*, has just reported: "The train guard who was last month elected leader of the new breakaway railwaymen's union has been asked to resign by his fellow officials because, they complain, he spends too much time hunting ghosts and looking for flying saucers."

But why is that a disqualification? Sounds like he was about as much in contact with reality as anyone else who thinks that you can destroy the trade union movement.

Survivors' guide to the depression

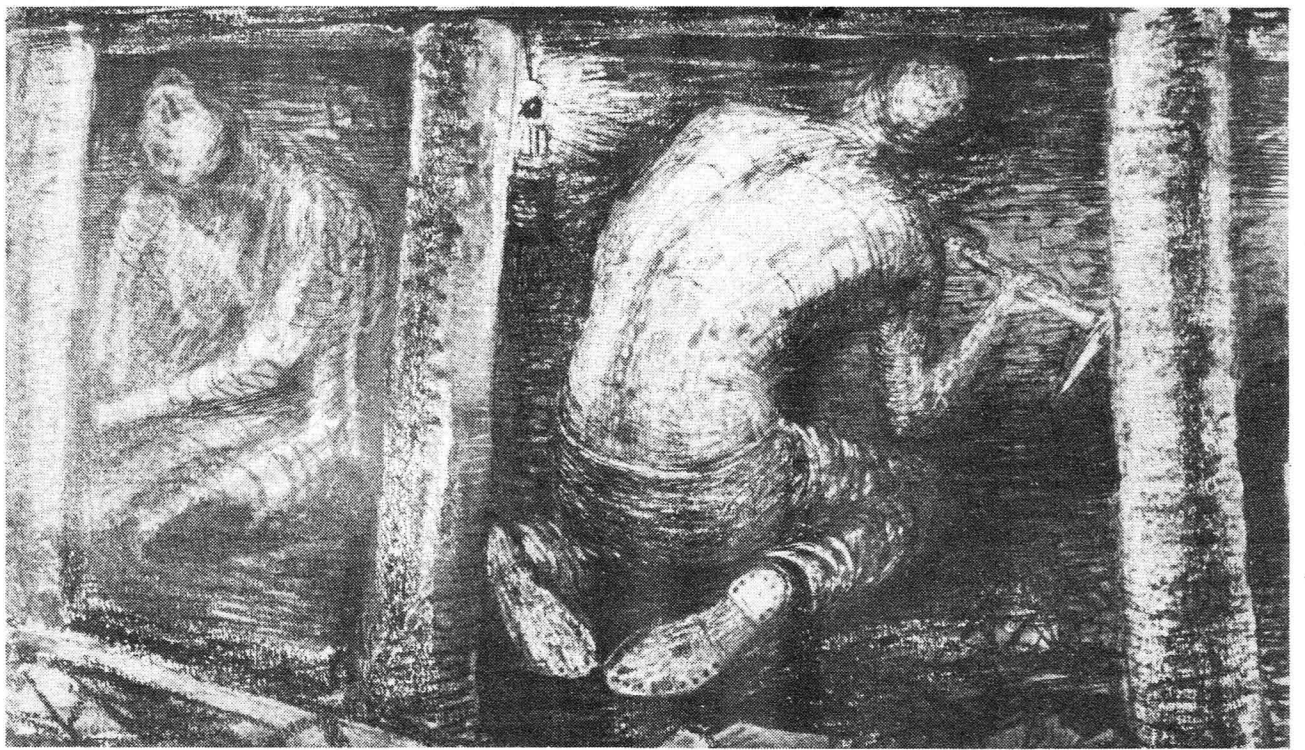
A huge increase in unemployment and major bank collapses may seem a pretty grim prediction, but Robert Beckmann who wrote a book called *Doom-wave*, with these forecasts, writes with optimism of surviving such events and even making money out of them. Pawn broking, debt collection and selling second-hand clothes are some of the obvious ways Mr Beckmann recommends you cash in on this second great depression.

Fast food is another, less obvious, bread winner and last but not least when you've emaciated the population through debt collection, frozen them with second-hand trousers and skirts, and ruined their digestion with gristleburgers, you can make another fortune by body-building courses for "all the seven stone weaklings" you've created. After all, says Beckmann, Charles Atlas started his success in the 1930s. If you really want to survive though, forget about body-building, concentrate on *Militant* building, so we can all kick sand in the faces of Beckmann and the rest of his class.

One hundred and fifty years ago

You can see why Thatcher wants to return to the nineteenth century; she feels at home in it. Then as now, millions could find no work. And the ruling class' representatives in parliament showed their total lack of concern. A report in the *Observer*, 21 March, 1833 illustrates what happened to one attempt to investigate the results of mass unemployment:

"Mr Attwood brought forward his motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to enquire into the distresses of the country. The condition of the working-classes was especially to be lamented he said. One-half of the working population toiled with scarcely any benefit to themselves, and another half had no employment at all. 100,000 persons were out of employment in the Metropolis alone who were willing to work but unable to get it. 158 voted for Mr Attwood's motion and 192 against."



'Miners at work on the coalface, 1942', Henry Moore

Tony Cross reviews the exhibition of "Coal: British Mining in Art 1680-1980"

Life down the mines

.... in pictures and song

Artists who will venture down a pit are rare and painting is definitely a minority interest among miners. But currently touring cities, in coalmining areas, is an exhibition of the work of artists who have gone to the mines and colliers who have spent their free time painting.

The show spans three centuries. What strikes you about pictures up till the twentieth century is that people count for virtually nothing. Most of them are landscapes, into which pitheads intrude.

Even the participants in such dramatic events as pit disasters or "the arrival of the troops during the riots of Merthyr 1816" are small dots in the composition. What opportunities the artists have missed to portray the drama of these people's lives! They seem to have considered workers' lives and feelings to be as insignificant as the coal owners did—although, it has to be said, with far less harmful effect!

Nineteenth century artists even "clean up" those miners and their families who manage to get onto canvass. They knock them awkwardly into "classical" poses and make miners' wives adopt the expressions of saints. Presumably this is to show the "dignity of labour"—for someone else's profit of course!

Whose dignity of labour?

By contrast, among the later works are pictures by artists who have not altered their subjects to render them suitable for gallery consumption.

Most notable of all are Bill Brandt's photographs from the 1930's of coal picking on pit-tips and particularly his picture of a Northumberland miner at his evening meal. The face of the miner's wife is the picture's most striking

feature—even though you feel you've seen it many times before in any working class area. Sitting watching her husband eat, her expression sums up the tragedy and the tenacity of a lifetime spent slaving for a wage slave.

Those earlier artists missed so much in ignoring faces like this! The growth of the socialist movement was the major factor in making the photographers of the '30s think it worth truthfully recording people with no property.

Henry Moore's art is not so readily understandable to workers who do not have the time to study art closely. But his style is ideally suited to portraying coalmining.

His figures combine the properties of English landscape with the human form. His pictures of miners in the pits around his hometown of Castleford show the men absorbing the strength and the harshness of the rock from which they wrench their living.

Set talent free

Other modern artists have dealt with the same theme, showing miners' bodies dramatically contorted by the effort of their work.

In the '30s and '40s a group of miner-painters was formed in Ashington. Their subjects ranged from the pit-bottom to union meetings and whippet racing.

No one could say that they were as sophisticated as the professionals, but their paintings are full of the feeling of being there. The painters have obviously known the smell of the colliery at 6 o'clock in the morning, and stood on a field in the spring winds watching their friends race their dogs.

Vast reserves of such talent is bottled up by the capitalists' ownership of art and culture—and their monopoly of the time and education needed to develop it. Socialism will set this talent free, allow it to develop to the full and thus raise human culture to heights which will dwarf the highest attainments of past and current class society.

This privately produced album of songs and stements is the sole work of an ex-miner, Jock Purdon, at the old Harraton colliery in Washington Co. Durham.

Known locally as 'the Cotia', the pit was closed down as part of Lord Robens' "rationalization" of the industry: folk-music aficionados will be delighted to discover Jock has included his acclaimed song "Farewell to 'Cotia" which bitterly makes puns at the expense of the former Labour MP for Wansbeck.

Not surprisingly, the two main themes of this album are pitlife and war. The humour is grim with the sole exception of "Hally's Piedbald Gallawa" and, unfortunately, this detracts a little from the overall content.

This album is important for two reasons. Folksong, the musical expression of

working people, is now almost entirely the preserve of the middle class and Jock reminds us by this effort of where it belongs. Political statement is no longer in favour in folksong as it was during 'the revival' and once more Jock sends a salvo in that direction.

Jock's artistry and creative talents show that working class people are equal to any in those fields. He has performed his work twice for *Militant* socials at the Chester-le-Street Labour Club for no fee and orders for the album cost £3.50 (incl p&p) should be made to:—

Pitlamp Press, 53 Twizell Lane, Beamish, Stanley. Co Durham DH9 6SQ. Phone Durham (0385) 700284

Bob Stothard (Durham CLP and TGWU) reviews the album "Pitwork, Politics and Poetry" by Jock Purdon.

Equal pay strike

Earlier this year Moss Side Women's Section showed the film *The Willmour Eight*. It follows the struggle of eight women bank workers for equal pay in Willmour, a small mid-West American town with no real history of industrial action. The women had not previously been particularly active in the union but decided to strike over equal pay.

The strike last two years. The women picketed every day—even in temperatures 20° below freezing. The film shows how they kept up their morale with support from other areas and other unions. They spoke at union conferences and on TV and had the first demonstration in the town for decades.

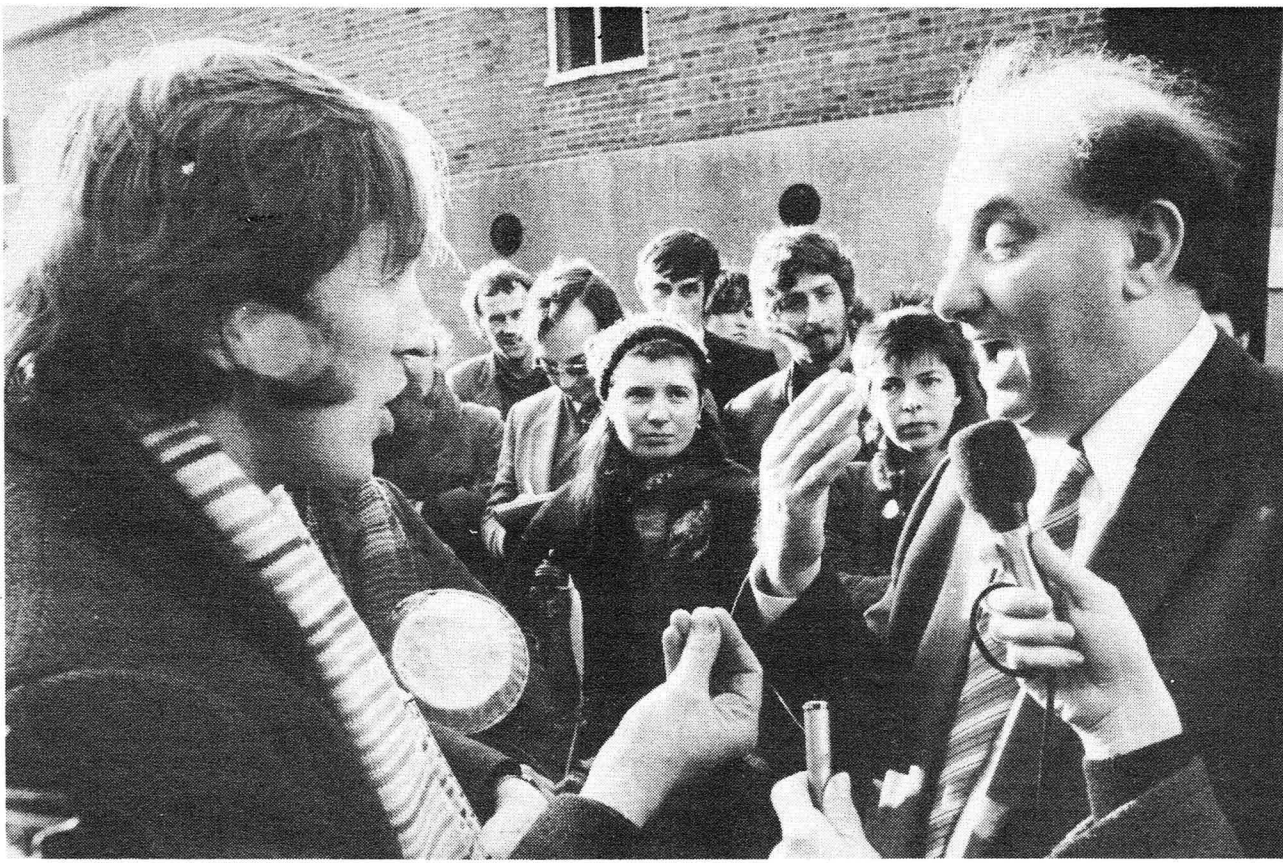
Despite this they did not win their case and only one worker was taken back at the bank. However, it was not a total defeat. It resulted in the US Labor Department making the banking industry its union target for the implementation of equal pay

legislation and many other groups of women workers benefited from the actions of the 'Willmour Eight'.

Although the film doesn't bring out the wider industrial and political implications of such a strike, it shows how a small but determined group of previously inactive women can organise and maintain a strike for such a long period. It also shows the changes in the women's attitude to their bosses and society as a whole. Our members all enjoyed the film—it is well worth showing in the labour movement, especially to Women's Sections or unions in the banking and finance industry.

'The Willmour Eight' can be hired from the Workers' Film Associations, 9 Lucy Street, Old Trafford, Manchester 15. It is 50 minutes long and costs around £22 plus transport.

Reviewed by Margaret Manning



Confrontation at opening of Sizewell 'B' Inquiry in January, between Edward Irving, Prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate (left) and Dr Walter Marshall. Photo: A Wiard (Report)

Dangers of nuclear power

The Tory government's plans to spend more than £20 billion on ten new nuclear plants have aroused widespread opposition.

But the known dangers of nuclear powers have to be seen not just as an environmentalist problem but also as a class issue.

Although the Central Electricity Generating Board has a 36% surplus generating capacity, they use the argument that new power plants are needed as they expect a rise in the demand for electricity.

The reality of capitalism in crisis is that many working class families have had to cut down on its use—indeed 214,222 households were 'cut off' through failure to pay bills from 1981 to June '82. Tory monetarist policies have also devastated manufacturing industry and its consumption of electricity.

The Tories partly see the switch to nuclear power as removing a growing proportion of electricity production from the 'danger' of industrial action by coal, transport and power station workers.

The first new breed of nuclear plants is planned to be built at Sizewell which

By Lee Waker
(Dagenham LPYS)

already has Sizewell A, an old-type nuclear power station.

The proposed Sizewell B will be near the town of Leiston, which has a population of 4,000 and unemployment at 14%. The 3,000 temporary jobs at the Sizewell B plant may look attractive to people on the dole but the dangers of this new type of plant must be recognised.

Gambling with safety

Sizewell B will be a Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR), the same type as that at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, USA. In March 1979 a near disaster there, was only narrowly averted. Even so, 400,000 gallons of radioactive water was dumped in the nearby river and four years later the reactor is still so dangerous

that investigators can't get close enough to see exactly what went wrong.

Yet the Tories deliberately chose the PWR reactor instead of the 'safer' gas-cooled type, because the PWR was cheaper and easier to build. They are prepared to gamble with the safety of thousands of workers.

The hazards of nuclear power are clear—nuclear power produces deadly radioactive waste which remains dangerous for thousands of years to come. After 30 years scientists still can't decide what to do with radioactive waste.

The waste of British and foreign reactors goes by road, sea and rail to Windscale mostly to be reprocessed and stored but small leakages do take place. Indeed, the Irish sea is already the most radioactive in the world.

Recently two workers from Sizewell A died from leukaemia, and over the last few years a further five workers died from haemolytic anaemia, a blood condition associated with exposure to radiation. The incidence of leukaemia at Sizewell A is 30 times the national average.

The capitalist class have proved that they put profit over the safety of workers; nuclear power is too dangerous an issue to be left

in their hands. All socialists should oppose the building of nuclear power stations while this is in the hands of the capitalist class.

However, it would be wrong to close our eyes to new forms of technology and energy. Nuclear fusion, unlike fission which is used in current power plants, is safe. It produces no radioactivity, no dangerous waste and is available in vast resources. Further research could also be made into other forms of energy such as wave power, solar, etc.

Use New Technology

New technology could, for example, end the need for workers to slave away thousands of feet below the earth, to produce coal. Under capitalism however, this would just mean miners going on the dole.

It is only by breaking out of the prison of profit and establishing a socialist plan of production—where 'new technology' does not mean the dole for some but instead a shorter working week for all—that the world can become a safer and cleaner place.

Did 8,000 die from Windscale accident?

An article in *New Scientist*, 31 March, claims that a hushed up accident at the Windscale nuclear plant in 1957 "could represent the worst environmental disaster that Western Europe has known this century. On the 9 October, 1957, the atomic pile of No 1 reactor at Windscale in Cumberland, North West England began to overheat and part of it caught fire."

The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), a government quango, have said that the radioactive cloud released "travelled south-east across most of England and on over Europe". They

calculate that iodine-131 may have 'only' killed 13 people through cancer of the thyroid. But the *New Scientist* article points out, a very dangerous substance known as polonium-210 was not considered in the NRPB's calculations.

"Polonium was a little known element needed for a vital component of the atomic bomb...it was so radio active that it glowed in the dark...". In the area around Windscale, taking account of the polonium-210 and iodine-131 fallout, "local people relying mainly on local milk, meat and vegetables could expect doses

over a period of a couple of years of about 4-15 rems; more incidentally, than people at Hiroshima within 2km of the bomb".

As a result of the accident, people in the district have shown significant increase in incidents of cancer deaths, particularly among the young. "The chance of this surge of cases occurring by chance would be 1 in 1000", the article points out. In the district of Copeland the number of deaths from 1974 to 1980 "...in the 15-24 age group is 210% of what would be expected".

"The figures suggest that some 1,200 excess cases of

leukaemia may have been caused in Britain by the Windscale accident. Since leukaemia deaths account for some 15% of cancers attributable to nuclear accidents, the total toll of cancer deaths suggested is 8,000".

These facts have been hidden from the general public for 25 years and only because of pressure from *New Scientist* have they now come to light. How much more is hidden from public view?

By Ian Wells
(Maesteg West Labour Party)

'The Army made me a socialist'

I will never forget my first Army inspection.

Standing to attention in my ill fitting overalls, I was abused by the NCO, a foul-mouthed, whom if I meet now I will have to be restrained from doing damage to. My boots, though clean and polished, were not shining sufficiently in the wells of the sole.

I hasten to add that I was not singled out. Almost every other person was got at in some way. Then came the room inspection by our squadron leader—a captain with the most Scottish name possible, but his accent was the same as all the others—a cross between Prince Charles and Roy Jenkins.

One of the blokes' bed packs was not sufficiently straight and he instructed the corporal to throw it on the floor. I glanced over from my position and he immediately went into a rage screaming at one 17 year old kid who did not have the self-control to remain as a statue while he was being humiliated.

Upper-class sadists

The officer and his team of sadists then went through the barrack room like a tooth comb. Our lockers were ravaged. Anything wrong such as incorrected folded long Johns, unpolished shoe polish—any excuse at all—and the whole thing was emptied out all over the highly polished floor.

Reveille had been at 0600, when you had to get up, make a bed, fold the sheets and blankets in the correct manner, so all lines on everything measured up exactly.

You then had your cleaning duties to perform. Sweeping the floors, scrubbing the floors, polishing the floors, cleaning the windows, polishing all the brass, even the toilet brasswork—go to breakfast, eat breakfast, come back for parade and inspection.

Everytime, early on, they would throw our kit on the floor. It was their way of forcing us to conform.

Fading glamour

In the evening when we should have finished, we would have to go through it again, sometimes til midnight. I once forgot to polish the brass socket of the light bulb by my bed and therefore we all went through the nightly hassle.

It was not what I had expected when I joined up in 1972. I had been lured into the Army by the glamour of advertisements on the box showing soldiers in exotic places with bikini clad girls.

Look what's happened to all those adverts now. I suppose with four million out of work you don't need to con today's youth.

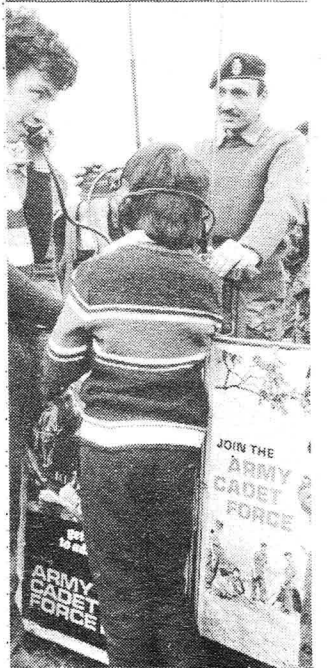
Signing up at the Blackheath recruiting office, I came across my first officer whom I had to call "Sir". I'd just left school so I was used to it. I then had to give an oath of allegiance to HM the Queen, her highers, her government and officers; first loyalty is not to any elected body.

I then reported for three days induction at Sutton Coldfield. Stepping off the lorry we were given haircuts (no matter how short your hair was, skinheads included, had to have the army barber). This is of course the first indication of the grip the army has on you.

Refused to lead a dog's life

After the tests and such like, you were assigned to the training regiments of the corps. I joined the Royal Armoured Corps and was sent to that most glamorous of places, Catterick.

But one incident changed me from a racist-leaning working class kid who had never understood why his family always voted for rich Labour MPs. Every Wednesday was sports afternoon and we looked forward to playing football.



Catch them while they're young. Army propaganda at S London show. Photo: Militant

This day it was cancelled. Instead we were told to "go beagling" for the officers. We were to go chasing game out of their hiding places for the upper-class 'hounds'.

Myself and another bloke refused. We wanted to play football. So we were put on fatigue duty in the officers' mess.

These experiences happen to individual soldiers all the time. Ultra-lefts who dismiss economic conscripts as class traitors fail to grasp the meaning of the conclusions soldiers draw from class confrontation. From that moment on I was a committed Labour voter.

By Bob Law
(Bermondsey CLP, first of two articles on life in the Army)

FALKLANDS ONE YEAR AFTER

On 30 March 1982 the chants of thousands of workers rang out in the Plaza de Mayo, in the centre of Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina. "Out! Out! The Military Out!"

Over 25,000 workers had braved the terror of the military-police dictatorship of Argentina's generals to voice their demand for change.

This storm of protest became a storm of applause when, two days later, every opposition organisation in Argentina, embracing trade unions and political parties, amid patriotic demonstrations, announced their unconditional support for the Galtieri regime and its invasion of the Falkland Islands.

So began the "Falklands Crisis", which became the Falklands War, which not only exposed the hypocrisy and chauvinism of the British capitalists and their Tory representatives, but also exposed the weakness of the leadership of the labour movement.

On the one hand there was a complete lack of any socialist, working-class standpoint in the pro-capitalist, patriotic, pro-Thatcher stance taken by Labour's right wing, while on the other hand, the isolation of a pacifist approach in times of war was seen in the mistaken, if courageous, stand taken by a minority of the left of the Labour Party.

War and class interests

Marxism bases itself on the class struggle, nationally and internationally. Our interests are based on class interest, on the struggle between workers and capitalists at home and abroad, and the common interests of workers everywhere to fight for socialism. These principles apply in peace and in war, because for Marxism, wars are not accidental events but are the consequence of objective conditions.

Militant explained from the very beginning: "The origins of the crisis itself are not to be found in simply asking 'who struck the first blow?', but in the class relations in Argentina and Britain, and it is on this basis that socialists must look at the possible outcome. Whose class interests are served by the Argentine invasion and whose class interests are served by a British military expedition?" (9 April 1982)

The editorial in *Militant* continued: "The labour movement cannot align itself either with the Argentine regime or the Thatcher government.

"The interests of workers in Britain and Argentina will not be served by supporting either capitalist government in this dispute... There is no difference between workers in Argentina and workers in Britain. The interests of both, as well as those of the Falkland Islanders, will only be served by the ideas of socialist internationalism and fraternity."

One week later, a further editorial explained, "Workers can offer support

neither to the Argentine Junta, nor to the Tory government in the diplomatic tussle soon perhaps to be a war over the Falkland Islands.

"...Workers have nothing to gain from a war with Argentina. If it arose, the burden of the casualties and the economic hardships would fall entirely on working class homes here and in Argentina." (16 April 1982)

It was precisely due to the growing workers' protests that Galtieri launched the invasion in the first place: "It was in an attempt to provide itself with some measure of popularity and to distract the opposition at home that General Galtieri launched his adventure last week." (*Militant*, 9.4.82)

The rights of the islanders were not an unimportant consideration that could be ignored: "The Falkland Islands are an anachronism, a relic of British imperialism's predominance in the last century but the population of the Falkland Islands have been perfectly justified in opposing Argentine sovereignty on the basis of that regime's horrific totalitarianism." (*Militant* 16.4.82)

Militant, therefore, had no hesitation in condemning the Argentine Junta—but always from the standpoint of the working class and clearly rejecting the sickening hypocrisy and jingoism of the Tories and their press:

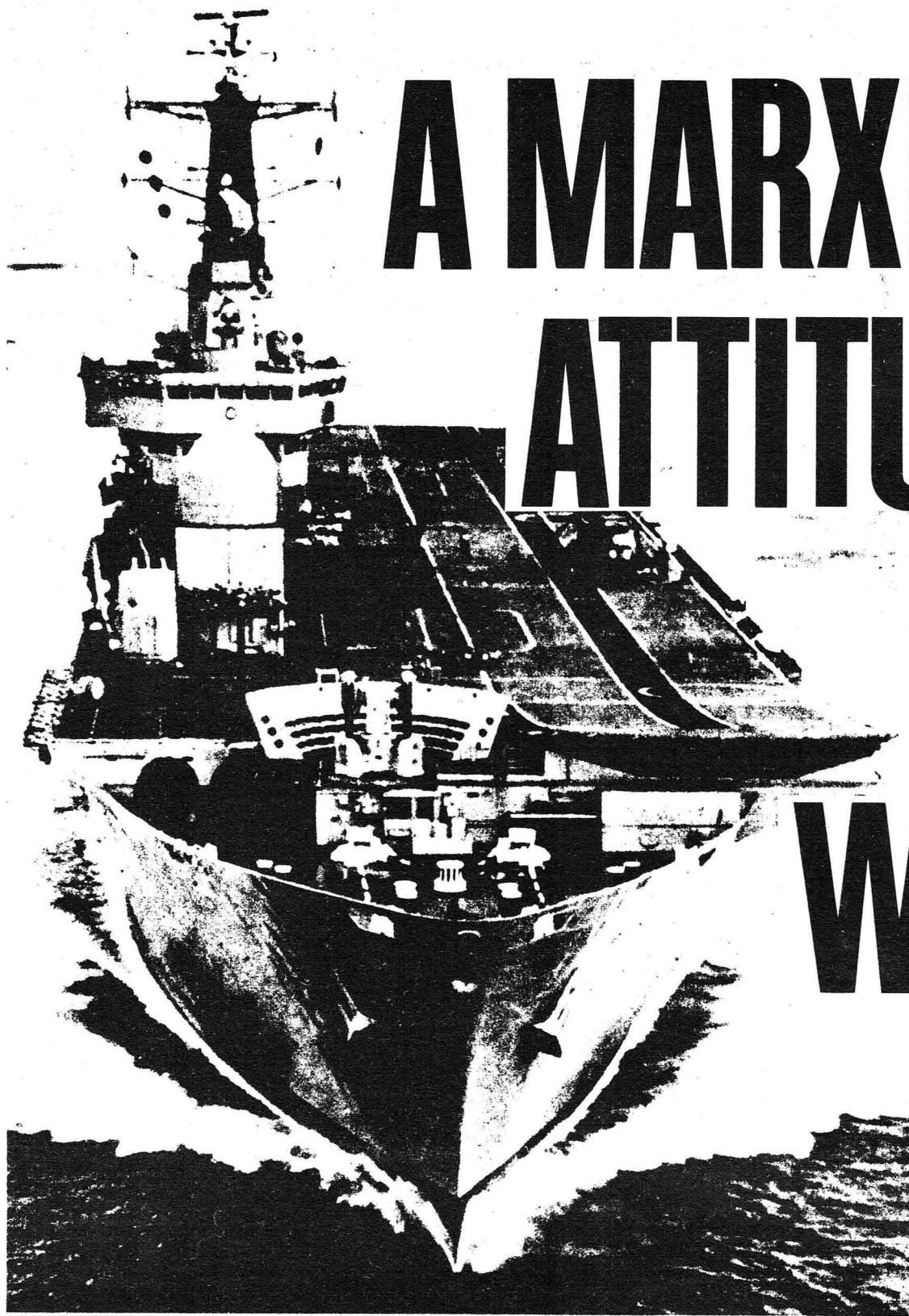
"The victory in the 'Malvinas' did not improve the living standards or the democratic rights of Argentine workers by one iota... In its concrete effects the invasion did nothing for the working class in Britain, by strengthening the junta it made the position of the Argentine workers worse, and it condemned the islanders to a life under the iron heel: for these reasons and not for patriotic or chauvinist reasons, British workers cannot but condemn the invasion." (*Militant* 30.4.82)

In condemning the Argentine Junta, *Militant* argued for the labour movement to stand on its own ground, to put an independent class position.

"As always—and especially on a fundamental question of war—British big business and its Tory representatives will be taking action strictly in pursuit of their own class aims. The labour movement must reject capitalist aims and act on its own independent policy.

"The Labour Party and the trade union movement could stop Thatcher dead in her tracks. The labour movement must declare that it has no confidence whatsoever in the policies or methods of the British government... Labour must demand, not just the resignation of Defence Minister Nott, but the entire Tory government. They must demand a general election." (9.4.82)

"War is the continuation of politics by other means. There can be no more support for the government of British big business in war as there is in peace." (*Militant* 30 April 1982)



A MARXIST ATTITUDE TO WAR

BOB WYLIE reviews the comments and analysis of *Militant* during the Falklands Crisis last year

"The position of the British ruling class, like any other, is based on their economic position, their profits: but not on that alone. Their position also rests upon power and prestige... Thatcher's policy reflects the fear on the part of British capitalism that a humiliating loss of face like the April 2 invasion would damage their prestige and ultimately their other interests internationally." (*Militant* 16 April 1982)

This socialist approach was completely absent from the standpoint adopted by the right wing of the Labour Party on the Falklands War.

Instead of merciless criticism of the tactics, strategy and actions of both the ruling classes involved, Labour's right, including almost all of the opposition Front Bench team, fell into line behind Thatcher.

Even the thin veneer of socialist rhetoric, which serves as a "fig-leaf" cover for the right's everyday support for capitalism, was absent in their practically uncritical support for the Tories from the first day of the crisis.

Labour's right was in complete agreement with the

Tories fighting a war; their only difference of opinion, and this has remained so throughout the entire episode of the Falklands War, was whether adequate military precautions had been taken beforehand to prevent the necessity of going to war.

The crucial first month of the Falklands dispute, the time when the running had to be made by the labour movement against all the capitalist interests involved, was largely spent in unity with the Tories.

Yet the labour movement could have seized this opportunity to drive the Tories from power if a resolute, class approach to the war had been taken.

If Labour had refused to support Thatcher's war, condemned the military police dictatorship of the Argentine and laid bare for all to see the motives of the bosses in both countries in fomenting war, a huge divide could have been opened up in Britain between capital and labour, between the interests of big business and the workers.

The only force capable of bringing down the Tories

was the labour movement. If the Labour leaders had gone on a crusade to explain that there could be no more trust in the Tories' foreign policy of war than in their home policy of war on British workers' living standards, then a movement of opposition could have been built to force the Tories to concede a general election.

No trust in capitalists—in peace or war

But, *Militant* argued, "...it is not from a 'pacifist' standpoint that workers will judge this war. If it were in a just cause, workers would be prepared to make great sacrifices, to give their 'blood, toil, tears and sweat'." (14 May 1982)

As the *Militant* of 23 April pointed out, "Neither in peace nor war can the workers trust the capitalists or their government. Thatcher and the Tory government must be forced to resign by a campaign of the labour movement. No support for a dirty capitalist

war. Out with the Tories! For a general election now!

"...a Labour government will have clean hands to appeal to the Argentine workers in the event of war to end their misery by overthrowing the junta. The interests of workers in Argentina and Britain are the same, but only a socialist government could appeal to them on class lines."

Lynn Walsh generalised these arguments in the *Militant International Review* of June 1982: "A socialist government in Britain would make it clear that, while defending the rights of the Falklanders, it entirely repudiated the neo-imperialist interests and aims of British capitalism. It would support the expropriation of British banks and businesses in Argentina, along with the nationalisation of Argentinian big business and finance capital."

"A Labour government would propose a socialist Federation of Britain and Argentina, including the Falkland Islands... A socialist Federation which would... open up planned development of the economies which would have enormous advantages for the workers of Britain, Argentina and the Falklands."

The failure of the Labour leaders to attack the Tories on class terms, when they were at their most divided and vulnerable, allowed



"Workers have nothing to gain from a war with Argentina. If it arose, the burden of the casualties and the economic hardships would fall entirely on working class homes here and in Argentina." *Militant*, 16 April 1982

Thatcher to ride out the crisis and the government to consolidate its position.

By the first week of May, Labour had finally broken with its bi-partisan approach but adopted an opposition to Thatcher's policy based on a call for the UN to be allowed to arbitrate.

Labour was thus cast in the minds of millions of workers in the confusing position of first supporting the sending of the Task Force and then apparently being against its use!

Militant explained that there could be no negotiated settlement of the war by the United Nations, because of its nature, as Ted Grant pointed out in an article in the *Militant* of 7 May:

"During the last three decades since the end of the second world war there have only been 17 days of peace. 40 million dead are a grim monument to the impotence of the United Nations. The UN will only solve secondary problems, not involving the major powers... When one of the five powers with a veto disagrees the UN is paralysed." These arguments were to prove to be tellingly accurate.

Galtieri needed to divert workers' opposition to his regime into nationalistic channels. British capitalism needed to preserve its interests, profits and prestige world-wide. Only force could resolve this conflict of interest.

As Ted Grant's *Militant* pamphlet (May 1982), *Falklands Crisis—a Socialist Answer* argued, "Neither side can back down. If the Junta were now to relinquish the Falklands it would face immediate downfall and would even prefer the risk of defeat in war. The Thatcher government is in the same position. Acceptance of defeat would mean the collapse of the government, and the ruin of British imperialism's diplomatic power."

The class interests involved dictated that continuation of the war was certain unless they were altered by a ge-

nuine workers' government coming to power in Britain or Argentina. In other words, the war could not be stopped unless the classes in whose interests the war was being waged could be stopped.

As Lenin wrote of World War 1 (*Collected Works*, volume 24), "Our Party will patiently but persistently explain to the people the truth that wars are waged by governments, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of definite classes, that this war can be terminated by a democratic peace only if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent countries has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital."

More than sixty-five years ago he argued, "The war cannot be ended at will. It cannot be ended by 'sticking your bayonet in the ground'... The idea that war can be terminated without changing the classes in power is an

anarchistic idea. Either this idea is an anarchist idea which has no meaning, or it is a hazy pacifist idea that fails completely to appreciate the connection between politics and the oppressing class."

On 21 May 1982 *Militant* stated, "Instead of putting the position in class terms some lefts and the pacifist wing of the Labour Party put forward the demand, 'Bring back the Fleet'. Such a demand is completely unrealistic and futile... No appeal to Thatcher in the most heartfelt terms about loss of life or the horrors of war would have any effect on the ruling class.

"Nor has it ever had any effect on the ruling class in the whole of history... Once the Task Force has been sent the die is cast. The call for withdrawal is meaningless once the government and the ruling class are set on war in their own interests... There is no way of stopping them in their use of armed forces for their own ends."

Militant predicted that the pacifist position of the Com-

munist Party, Tony Benn and other lefts could not gain the support of the mass of the working class.

It is true that their stance represented a form of opposition to Thatcher, but it could never overcome the reality that pacifism is not a trait of the working class or its experience and that "withdrawal of the fleet" could never answer the questions in workers' minds of, "What else can we do? I don't support Thatcher but we cannot let the Argentinian dictators trample on people's rights."

Militant also explained that as battle loomed closer the call to bring back the fleet would be seen to be more and more irrelevant. It came to be a call to have the fleet pause on its journey to the Falklands to allow for negotiations. When battle was commenced, withdrawal was completely forgotten and refuge sought beneath the portals of the United Nations.

The Ad Hoc Falkland Islands Peace Committee had a pacifist and religious

colouration from its inception and was doomed to isolation from the mood of the mass of workers. It was incapable even of mobilising the active, politically advanced section of the working class.

Peace rallies drew little support

A peace rally, held in London on Sunday 9 May, mobilised only 1,200 people who were described as "Methodists, Quakers, members of CND and a large contingent from the Socialist Workers Party." A similar rally held in Glasgow a fortnight later mustered scarcely half these numbers.

The Communist Party took the same stand as the Labour left, "Immediate ceasefire, Bring Back the Fleet, A United Nations Peace"—totally devoid of a class standpoint, a class analysis and class solutions.

To the ultra-left groups, the invasion of the Falklands was part of the national democratic revolution in the Argentine. Consequently, they gave full support to the Junta.

Presumably their papers were not sold in Portsmouth, Southampton or any other working-class naval town where workers might have taken exception to the invitation to applaud the sinking of the British fleet and the death of their husbands, sons or neighbours!

Throughout the course of the war, *Militant* continued to comment on events, from a class standpoint. Time and time again, even as British service personnel were risking their lives "for Queen and country" the blatant class nature of the armed services and the sickening hypocrisy of the Tories were made apparent.

Militant exposed the inconsistencies of the British government policy towards the Falkland Islands on the one hand and Diego Garcia on the other, the latter being an island in the Indian Ocean

whose population was forcibly evicted to Mauritius by the British government, to make way for an American military-communications complex.

Militant was one of the few newspapers of the left which had an active readership among the wives and families of servicemen, whose interviews were published, showing the rotten treatment that the Tories were meting out to the ordinary soldiers and sailors.

In May, for example, the pay awards were announced, giving a private a rise of £3 per week (4 per cent), brigadiers £37 a week more (9 per cent) and Generals and Admirals £90 more (14 per cent). The Admiral of the Fleet got an extra £120 a week. Just to boost the morale of the navy even more, it was announced that their overseas allowance was being reduced from £4 a week to £1!

At the same time that workers in uniform were risking their lives, *Militant* explained, businessmen involved in the manufacture of war materials and equipment were crowing in anticipation over their likely increase in profits.

The war in the Falklands was not about freedom, it was about the freedom to exploit. It was not a war against dictatorship and tyranny, for once British prestige had been restored, the Argentine regime was being financially supported by British capitalism!

The dead of both sides have been buried. The injured and the maimed have been carefully kept out of public view. Now for capitalism it's business as usual.

For the British soldiers and sailors who fought in the Falklands War, nothing has changed. They returned to a Britain where there were few jobs, fewer homes fit for heroes and promises from all the long-term economic experts that all they could expect for their future was more austerity.

The last post had scarcely sounded to commemorate the ending of the "Battle for the Falklands", when the Director of the CBI in Britain whined that pay restraint had to last forever.

Militant took a clear socialist and internationalist stand on the Falklands. It explained from the start that all the workers involved, in the Argentine, in the Falklands and in Britain itself, had nothing to gain from war in the Falklands. Events have confirmed that prognosis.

Argentina's defeat meant the end of Galtieri, and brought nearer the end of military rule. General elections have now been called for 30 October. Thus in opposing both sides, *Militant* was expressing the internationalist interests of working class people as a whole.

There can be no permanent solution of the Falklands question under capitalism. As Ted Grant argued on 21 May 1982, "Everybody wants peace and not war, but the road to peace lies in the struggle for socialist policies."

**Next week:
The Aftermath**

In the first few days of the crisis, the military-police state in Buenos Aires successfully diverted opposition into nationalist channels, supporting the invasion of the 'Malvinas'.



WEST GERMANY

"West Germany now looks capable of producing four years of stable government under a coalition of Christian and Free Democrats."

So thinks the *Financial Times*. Reality is very different.

With 2.5m unemployed and the fastest accelerating job losses in Europe, falling living standards and a collapse of vital export markets, the government of Helmut Kohl will be beset by bigger problems than any since the war.

Right now, members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) are asking their leaders what caused the recent electoral catastrophe. The SPD lost 2m votes, its share of the poll falling to 38.2% the lowest for over 20 years. Its worst losses were in its strongest areas—the Protestant and industrial areas with large working class populations.

The German Tories won 48.8% of the votes: a gap of 10.6% has opened up between the two biggest parties—the widest for 22 years. The questions being asked are: has the German working class rejected socialism and gone firmly to the right? And will the SPD therefore be kept out of office for the next decade?

When the "Liberal" Free Democrats (FDP) first pushed out the SPD by crossing over to support the Christian Democrats (CDU) in the Bundestag, the parliamentary coup saw an influx of support for the SPD and 100,000 new members, workers and youth, joined the SPD to look for a radical alternative.

But a few months later on the bread and butter issues of jobs, wages and the economy around 2 million workers rejected the policies and past record of the leaders of the SPD who are renowned as being one of the most right wing of mass workers parties.

Social Democratic failure

"Moderate" leaders of the British Labour Party cite SPD governments as a model for their "gradual road to socialism" through reforms, co-operation of workers with capitalists, avoiding strikes, etc. Roy Jenkins and co., who no longer even pretend to want socialism, even named their party after the Social Democrats.

Yet after 13 years government—surely time enough to secure the support if their policies were correct—millions of workers now under the threat of unemployment cast a vote of no confidence in their ability to solve the economic crisis into which West Germany has plunged. The reformist policies of former Chancellors Brandt and Schmidt simply didn't match the problems of our age of world capitalist crisis and mass unemployment.

The "success" of past SPD governments depended on the bosses making enough profits to expand industry, leaving a small slice for higher wages and welfare reforms. But as soon as the capitalist economy stopped

By BRENT KENNEDY

growing reforms gave way to counter-reforms, welfare cuts were introduced and for the last two or three years real wages fell or stood still. Basing their strategy on capitalism, the SPD leaders could offer no real alternative to the CDU as to how unemployment could be brought down.



Chancellor Kohl

The election campaign saw an orchestrated campaign by the CDU, the press and their big business backers that "industry" had no confidence in an SPD government and would not invest. Publicity was given to companies including clauses in new contracts saying that proposed investment or employment plans would only go ahead if CDU won.

This propaganda reached the level of a scare campaign, but behind it all lies a very reasonable question—and the SPD's failure to answer cost it 2m votes. Short of introducing a socialist, planned economy, how could an SPD government satisfy workers' needs and provide them with full employment while at the same time winning support of the capitalists in whose hands the decision to invest rests?

Unanswered question

The SPD leaders dodged this, the most crucial issue of the election! One regional leader, Friedhelm Farthmann, even admitted that the workers "are with us in their hearts, but on the economy they have no confidence in us" (*Der Spiegel*, 14 March 1983).

The SPD could have wiped out the disappointment of its past record with a campaign of mass demonstrations and rallies against the interim CDU-FDP government's attacks

on welfare rights, but only by admitting the mistakes of its own record of counter-reforms.

The right wing preferred defeat to offering socialism. Back in October they were overwhelmed by the numbers of trade unionists and young people who spontaneously protested in the streets against the removal of their elected government and the threat of cuts in welfare. The timid advocates of gradual reform without upsetting the ruling class were more afraid of being elected on a wave of heightened expectations they could not fulfill than of allowing Strauss, Kohl and Count Lambsdorf election victory.

Vogel, the SPD leader, declared that he would rather tolerate a minority CDU government than form a minority government supported by the "Greens"—the mainly young, middle-class, radical movement of pacifists and ecologists. This alienated thousands of leftward-moving youth. 23% of first-time voters voted for the Greens, compared to 37% SPD and 32% CDU.

Nor did this offer any attraction to former FDP voters. While only 70,000 switched to the SPD, 250,000 gave their votes to the new party of the Greens. Furthermore, a massive 750,000 former SPD voters switched to the Greens.

Thus the right wing SDP leaders are responsible for letting this heterogeneous, confused movement overcome the 5% hurdle to use the platform of the Bundestag, undoubtedly complicating the struggle to organise youth in the ranks of the labour movement.

No real campaign was waged by the SPD. Huge posters of Vogel (without jacket or tie—the ad-man's idea of a "man of the people" image) covered the streets, but proposed no new reforms. Only a return to the status quo was promised, such as maintaining the existing law on abortion rights—a demand that costs not a pfennig.

Party workers who wrote to leaders warning of the inevitable result were ignored. In the industrial Ruhr, party workers made their own posters, at least identifying the party with the working class if giving no new alternative. Workers at the big Mannesmann factory even refused to distribute the official SPD leaflets. The failure to offer any convincing socialist solution to unemployment in the Ruhr where ¼ million are out of work led to a fall in votes from 60% to 55% in Duisburg and from 80% to 74% nearby.

This election defeat does not signify a defeat for socialism but a rejection of the record of right wing reformist leaders of the SPD who have exposed their impotence in the eyes of many workers. Let these "practical", "realistic" statesmen now claim that socialist ideas would frighten away voters!

But Kohl's government, already split between the reactionary Strauss wing and the "liberal" butcher Genscher of the FDP, will enjoy little "stability".

The main source of conflict will undoubtedly be the continuing economic crisis. The engineering industry's export orders declined by

Gradualism in decline



Hamburg dockers protest against dismissals

18% last year, 30% in the last quarter alone. Domestic demand is insufficient to make up this continued collapse.

Industrial struggle

Thousands of jobs will be axed in the shipbuilding, coal mining and steel industries as rationalisation is pushed through. *Der Spiegel* estimates that a rate of economic growth of 4 to 4.5% is needed just to prevent a rise in unemployment.

The inevitable increase in unemployment under the CDU will destroy illusions of millions in the ability of that party and "the men of money and business know-how" to run the economy in the interests of all. With factories threatened with closure, wages held down and attacks on public sector workers, we can expect the struggle to switch to the industrial plane. Already tens of thousands of metal workers have struck for wage increases to restore fallen living standards.

Through the harsh experiences of strikes a new

generation of young workers will begin to transform the unions into fighting organisations. The intervention of the state will raise the need for a political struggle and a new turn to the SPD. "But not like the old SPD government".

The policies needed will be forged in the class battles to come. A significant comment was made by a group of workers in one Cologne factory the day after they had voted for the CDU: "anyway, in a year or two's time we'll all be on a General Strike to get rid of this government".



Count Lambsdorf of the "Liberal" FDP and the reactionary Franz Josef Strauss, together in Kohl's capitalist cabinet.

Elite's conference

Scared of 'excess democracy'

The Tenth anniversary of the Trilateral Commission (TC) will be celebrated this coming weekend—beginning on Sunday 17 April—in the luxurious comfort of Rome's Cavalieri Hilton Hotel.

The TC was inaugurated in July 1973, with initial funding from David Rockefeller, and has met at least once a year since then. It draws its membership from the elites of the political, big business and academic circles of the three "Trilateral" regions—North America, Europe and Japan.

The TC is financed by about ten of the foundations set up by big-business family dynasties, like the Rockefellers, Fords, etc, and a score of the West's biggest corporations. Spokesmen for TC deny that it has a distinct policy. But there can be no doubt that it aims, through its extremely influential members, to promote policies nationally and internationally which favour the interests of the multinationals.

This has become particularly crucial for the Rockefellers and the Kissingers because, while the size and influence of the multinationals has continued to grow, the power and influence of US capitalism, whose dominant position determined the pattern of post-war economic and political relationships, has been dramatically undermined by the global events of the last decade or so.

The TC comprises the leading lights and up-and-coming hopefuls of the industrialised capitalist world, several of whom prepare what are known as Task Force reports, which are

read at TC meetings and discussed in the complete absence of the press and public.

When TC members enter public service they resign from the TC, as did Jimmy Carter before he became US president, when he appointed ex-TC members to twenty top posts in his administration.

All TC members, whether politicians or directors of multinational corporations, agree to meet in secrecy so that they feel free to voice opinions without being inhibited by the constraints of party or company policies or by public reaction.

Backed by multinationals

It was the discussion paper debated at the 1975 TC meeting held in Kyoto, Japan, which has aroused most criticism—because it gives an ominous warning of the perspectives of the spokesmen of the multinational banks and corporations.

Entitled *Crisis of Democracy*, and later published by New York University Press in a much-edited form, it dealt with the sensitive subject of the "governability" of democracies. Its authors were Michael J Corzier from Europe, Joji Watanuki from Japan, and America's Samuel P Huntington, previously notorious for his role as policy-adviser to the US government on its methods of consolidating control over the population of South Vietnam during the US's bloody but doomed intervention in Vietnam.

The "crisis", according to the TC report, is that the balance in society has swung too far against "governmental authority" and towards

"popular control". After World War II "Truman had been able to govern the country with the co-operation of a relatively small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers", but by the mid-'60s this was no longer possible since "the sources of power in society had diversified tremendously". One threat to the governability of society was the media, and the TC report hints there should be more government control unless the media adopt "more self-restraint".

A second and more dangerous threat, however, is posed by the "previously passive or unorganised groups in the population", and they mean the Blacks, Indians, Chicanos, white ethnic groups, students and women who became mobilised and organised in new ways to achieve what they considered to be their "appropriate share of the action and of the rewards". In other words, the "Wall Street lawyers and bankers" and their political spokesmen were no longer having things all their own way.

"Restore authority"

The task, for the authors of the TC report, is to work out how to "restore the prestige and authority of central government institutions, and to grapple with the immediate economic challenges". Ways must be developed, they argued, of controlling the "more politically active citizenry", through reinforcing or replacing "traditional means of social control".

It is in this kind of academic, diplomatic language that the authors of the *Crisis in Democracy* spell

out the need to replace the liberal, democratic methods of the last three decades with more authoritarian, totalitarian means of maintaining the wealth and power of the capitalist class. And the Trilateral Commissioners represent not the reactionary right-wing of the American ruling-class, but its "liberal" wing!

Secret meetings

The idea, however, that "too little authority" has resulted from an "excess of democracy" (to use the TC language) has had an echo among Labour's right-wing MPs, or rather former MPs.

The renegade Labour MPs who split away to form the Social Democratic Party claim that they left because of the "lack of democracy" within the Labour Party and trade unions. But did not the right-wing Social Democrats split because they were totally opposed to more democratic accountability of MPs within the Labour Party? Clearly, they viewed mandatory re-selection and the election of the leader and deputy leader by the constituencies and the trade unions through the electoral college as an "excess of democracy". They labelled rank and file Labour Party members who campaigned for these democratic reforms as "extremists".

SDP and Tories

There is clearly nothing inconsistent, to say the least, between the ideas outlined in *The Crisis of Democracy* and the views of the SDP leaders. In case anyone thinks that this connection is far-fetched, we can reveal that two prominent leaders of the SDP have been involved in the Trilateral Commission, David Owen, and John Roper, formerly Labour MP for Farnworth.

In fact, only two days after launching the SDP in March 1981, David Owen and John Roper were in Washington DC's plush hotel, L'Enfant Plaza, hobnobbing with the likes of David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger at that year's TC meeting.

Of course, representatives of the SDP are not the only British MPs who have been involved with the Trilateral Commission. So have Tories like Edward Heath and Peter Tapsell.

Among the other British TC members they would have met at TC meetings are industrialists like Sir Kenneth Keith (Rolls Royce), Sir Reay Geddes (Dunlop), Lord Harlech (Harlech Television), and Lord Shackleton (RTZ); bankers like Lord Cromer (Barings); and newspaper editors like H Fisher of the *Financial Times*.

For further information on the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group see *The Global Manipulators* by Robert Eringer (Pentacle Books) £2.75, available from World Socialist Books.

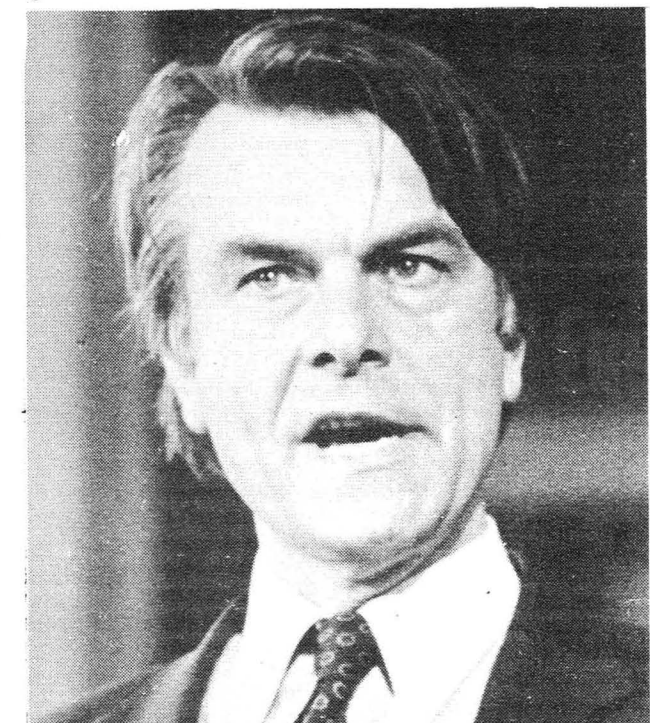
By Philip Andrews



Kissinger, worried about the relative decline of US influence



Carter appointed twenty Trilateral Commission members to his government



Owen left Britain two days after launching the SDP to attend the 1981 Trilateral Commission

"WHAT WOULD MARX SAY?"

IF YOU travel in Yugoslavia today you are likely to come across large posters with just a short sentence in small print asking a question: What would Marx say today?

This is a novel way to do public opinion polls, but one wonders what sort of answers were the Serbian Socialist Youth League expecting.

There is very little good in the lives of ordinary Yugoslavs to prompt a positive answer. Economic problems on par with those of Poland have been making life miserable for them for years. Basic necessities like petrol and washing powder have been rationed for months now and shortages are widespread.

Coffee is not rationed because the issue of ration books for coffee would be pointless; it is totally unavailable. The black market is booming and those in the high income brackets can still enjoy their favourite cup of coffee for three-fold prices.

Many shortages are not only caused by production and foreign currency difficulties but are direct results of panic buying and hoarding. As the monthly petrol ration is only 9 gallons, many people hoard in unsafe cans and containers for the one longer journey they hope to make.

Tito's legacy

There is a vicious circle. Shortage of energy, petrol in particular is hampering the tourist industry which in its turn should provide at least 39% of the dollar revenue to enable the import of materials, like oil and other chemicals to cure the shortages. Some shortages mirror the chaos of regional decentralisation, so much hailed as the solution of all ills a few years ago. In one town, long queues form for cooking fat, while in the next one there is plenty to go round.

As of 1 February many foodstuffs were supposed to have gone on ration in Belgrade following the regional towns, but at the

last moment the Council of Republics and Regions decided against it. Instead the well known Eastern European remedy of steep price rises was introduced.

Meat and poultry went up by between 24% and 33%.

Yugoslavia was regarded for years as the economic miracle of Eastern Europe, with many political advantages over the other states in the region. Tito for many years balanced between his Eastern and Western friends. However, the Yugoslavia he left to his successors three years ago has been going from bad to worse. The seeds of discontent had been sown, national antagonisms add to new economic hardships, ready to explode.

The answers on those posters are likely to be unprintable, but we, here, can answer them truthfully. Marx would not like what he would see. He would surely call for an eradication of the bureaucracy and an establishment of workers democracy in Yugoslavia as the only solution to its problems.

By Magda Szabó

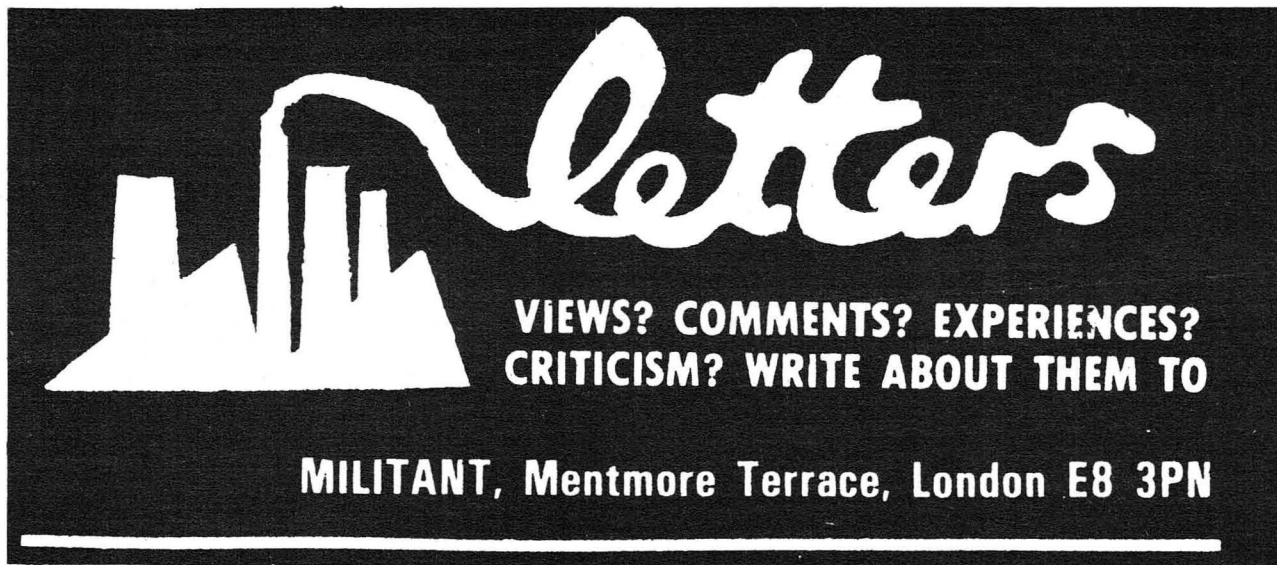
CONCERNED READER

Mr Philip Andrews (address supplied) has written asking us to publish the following statement:

"Philip Andrews of Teddington, Middlesex, wishes it to be known that he has no connection with the article that appeared in *Militant* issue 644 regarding FBI surveillance against John Lennon."

We would point out that there are over 40 "Andrews" with the initial letter "P" in the London telephone directory alone. They have no connection with the article, either. We have not checked how many Philip Andrews there are in the rest of the English-speaking world, but please don't all write in.

Editor.



Fighting back sitting down

Dear Comrades,

Recently, a member of our local management made a vain attempt to attack my individual right to sit down whilst working, where the opportunity arises.

Following an exchange of words between myself and our shift manager, he suspended me, with no mention of pay whilst suspended.

I pursued normal grievance procedure, which involved senior management. My individual right was quite clearly laid out in the Factories Act 1961, and also in the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.

After quoting my rights, I was asked to go back to my work whilst they had a talk with the shift manager.

Many of the workers were elated with this victory, small as it was. The lesson is, however, that whether it's an individual issue or a collective one, it pays to know your rights.

Yours fraternally,
W Clegg,
Branch Secretary,
Warburtons Bakery,
Oldham,
(personal capacity).

Looking back into the future?

Dear Comrades,

My uncle wrote the following and asked me to send it in the to you

"The situation in the coal mines is completely different from the 1926 strike. In those days the miners were solidly behind each other, however, now the pit wages are vastly superior to what they were then—and so they should be—but I think a little of they fight they had then could be helpful against this 'Victorian Government'.

"My father was killed in the Klondyke pit in 1935. I was working in the grocery trade and learning window dressing.

"Two weeks after my father died I received a letter from the manager of the colliery. I was to go and see him—then given the choice of either working in the pit or the brickwork.

"They also asked my mother why our rent was two weeks in arrears after my father's death—they forgot him even in that short time.

"If the people of this country do not want this to happen again they had better get rid of this so-called government—another four years would bring it all back.

"An OAP from Midlothian.

Yours truly,
Pauline Dick,
Dalkeith.

The price of life

After 45 years

Dear Militant,

Margaret Thatcher says we should return to the values of earlier days. Does she mean like the days before the NHS?

I remember a little girl aged 14 who was suffering severe pain in the stomach. Her parents instead of calling a doctor called in a nurse who put a poultice on the affected area causing the appendix to burst and the little girl died.

She could have been sav-

ed if a doctor had been called in the first place. But her parents could not afford the cost.

What price their lifetime of grief? I have carried this story since 1938 and I feel now I should strike a blow on her behalf and for all the others who have suffered under capitalism.

Yours sincerely,
Dorothy Dale (Mrs),
Newport,
IOW.

The declining rate of BUPA

Dear Comrades,

Civil servants are being individually circulated with offers to join BUPA under an agreement between the profit privateers and the government.

Fortunately it looks as though BUPA will be disappointed.

When staff at the Welsh Office in Cardiff were circulated with the BUPA offer, there was general disgust, with only a few expressing interest.

CPSA activists asked all those who disagreed with the scheme to give them the copies of the correspondence and the pre-paid reply envelopes. The propaganda was promptly binned and the envelopes were then posted back to BUPA—blank!

As these amounted to a good few hundred, we can expect the law of the declining rate of profit to take its toll.

Yours fraternally,
Steve Davies,
Cardiff.

Nuclear redemption

Dear Comrades,

I read with interest, letters from Christian Marxists in the *Militant* some time ago. I have also read that the General Synod of the Church of England have voted in favour of nuclear weapons.

The Archbishop of York Rev Stuart Blanch, said Christians should not fear nuclear weapons as the prospect of redemption is quicker.

I do not know about Christian Marxists but as a non-Christian Marxist I do not want to be redeemed yet.

Yours fraternally,
I R Smith,
Brighton.

Expelled for Co-operation

Dear Comrade,

In reference to Steve Higham's article on his supposed expulsion from the Co-operative Party, his appeal was not, in fact, rejected by Co-op Party conference.

At the Co-op Party's conference, his case was raised as an example by two Societies: London CRS and South Suburban. Helen Bulaitis, a *Militant* supporter and part of the South Suburban delegation, moved the reference back of the section of the NEC report referring to the Militant Tendency. It was this reference back which was lost, not any appeal by Mr Higham whose appeal is yet to be heard by the Co-op NEC.

While many Co-op Parties hope for a favourable outcome to his appeal, conference has no direct influence over an NEC decision, eligibility for member-

Compassion stillborn

Dear Comrades,
DHSS leaflet NI 17A/Mar 82 tells us:

"If the baby is stillborn the grant will be paid as long as the pregnancy lasted for 28 weeks or longer. If you have twins or triplets etc you can get a grant for each child who lives for more than 12 hours (although if all died one grant would still be paid)."

As if the 'conditions' aren't bad enough, guess how much they are offering?—£25.

If such pennypinching is the mark of a civilised society then roll on its overthrow.

Yours fraternally,
Pat Seery,
Cathcart Labour Party.

RED FATHER TIME

I was with Wat Tyler on that fateful day,
in the City of London, hell was to play,
We'd decided to lift ourselves out of the pit,
and change things for better, if only a bit.

I marched with bold Cromwell to rid us of kings,
to give us a say in many more things.

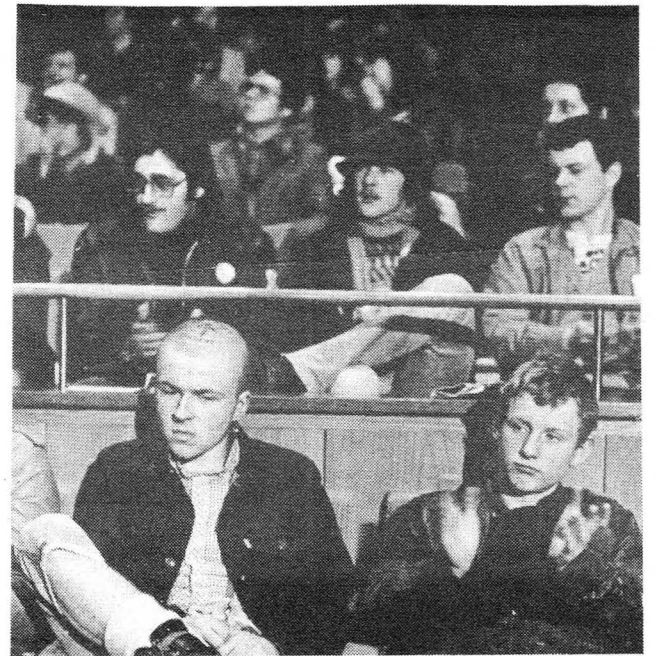
I ranted with Chartists and echoed their pleas,
to stand up and fight and not live on our knees.

I rode in with Lenin to Moscow that day,
a great part in history that man was to play,
Small in stature but huge in ideals,
his words echo still, how the working man feels.

And so into Spain where I answered the call,
to free us from fascism once and for all.
We marched and we fought with not too much food,
that proud and noble, mixed, gallant brood.

So I'm still here today, a thorn in their sides,
an immortal spirit, that may soon turn the tide.
I've had many names in time's honoured scroll,
Today I'm a socialist, I'll play my role.

Chris Watson
Hartlepool CLP and EPTU (plumbing)



On the YOP Trade Union Rights Campaign Lobby of Parliament, February 1982

Skinhead

Dear Comrades,

As a skinhead I have taken a lot of abuse and hassle from the general public. If you wear Doc Martin boots and have short hair you are not only classed as a hooligan but a fascist and a supporter of the National Front.

True it is that some of the skinheads are NF but this is only a small minority. Most skinheads who I know from Stoke are socialists and are working class.

Skinheads are like blacks in our society. They go for a job and after the interview

are put on the bottom of the list.

Guess who is behind all this hatred and propaganda against skinheads? It is the media who have classed our comrades as thugs and paki-bashers and the public takes all this in and believe it.

So it's up to the skinheads to join the LPYS and *Militant* to help get rid of the capitalist system so skinheads can get a better deal in life.

The capitalists are the real fascists of this country not the working class skinheads.

Yours fraternally,
Wayne Dunn,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Hey, good lookin'

Dear Comrades,

Sir Geoffrey Howe's favourite recipe is for avocado mousse, with which he insists only silver utensils must be used.

Even the *Times Diary* comments that this is not entirely in keeping with his favourite quote: "Thrift should be the guiding principle of government" (which he attributes to Mao Tse-tung).

Meanwhile, what's the Parliamentary Labour Party got cooking?

Yours fraternally,
E Ronay,
Nottingham.

Miners—under threat

Dear Comrades,

I work in the super production North Notts coalfield, which regularly returns a profit, so all should be well for me. Not so. Within North Notts the area board is seeking 500 redundancies this year and it's rumoured that this is now increased to 1,000.

My own pit, a profit-making long-life pit, has a figure of 80. This figure will not always be attained by early retirements or redundancies, but by dismissing people for offences for which they may once have received a fine. This discounts the claim that any place making a profit is safe.

This is not the only attack being made upon the miners. In April the new sick pay scheme, invented by our family-loving government, comes into force. Our old scheme allowed the NCB to make up the sick payment from the Social to an amount agreed according to length of service. The claimant was taxed on the portion paid by the NCB. Because the maximum NCB payment never reached more than £40 this usually made a tax return to the claimant.

With the new scheme the NCB pays the full amount for the first eight weeks and the claimant is taxed on that amount, which in most circumstances means a loss of £12-£15 in sick pay. The theory most likely is that it will be an incentive to get back to work.

If there is to be any economic adjustment in society it must be on our terms: early retirement with adequate pensions, jobs and training for the young.

Yours fraternally,
Graham Naylor,
Mansfield.

Pick yourself up...

Dear Comrades,

Nine months ago I was unemployed, fed up, eating less and less and becoming more depressed and desperate day by day.

I didn't think it was worth joining the Labour Party because I was disillusioned with the right wing leadership. On the other hand I saw Marxists as middle class academics.

I've since met *Militant* supporters and become an active Marxist. I've not only found answers to a lot of political questions but also enormous hospitality and helpfulness on a personal level, particularly among Dagenham LPYS

So if you're going through what I did, join us now!

Yours fraternally,
Peter Akhurst,
Hornchurch.

National Minority Movement

The challenge defeated

This is the second and final part of Bill Mullins' article on the Minority Movement. In last week's *Militant*, Bill described the rapid development of the movement. In this article, he analyses the experience of the movement with important lessons for today in the many Broad Left organisations in the labour movement.

In the early 1920s, under pressure of an aroused working class, many of the union leadership were adopting a left face, and more 'lefts', Purcell, Hicks, etc., were adopted onto the TUC General Council.

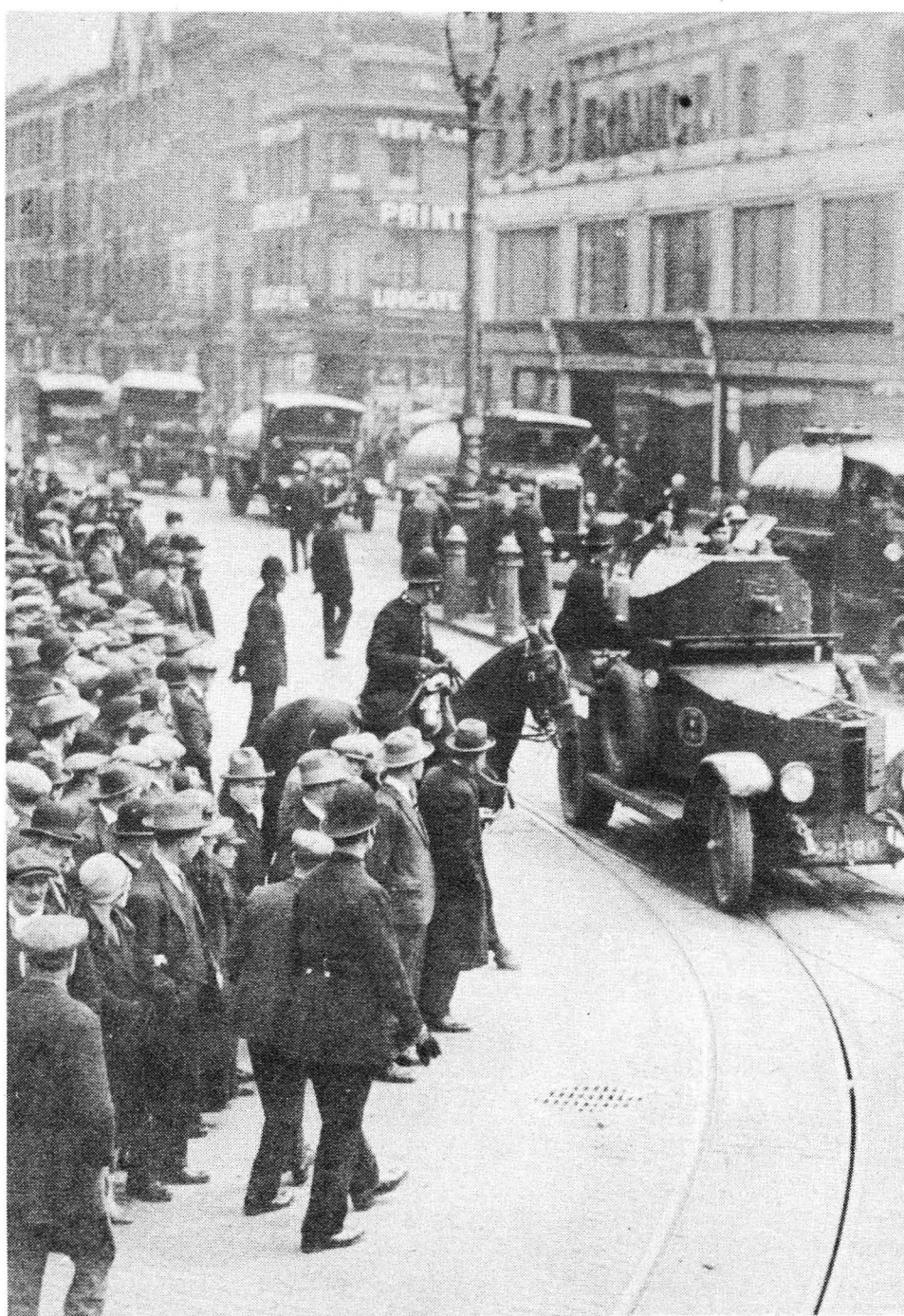
The development of Stalinism in the Russian CP was beginning to have a baleful influence on the whole International, including the British CP. Stalin, representing a growing bureaucracy and based on the theory of socialism in one country, was trying to reach an agreement with British imperialism through the intermediary of Tomsky and the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, which had been formed earlier between the TUC and the Russian Trade Union Centre.

From consciously develo-

ping a clear revolutionary lead in the trade unions through the National Minority Movement, the CPGB, after August 1925, moved closer to the official left wing, turning its work in the National Minority Movement and Trade Union's from a revolutionary perspective to what it assumed, under Stalin's direction, must now be a purely economic and industrial struggle in May 1926.

The attitude of the CP leadership to the role of the National Minority Movement as a means of winning the mass of workers from reformism to revolution is demonstrated from this extract in the *Worker's Weekly*, (The CP paper) of July 31 1925:

"The success of the Minority Movement is in reality a sign that the



Armoured cars escorted food convoys through London during the 1926 General Strike.

workers are coming to look upon the unions less and less as a means of improving their individual well-being within the framework of the capitalist system, and more and more as a weapon of struggle against the capitalist class. For this reason the Minority Movement cannot be compared with previous 'unofficial vigilance' and 'reform' movements in the era of capitalist vigour... there can be no doubt that...many reformist leaders would rather swim with the current than against it.

Torn Two Ways

"Without pushing away anyone who will fight, the task of the Communists in the Minority Movement is to see that this does not obscure

in the eyes of the workers the fact that their fight is a class fight against a class enemy and not a fight for small reforms".

But by this time the CP was coming under increasing pressure from the Executive Committee of the Communist International not to be critical of the 'Lefts' on the TUC. This contradictory process, on the one hand raising the perspective of a revolutionary struggle and on the other extolling the virtues of the 'Lefts' on the TUC confused its own members and fostered illusions amongst the broader layers of the working class.

At the TUC conference in Scarborough in September 1925, TUC lefts were uncritical of the right wing on many important issues.

A CP National Minority Movement-inspired motion

to give more power to the General Council to act as the General Staff of the working class, was only supported by A.J. Cook, the miners' leader, of all the lefts on the General Council. Clynes (NUR) summed up the attitude of the right wing and increasingly the left, when he declared, "I am not in fear of the capitalist class; the only class I fear is our own".

No leadership

At its March 1926 conference the National Minority Movement laid down no practical plans to give the forthcoming general strike a revolutionary lead. In fact the leadership saw the general strike as purely an

economic (Industrial) struggle.

George Hardy, acting general secretary of the National Minority Movement ordered the National Minority Movement to subordinate itself entirely to the TUC on the eve of the General Strike. "...We sent out from Minority Movement HQ instructions to our members to work for the establishment of Councils of Action in every area. We warned, however, that the Councils of action were under no circumstances to take over the work of the Trade Unions...The Councils of Action were to see that all decisions of the General Council and the union executives were carried out" (*Workers Weekly* April 9 1926.)

Decline to ginger group

The party and the National Minority Movement had been turned, at this crucial period, into nothing more than ginger groups inside the unions.

Hardy admitted, after the General Strike:

"Although we knew what treachery the right wing leaders were capable of, we did not clearly understand the part played by the so-called 'left' in the main...they turned out to be windbags...we were taught a major lesson...the main point in preparing for action must always be to develop a class conscious leadership amongst the rank and file". This was precisely the role the National Minority Movement was playing at least up to August 1925.

Isolation and end

In the post general strike period of reaction, the TUC ordered the Trades Councils to disaffiliate from the National Minority Movement. This attack was unopposed by the CPGB leaders. It effectively killed off the Minority Movement.

What finally buried it was the so-called "Third Period" where under Stalin's orders, the National Minority Movement, in a period of ebb in the class struggle, went on an ultra-left binge and tried to form new "red" unions and oppose the existing unions. This left the National Minority Movement completely isolated and it finally withered away.

Stop these flags of convenience

Joe Barlow, Full-time official of the National Union of Seamen, West Wales, spoke to Alec Thraves, AUEW

After the Second World War we had the largest merchant navy fleet in the world. Merchant seamen suffered one of the highest fatality rates out of all the parties involved in the war. A substantial amount of ships lost were replaced by the government but in the 1950s when

I started in the merchant navy, the rot was already starting to creep in.

The small private companies started to be taken over by the big boys who wanted to monopolise the industry. We had around 60,000 members then and there were plenty of ships around. Now we have around 20,000 members. Our work-force has been cut by about 10,000 every decade and it's getting worse.

By the 1960s these big shipowners could see that their profits could be even further increased by adopting "flags of convenience" (FOC) ie registering under foreign flags such as the Liberian flag, Bermudan

flag, Cypriot flag etc. It's for tax dodging, pure and simple. Also, they do not have to conform to the very high standards of ships registered in the UK which the Department of Trade and Industry inspects regularly for the ship's seaworthiness and the skills of the crew.

The FOC shipowners can put their ships to sea with inefficient crews, mostly from the third world and dreadful working conditions. These shipowners do not bother to even repair their ships.

The ships have become almost like floating bombs—lack of proper maintenance, deliberately running ships down, which not only endanger the crew

but pose a threat to any seaport they arrive in. You only have to look at the daily Lloyds list and read the shipping casualty list which is reported and you'll find that 90% of the casualties are FOC vessels, due to engines breaking down, ships going aground, bad navigation etc, etc.

The conditions aboard these FOC ships highlight the worse kind of exploitation to humanity. If you are lucky the wages will be around £20 a month. After the end of a voyage the company may go broke or be sold off and these seamen are left high and dry, in various ports of the world without a penny.

Successive governments have failed to tackle this problem. The NUS and the International Transport Workers' Federation mounted a massive campaign against these fly-by-night FOC operators but unfortunately we haven't had the necessary government legislation to really bring them to heel.

The Tory government argues that because we live in a world of "free trade" there should be no restrictions. Yet the Tories' attitude to the merchant navy was totally different during the Falklands War. Then a British merchant fleet, manned by highly skilled seamen, was absolutely vital

for Thatcher to fight a war which she brought about herself.

After the war the men feel badly let down. Having risked their lives many of them are going back on the dole. A pretty poor reward.

A future Labour government should nationalise shipping—Britain needs a strong, planned and efficient merchant fleet, with stricter control. Unless this action is taken the remaining 20,000 jobs will go along with the industry. The Tories are prepared to let our industry die—Labour must not!



Pat Wall, President Bradford Trades Council, gives support at Aire valley strike meeting, 10 April.

Photo John Smith (IFL)

Aire Valley yarns

TWENTY-TWO Asian workers have been on strike at Aire Valley Yarns Ltd, Farsley, near Bradford since 14 March, in protest against the sacking of their shop steward, Liaquat Ali.

Liaquat Ali told a protest meeting of nearly 200 people on 10 April, "I was called in to the office and warned; that if I joined a union, I would be thrown out. Management gave me an hour to take union cards back from the members. I went back to my mates and told them what the management had said, and they were emphatic. No! It's our right to join a union."

"I told management what had been said, so they told

me "you're fired". Management twice refused to see the Transport and General Workers Union. I had been sacked for exercising my right to join a trade union."

Another striker, Malik, said at the same meeting: "This is an official union strike of Asian workers. I wish it could be black and white workers. We request the help of the whole community. It's not a question of race but of class. There are 22 of us. We can't win by ourselves; this is not just a battle in Aire Valley, but for all workers and for the name of the union."

Aire Valley has been said to be worse than even Grunwicks. The rate of pay is £1.02p per hour, for a 60 hour week, with similar rates for overtime. Day shifts start at 7.15 am and end at 7.45

pm with only a ½ hour break for lunch. Management have been trying to abolish wash and clearing time at the start and end of shifts. Overtime and weekend work, including Sundays, is compulsory.

There are no gauze masks for workers, resulting in frequent chest ailments; there is no first aid kit in the mill and injured workers are told to make their own way to the hospital, and to clock out before they go. Textile carding machines used in the factory are very dangerous; 23% of accidents in the textile industry are caused by them yet workers at Aire Valley complain of inadequate guards on their machines.

Workers say machines in the mill have no foot-brakes and workers have to use their

hands and feet to stop the spindle, which frequently results in burns. The management have sacked the shop steward, who tried to improve things, and subsequently all other workers who went on strike in support of Liaquat.

During the four week strike, the 22 workers have maintained a 24-hour picket. But help is urgently needed, both on the picket line, and in terms of support of the labour and trade union movement.

Messages of support and contributions should be sent to L. Ali, 34 Dirkhill Road, Bradford 7. This is an official TGWU strike.

By Anil Singh
(Leeds LPYS)

Keep greedy hands off Telecomms

By Colin O'Callaghan

(POEU Overseas Telegraph Branch)

THE POST OFFICE Engineering Union (POEU) has started selective industrial action as part of a campaign to stop Tory denationalisation plans for British Telecom.

Initial targets have been the Bank of England and the mandarins of Whitehall, where POEU members have been withdrawn for an indefinite period. The British Telecom Board, has sent other members, not directly involved in action, home in retaliation.

This is a political attack on our industry, and clearly the stakes are being raised. BT, with an annual income of £6 bn, is the jewel in the privatisation programme.

The main victims would be the workforce and ordinary customers. Press speculation puts the job loss as high as 100,000 while the ordinary customer would pay more for a steadily worsening system, as domestic telephone networks were stripped of resources to be channelled exclusively into business communications.

The POEU has an almost unique facility to target action against those who stand to gain most from this attack. This plus the concentration of industrial muscle available to the POEU through the introduction of new technology is the reason for the general acceptance of selective action as opposed to all our strike.

The Broad Left has campaigned for selective action,

backed by supportive action involving all members, for 3 years, whilst the right-wing leadership instead channelled union efforts into a totally unproductive parliamentary campaign.

Even so, serious difference of opinion exists as to how to conduct the industrial action campaign. The Broad Left would prefer to swap the Bank of England for the Stock Exchange and Whitehall for the City of London; hitting at the citadel of capitalism would be guaranteed to create instant pressure on the government. The Civil Service strike illustrated how the Tories are willing to absorb a loss of public money. They would be infinitely more responsive to squeals from the big business class they serve.

Just as important an omission is the lack of a programme of supportive action. If selective action is to be successful the rest of the membership not involved at the sharp end must be involved in back-up action.

The Executive have instituted a national levy—this is not enough. A supportive action programme should include:—branch meetings convened in works time, half-day regional stoppages, demonstrations and lightning strikes to back up the 'front line troops'.

A private alternative communication network called Project Mercury was licensed by the first Telecomms Act. Clearly with the denationalism of BT in mind the Tories have allowed the setting up of a 'scab' operation. However to operate this system, it needs to interconnect with the BT network. The POEU has a policy of refusing to interconnect Mercury. The Mercury issue will probably cause an escalation in the dispute.

A recent document drawn up by the Institute of Directors identifies "a large dose of privatisation" as the best way of undermining public sector trade union structures and sees this as their "next priority".

This is just one more indication of the political nature of our struggle. All public sector industries are under common attack. Now we are in a fight—the POEU should take the initiative in calling for the formation of public sector defence committees to conduct joint action to defeat the Tories.

Labour leaders, MPs and PPCs should be invited onto POEU platforms and called upon to commit themselves to the repeal of the Telecoms Acts 1 and 2, the renationalisation of British Telecom without compensation, and the drawing up of a positive plan for the nationalisation of the whole of the communications industry manufacture and supply.

Determined to save jobs

LEITH SHIPYARD

LAST Friday, the streets of Leith resounded to the shouts of the workers from Henry Robb's shipyard. They were marching from the yard to a rally to launch a campaign to save their jobs and the future of the yard.

After the meeting GMBATU Convenor, John Keggie, explained why there had to be a fight. British Shipbuilders have announced that they are asking for 474 voluntary redundancies. "If they get them the yard will be down to 85 steel workers, 60 outfitters and 42 general workers, not a balanced workforce and not viable for building ships." Yet they would be retaining 120 staff workers.

"There are no orders and

only three boats in the yard now," he continued. "An action committee has been formed to get as much public support as possible, in Leith, Edinburgh and the surrounding area." "We have had support from the Lothian Regional Council Labour Group, Edinburgh Trades Council and Ron Brown MP."

The rally agreed to stand by the the Blackpool Agreement for no compulsory redundancies, and to give 100% support to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee which is to hold a further meeting with BS on 9 May. "The fight will really start after that." Not just these 781 jobs, or even just the future of Robb's yard is at stake, but the whole community of Leith, which has already suffered massive losses of industrial jobs.

By Pat Craven & Andy Mason
(GMBATU, Henry Robb's personal capacity)

KRAFT CHEESES

THE WORKERS at Kraft Cheeses, Kirkby, responded to the bombshell announcement of 930 redundancies by deciding to fight.

Stewards were told by management on 8 April that Kraft's "European Industrial Strategy" meant that the Kirkby workforce had to go down from 1,150 to 220.

About 900 USDAW members voted overwhelmingly to resist. Members of AUEW, the second largest union, voted unanimously. There is "unprecedented unity" amongst stewards of all unions.

Kraft UK is profitable but not enough to give the 30% return that the parent com-

pany told the *Wall Street Journal* in 1981 was the minimum objective. In a hand delivered letter to each employee Kraft say they "recognise the problem" of high unemployment in the Kirkby area and that it intends to be "as generous as possible" with redundancy payments.

The letter makes clear, however, that this "generosity" and the remaining 220 jobs will be withdrawn if there is any resistance to the 930 redundancies.

They justify closure because the plant is 26 years old and would be too expensive to operate. "Geographical and market considerations" are against it and the Namur plant in Belgium has more modern machinery. In other words they have profited from Kirkby workers for 26 years but haven't considered it worthwhile modernising the plant.

Their reasons are typical

of multinational logic which is indifferent to human considerations. The fact that closure of the Namur plant would mean them having to repay £6 or £7 million grants from the Belgium government may also have influenced the decision.

The management have made their preparations. Stocks normally kept in Kirkby have been moved out over the past few months. There is no processed cheese left in the North West. Their transport and probably storage costs have gone well over budget.

The workers are resisting the threats and bribes of the company and need the support of all workers. USDAW branches in particular should send their support to Dick Caton, Union convenor, Kraft Foods, Moorgate Road, Kirkby, Merseyside.

By Jim McGinley
(Chairman, Knowsley North Labour Party, personal capacity)

STOP CAR BOSSES WAR

REJECT COWLEY OFFER

Cowley workers, now into the third week of their strike, will be meeting on 14 April to hear the management's latest "offer".

This amounts to a grand "concession" of another six days' grace before they do away with cleaning up time altogether. All Cowley workers must reject the "offer" with the contempt it deserves.

The bosses have obviously been stunned by the solidarity shown so far; another decisive vote in favour of continuing the strike would only increase our chances of winning. Moreover many other

groups of workers are looking to Cowley as a confidence booster for the whole working class.

The media of course has trivialised the issues, but they would, with their three-hour expense account lunches.

At the mass meeting, it seems the leadership will not be making any recommendations. This is a mistake and could make a difference to the outcome. But whatever happens, Cowley workers have shown the bosses that the days of accepting anything they throw at us have passed.

By a Cowley Assembly worker

HALEWOOD

THE MASSIVE struggle of workers at Ford's Halewood officially ended on Monday as workers returned to work following the previous Thursday's mass meeting.

Thursday's meeting in the Liverpool stadium was a stormy event attended by 1,500 to 2,000 workers. The recommendation was to return to work pending a report of a 3-man inquiry including representatives of the union and management with a chairman from "a legal background".

About a third of the meeting voted to continue the strike. Many workers felt angry and disappointed at the recommendation before the meeting. As one man put it, "when we came out the gate two weeks ago at the beginning of all this I thought we were going to get Paul Kelly's job back. He should be first back through

Jim Hollinshead (GMBATU) spoke to Halewood workers

the gate and we should follow him".

This has been a hard fought struggle. The workers at Ford's held together well. Towards the end of the dispute there developed a contradictory mood of wanting to fight the issues but also of not wanting to stay out any longer.

This mood fed on the lack of feedback from the union to the members with people becoming a little isolated and removed from the actual fight. The workers are still bubbling with anger and are still in limbo over the outcome.

Things are still in the mill as Paul Kelly remains suspended pending the outcome of the inquiry. The

thing that is certain is that management are moving on to the offensive. One worker at Halewood said: "They're upstairs now trying to work out how to put the line-speed up and cut down manning levels".

This dispute has been the first episode in a continual saga of struggle that will develop at Halewood as Ford's management attempt the implementation of their new system of working practices and whatever else they have up their sleeve.

The Halewood workers have gone back, but they've gone back not with their tails between their legs but with heads up and undefeated. Workers' willingness to fight has been tested once again and not been found wanting.

The Ford's workers and their union leaders must be on their guard for the struggles that will inevitably develop in the future.

"They will not 'humble' ACME workforce"

THE MANAGEMENT of ACME Services Ltd at Manchester Airport responded well to Thatcher's call for a return to Victorian attitudes.

140 cleaning staff have now been out on strike since 1 April when ACME took over the contract for cleaning the airport terminal. One of the first actions of the new management was to offer only 125 of the workers their jobs back, with wage cuts of between £15 - £24 a week!

The previous company was paying £109 a week gross. ACME offered their jobs back at £89 a week. Workers were also told they now had to pay for their meal breaks. This, however, was only the beginning.

The late night transport provided by the previous company to take workers (mainly women) to and from the airport was to be withdrawn. Because of the shift times this would effectively mean that many women would have to walk to and from the airport in the early hours of the morning.

Not surprisingly the reaction of the workforce was swift. A 24 hour picket was set up and since bank holiday Friday the strike has been solid. Workers have appealed to other airport workers to support them. The Labour Party Young Socialists were applauded at the meeting for the work they had done in the strike so far even though the full-time official of the T&G said he did not want the strike to be political!

ACME are part of the multi-national Pritchard Services Group. Last year Pritchard made £10 million pre-tax profit. Projected profit for 1983 is £12.5 million. They have the contract to clean the streets of Wandsworth, to collect refuse in Bath and clean laundry at Redhill hospital in Surrey. Workers know the threat these firms pose to direct labour organisations and trade unions.

Nor are they "more efficient" as they claim. In October last year Pritchards were fined £7,665 for falling below authorised cleaning standards in Wandsworth. The report said "There was a lack of planning and training and reports of hiring and firing in a somewhat erratic manner".

As Alan Kennedy, one the strikers said, "They are out to humble the workforce! It is not as though we are asking for a pay rise. We just want to be paid what we were last week".

The T&G must now make the strike official and call out all members at the airport, especially the firemen who could bring the airport to a standstill. ACME management must be defeated or they will see a victory as a green light to cut more jobs and pay.

By Wythenshawe LPYS

Secret document shows rail board's aims

"THE FUNDAMENTAL solution to the problem of major capacity reduction remains as previously—works closures."

So says a confidential management document which has fallen into the hands of the Works Committee at British Rail Engineering (BREL) Horwich who are currently fighting the closure of their workshops and the loss of 2,600 jobs.

The plans are for major reduction of the Swindon site at the year's end, and closure of all activities at Horwich with the exception of the foundry by the end of 1983.

In 1984, the phasing out of Shildon with complete closure at the year's end. Major rationalisation and sharing of facilities between Derby Loco and Derby Littlechurch Lane. Phasing out imported (from other regions) carriages and locos out of Glasgow during the year, with major redundancies. In 1986 is planned the complete closure of Swindon.

The British Rail Board (BRB) are claiming that the document is "out of date" and not applicable. Why then have they called in police to investigate how the document became public?

Furthermore BRB member James Urquhart has indicated the Board's real attitude by saying there is no turning back, that it would be dishonest to raise hopes and claiming that as Shildon and Horwich had not taken strike action they'd "ac-

cepted the inevitable".

Denis Green, Works convenor at Horwich, soon put paid to that rubbish. "We don't need Urquhart to tell us when to go on strike to protect our interests. This is an ongoing campaign and we'll make him eat his words."

On 7 April, despite foul weather, over 400 people packed into a protest meeting which reassured the Committee that they have the support of working people in the whole of the community.

Horwich workers look to the labour and trade union movement for support. Already Bolton, Wigan and Lancashire trades councils are backing them. But the Joint Action Committee will be sending out material and are ready to send speakers to union branches nationwide.

Horwich's lead must be taken up by the leaders in rail and engineering unions. As Denis Green said, "We can see how they are going to implement Serpell and we are at the sharp end."

"But this document shows that it is a mistake if anyone thinks that by allowing us to be sacrificial lambs it will straighten their job prospects. Our fight today is theirs tomorrow!"

Donations, applications for speakers or raffle tickets (to pay for a coach to lobby Parliament) to Horwich Loco Works Joint Action Committee, Chorley New Road, Horwich, Lancs. Telephone 0204 66801, ext. 7351.

Militant spoke to Denis Green

YORKSHIRE PIT THREAT

THE NCB is now attempting to cash in on the recent setback in the NUM strike ballot, by axing jobs in South Yorkshire.

At Hickleton pit in the Doncaster area which employs 1,100 men, 726 jobs are to go. One third of the men involved are to be made redundant. The rest to be "re-deployed". There is also talk of the colliery closing down altogether.

This is no Lewis Merthyr. Hickleton has at least another 15 good years in it. Men here are willing to take action to protect their livelihoods; in the March ballot they polled a 77.8% 'yes' vote.

This was reflected in their mood on Monday. After the news broke "we ought to have been on strike this morning" was the general consensus. These redundancies coupled with the proposed

run-down of Highgate pit—would deal a crippling blow to job prospects in the Dearne area, with unemployment already 25%.

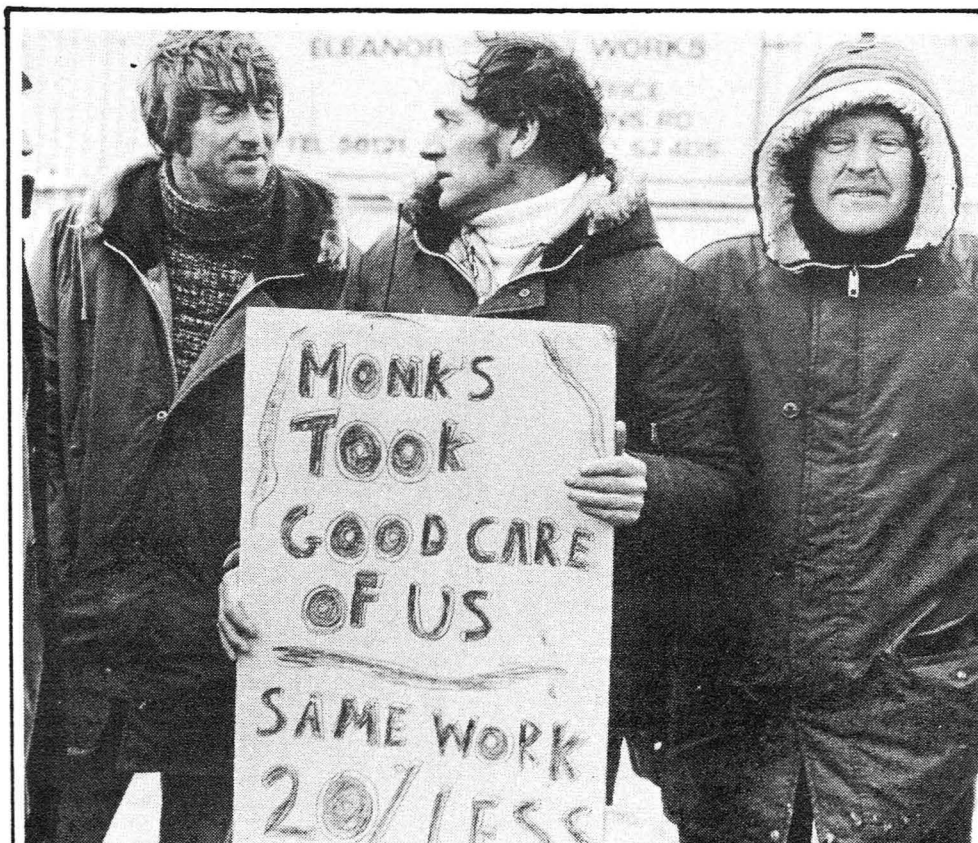
Plans for an open-caste mine at Goldthorpe will provide little hope. This will create only about a dozen jobs for skilled men, who already work for outside contractors and would not be NUM members. Dearne residents are up in arms about the environmental scars such schemes would make, and have set up a "Dearne opposition to open-cast mining group" to combat it.

The Barnsley, Doncaster and South Yorkshire Council along with the NUM are also in opposition to this project. Clearly, the NCB strategy of running down good pits and increasing open cast activity is a political one.

Hickleton has a strong history of militancy and the bosses would love to reduce the power of the NUM. With a solid 'yes' vote in March in all the surrounding collieries (eg 90% at Highgate) local miners will stand for no nonsense and therefore will be pushing for solidarity action should the situation escalate.

The NUM leadership must take up the fight of the Hickleton men and fight tooth and nail to oppose job losses. This time we can win.

By Graham Williams (Manvers Colliery) & Gary Bottomley (Dearne South Labour Party)

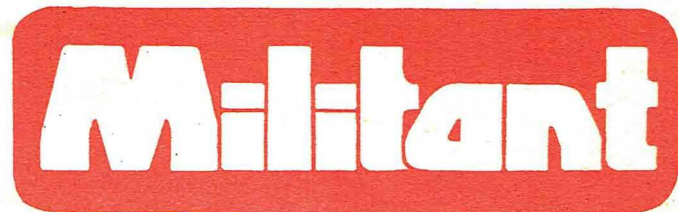


Hodkin and Jones, a subsidiary of the Monk group after 3 months of fruitless negotiations imposed a 20% cut in earnings on their workforce on 1 March. The workers worked to rule, so management sacked 12 production workers on 18 March. The remaining workforce walked out demanding total reinstatement and a return to the negotiating table on earnings and conditions.

At present 29 workers have to cover two premises in the Sheffield area. Resources being thin, 12 scabs have been employed there. But the mood remains optimistic. Donations and letters of support to Roger Horne, 74 Hands Road, Sheffield.

By Simon Duerden (Sheffield Central LPYS)

STEEL JOBS- The fight must go on



CROXTETH

(cont'd from front page)

Brigades Union, COHSE, the National Union of Seamen, and various branches of the NUT. The Labour Party at national level has given support.

The local West Derby LPYS have been involved in the struggle since the beginning of the occupation. The campaign wants to see the Croxteth fight for a new comprehensive school, as a part of the forthcoming re-organisation of Liverpool schools. For this to happen it's vital that a Labour council is returned in Liverpool in May. The demonstration is a culmination of this struggle.

done by the Croxteth Community Action Committee.

The day-to-day teaching in the school continues against all odds. They have won the support of the people of Liverpool because they've stood up and fought back against the cuts. Money and practical support has come in from the labour movement.

Many teachers would welcome the support given by the parents. For example, since the parents started running the detention class, the number of pupils in detention has reduced dramatically.

Sabotage from the Liberal/Tory City Council demonstrates their contempt for workers lives. They even retracted at the last minute their promise to pay the examination fees for CSE and GCE examinations this May. An anonymous donation in pound notes saved the chances of the pupils who live in an area already blighted by high youth unemployment. The contemptuous attitude of the Liberals on this issue is in line with their closure of the school, which is the sole public building on the estate.

The school has 37 acres of playing field—an unusual feature in Liverpool schools. Locally, the cuts have reduced playing field space by 500 acres in Merseyside. The children of the estate have always enjoyed the free use of the field out of school time.

During the occupation Croxteth has become a genuine community school, where parents and the community have been able to use facilities for sports and social functions out of school time.

The demonstration planned for 16 April has been promised support by the Trades Councils, the Lancashire miners, the CPSA, the National Union of Sheet Metalworkers and Copper-Smiths Heating and Domestic Engineers, the Fire

Croxteth has been an inspiration in the fight against education cuts nationally. In Nechells, Birmingham, for instance, the struggle against another school closure has begun. Phil Knibb from Croxteth Action Committee has spoken at a meeting in Birmingham called by Nechells parents.

However, the demonstration is not solely against education cuts, but against all cuts. Unemployment is a huge problem in the area, as is the state of the houses.

The attack on education, spearheaded by Keith Joseph nationally and Trevor Jones, the Liberal locally, is gathering momentum, and only a serious stand by the Labour movement, such as we've seen at Croxteth will protect education.

The Transport and General Workers Union has given enormous practical support, linking in with community action on this question. And even during the recent Halewood dispute, practical support continued to come in from the stewards at Fords.

The LPYS have organised a weekend of action, to include the demonstration, a night spent at the school and a canvass of the Broad Green constituency, for the prospective parliamentary candidate Terry Fields. The demonstration starts at Clubmoor playing fields, at 10.30am 16 April. It continues through Norris Green to the school. Organisations are asked to bring banners. Contact Phil Knibb, 37 Redruth Road.



National Leadership is needed to save jobs. (Above) Bill Sirs, Steel Union leader, on TUC demo.

After eight days strike in South Yorkshire, the British Steel Corporation has been forced to partially back down.

The management have agreed to re-employ any of the 85 workers who were compulsorily made redundant, although some have taken voluntary redundancies.

They have also promised to re-examine the shift patterns. The BSC have agreed to stay within the procedure in future for ISTC members but they have refused to give the same agreement for the craft unions.

Steel workers have seen

By Chris Fry
(ISTC Phoenix Branch,
Rotherham
personal capacity)

this for what it is, a blatant attempt to split the workforce. At a mass meeting on Tuesday, craftsmen agreed to continue the strike and picket any ISTC members returning to work.

Although the Executive Committee of the ISTC agreed a return to work, ISTC members in Rotherham have respected the craft unions picket line. They say the craft unions gave us support when we were out, so we will do the same for them.

As the South Yorkshire Steel Action Committee stated last week, "Don't get buried under the issue of a handful of jobs in Templeborough or Aldwarke. The real issue is 1,700 jobs in Specials Steel. Do we sit back and watch the destruction of our industry or do we fight like Belgium and French steel workers to defend ourselves?" The strike could also influence the future of the whole steel industry in Britain. This partial victory in South Yorkshire shows the way for all steel workers.

A steel worker on the picket line on Friday had a letter in his pocket that he could collect £21,000 redundancy money. He has refused and stayed on the picket line all day. This example shows that when workers

can see the possibility of victory they are prepared to make sacrifices and fight to save jobs.

Steel workers realise the high stakes. Defeat would mean massive job losses, contraction of the industry, the erosion of the national strength of the union and eventual privatisation.

The menace of unemployment threatens everyone. Lack of respect for picket lines certainly does not mean immunity from the dole queue. A lead should be given, not just from the ISTC, but from the leaderships of the craft, and transport unions, who so far have had very little to say.

The lessons are clear. The ISTC and other steel unions should prepare their members for a fight to stop any further job losses in the steel industry and other outstanding issues such as the national wage claim.


This needs to be translated into decisive action nationally, engaging the national power of the steel unions and invoking the Triple Alliance. A battle has been won but not the war.

BIFU Report

The report in last week's *Militant* of the conference of the Banking Finance and Insurance Union was incorrect-

ly ascribed to Dave Crack. The article was in fact based on a report from John Bulaitis

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