

# Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 673  
28 October 1983

20p

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## Brutal takeover in Grenada...

# Reagan Lies Over US Invasion

**THE LABOUR movement must unreservedly condemn the disgraceful United States invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada.**

Reagan has shown the most sickening hypocrisy in his claim that the invasion was to "forestall chaos", to "protect innocent lives" and to "restore law and order". In reality he has poured thousands of marines into this tiny island not to defend "freedom" or "legality", but purely in order to shore up the interests of American capitalism.

He is not interested in the slightest in the reported brutality or the so-called "illegality" of the Grenadian military council that took power from Maurice Bishop two weeks ago, or the execution of Bishop and some of his government ministers. Reagan himself had been planning for months to overthrow Bishop's government.

### Reagan support for dictators

There has not been one instance where the United States has been prepared to intervene against *right-wing* military coups, no matter how bloody, whether they were in Chile, the Philippines, Pakistan, Central America or elsewhere in the Caribbean. The White House supported the coup in Chile which murdered President Allende and thousands of workers and fawned on the murderer General Pinochet.

**Militant**

Reagan described the new military council in Grenada as "leftist thugs", but since being a "thug" has never been a condition for disqualification of friendship by the White House, it is clearly the "leftist" tag which has condemned the Grenadian regime. Socialists do not

measure "aggression" by who fired the first shot, or "legality" by which dictator's laws are enforced, but by which class takes action and in whose interests it is taken. The America intervention represents a naked and unashamed use of overwhelming force against the democratic and national rights of the people of Grenada.

Reagan's hypocrisy is only matched by the hypocrisy of his lap-dogs in the Thatcher Cabinet. Thatcher and Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Howe, have refused to condemn the American invasion outright and it is clear that while standing aside from active participation, the British government

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**The Special Relationship!**



## Telecoms - Battle hots up

**£500 a week for scabs. That's what the BT management, under orders from the Tories, according to *The Mail on Sunday*, are paying management mercenaries to try and break the Post Office Engineering Union.**

**Over 2,000 POEU members are now suspended**

**and about 20 threatened with the sack.**

The battle is fiercest in London, the country's telecommunications centre.

The stakes are high—up to 100,000 jobs if Tory privatisation plans are successful—and a financial bonanza for their big business buddies.

That would also mean the destruction of a vital public service at the hands of City speculators.

The Tories and BT management took a body blow in the courts last

week. Rejection of the application for an injunction to stop blacking of the private telecommunications system Project Mercury was a marvellous victory for the POEU and potentially for all workers fighting privatisation.

Management have been forced to retreat on the sacking of POEU members refusing to do the work of suspended and striking fellow members.

But the shadow of further sackings and victimisation remains. Bullying and intimidat-

tion have been used against any worker in Telecoms questioning management's brutal tactics.

BT management will not easily turn back now. Standing behind them are their hard-faced Tory masters.

The battle continues.

Only a determined struggle by the POEU drawing in wider sections of the union and the labour movement, can maintain the momentum of these victories and smash these disastrous Tory plans.

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# Reagan lies

From Page one

knew of the plans in advance.

Thatcher will not thank the Reagan administration for putting her in the ludicrous position of having to meekly accept the invasion of another Commonwealth country, supposedly under "the British Crown", and then being handed the pieces to put back together again. Nevertheless, workers in Britain will wait in vain for Thatcher to call for a boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, as she called for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics after the Russian intervention in Afghanistan.

The United States has intervened because the revolution in Grenada in 1979 posed a threat to their strategic interests, and to the interests of capitalism and big business elsewhere in the Caribbean.

For four and a half years the Grenadian government, under Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement introduced tangible reforms and increases in the living standards of the working class and shone like a torch to workers elsewhere in the region. The United States and their partners in the Caribbean have simply used the excuse of the recent coup to extinguish the torch.

"Why the fuss about this speck in the ocean?" asked the *Wall Street Journal*, a day before the invasion. "For starters", it replied to its own question, "it is right on the deepwater channel through which more than 50% of the Caribbean oil shipping goes".

The main burden of the military intervention has been borne by the United States, but the labour movement will also condemn the 'jackals' of the Americans, in the shape of the right-wing Caribbean states which have supported intervention, thereby giving Reagan a convenient diplomatic cover for his policy. Reagan simply asked them to ask him and they dutifully complied to his request.

The support of these Caribbean states, and especially that of Seaga, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, shows their fear of the spread of the contagion of revolution, to the much bigger island of Jamaica, with a population of more than 2 million, and to Trinidad, the economically important oil-based island, with a population of one and a quarter million, and elsewhere.

Even the tiny island of Dominica, which supports Reagan, was rocked in 1979 by a 25-day general strike which led to the resignation of the then Prime Minister.

These governments have looked at the rise of the revolutionary New Jewel Movement in Grenada, with its massive support among the workers in the whole Caribbean, and they feared for their own positions.

Reagan may also have calculated that he could use the Grenadian adventure as a "dry-run" for a much larger thrust into Nicaragua at a later stage, testing out the public reaction in the USA, especially among black workers. But his policy will come unstuck. This cowboy adventurer

might imagine that he can stride into the Caribbean and settle the issue with one quick blow, like the hero-sheriff in one of his second rate Western films. But the reality will be different.

Whatever the short-term outcome of the battle in Grenada itself, the repercussions around the Caribbean and elsewhere will be incalculable. The general effect, of provoking unrest and upheaval, will be the very opposite to that intended by the Pentagon strategists.

The right-wing governments in the Caribbean will probably be the first to taste the backlash.

In Jamaica in 1980, Prime Minister Seaga floated the idea of the provision of facilities for an American Naval base, but when this became public, there was an enormous out-cry and the idea had to be dropped. When it becomes known that Jamaican troops were among the small contingent of Caribbean soldiers in the invasion, there will be even greater outrage and a tide of opposition in Jamaica and elsewhere.

Already, the key oil-field workers of Trinidad have called for a mass protest and a conference of all Caribbean workers in the next two weeks. The waves created by Reagan's invasion could very well end up swamping some of the governments the invasion was organised to prop up.

Nor will the opposition to the invasion be confined to the Caribbean. The overwhelming majority of British workers of West Indian origin will be opposed to the American invasion, and the British government's tacit support for it. In the United States itself the majority of black workers will come to oppose this military adventure.

## 1979 revolution had mass support

Throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere there was outrage over the coup which overthrew Maurice Bishop this month. But that will be nothing compared to the much greater outrage that will be shown over the US invasion.

The revolution led by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement in March 1979 in Grenada had enormous support among the mass of the Grenadian people. Under the dictatorship of the previous Prime Minister, Sir Eric Gary, the living standards of workers were in decline.

Gary was noted for only two things—his exotic interest in flying saucers, and his studied lack of interest in the plight of the working class of Grenada. No one regretted his passing.

"The revolution seems to have pleased everyone", commented one journalist at the time (*The Guardian Weekly* April 8, 1979), "The People's Revolutionary Army soldiers, guarding public buildings and road checkpoints called everyone 'brother', 'sister', or 'comrade' and there are lots of black power salutes. 'This is the first time I've seen the fellows living on the block controlling something' said a



Left: Maurice Bishop. (Photo: Carlos Augusto Guarita, Photon)  
Above: Demonstrators outside the US embassy in London last Tuesday. (Photo: Sefano Cagnoni, Report).

with several ministers and trade union leaders. This coup, and the bloodshed following, unfortunately played into the hands of Reagan who saw the international condemnations and the disorientation of the Grenadian population as the green light for smashing the left-wing movement altogether.

But despite Bishop's popularity in Grenada, and protests against his murder, the mass of the population will be bitterly opposed to the American invasion that seeks to turn the clock back to the hated Gary era. The invasion shows that

these concessions were clearly not enough to stop Grenada being a thorn in the side of Imperialism.

The United States' actions will not, in the long run, stop the movement of Caribbean workers struggling for and achieving their social liberation.

The capitalist press has presented the issue as a choice—either Grenada and the Caribbean states must go along the road of private enterprise and capitalist development, or on the other hand along the road of totalitarianism.

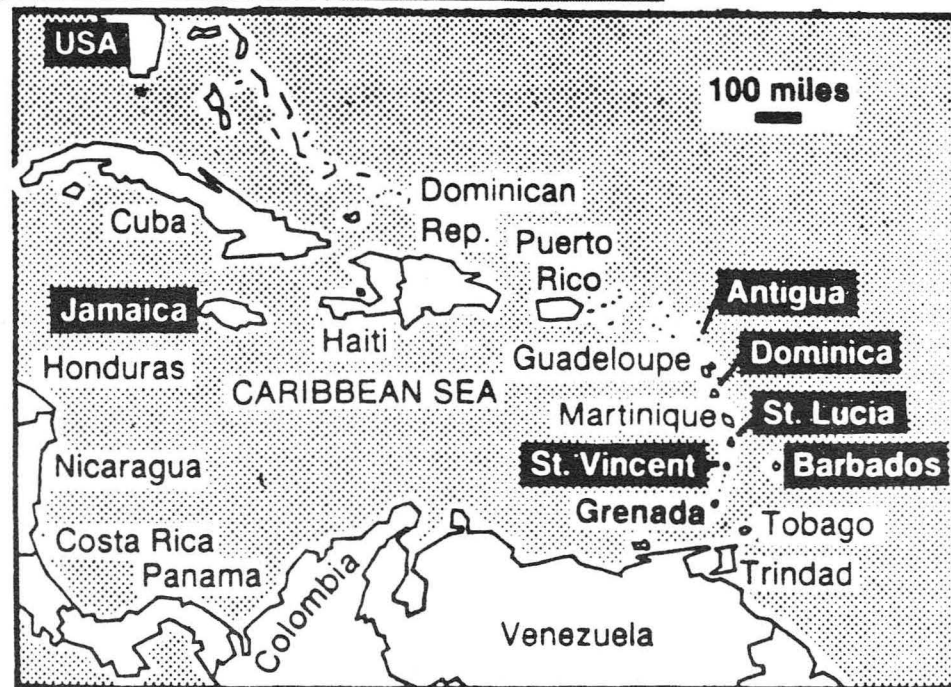
Socialists and the labour movement must pose their own alternative. As the Grenadian regime of Sir Eric Gary showed before 1979 and Edward Seaga's Jamaican regime shows now, there is no future on a capitalist basis for the mass of the Caribbean population. Instead, socialists must raise the banner of a Caribbean Federation of Democratic Socialist States, based upon workers' democracy and workers' internationalism.

An international movement that encompassed all the labour and trade union organisations in the Caribbean would have an enormous impact on Central America and even on the United States itself.

While wholeheartedly condemning the American invasion of Grenada, the British labour movement must see as one of its central tasks assisting the workers' movement in the Caribbean in this aim of overthrowing capitalism and establishing a fraternal federation of socialist states.

Events like this demonstrate that the capitalist class internationally are motivated by their own naked class interests and not by any allegiance to "freedom" or "democracy".

Workers must not be fooled by the hypocritical claims and charges of the Reagan administration and their apologists in the British government, they must not be lulled into accepting the 'good offices' of the United Nations or other similar bodies. To defend the interests of workers they can only rely upon their own strength and their own organisations, nationally and internationally.



young Trinidadian journalist".

Within four years, the radical policies introduced by the New Jewel Movement achieved a 14% growth in the economy (5½% in 1982 alone) and brought unemployment levels down from 49% to 14%.

In order to develop the tourist industry, Bishop arranged loans from Eastern Europe to finance the building of a new 9,000 ft runway on the island.

Reagan claimed earlier this year that aerial photographs of Grenada and Nicaragua illustrated, "the Soviet Cuban militarisation" of the area. Yet even his own defence officials denied that the runway was ever or could ever present a threat to the security of the United States.

Divisions within the ruling body of the New Jewel Movement and within the Grenadian government led to the recent coup and the murder of Bishop, along

the presence of any regime with mass support or even vaguely radical, poses a threat to their interests and the wider interests of capitalism in the Caribbean.

It even seems that the new Grenadian military council under General Hudson Austin were prepared to make economic concessions after having held talks with industrial leaders, commercial banks, hoteliers, overseas investors, and other business interests. But even

# Black youth in Britain rally

## Unite and fight the Tories



Scenes from the rally — (left) a section of the audience and (right) Chandra Dasgupta speaks on behalf of the LPYS.

THE LPYS's Black Youth Rally held on Saturday was a tremendous success, demonstrating the appeal of socialist ideas to young blacks.

The event was attended by 350 youth, double the attendance of last year.

Delegations came from all parts of the country, such as Bradford, Bristol and Leicester, and included 20 YTS trainees from Manchester.

The seminar discussions on the Black Power movement, Black women, and the revolutions and counter revolutions in the Third World, showed an eagerness of young blacks in involving themselves in the struggle for socialism and a thirst for ideas.

The guest speakers, which included Paul Boetang, Darcus Howe, Terry Fields MP and Andy Bevan,

Labour Party youth officer, added to the discussions. Sadly, one of the main speakers, CLR James, could not attend due to ill health.

Significantly during the rally, there was not one expression of support for Labour's right-wing. Blacks fully remember with anger that previous right-wing Labour governments passed laws such as the 1968 Immigration Act.

On the other hand, the Marxist ideas expressed by *Militant* supporters were well received, as the comments from visitors below illustrate:

"There are 35 of us down from Bradford. The debates have been very interesting. Blacks and whites live in the same society and have similar problems. So we need to fight against them together.

"Things in the Third World affect the West and vice versa. The problems are linked."

—Ghazanfer Raja, Bradford.

"This is the first time I've been to the Black Rally. On the whole it's good. But there's not enough time for a really full discussion.

"The discussion on women was very useful. It's a shame the Rally couldn't be over two days. This would allow more time for personal experiences."

—Perry Barr LPYS member.

"It's well worth coming to. There have been a lot of good points, but a lot has been missed out. How can we re-educate people's way of thinking? Capitalists educate people to suit them. This is my first LPYS meeting and I've enjoyed the day."

—Jenny Bradshaw, Kensal Green

Photo: Rita Shergill

## COUNCIL CREATE 600 JOBS

ON MONDAY morning hundreds of unemployed people were queuing up at the Norris Green Job Centre, Liverpool, to apply for the 600 jobs created by the City Council.

One-third of those in the queue had been unemployed for three years. Many said it was the first time in a decade that anything had been done to create jobs in Liverpool. Indeed, the previous Liberal/Tory coalition had destroyed 5,000 jobs.

Those queuing said although the jobs were not guaranteed with a Tory government in power, at least Labour were trying.

As an example of how the potential talents and skills of working class people are wasted under capitalism there was a physics graduate, unemployed for three years, in the queue with his father.

Also in the queue were four members of the local West Derby North YS, who had been unemployed for a total of eight years between them.

The creation of 600 jobs in Liverpool is a major step forward, but to make them permanent the Tories must be stopped in their attempts to smash local councils and dictate to local government.

Already a Tory MP has said the city council should be suspended for so-called



Local council workers lobby Liverpool council when it was controlled by the Liberals and Tories, against privatisation and job cuts. They're is great support for the creation of new jobs.

'over spending'. Local MP Terry Fields has angrily replied, "Every attempt to penalise Liverpool City Council will be fought tooth and nail by the Labour MPs for Liverpool and the local labour movement."

As a step towards this Liverpool District Labour

Party are organising a march on 19 November against the attacks on the Council and against the recent spate of closures since Thatcher was re-elected.

By Ray Murray  
(West Derby North LPYS)

## YTS PROTEST

THE GOVERNMENT youth schemes claimed their nineteenth victim last week. Sixteen years old Gerald Corrigan from Coatbridge in Scotland was crushed to death under a fork lift truck whilst on a Youth Training Scheme.

The Health and safety record on government youth schemes is absolutely appalling, with in many cases no proper supervision or training for inexperienced teenagers, and inadequate safety levels.

Gerald is the second Coatbridge teenager to die on a government scheme in the past year. Seventeen youths have died on YOP schemes, and although YTS is less than two months old, two more youths have been killed. In the past three years on these schemes, 3,000 youth have been injured.

But this national scandal is being fought. 80 Labour MPs backed a motion on Monday in the House of Commons which called to improve YTS safety standards, moved by Dave Nellist.

Alongside its campaign to secure trade union rights and rates of pay, the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign is stepping up action to secure decent health and safety standards with proper supervision and training on these schemes.

They have called a National Day of Action on health and safety on YTS for Wednesday November 2.

YTURC have organised a delegation to meet Peter Morrison, the Tory minister in charge of YTS, to demand a tightening up of the law to give YTS trainees better protection.

The delegation will include parents of youth killed on YOP and YTS schemes, along with Labour MPs Dave Nellist, Terry Fields, Joan Maynard, Michael Meacher and Joe Richardson, with Nick Toms, national secretary of YTURC.

YTS trainees and LPYS members in London are organising a mini-lobby outside the Department of Employment to support the delegation, meeting at 10am at Tothill Street, SW1.

In every region around the country LPYS members and YTS trainees are organising delegations to meet the Manpower Services Commission and picket MSC offices.

However, this campaign won't end on November 2. Dave Nellist is to put forward a bill in parliament to raise the issue of health and safety on YTS on November 15.

Support this campaign—this scandal must not be allowed to continue.

By Nick Toms  
(Secretary, YTURC)

# HALF YEAR TARGET £100,000



2 OUT OF 3 PEOPLE READ A MIRROR GROUP NEWSPAPER

Half a dozen large capitalist companies dominate Fleet Street.

**WE HAVE** combined last quarter's figures with this quarter to give an overall half-yearly target of £100,000 to be raised by January. This gives every area the opportunity to raise all the necessary cash to reach their targets and to spur on the campaign for the new premises and for the daily paper.

How can you raise money? How about giving up smoking or beer? If 3,000 of our readers gave up smoking 20 a day for only one week it would raise £23,000!

If 3,000 gave up 1 pint of beer a day for just a week it would raise £17,000, £40,000 from just one week's abstinence! Fund raising has never been so easy! And imagine how healthy you will feel!

Thanks go to many supporters who gave £1 for their papers this week including: V Duffy, unemployed from Leicester, Stephen Bevan (Basildon), Mike Petrovic (Oxford) and N Hanney (NUT Leicester). Thanks also to the many other small but valuable donations made: Helen Snuffer a Portsmouth student with no grant gave 60p, Iris Barrow, (Manor Ward Labour Party, Sheffield) £1; M Litbarsky (Rugely Constituency Labour Party) £1; H Bonifacio (Gibraltar) £1; Jacquie Ireland (Leeds University Labour Club) £1; S Waugh (East Lothian) £5; a Turkish supporter from Poplar £5.

Workers at British Gas, Easington, Humberside donated over £7 and NGA and SOGAT supporters donated over £24. Have your workmates made a donation yet? Pass an appeal sheet round next pay day! Brighton supporters collected over £15 from one appeal sheet.

An "Irish Night"—Irish stew and drinking raised £17

**TOTAL SO FAR: £40,897  
THIS WEEK: £2,808**

from Gosport. With Halloween and Guy Fawkes night looming, now is the time to arrange for effigies of the 'real' witches to be burned—organise a local social now and think up ways of raising extra money!

A supporter in South London raised over £47 from

watch repairs. Have you got a skill that could raise money for the fighting fund?

*Militant* Christmas cards will be available soon, so areas should get ready to send bulk orders as this is another opportunity to raise fighting fund. The badges we have produced and the

posters of Marx, Trotsky and Connolly will make ideal gifts for Christmas!

But individual donations are still the most important way of guaranteeing a regular income as they are a true indication of support for a Marxist newspaper. Every supporter, every reader must be approached for a donation now. Start saving for a Xmas present to *Militant*. Big or small, a "Xmas box" will make sure we go over our target. Keep the money pouring in.

By Kath White

## — Building Fund opens in one week —

**MILITANT SUPPORTERS**, who have set up the Marxist Daily Club are confident on the basis of pledges already received, that they will be able to take steps early in 1984 to acquire premises to house the presses, the staff and other equipment necessary for the production of a daily paper.

Of course, the pledges have yet to be redeemed but look at the enthusiasm and the spirit of determination that the ideas of Marxism arouse in the face of the Tories and the rotting system:—

Alexander Warner from Tameside writes, "Enclosed is my pledge towards the Building Fund... please excuse the meagre amount, but I am unemployed and have nothing I can sell..."

"If I can possibly find ways to raise urgently needed cash for the fund I will be happy to do so. In the interim, £5 is the absolute minimum I will give."

F Donaldson of Arbroath, who pledged £50 at the Wembley Rally has written to explain how his mood of pessimism gave way that day to one of confidence that socialism could be achieved (see letter this page). Other

£50s, £35s, £20s and £100s have been promised this week. Two couples—Jeff Cuthbert and Catherine Wallace, and Jim Brookshaw and Hazel Middleton—have promised £200s.

Whatever you have or have not—think of what a Marxist daily could do in speeding up the transformation of society along socialist lines.

The Marxist Daily Club, even on the basis of the excellent support promised,

Dear Comrade,  
I went to my first Wembley Rally with little enthusiasm, one of the reasons for my pessimism being the area I live, (Arbroath). At Parliamentary level the Labour candidate inevitably loses his or her deposit. At Regional Council level Arbroath does not have one Labour representative, and at District Council we have only two councillors from a total of 24.

My pessimism began to hit an all-time low when our coach broke down at Edinburgh, and we were transferred to a bus, that, to say the least, was not designed for large distance travel. There then followed what can only be described as the most uncomfortable journey of my entire life.

As the rally got underway my pessimism began to lift, (it was like going from the ridiculous to

will not be rich enough to take over the the *Daily Mirror*'s resources and will never receive backing through the advertisements or gifts of big business.

But we will overcome all the obstacles to lay concrete plans for a Marxist daily within a very short space of time...with your help. Rush all you last pledges into us this week and prepare to send cash to the "Marxist Daily Building Fund" as soon as it is opened on 1 November.

the sublime). Never in my 15 years involvement with the labour movement had I seen or heard anything like it, from the speeches, to the contributions from the floor, absolutely brilliant all this in a packed Wembley Conference Centre. 3,000 people truly committed to socialism, 3,000 people I felt I could turn to, and trust. It was without a doubt the most moving experience of life.

I have come home with a new optimism, a new life for the future, and a belief that with the correct approach and a real socialist programme Labour could sweep the country.

Yours fraternally  
F Donaldson  
P.S. Please find enclosed a cheque for £50 for the building fund to cover the pledge I made at the rally. A Marxist daily is an absolute must.

# ads

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

**BRADFORD:** Marxist discussion group fortnightly. Details from: Bradford 669840.

**CARLISLE:** Marxist Discussion Group meets fortnightly. Further information, contact: Iain Campbell, 124 Petteril Street, Carlisle. Tel: 21068.

**BURY:** George Hotel, Market Street, Bury. Thursday 27 October, at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Julie Morgan.

## CLASSIFIED

**DEBATE:** "Northern Ireland—Which way forward?". Debate between Richard Venton (on behalf of *Militant* and Rob Clay (MP, Sunderland North). Sunday, 13 November, 7.00 pm—at the Sheltered Deck, Kings Road, Southwick, Sunderland. For further details contact: Ray Physick, Sunderland 653994.

**BRISTOL:** "Women and Socialism". Speakers: Eve Orpen (NUPE National Executive) and Pauline (Labour Party Women's Section). Tuesday 1 November, 1983, Central Hall, Bristol.

**BIRMINGHAM AUEW** Broad Left meeting at 12.00 prompt. Saturday 5 November at White Lion, Queensway, Horsefair. All members welcome.

THIS space could be yours. Advertise in *Militant*! Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986 3828 NOW!

**MILITANT INDUSTRIAL FORUM**  
"Fighting for socialism in the workplace"  
Sunday 30 October, 2–5 pm,  
Salford, University Quiet Room  
Speakers: Terry Fields MP,  
Ian Lowes (GMBATU convener)  
Frank Holt (POEU Manchester)

## FINANCE WORKERS' BROAD LEFT

**LONDON:** at Ivanhoe Hotel, Bloomsbury Street, London WC1. (5 minutes from Tottenham Court Road Tube). Thursday 27 October at 6.30 pm. Speaker: Harriet Harman.

**GILLINGHAM:** on Wednesday 2 November at 7.30 pm. Livingstone Arms, Gillingham Road, Gillingham, Kent.

**MERSEYSIDE:** at YMCA Mt. Pleasant, Liverpool on Saturday 5 November at 11.00 am.

Jubilee Hall, Covent Garden (next to Transport Museum)  
Fri 4 Nov 12.30-6.30  
Sat 5 Nov 11.00-5.00



**MILITANT SOUTH WALES SUMMER CAMP**  
Good quality tapes available (90 minutes) on following:  
Ted Grant: 'War and Peace'  
Bryan Beckingham: 'Colonial Revolution'  
Rob Sewell: 'US Labour Movement'  
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J Harris, 15 Sterle Avenue Poole. Tel: (0202) 685305

# WANT A DIFFERENT DAILY

ANYONE WANT a daily paper? It can be yours for £100 million!

The chairman's job alone is worth £65,000! This is of course, not the *Militant* but the Mirror Group! Indeed the capitalist press whether it be "left" or "right" are in it only for the money and to thwart any moves towards socialism and democratic control of the media.

We produce a weekly paper on a small fraction of that £100 million but we are fighting for the interests of the millions of workers internationally.

sellers and readers to spread our sales and influence and this week we have had orders from Sidcup, Mansfield, Aberdare and the Isle of Wight.

Why not become a seller or get your local newsagent to take a supply? Take your future out of the hands of the capitalists and build a socialist future with a mass *Militant*! Use the tear-off slip on the back of the paper or write to 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN or phone 01-986 3828.

By Dave Farrar

# Campaign builds for Young Workers Assembly

THE YOUNG Workers' Assembly, to be held in Manchester on December 10, will be the central point of campaigning work by the Labour Party Young Socialists for the remainder of 1983.

Our message is that young workers must get organised to fight Tory exploitation, and that the labour movement has a responsibility to campaign against the steady undermining of youth pay and conditions.

The Assembly is being held at Manchester's Free Trade Hall—the site of the infamous Peterloo massacre of 1819. We see it as part of the fight to avenge the countless attacks which working class people have endured under capitalism.

LPYS branches in Manchester are preparing enthusiastically for the event. A 'survey of young workers conditions' has been launched. We are taking it to shop stewards committees to help compile detailed information on such issues as cut-backs in apprentice quotas, battles to get the management to top up the pay of YTS trainees, and also to campaign for better union representation of young workers, apprentices and trainees.

In the fight against



Photo: Militant

The LPYS banner on the march at the massive CND demonstration on Saturday, October 22. LPYS branches are now campaigning for support for the Young Workers' Assembly.

cheap labour we aim to establish trade union based YTS councils in the city of Manchester, Salford and Wythenshawe.

At Fielden Park FE college a YS member has been elected as YTS officer by the Students Union and is encouraging the classes of YTS trainees to elect representatives to come together to form a Council at the college. We hope that this can be taken up at other colleges too.

Already, support for the rally has been pro-

mised, for example, by Bolton busmen, Salford Trades Council and by CPSA and T&GWU workers at Manchester Airport. Promises of support and delegates have also come from South Manchester POEU and NUPE. We will be working to organise meetings at factory gates, in the canteens or at nearby pubs in our drive to get hundreds of young workers to attend the rally.

By John Hunt  
(LPYS  
National Committee)

## Digs crisis for students

TWO YEARS ago some first year students started their course at Kingston Polytechnic by sleeping in the college bar. It was not through choice—the college is notorious for the shortage of decent accommodation for newly arrived students.

This year the housing shortage is equally severe. The Tory local authority has refused to build homes for workers living in the area—and consequently the private-rented sector is sub-

ject to intense demand. Many local landlords charge extortionate rents completely out of the range of students who, even if they get a full grant, have to exist on £1,160 a year.

The situation will be even worse next year when the Poly's budget from the National Advisory Board on local authority Higher Education will be cut by over £100,000—while the Poly has applied to NAB to increase its intake by 150 full-

time students.

The Labour Club at the college must map out a strategy to meet this situation. Only by linking with the other workers in the public sector under attack from the Tories can students hope to achieve improvements in their conditions. An active Labour Club armed with such an approach could exercise a powerful influence in the fight of students at the Poly on the issues of housing,

## Knowsley meeting

A PUBLIC meeting to build support for the Young Workers' Assembly attracted over 30 youth in Kirkby, Merseyside.

Called by Knowsley North LPYS on the Tories' new Youth Training Schemes, the meeting was held at the Kirkby Unemployed Centre.

The first speaker, Steve Alcock, a T&GWU branch secretary from Pendletons Ice Cream factory, talked of the need to fight for trade union rights and rates of pay. He attacked the actions of right wing leaders of the labour movement who had aided the Tories plans on YTS, citing former EETPU leader Frank Chapple under whose leadership the union 'negotiated' a wage cut for apprentice electricians.

Chairman of Knowsley

North Labour Party Jim McGinley, praised the LPYS in its work over the government's training schemes.

For the LPYS Mick Hogan graphically illustrated the plight of YTS trainees.

In the following discussion, the inequalities of Tory Britain were exposed. One young nursery nurse told how the local college trained 25 nursery nurses a year although 18 of them would not find work. Yet mothers were crying out for nursery places.

This meeting was an excellent start to our campaign to build support for the coming Young Workers Assembly.

By Ellen Coady  
(Knowsley North LPYS)

## Infantile communism

WHILE TORY ministers rant about the "left-wing" threat to our education system, it would seem the 'rot' is already setting in amongst infants.

According to the *Times Educational Supplement* (14 October) pupils of Forsbrook infants school in Staffordshire have openly voiced criticisms of the capitalist system.

As part of a plan to introduce primary pupils to industry, they studied the design and production of electric kettles. After visiting local factories the pupils set up mock production lines in the school. Divided into managers and workers they analysed their own output, and democratically replaced inefficient managers.

Unrest arose when

capitalist economics were introduced. Pupils asked why production workers had to work the hardest but got paid the least? The managers did least work, yet got paid the most?

The head teacher said "We couldn't think of a way of answering... I gather a lot of them went home and told their parents how unfair they thought the whole system was."

Even six-year-olds arrive at socialist conclusions when they study society. As a local education officer said "They haven't yet learned to accept without question the established ways of doing things."

By Mat Teale  
(Bradford)

## Building the party

IN LIVERPOOL Broadgreen Constituency, 1983 has seen a complete reversal of the national Labour Party's failures.

In a year when elsewhere Labour suffered a massive setback in the general election, Terry Fields was elected as MP for Broadgreen, which was expected to return a Tory.

While membership of the Labour Party nationally has declined, Broadgreen Labour Party has doubled its membership and has a Young Socialist branch with over a 100 members, the first to reach this target and gain entitlement to a Labour Party Conference delegate in 1984.

Success has been based around bringing politics back to the ordinary people on the street. The precedent for this was set at a LPYS day of action in the Old Swan area when shoppers were amazed to see their local MP campaigning on the streets, talking to people or explaining matters of Labour policy.

This work did not stop in Old Swan. At a street meeting in Childwall, the mood of the crowd was summed up when one resident said, "When was the last time an MP took the trouble to stand here and listen to our problems?"

At a meeting on a council estate in Kensington, 45 people turned up during TUC conference week and expressed their anger and bitterness at the TUC leadership. After Terry Fields had talked about the trade unions and answered questions, many people expressed an interest in the Young Socialists and two people filled in Labour Party membership applications. Having come and met Terry, the lies put out by the Tory press were destroyed.

By Bryan Hayes  
(Broadgreen LPYS)

## MILITANT STUDENT RALLY

Open to all students  
at university, polytechnic or FE College

On Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November at  
Liverpool University Student Union

Sat 2pm: Fighting the Cuts

Speakers:

Pauline Dunlop, Kath McDonnell

7pm: Film: *The Battle of Chile: The Coup d'etat*

Sun 10 am: Seminars on:

"A socialist programme for FE Students"  
"Building a mass NOLS"

"NOLS and the workers' struggle  
in Eastern Europe"

2pm: Debate on:

"Which way forward for Labour?"

Speakers:

P. Taaffe and leading member of L.C.C.

Tickets:

(cost £4 each or £2 for FE students)  
and leaflets now available from: "Militant student rally", 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. Cheques payable to "Militant Student Publications."

## Queen misses out on Les's visit

"JP QUILTS in Royal snub rumpus", was the headline news of the *Dudley Evening Mail*. The JP in question was Labour councillor, Les Millard—the same story was carried by the national press and radio.

Les told *Militant* what it was all about:

As a councillor I was invited along with some other councillors earlier this year to a Buckingham Palace garden party. My wife also received a gold embossed invitation. I made it clear I wouldn't be interested. So we both decided to ignore it.

When the press rang me up I told them the truth. As

a socialist I am opposed to the monarchy. Royalty represents privileged society. I believe in socialism, for the overthrow of capitalism.

What happened then?

The chairman of Dudley magistrates called me in and told me 20 or 30 magistrates refused to sit with me because of my anti-royalty views. I then resigned, something I was thinking about anyway before all this blew up.

Why did you become a magistrate?

I was originally interested in juvenile work, and I thought then that I could influence the system, but hav-

ing seen it I realised that no way can working class people win. Magistrates are not there to uphold the law but only upholding their own status. Since I came across the ideas of *Militant* this has confirmed my views. Labour Party members becoming magistrates, even the best ones, get sucked in.

What has been the reaction locally?

It was no coincidence that the *Mail* wrote the story the day before a by-election in the Brierly-Hill ward of Dudley. They obviously thought it would influence Labour's vote.

But quite to the contrary,

grants and the other problems students will face over the coming terms.

Although at the 'Freshers' Fayre' Labour Club officers seemed more concerned with unsuccessfully trying to stop the sale of *Militant* than in fighting the Tories, we are confident that if the correct approach is adopted, the Tory attacks can be beaten back.

By Kath Garnett  
(Kingston Poly  
Labour Club)

Labour's vote went up to 1,800. The Tories only got 400, whilst the SDP got 163. The *Mail* ignored the fact that a founding member of Dudley National Front had signed the nomination papers for the Tory candidate, something that only the *Daily Mirror* had reported.

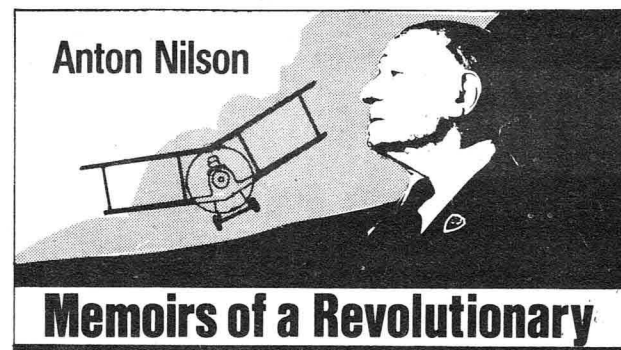
By the way. How did the garden party at the palace go?

I'm told they met some interesting people there—like Denis Healey and Len Murray.

By Bill Mullins

# Military coup and general strike

This section of ANTON NILSON's political life deals with his experiences in the German Revolution.



**BY SHEER chance in 1919-20, I found myself caught up in the German Revolution, a General Strike and an attempted military coup.**

I had gone back to Sweden in 1919, partly out of exhaustion and partly to take out peace messages to Western governments. But when I came to return to Russia, the Swedish government refused to grant me a visa. So I had to smuggle my way back via Germany.

First some Swedish workers rowed me over from Malmo, in southern Sweden, to Denmark; there I met up with two members of the German Parliament, with whom I travelled to the German border. I went over the border at night, helped by some Danish soldiers.

I met with German members of the Independent Social Democratic Party, who had been involved with fighting in Hamburg. Germany was in great turmoil

then. All the way along the road, we were stopped by workers' guards, police etc.

In Hamburg there were machine-gun fights, barricades, ditches full of bodies. I was taken on the train to Berlin, but it was impossible to travel on to Moscow, as all communication had been cut.

The troops of the right-wing Social Democrat Noske government were ruthless. They would go into bars and clubs to bayonet or shoot workers down.

I came in touch with revolutionary German pilots, who had seized Danzig (now Gdansk) airport. I spent Christmas 1919 there.

We sent a message to workers' leaders in Berlin—if you organise revolution we will support you; we have 100 aircraft at our disposal. But there was no answer.

If it had not been for the lack of leadership the German revolution would have been carried through. The workers were ready. I remember at one time, after witnessing some atrocity of



"Brothers don't shoot" was the message of the German workers to soldiers.

Noske's troops, discussing whether or not to rob and capture their weapons.

But it wasn't really necessary, because the workers were already armed. In the yards they had hidden well-oiled, good weapons; they were just waiting for leadership.

Yet even the 'left' Social-democratic leaders were as scared of the socialist revolution, as they were of military counter-revolution. The 'lefts' had been forced to call a General Strike to defeat Kapp (an attempted military coup), but they were terrified by the tremendous response.

Afterwards they were keen

to smash the revolutionary workers movement. Many workers wanted to form a German Red Army to link up with the Russian Red Army. The Social-Democrat leaders now saw the socialist revolution as the biggest danger.

In this they were unfortunately helped by some 'Independents' and 'Communists' who advocated caution. I recall that shortly after the defeat of the Kapp putsch, when there were great revolutionary feelings, there were 60,000 armed workers in Berlin.

At the same time there was a rural workers' conference

in the city. I attended the Conference. It was packed. There were hundreds of delegates, but no leadership.

You could see what the rural workers wanted. When one of their leaders stated first "you must calm down", there was uproar.

Workers jumped on tables, screamed, whistled, booed and prevented him from going on. But the Conference dispersed without any clear decisions being made; people just drifted back to their individual rural areas.

The leader of the German pilots I was with was arrested and put in irons. I managed

to get out because I knew Joffe and the Russian Ambassador.

They gave me and a Russian pilot false papers. It said that we were Russian war prisoners and had to return home.

Getting back to Russia was a bit of an adventure. But we managed to get onto a ship and through both White and Red lines.

I finally arrived back in Leningrad on 2 May, 1920. On 3 May I was in Moscow, and on the 4th, I was on the Polish front. My commanding officers were surprised to see me back, but they seemed happy to see me.

## Maydays

BOB WADE reviews the new play by DAVID EDGAR

ALTHOUGH PLAYS such as *Destiny* by David Edgar have been spot on, I went to see his new play *Maydays* with trepidation.

From what I'd read in the press, it seemed David Edgar had caught Hobsbawm-itis—i.e. 'the working class were finished', 'socialism was old fashioned' etc, a current wail emanating from various sections of the labour movement. However I was pleasantly surprised.

*Maydays* looks at the period from the 1956 Hungarian Uprising to the 1982 Falklands War. This period is seen through the eyes of Martin Glass—a middle class radical who falls into the 'revolutionary' movement—and a Russian dissident, Lermontov.

Edgar looks at the left in Britain for that period from a middle-class standpoint. The character Glass comes from a comfortable background, the son of a vicar. He becomes involved with CND at public school, moves into the 'student left' in the sixties, and becomes a leading figure in the 'Trotskyist' left—an imaginary group called Socialist Vanguard—in the seventies.

However he is expelled for disobeying the 'party line' over individual terrorism, and drifts through cynicism to be greeted with open arms by the 'New Right'. Glass is not alone amongst his trendy friends in drifting away from 'revolutionary' politics. His girlfriend gets in-

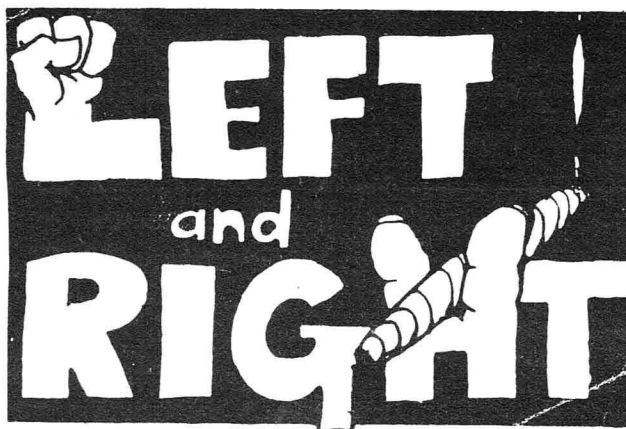
involved in one-issue campaigns (from her squat in Stoke Newington) and another joins the Labour Party.

This theme runs parallel to the struggle of Lermontov a Russian dissident. From a Russian officer suppressing the Hungarian uprising he moves to dissent, being imprisoned in a labour camp until he defects to the west. Here Glass, as reporter for the Sunday Times, meets Lermontov and becomes involved with the questionable 'campaign group' around Lermontov, which is using him to build the atmosphere for a new cold war.

However, the end of the play marks a few surprises for Glass and his new found friends, and has a far from gloomy perspective for the labour movement internationally. Even though this play tends to study the middle class's involvement with socialism, the working class not getting much of a look-in, it is still worthwhile seeing.

Unfortunately the play is currently showing at the Barbican, which means putting up with the Burberry raincoat set, not to mention the high prices. The tickets are around the £7 mark and the bar prices untouchable, but apparently there are low cost tickets for students and unemployed. If you can, see this play.

*Maydays* is now showing at the Barbican Theatre, London.



### What they deserve?

More good news for the rich. British executive salaries rose by more than twice the rate of inflation in the year up to July, according to management consultants, Imbucon. The gain in real terms was one of the largest discovered since Imbucon first produced their annual survey in 1961. Executives are also getting longer holidays and more medical insurance just in case the Tories pull the plug on the NHS.

Meanwhile Labour Research have shown that six directors now "earn" more than £250,000 a year and another 22 between £125,000 and £250,000. This excludes fringe benefits and ownership of shares.

Between 1979 and 1982 inflation totalled 49%. Male manual workers' wages went up 43% (a real decline) while the top 28 directors paid themselves 93% more. With tax cuts, dividend arrangements and other perks, these guardians of private enterprise are doing very nicely, thank you. And don't they deserve it for making Britain's economy what it is today. Answers on a postcard, please, to 10 Downing Street.

### The biggest asparagus tip in the world

The Tory press regularly carry angry editorials about Labour councils giving grants to minority groups. But the same papers have been quiet about an English Tourist Board grant which benefits a very small minority, the stinking rich.

If you dine out at Les Quatre Saisons restaurant in Oxford, roast pigeon will set you back £12.50 and asparagus an extra £8.50. The restaurant's owner, Raymond Blanc, now plans another posh nosh house at Great Milton Manor, a 15th Century Oxfordshire house, which cost £300,000 to buy and another £260,000 to provide overnight accommodation, swimming pool and tennis courts.

The Tourist Board are giving Blanc a £95,000 grant because the restaurant will attract lots of visitors to the area. Lots? How many millionaires are there? If M. Blanc charges £8.50 for a sprig of asparagus how much would you be stung for a plateful of beans and a game of tennis at a stately home?

### Let them eat rats!

Two hundred bankers in London last week heard Dr Alfoso Pastore, Brazil's central bank governor, plead for new loans to pay off interest on old loans. The *Daily Telegraph* reported Dr Pastore as saying, "the Brazilian government was trying to de-index wages from the inflation rate, to comply with the IMF conditions."

But the official inflation rate is 116%! How can workers, already near starvation cope? The answer says public nutritionist Mr J F Amaral is simple: "Brazil's hungry millions should eat rats, possibly grilled or in strogonoff... only prejudice led people to reject grain-eating rats while happily accepting the meat from pigs, which sometimes eat excrement..."

Perhaps the assembled bankers will lead the way in new cuisine. "Medium or rare rat, sir?". Surely they can't be prejudiced!

## Women workers- TUC day of action Oct 29

# Get involved in the Union

By Ann Sylvester

(IRSF Executive, personal capacity)

**WHEN I joined my Civil Service union, I didn't know much about it.**

**I just had the feeling we should stand up for our rights against the bosses.**

However, although there was a big union membership (600 in my branch) there was not much participation. The person who had been the union rep, had been leant on very hard by the management; in fact he left and got a job as a postman. Because I was outspoken people used to ask me what was going on and I used to phone headquarters and then draft a news sheet to let members know.

When the previous rep left, there were no elections. I just got the job. Then a branch official moved into my office; he encouraged me to go to branch meetings and that's how I got involved. After years of inactivity, I held elections in the office and got elected.

It was much better as it made the members aware that they had elected someone to act on their behalf.

Soon management had me into their office to tell me to drop the union work. They said that if members wanted to discuss things, they could contact the head office of the union. There was no need for the office rep to do more than hand round information. They said, obviously I was quite popular in the office to get elected and I was quite bright so if I packed it in I might get promoted.

Getting involved in politics meant I didn't feel so isolated. I stood for the National Executive because I wanted to fight for a stronger union.

By the time I was on the Executive I was a *Militant* supporter. The next time I stood I put on my address that I was a *Militant* supporter and the policies I believed in, and I was re-elected and the following year as well.

*I think it's important to maintain your base in the workplace and not forget the people you represent, to*

*remember the pressures workers are under. It's a very similar question to MPs being on workers' wages. The union rep should be hardworking and reliable in the workplace so the management can never fault you over your work.*

It's also important to maintain your base because after the initial battles with the bosses they realise that you're there to stay and that you won't change and they might appear to develop a respect for you. So you have to be very clear about which side you're on and not get drawn into 'chats' with the management.

I think being a Marxist has helped me enormously with tactics as well. For instance, since I've been on the EC I've been put in charge of an area dealing with personal complaints, staff transfers etc. The cuts are having an effect and there's no doubt there'll be growing pressure for walk outs.

One branch I went to recently wanted to bring their office out on strike. People were sick to death of the pressure. Through touring the area we discovered common problems and when they do come out it won't be in isolation but as part of a stronger, more general campaign. We have to be careful not to wear people out with the wrong tactics or timing for action.

There is a discussion going on at the moment about the relationship of the union to politics.

I don't think that it's a question of my union or any other just affiliating to the Labour Party but it's a question of what that party does when it's in power, what it's going to do about jobs, hospitals, nurseries. The only way that the lives of working class people can be permanently improved is by the introduction of a socialist society.

*I know now why I started all those years ago to get involved in the union. It was to change society and I wouldn't allow anything to stand in the way of the fight.*



Women mostly work in low-paid, service jobs. A survey by Labour Research Department this year found that a average woman earned a third less than men. £106 pw, compared to men's of £155 pw. (Above) Civil Servants strike because whilst unemployment has spiralled, there has been no increase in resources to meet the jobless' need.

Photo: J. Smith (IFL. II)

# Hindle - Breaking the isolation

**IF MEN go on strike, the media often try and create a movement of wives and girlfriends against the strike. This propaganda onslaught can be beaten back. At Hindle Gears at Bradford, the mainly male workforce have been in dispute over a pay claim for over seven months. In this interview with Militant, EVA FIRTH, explains how and why they set up the Hindle Strike Wives' Committee:**

My husband Stewart and 70 others came out on strike on the 11 March. I thought it would be a few days and that would be it. But it went on through the Easter holidays and they were getting no strike pay. That didn't come through for 6 weeks. I work part time and with three kids it was hard managing like that.

The boss refused to give them their holiday pay at Easter.

After the holidays they got a registered letter telling them they'd been sacked. On that Monday, a few went back in, Tuesday a few more. On Wednesday after they'd received the sacking letter a couple more went in. That's important because that's how we won the pre-tribunal because these men started work after they'd received the letter sacking them.

After six weeks they got their strike pay and they started picketing everyday. Personally, I didn't know what was going on, I didn't know which earth I was on. It's very hard. You have no one to talk to. You're just

the wife of a striker. You get very upset. Your husband's not at home but he's not going to work either and although he might tell you, you don't really understand what's going on.

Then on 6 June they occupied and that week for me was the absolute limit. It was a really bad week. We were frightened about him going to prison. They were served injunctions. There were no solicitors or anything to advise them so they came out.

I had asked my husband four weeks into the strike if he would ask the men if their wives would be interested in having a talk; but the men said they weren't. There was a meeting for the strikers. I was there with one of the other wives. We started to talk and thought it would be a good idea to get the wives together, as a supportive thing for one another. You don't understand about strikes. I didn't before this started.

My husband got me a list of strikers and I went through the phone book and found all those with

phones. We decided to have a meeting in the AUEW offices. Practically all the wives we were able to contact turned up.

We talked about the strike. It takes the pressure of everyday problems off you.

We also decided to join the picketing on a particular day. I was surprised with the impact we made. I took my kids down as well. The Hindle management had no warning of us coming. We chanted and so on and the boss left by the back entrance. He didn't try to get in his own car which was parked near us.

I couldn't believe how frightened they looked at the sight of a few women. We felt that a handful of women had more impact than a larger number of men. We'd be called names but you just have to take that.

We also thought the kids needed something so we organised a picnic. When the men had a demonstration we got involved. In August we organised a social evening to raise some money to take the families away for the day. There was no go-

ing on holiday because the money was so tight. It boosted our morale to have a day out.

Wives are part of a dispute whether you like it or not. You might as well be actively involved.

We're now organising a jumble sale because it's coming up to Christmas. We want to ensure the families get something, a Christmas dinner or whatever.

I think the labour movement should take up this idea of organising strikers' wives. It's taken a lot of the pressure off the men. Otherwise they'd have been in trouble when they got home at night. We've had some meetings where the men have been invited. We've disagreed about some things and the men were organising things and we didn't know what we were doing properly so we got together and sorted it out.

We meet every week but if some wives don't attend I ring them up and keep in touch. Most of the wives work and often feel too tired to go to a meeting. I enjoy the meetings even if they're only small. Sometimes things have gone well and they're like a celebration. Sometimes it's right depressing but once you've talked about it doesn't seem so bad.

I was never politically aware before, but I am now. I feel very strongly about things I never used to think about before. I'm definitely a Labour person now and I wasn't before. ♪

# ARGENTINA: Elections on 30 October

By John Pickard

THE ELECTIONS in Argentina on 30 October will usher in a whole new period for South America—one of unprecedented social unrest, class struggle and revolution.

In Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina, the growing confidence of the working class and its enormous preparedness to struggle have forced the military-police regimes to retreat.

To one degree or another in these countries, the military have been forced to move gingerly in the direction of granting democratic rights, not through any conversion to democratic principles, but through fear of a mighty social explosion. The General's regimes in Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Santiago and Montevideo hope that by introducing reforms from above they will be able to prevent a revolution from below.

Years of brutal military government have created a mountain of discontent while the social bases of the regimes have been whittled away to almost nothing. But it will be in Argentina that there will be the first demonstration of the enormous power of the opposition and in particular of the working class.

It is ironic that the invasion of the Malvinas/Falklands in 1982 was seen by General Galtieri, the then President, as a diversion to head off discontent at home. But that only succeeded for a while—the subsequent war and defeat threw into even sharper relief all the rotteness, mismanagement and corruption in the regime, as well as intensifying the economic crisis in Argentina.

The burden of the crisis was pushed even more on the shoulders of workers. Having launched the war in an attempt to apply the brake to the coming revolution, Galtieri soon found that he had pressed the accelerator.

The most important part in the coming events in Argentina will be played by the mighty working class, the strongest in Latin America and with the longest and one of the most radical traditions. It is an enormous social force—84% of the population live in cities of more than 100,000.

Neither will the mass of the working class treat the achievement of new-found democratic rights as an end in itself. But they will strive to use their political organisations and trade unions to introduce tangible reforms and improvements in their living standards.

The majority of workers will undoubtedly move through the Justicialist (Peronist) Party, which is likely to win the elections on 30 October, as it has won every free election since the war.

Last week's mass rally of over 200,000 Peronists in a Buenos Aires football stadium showed, in just one instance, the tremendous power and vitality of the movement. The overwhelming majority of those present will be demanding fundamental social changes to put an end to the nightmare of the Argentine economic crisis.

The generals have left the Argentine economy in a complete mess. Unemployment has reached the level of 20%. There is 350% inflation. There are enormous international debts, \$40 bn in all, a big proportion of which are un-

doubtedly due to speculation and corruption in the military.

Recently, the Governor of the Central Bank of Argentina was arrested, holding up the debt rescheduling negotiations, and there were allegations that as much as one quarter of Argentina's foreign debt accumulated since 1976—\$10 bn—was used purely for speculative ends.

There has been an intensified flight of capital in the recent period, provoked by the fear on the part of capitalists of the consequences of a Peronist victory, which has added to the general decline of the Argentine currency.

As well as demanding concrete improvements in their everyday living standards, the workers will demand retribution against the Generals, for the brutal military government of the last seven years, when more than 30,000 workers were tortured, murdered or otherwise 'disappeared'.

Even during the Falklands war, a time of so-called 'national unity', the corruption within the military was rife. While the workers were exhorted to make sacrifices and hold collections to help the young soldiers fighting for the 'Malvinas', it became obvious that much of the cash and goods collected found its way, not to the soldiers in the trenches, but to helping the bank balances of the Generals.

The top layers of the military can feel the ground shifting beneath their feet and they have by various means tried to take out 'insurance' against the revenge of the working class. They have introduced a law which conveniently gives an amnesty to all those involved in political crimes, in other words themselves—but this so-called "self amnesty" law has been rejected by the mass of the working class and the opposition parties.

Some have built up dossiers on tortures committed by their fellow officers, hoping, no doubt, to use these to bargain for their own safety in the future. Yet other officers have edged away from the extreme

right, suddenly discovering that they are really "democrats" and "progressives" in favour of civilian rule.

But all the manoeuvring and shuffling of the Generals will not prevent a huge wave of anger and discontent exploding onto the political stage after the elections of October 30th.

The last time a military dictatorship gave way to an elected regime in Argentina, it ushered in a period of titanic class struggle. In late 1972, the then President of Argentina, General Lanusse, like his modern day counterpart, General Bignone, was eventually forced after years of strikes, general strikes and uprisings, to concede elections.

In March 1973, Hector Campora, the stand-in candidate of the Peronist movement, was elected by a landslide, in the first round of the elections, bringing hundreds of

thousands of workers onto the streets in celebration. After years of military government and massive cuts in living standards, the mass of the working class had great hopes and expectations in the election of a Peronist President.

Campora himself had two sons who were members of the Montoneros, the guerrilla movement associated with the Peronist Youth, and his inauguration, in May, was witnessed by Salvador Allende, and Oswaldo Dortices, the Presidents of Chile and Cuba. On the day of Campora's inauguration, the army were jeered at and jostled in the streets of Buenos Aires and were not even able to organise their own parade.

Thousands of demonstrators went off to the Villa Devoto Prison, where they released 600 political prisoners, without waiting for any amnesty laws. In the main cities, dozens of revolutionary

papers flourished and workers were involved in intense political discussion and activity.

The mass of workers were already coming to the conclusion that there was a need for socialist change, and an enormous feeling of confidence and optimism was present throughout the labour movement. "In all its spontaneity and enthusiasm," commented one labour movement activist at the time, "it amounted to the Buenos Aires commune".

## Peronist tradition

The Peronist movement owed its origins to the Presidency of Juan Peron from 1946 to 1955. During that period Argentina experienced an economic boom, based upon the export of wheat, beef and other raw materials to war-ravaged Europe.

Peron was never a "Socialist",



Juan Peron and second wife, Isabel.

# NEW PERIOD OF STRUGGLE OPENS



"Where are the desaparecidos (the disappeared)?" ask the banners. Demonstration in Buenos Aires against the military regime.



he always protected the fundamental basis of Argentine capitalism. But like a classical bonapartist, he was able to balance between the different interests of the capitalist class and the working class, squeezing reforms out of the former, to give to the latter.

Because of the economic boom, Peron was thus able to introduce welfare rights and other improvements in the living standards for the majority of the working class, better than those elsewhere in Latin America. Although he smashed the independent trade unions, he set up the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) as a tame organisation but with a cer-

to the one existing in 1946. The expectations of the mass of workers were lifted, but Argentine capitalism was incapable of granting even modest reforms in the interests of workers.

Resting on the basis of a capitalist economy, the right wing at the head of the movement could only pass the burden to the workers, calling for "moderation" and "reason."

"What Argentina needs is austerity, order, and patient construction," commented the *Sunday Times* (September 23 1973) echoing the Peronist right wing, "But what many Argentines seem to expect is the moon."

# CLASS UP

As *Militant* explained at the time, the Peronist movement, under these conditions, would inevitably split along class lines: "...Beneath the superficial unity behind Peron, the situation is charged with conflict. And this is expressed most sharply within the Peronist movement itself. The Peronist youth in particular will move into opposition when they see that Peron cannot live up to his promises." (*Militant*, October 5, 1973).

Peron and the cabal of right wing leaders around him, made every effort therefore to stifle the Party Youth and to pull the movement back to the right. Hector Campora, after only seven weeks in office, resigned so new elections could be held, and Peron himself stand for President. He was elected on September 23 with 62% of the vote, with his wife, Isabel as vice president. Isabel, Rucci the Secretary general of the trade union CGT, and Lopez Rega, the Welfare minister, were the main figures behind the scenes pushing the Peronist movement to the right, but the General himself also launched many bitter attacks against the left.

## Youth expelled

During his May Day speech, in 1974, he lashed out at the Montoneros, calling them "callow mercenaries and Marxist-infiltrated imbeciles". At the National Congress of the Justicialist Party a month later, Peron organised the expulsion of the Peronist Youth movement, driving large sections into the underground with the Montoneros guerrillas.

The death of 79 year-old General Peron, in July 1974, made no fundamental difference to the political situation, the lack of its living 'arbiter' only exacerbating the splits and tensions between the Left and the Right within the movement to which he gave his name.

It would have been entirely possible with the correct strategy and tactics, for the mass of the Peronist Youth and the bulk of the 7 million trade unionists to have been won to a socialist programme and perspective. A socialist plan of production, with democratic workers control of industry,

finance, trade and the economy in general, could have promised a new dawn for the mass of workers. Argentina, in terms of natural resources one of the richest countries in Latin America, if not the world, could have been a shining beacon to workers everywhere.

Unfortunately, many of the Peronist Youth and in particular, the Montoneros, under the influence of various pernicious sectarian groups, went off on a tangent on the misguided strategy of so-called "urban-guerrillaism." Rather than patiently building a base among the trade unions, the ultra-left element inside the Montoneros sought instead to assassinate right wing trade union leaders, like the Secretary General Rucci who was killed in September 1973.

Rather than win a base among the mass of the urban population, mobilising them into political activity in defence of their living standards and democratic rights, the Montoneros substituted themselves for the mass of workers in what could only be described as "Robin Hood" tactics. It was a common policy for the Montoneros to kidnap business executives and then to release them after the distribution of food, blankets and other supplies to the inhabitants of the various slums.

The British consul in Rosario, for example, was one of those kidnapped and only released after goods were distributed to the urban poor.

Rather than prepare and organise the working class to struggle on its own behalf, the Montoneros were more prepared to launch isolated and adventurist attacks upon military barracks in the countryside.

Despite the undoubted heroism of the majority of the Peronist Youth and the Montoneros, these misguided tactics only resulted in the isolation of the left of the Peronist movement from the mass of the Argentine population. The lives of many Montoneros were wasted in this way in fruitless adventures.

Argentina became, in effect, a battleground between, on the one side, the military and police, and on the other side, the left wing of the Peronist movement and the Montoneros, with the mass of the working class confused and disoriented on the issue.

The Generals, having stood down from power in early 1973 by 1975 were once again at the front of the political scene, in the vanguard of the battle against the urban guerrilla movement. Right wing death squads—the AAA, in fact police and army officers—hunted down and killed left wing trade union leaders, youth leaders, socialists, communists and even liberal newspaper editors.

By 1976, the government of Isabel Peron, was completely discredited, but the working class, even without a clear leadership, showed its determination to fight austerity measures. A general strike over wage rises saw the government completely cave in to the workers' demands.

With the increasing danger of the Peronist right-wing losing all control and influence over the workers, and using the excuse of wanting to end the urban anarchy, the Generals took over power again.

Once back in the driving seat, they conducted a merciless and bloody war, not only against the remnants of the Montoneros, but also against all the left-wing elements within the Peronist trade unions, and all other opposition movements. The murders previously done by the AAA "unofficially", were done by the army, except that where the AAA were retailers in murder, the army dealt wholesale.

Just as the period of 1973-76, exposed the class divisions within the Peronist movement, so the same

process will be repeated on a higher level in the period after the October elections.

During the course of the last year, there have been numerous one-day general strikes, protesting against government economic policy, and the lack of democratic rights. The most recent, on October 4, involved over 9 million workers and closed down all industry, transport and business. The workers were demanding pay rises to keep up with the astronomical rate of inflation, but there were clear demands for more fundamental change, for "a change in economic philosophy".

This new phase of Peronism will see the class lines in society, and in the Justicialist movement, drawn even sharper than in 1973-76. Workers still look to the Peronist movement, but they have fewer illusions in the right wing leadership than in the past.

It was significant that at the mass rally of 200,000 Peronists in Buenos Aires last week, a right wing trade union leader was not allowed to continue his speech because of the whistles and boos, after he remarked that there must be "neither Marxists nor Yankees" in control of the economy. The period opening up will see the beginning of the end of Peronism: it will begin to disintegrate on class lines.

But initially, the Peronist Youth and trade unions will again be the main organisations commanding the mass support of the working class, a potential battering ram strong enough to destroy Argentine capitalism.

Just as the stepping down of dictator Primo de Rivera ushered in a period of social revolution in Spain in 1931, or in modern times, the overthrow of the Portuguese dictator Caetano or the Greek Colonels in 1974, so also the demise of the Generals will open the door to mighty class struggles in Argentina.

## Argentinian workers' movement—the key to the continent

But the key element that will decide the outcome of these struggles will be the creation of a Marxist leadership for the workers' movement. Argentine society is rotten ripe for socialism.

The ruling class and the Generals are in complete disarray. Argentine capitalism is in a chaotic crisis, absolutely incapable of providing a way forward for the mass of the population.

The majority of the workers have expressed their determination and their willingness to struggle for a new society, and they have brought in their trail a majority of the middle layers of society, white collar workers, professional workers, students, technicians, housewives, and so on. Only the subjective factor, a Marxist leadership with a clear programme and perspective, is lacking at the present time.

The tremendous revolutionary potential of 1973-76, came to nothing in Argentina. This must not happen again.

A socialist leadership in Argentina would not only be capable of leading to the overthrow of the Argentine capitalism, but by holding up a beacon to the working class in the whole of Latin America, would be a decisive factor in the overthrow of military dictatorships in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and elsewhere.

The whole of Latin America is pregnant with the possibility of social revolution on a continental scale. The key to the continent is the workers' movement in Argentina. The 'key to the key', is the establishment of a Marxist leadership for that movement.



Demonstrators support the Falklands/Malvinas invasion



Eva Peron, decorated by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.



General Videla, seized power in 1976.



General Galtieri, in power during the Falklands War.



Ex-president Viola later replaced by Bignone.



## Conference convert

Dear *Militant*,  
I watched the Labour Party conference on the television all week. I live six stories up in a council flat, and I get very bored while my children are at school.

I'd been listening to the people in charge of the Labour Party all talking and cheering and clapping each other. I know they are the ones who will get us out of all our problems, and I always vote Labour.

But I was beginning to feel ashamed that I'm not clever enough to be on the television doing all that complicated talking. To tell the truth I think being so broke makes me feel tired. I can't even get the energy to go shopping.

Anyway, I'd been having a good listen and beginning to feel that I was a real dim-wit, also I couldn't work out how they were going to pay for all the things they were going to do.

I'm writing to you because there was a little old man who made me perk up my ears. He was from Brighton, and from *Militant*. So I wanted to tell you I could really understand what he was saying.

He explained how Labour would pay for all the changes. He really made a lot of sense and didn't have to shout to make people listen to him. When I heard that the people in charge didn't want the conference to agree with him I was very surprised. I was amazed that the Labour Party disagreed with him.

So I just wanted to say that he made a lot of sense to me, and I'm just an ordinary person whose life would be made a lot better if the Labour Party was all *Militant*.

Yours truly  
Mrs P Andrews  
Sussex

## Long term solutions

Dear Comrades,  
Last week I was selling *Militant* outside the dole when I saw a bloke, Russ, who used to get the paper off me every week. He also runs a solvent abuse clinic, he used to be an addict himself until he was cured.

To look at him a year ago he looked a picture of health, but when I saw him last week he looked very pale. I later heard on the radio that because of the cuts the clinic was going to be closed. They said that another one would be opening in Chesterfield, Russ wanted to carry on up there with his work but couldn't. The clinic had over 75% success rate—what will happen to the other 25% now?

As for Russ, he suffered a nervous breakdown. The doctor said on the radio, "mainly due to pressure of work but also from the effects of solvent" (a weak heart) despite the fact that he packed that up years ago.

Yours fraternally  
Chris Fernandez  
Derby N. LPYS

## Solidarity and socialism

Dear Comrades,  
I am writing in reply to the remarks made by the comrade from *Sparticist* who spoke at the *Militant* Rally regarding the "counter-revolutionary" activities of the free trade union Solidarity in Poland.

I was lucky enough to be in Poland during the formation of Solidarity—August/September 1980—and no mention whatsoever was made of a return to capitalism being desired by either the Solidarity organisation or any Polish workers. What they did, and still do, want is democracy—not the additional curtailment of rights as happened following martial law—imposed because of the bureaucracy's fear that workers democracy would mean the ending of their power and privileges.

Some Polish students came over to Britain shortly after my visit there and even though their living standards were comparatively higher than the mass of the population, they stated quite categorically that out of a working population of just over 10 million, 10 million had joined Solidarity and not one worker was calling for a return to capitalism and all the horrors of the profit system.

I hope this clears up any illusions that the comrade may have in the real interests of the totalitarian ruling clique in Poland and other Eastern European countries.

Yours fraternally  
Ruth Hargreaves  
ASTMS Coventry

## Making Royal ends meet

Dear Comrades,  
I have just read a heartrending story in today's *Observer* (16 October). It concerns a young married couple who are hard up after the birth of their son. However in good Tory tradition they are determined to do something to better their situation. So they are taking a "more abrasive approach" to the tenants on their vast estates and, in some cases, are evicting tenants and selling off the property.

The justification for this has been, as the *Observer* says, "Prince Charles's need for more cash since his marriage, and especially since the birth of Prince William".

Do you think we should organise a whip round for this poverty stricken couple?  
Yours fraternally  
Dave Clark  
Deeside TUC

## Blame the Tories not NHS staff

Dear Comrades,  
The sister of a friend of mine is 46 years of age and is paralysed from the waist down. When the paralysis was first detected 18 months ago, she was admitted to the

# Sid Weighell and democracy—on the wrong track

Dear Comrades,  
Many *Militant* readers will be heartened to know that Sid Weighell is a keen supporter of greater democracy in the labour movement. This startling revelation is contained in this new book, 'On The Rails'.

Unfortunately trade unionists may not be too surprised to learn that Bro Sid's ideas on extending trade

union democracy are not very different from Norman Tebbit's proposals. Sid is opposed to the system of branches voting as a block at meetings because he believes it needs only half a dozen dedicated people to take over any branch! Instead Sid prefers secret ballots for the election of full time officials but he is opposed to their regular re-election.

Activists who have long argued against the undemocratic use of the block vote, especially Broad Left supporters in the NUR, may be wondering why Sid, who resigned as General Secretary of the NUR after he cast his union's vote against his mandate at Labour Party Conference last year, wasn't to the fore in campaigning for greater

democracy in the NUR and the Labour Party.

Sid's book may be called 'On the Rails' but it will probably only further convince activists that as far as trade union democracy goes he's definitely on the wrong track.

Fraternally  
Dave Backwith

## Police state?

Comrades,  
Are we not daily becoming a 'police state'? The two detectives in the Stephen Waldorf case are innocent on all counts.

What kind of society allows two hoodlums to go free after brutally attacking and shooting down (almost killing) this young man.

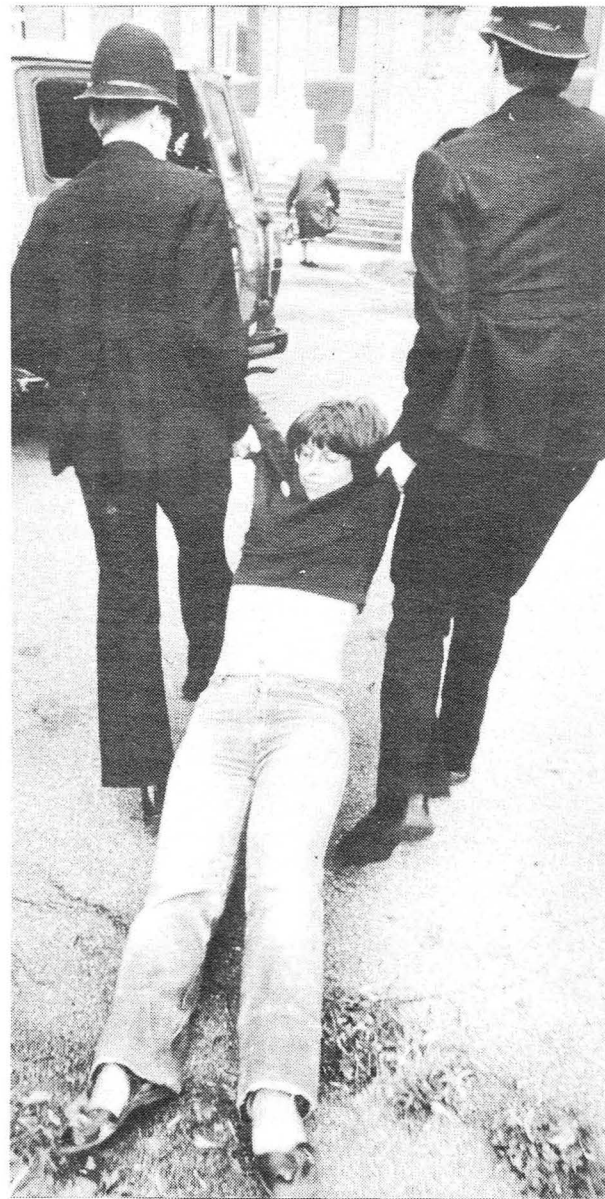
To my mind this smacks of "the police are always right"—like Mr Brittan's

speech at the Conservative Party conference.

Are we now to understand that if a person resembles a well known suspect he or she may expect to be brutalised, even killed?

I wonder what Mr Waldorf and his family are thinking today. We must protest loudly and strongly at this farce of a prosecution and its outcome.

Fraternally  
Mrs A Ursell  
Sittingbourne



## Ludicrous privatisation

Dear Comrades,  
British Telecom's drive for privatisation has reached ludicrous levels in Gloucester. They are privatising the jobs of over 100 women who are paid 54p a week to keep local telephone boxes clean. They are mainly old women who have been doing the job for thirty years or

more. BT claim that although the women only get paid 54 pence they cost £4.50 in office charges to pay them.

They are now putting the job out to private tender. The Tories love Victorian values but now it seems they also want Victorian wages—54p is too much to pay for cleaning a phone box.

Yours fraternally  
Matt Reed  
Bristol

neuro surgery unit at Smethwick.

Whilst in hospital she developed bed sores which deteriorated badly over her 4 month stay and later.

The woman has visited a specialist and been told her leg must be amputated. However, the GP thinks she may be sent to Liverpool as

a bed cannot be found elsewhere.

My friend feels everyone has a right to expect good health care, she does not attribute any blame to the staff in the NHS. She blames the Tories.

Yours fraternally  
K Burns  
Birmingham

## Holiday rip-off

Dear Comrades,  
Few of the holidaymakers who spent this summer overseas will have realised quite how many young British workers leave this country to take the notoriously badly-paid casual jobs in tourist resorts, farms and campsites and hotels abroad.

Many students like myself find a summer job working as couriers for one of the several British camping firms operating on the continent. On the face of it the work seems like a good holiday but in reality involves a lot of physical work as well as responsibility for a lot of equipment and customers.

The work has no set hours—you can be, and frequently are, required at all times of day and night. The firms rely on the hundreds wanting jobs and pay their couriers under £50 a week, although one director admitted he could offer even less and still get enough applicants. Contrast this to the £3,000 they take on a single campsite each week. Despite high costs the profits are clearly enormous.

At the end of the season workers are employed to take down the tents and then to rip to pieces many of the old, but still perfectly usable canvasses. The various firms must destroy thousands of tents like this every year. Even in 'holiday-time' the bosses waste, exploit and rake in their profits.

Only a socialist system could secure the decent education and conditions needed for everyone to enjoy the fascinating places to visit around the world, instead of the few rich families I had as clients.

By an LPYS member  
Cambridge

## Fighting spirit

Dear Comrades,  
The traditions of the labour movement call out not for a timid unity under Thatcher, but for militant solidarity in the face of her policies.

To bring Labour to power we must recall the will power, the fighting spirit of our forbears. That was the message of a retired electrician I spoke to on a paper sale:

"I'll tell you this. I'm 68, I've got an artificial leg, but if the factories round here were to get together I'd march with them. I'd march with them to Cardiff, but on condition that they remained united to the end."

Lets have the unity of our class, not the unity of the graveyard.

Yours fraternally  
Pat Bell  
Swansea LPYS

## Defend NHS

Dear Comrades,  
I write to express my anger at the lies that the Tories have been putting about the health service cuts will not affect the patients.

The nurses said it would, the unions said it would, and now the Health Authorities say it will.

So come on Maggie stop the lies and the smoke screen, and stop blaming those nasty unions. We know that most people in unions are in there to defend the health service. I think that most people would agree that nurses and ancillary workers work damn hard for their money.

Yours fraternally  
John Talbot  
Leicester NUPE

## More on abortion

Dear Comrades,  
I was surprised to read the letter in issue 669 by Paul Hillier on abortion. I could never divorce this issue from politics. You cannot be a socialist and deny any woman this freedom of choice.

The rich, Paul, have always had this freedom. Two things have happened that have enriched the lives of women and helped to free her. One is the pill, the other, abortion, and no socialist would advocate the loss of either.

Fraternally  
EM Portlock  
Gateshead

## Ruling class fear

Dear *Militant*,  
The BBC news announced that striking shipyard workers had lost a yard an order and this could lead to the closure of the yard. The news was carefully worded to point the finger of blame at the workers.

This is just another example of the fear the ruling class has of organised workers. They are prepared to lose orders and even risk closure rather than pay a decent wage.

The government lost more money through uncollected taxes during the 1981 civil service strike than it would have cost to meet the full demands of the union.

The ruling class understands that a victory by one section of the working class would boost the confidence and strength of other sections.

They waste no time or expense in trying to split, demoralise and confuse the working class, to try and prevent it from taking its fair share of the wealth in society which has been created by the working class.

Yours fraternally  
Rob Higginson  
Ashfield LPYS

# Shipyards - Prepare for national action

**THE CRISIS in British Shipbuilders is rapidly developing into outright confrontation.**

**Unless British Shipbuilders withdraw their latest proposals then national industrial action will be necessary.**

Management want: compulsory redundancies, privatisation of naval yards, compulsory transfer, no general wage increase, short-time working at management will. In fact the only thing missing from their list is the abolition of trade unions.

## Battles on redundancies and wages

They want yard closures and more interchangability and flexibility—which means that workers must be prepared to acquire new skills and remove customary practices and replace traditional apprenticeships with a modular training scheme. Tea and meal breaks will be phased to suit production needs. And management have the cheek to say the survival will be a joint effort!

The biggest battle is over redundancies and wages. In July the unions agreed to 9,000 voluntary redundancies in three phases. There is a shortfall of 500 volunteers in the first phase of 3,695 redundancies. Yet we now enter a second phase which requires a further 2,098 redundancies.

Management are threatening to implement compulsory redundancies if enough volunteers don't come forward. We must be prepared to fight on this issue.

In my view any fight over redundancies must be linked to wages, men won't fight to save an industry that pays low wages.

The timetable is a tight one. At the delegate conference on 28 October total rejection of BS package must be combined with positive steps to organise work-ins and strikes. This is the only language that BS will listen to. Prepare for national action!

**By Tony Carty**  
(Chairman, Austin & Pickersgill Shop Stewards' Committee, personal capacity)

## Sunderland Shipbuilders

SUNDERLAND SHIPBUILDERS have been on strike for five weeks for a £13 a week wage rise. Local and national media have been busy attacking them, especially following the loss of a £6 million order as a result of the strike but no-one reports the real problems that produced the dispute.

TONY HOUGHTON, a Boilermakers' shop steward, talked to *Militant* about the dispute. The real problem is that shipyard workers are facing poverty wages, that's what caused the dispute and is the underlying reason why we cannot stop people taking voluntary redundancies.

We are on between £68 and £78. Many of the men are on rent rebates, their kids are getting free school meals. Even this claim would not get us out of the poverty trap. The dispute blew up following a local award to the crane-drivers of £13.60 a week consolidated bonus as a result of a strike they waged last Christmas and early January. Such a local agreement contravenes the national wage negotiating procedure and we told management that we would want a *pro rata* payment for the rest of our members. The crane-drivers are now locked out without benefit because they refused to do our work.

All but 20 of the 1,800 men voted for an all-out strike on 24 September. There have been three mass meetings. On 8 October the stewards explained to a mass meeting the dangers of loss of work and possible lay-offs, but there was a unanimous vote to continue the strike. We have been sitting on a powder-keg for two years, the men are determined to get the rise.

One of the directors told us that if he had his way he would starve us back. That is the attitude of the people we are dealing with.

Messages of support and donations to: Tony Houghton, 11 Manston Close, Moorside, Sunderland.

## The bad old days

**IF THIS British Shipbuilders package is accepted, it will signal the end of the Blackpool agreement.**

This gave workers security of employment. In exchange the tradesmen gave up certain rights within their trade sections, flexibility and interchangeability became the norm.

Now BS want to tear up this agreement whilst still retaining full flexibility and interchangeability.

I see it as reverting back to pre-1969 days, when the 'market' system was in force. That was when yards had a 'core' force of workers and they took on other workers as they needed them from the labour market.

You had to do the rounds of the yards in the river every morning as and when work was available and hope to catch the gaffer's eye to get a start—if your face fitted.

Usually you got a start when a keel was laid and all the double bottom work was



Workers leave Govan shipyard on Clydeside. National action is vital to stop even more redundancies.

## Yarrows Clydeside

**At a mass meeting at Yarrows on Clydeside on Thursday 20 October, 3500 workers voted unanimously to reject British Shipbuilders National Plan.**

**It was a very short meeting because no one wanted any truck with British Shipbuilders' plan for more**

on the go. Then paid off again after the launch. In a good year you might work six or seven months.

The 'core' workers, the 'Royal Family' as they were known were willing to work in any conditions to safeguard their positions and the temporary workers tried to impress the gaffer, hoping to be kept on.

In pre-1969 days TSIW used to be written on your dole card. Temporary Stop-

page Intermittent Worker, that's what the DHSS thought of the shipbuilding worker. Someone who found a job for himself, by making himself available in the 'market' every morning, but who would turn up again like a bad penny after a few weeks, or if he was lucky, a few months, to sign on again.

Management had a 'carrot' of £3.50 per week (support payment) over 26 weeks but this will be monitored and if there is no increase in productivity, the 'offer' will be withdrawn. The

bosses will eat their own carrot. They are also trying to privatise the war yards since they are the most profitable. Yarrows won't be hit by redundancies at the moment, but we will be hit by the change in working practices. Friday's delegate conference at Newcastle, we hope, will give a lead and demand. 'No closures, no redundancies, no privatisation, for a wage rise.'

This whole business has

been dragging on since April while the management push their 'national framework for survival' People have studied summaries of the document and these 'survival' plans will destroy the industry. Our resolution is to support the Confed 'up to and including strike action'.

**By Hugh Watson**  
(AUEW shop steward Yarrows Clyde)

## Thatcher's dream yard

WORKING in a shipyard in Singapore recently I have become well acquainted with the true meaning of Tory talk about hard work and productivity making Britain great again.

The shipyard had plenty of work, unlike many around the world which are scratching about for orders, yet when they started work on the ship the 'superhuman worker' image was shattered.

When there was cutting or welding inside the tanks the air was smoke filled and choking, and steel would be cut away and allowed to fall without warning, even though there were people working at all levels.

Much of the scaffolding was made of wooden poles held together by wire and swayed when you walked on it. Although there were safety regulations and officers the standards wouldn't be acceptable to workers in Britain.

The message from the Tories is simple. Whoever is willing to work the longest hours in the worst conditions for the lowest pay will have their orders,

**By a shipyard worker**

## A world crisis

**THE CRISIS facing British shipyards is only a reflection of a worldwide shipbuilding crisis.**

At present world shipbuilding overcapacity stands at 40%. British Shipbuilders have a 420,000 ton capacity while orders for 1983-'84 reach only 90,000 CGRT. The responsibility for the crisis rests with past owners and the BS board.

The crisis in shipbuilding

is in reality a crisis of the capitalist system. There is a desperate need for new, more modern ships. Many ships on the high seas are no more than floating coffins.

International companies are continually putting ships under flags of convenience where there is no satisfactory international legislation to ensure minimum standards of safety.

The shipbuilding unions have a policy of 'scrap and build'. If shipping was run in the interests of the workers instead of the owners this policy could be rapidly implemented and

any over-capacity could be quickly eliminated.

A major plank of the SNC campaign has been a defence of the Blackpool Agreement i.e. no compulsory redundancies. This policy has been rapidly superseded by events.

The programme should be no redundancies, a substantial wage increase, a 35-hour week—linking this to a clear explanation of how the 'scrap and build' policy could be implemented. This would raise the sights of all shipyard workers and lay the foundation of a concentrated fight back by all shipyard workers.

# UPTURN IN MOTOR INDUSTRY



Articles by Mike Waddington

## Silcock and Collings, Halewood

WORKERS AT Silcock and Collings car deliveries, at Halewood, Liverpool who transport Ford vehicles to the showrooms, recently returned to work victorious. Their six week strike had seen a total of 13,000 cars stockpiled in every available space around the Ford plant. As part of the settlement Silcock and Collings' management admitted in writing that they had ignored the procedure for the avoidance of disputes and that in future they would adhere to it. There are still a number of secondary issues, and they have agreed these too will go through

procedure. So they still had to recognise the trade union organisation and the shop stewards. We are still here, and they have to deal through us. We don't believe that their attitude has really changed. Its just that they realise that the union is strong and that if they want to try again we'll deal with them in the same manner. So far as the sub-contracting of some maintenance work normally done by our garage staff is concerned, management have agreed to supply the relative costings. If it is just cost, then I don't see the company being too reluctant to provide the

figures. But we believe that we can prove that we can at least equal those costs. We believe that if the company are allowed to sub-contract any job, then it will not be long before they try it in other sections. They could turn the company into a clearing house, which would suit the Ford Motor Company. Fords resent the fact that we are organised here. In Europe car deliveries are not so well organised and even when there is a strike in the car plants they can still keep the showrooms filled, by using any scabbing outfit to shift cars. The managing director of Silcock and Collings is a former senior manager from Fords. The first place he comes to is Liverpool, because we are the best organised, the centre of trade union organisation in car delivery. We believe that management were out to destroy us first, because if they'd beaten us, then they'd expect to knock over the others comparatively easily. And we believe Ford will pick up the bill for the strike. With an organised workforce within car delivery we can act as a back stop to challenge the plans for Fords for their own workforce. We can see the threat from the multinational car companies to close down factories all over the country. If they decide to close down any plant, then car delivery has its part to play. They'd want to fill the market with cars from elsewhere and we'd be in a position to prevent them from doing so. Every time they have a problem at Halewood, Fords threaten to shut the place down. We need to be organised to offset that threat. Tolermans handle all the imports of Fords at Harwich. We need to build links between the car delivery agents and the production workers. Then we'd be in a position to say to Ford, "You close Halewood, but you won't sell another Escort or Orion in Britain." We need to co-ordinate our activity with the other car delivery agents and convince them of the need for a strong trade union.

THE CAR industry in Britain seems to be emerging from the devastation of the recession when between June 1979 and June 1982 employment in the industry fell by 168,200 to 289,300.

BL's parts division UNIPART has returned to profitability. In the words of John Neill, the manager, "We made everyone, at manufacturing, distribution and retailing levels—profit centres, making it clear they either made a profit or closed". (*Financial Times* 11.4.83) 1,000 of the 3,000 jobs there

disappeared. UNIPART obviously will now become a prime target for privatisation.

What the recession has meant to the working class has recently been highlighted by the Low Pay Unit in a special report on the West Midlands, where prosperity was built on the car industry.

Ten years ago workers there were top of the wages "league". Now they are 3rd from bottom, with one in six men and two-thirds of women earning less than £90 a week.

There are still reports that the Talbot Coventry (Ryton) plant which employs over 2,000 could close. In 1979 25,000 worked for Talbots—now it's only 5,000.

The recovery in America pulling the world economy up by its bootstraps has had an effect on the British car market. August 1983 saw sales increase 24% on Aug 1982, and by 27% for September. In the 6 months to September 1983 output was 23% up.

57% of this record market however, is taken up by imports. Car workers, who have taken the brunt of the recession, may also feel, like the American labour movement, that this is the opportunity to try and take back some of the guarantees they once had.

The *Financial Times* (15.8.83) recently commented, in an article entitled, 'Hard winter for pay bargaining

predicted as recovery develops', that 'Employees are as quick to see changed circumstances in production as the most adept accountant is to forecast profitability'.

Similarly, commenting on the Vauxhall pay claim, (recently settled for 7.5%), the FT (29.9.83) said "Vauxhall's surge to a 14.5% UK market share from 11.7% last year and 8.5% in 1981...has given them (the Trade Unions) power".

The "New Realism" the Tories imagine has dawned is nothing more than the discipline of redundancies.

## Yes—but

## Investment—or low pay?

FORD have belatedly increased investment at their Southampton plant (£74m by 1985), hoping no doubt to dazzle the public with the inflation eroded figures.

They have given assurances to the 3,200 hourly paid employees at Southampton that there will be no forced redundancies because of automation, but they are also saying that the general push for extra productivity throughout all its British plants will probably result in fewer jobs at Southampton in the medium term.

In other words Ford workers are told, yes the situation has improved, yes profits are up, yet shareholders will get their dividends, yes more investment will be made but jobs will go and wages will not rise.

BRITISH industry is based on cheap labour.

The *Economist* (16 July 1983) recently reported, "of the seven largest OECD economies, the one with the highest jobless rate is Britain, which has also had the lowest investment rate over the past 35 years. Japan, the heaviest investor, has the lowest unemployment today."

The problems of the British car industry are a direct consequence of this under-investment in British industry.

The OECD, referring to the vehicle industry reported (FT 17.8.83) "Failure to introduce new automated production techniques in manufacturing industries could have a far greater effect on employment through lowering international

competitiveness". Spain will produce more cars in 1983 than Britain.

The VW Golf has been one of the best-selling cars in Europe for the last 9 years—yet VW continue to invest in the Golf II, recently spending \$385 m at their Wolfsburg plant, where 250 robots will carry out most of the assembly work.

"West German manufacturing labour costs are among the highest in the world and pay in the automotive sector is well above the average for industry as a whole" (FT 10.8.83)

Marx argued that machinery will beat the cheapest labour everytime; the bosses in Britain have forgotten that.

## Strathclyde

In the Strathclyde region, where 70% of the population rely on public transport, the Labour-controlled council are considering a document which proposes major cutbacks in the area's rail network.

These proposals, even before the government cash curbs on BR, include the possible closure of the 'Cathcart Circle' which serves at least 10 of the busiest commuter stations in the Glasgow area, and the ending of several major suburban services.

The document also proposes the virtual de-staffing of the vast majority of Strathclyde's 140 railway stations.

It would mean a massive job loss in an area already scourged by mass unemployment. Destaffing would encourage crime and vandalism on the railways which in turn would lead to a further drop in the number of rail passengers and further job losses.

These proposals have implications beyond the immediate Strathclyde area. If BR management are allowed to carry out these cuts in

# RAILWAYS



Photo: Militant

The government's cut of £43 million to British Rails' subsidy will hit jobs—and vital passenger services.

collusion with the Strathclyde Regional Council it will be merely a matter of time before similar measures are implemented in other parts of the country.

The apparatus of the rail union federation must be brought to bear at branch district and national level in order to protect jobs and services.

In the Glasgow area station staff have set up two action committees. The Glasgow South Action Committee will be organising a

campaign of meetings and publicity with the aim of mobilising all railworkers, as well as the general public, behind a campaign of opposition to the cuts. Approaches have also been made to the Glasgow bus-drivers with a view to linking up in a joint struggle to defend public transport in Strathclyde.

By John Heron (Glasgow No 5 Branch NUR and Glasgow South Action Committee)

## Brighton

DICK ROBSON, a Brighton guard and NUR member explains the background to the recent dispute on British Rail in the Southern Region.

A guard was assaulted while carrying out his duties. So he restrained his attacker, not hit him, just held him until he cooled down. Anyway, the railway's management chose to sack him. Now beat this. His attacker didn't even make the com-

plaint. No it was another passenger, who claims he saw everything. So he wrote a letter of complaint to the Railways!

He even apologised to the railways for his complaint being a bit late. He was going on holiday when he saw the incident take place. And so he had to ring through to his secretary in his office to type it out and sent it off.

The very same person didn't even have the decency or the cheek, to attend the self-defending guard's hearing. The railways management sacked a guard on pure hearsay.

At the beginning of his fellow guards protest at this outrage, the men were holding a sit-down protest in their men's room, when management got the police in to evict the lot of them.

Head office got us back to work after plenty of pressure on our officials and promising he would get full reinstatement.

Then it blew again when we heard the guard got a severe reprimand—only one step away from the sack. So we came out again.

A local union delegation went up to Unity House last Friday—and got pressurised again. They came back and said they couldn't make any recommendation!

We voted to go back on the Sunday at a meeting at Brighton Labour Club.

But if one more man gets assaulted on this region...

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By Dave Williams (Secretary, Shop Stewards' Committee, Silcock & Collings, Halewood)

# Industrial Features

# LOTHIAN BACKS MINERS

For over six weeks 1,500 miners at Monktonhall colliery in Mid Lothian have been on strike over the halting of developments.

NCB management have refused to consult or discuss such issues as the development of new sections or manning levels.

They have refused to give a guarantee about the future of the pit.

Removal of machinery from developing sections, the life-line of any pit, confirmed fears of closure. Instead of answering miners' questions management have merely denounced the miners at Monktonhall as lazy, and have continually harassed and intimidated them.

In one section, L43, sixty men received fourteen days notice of termination of employment, unless production targets were reached. Yet L43 has regularly been in the six top producing face-lines in Britain. When workers on the day-shift were sent home for being five to ten minutes late after attending a pit meeting to discuss the future of the pit, the whole colliery went on strike. Since then the miners have been solid in their strike to get a guarantee of their future.

## Local support tremendous

Strike committees have been set up, co-ordinating the work of the area, and contacting other unions. Support locally has been tremendous—not only from the labour movement but from the local communities.

Support from other collieries was demonstrated last Monday when the Scottish coal-field came to a standstill in support of Monktonhall. Visits by Monktonhall miners to pits

**By Eddie Donaghie**  
(Scottish Labour Party Executive, personal capacity)

in England have won their backing. In the Yorkshire area guarantees of strike action—if called upon—were given to the miners to save Monktonhall. Similar guarantees are being given from other Scottish pits.

## Every pit in danger

The last nine months has seen the closure of Kinneil, High House, Scorn and Cardowan mines. Monktonhall, opened in 1964 has long been considered one of Scotland's leading pits. The board believe that if they can get away with closure here it will pave the way for wholesale closure of other pits. If the board intends to close Monktonhall, which has constantly met production targets, then the future of any pit is in doubt.

Miners cannot sit back and watch the devastation of the mining industry. The fight for Monktonhall is a national issue and must be linked to a national campaign. A campaign to explain the issues must be waged at national and local level.

The six-week strike shows miners' determination to save the industry, their jobs and future employment for their families. Every section of this movement should be behind them. Messages of support donations and requests for speakers, to Monktonhall, Joint TU strike committee, c/o Dalkeith Club, Woodburn Dalkeith, Midlothian.



## MILITANT READERS MEETINGS 'The fight against closures'

7.30pm Thursday 3 November, Dalkeith  
Speaker: Peter Jarvis  
(see local sellers for details)

7.30pm Wednesday, 2 November  
at Tranent Miners Club  
Speakers: Peter Jarvis (Militant), Tam Dury  
(SCEBTA, Monktonhall, personal capacity)

## Community at risk

**THE FIGHT to save Monktonhall pit from closure is as important for the dozens of local communities gathered around Mid and East Lothian as it is for the miners themselves.**

The closure of Monktonhall would have a devastating effect on the local economy—on towns such as Dalkeith, Newton Grange, Danderhall, Tranent, Prestonpans.

Those communities expanded in the post-war boom due to the coal-seams which lay on both sides of the river valley, and in other pockets of the area.

After the war there were nineteen working pits in East Lothian. In 1951 there were 12 employing 3,800 people. But by 1975 there were none apart from Monktonhall which lies between East Lothian and Mid Lothian.

In 1965 in Mid Lothian there were twelve pits employing 10,000 miners, many of them Polish and Lithuanian immigrants, and working people from the heavily populated areas of West Scotland and Glasgow who settled in and around Dalkeith in the 1950s and early '60s. Now there remains only one pit, in Bilston Glen, apart from Monktonhall.

## 25% unemployment

The demise of the Mid Lothian mining industry and other industries, like the paper mills at Pennicuik, have also badly affected employment. In Mid Lothian, which has a population of 83,000 people, in 1966 2,500 people were employed in the paper mills—down now to only 115 people. The effects of de-industrial-

**By Dick Vivien**  
(Sec, Mid and East Lothian Trades Council)

isation and the loss of development area status in 1981 has raised unemployment in Mid Lothian to over 25% of those working 48% travel to work in Edinburgh.

The figures show that for every 40 people unemployed there is only 1 job vacancy. In East Lothian alone 250,000 square feet of factory space lies empty.

The last pit to close in Lothian was the Lady Victoria pit in 1981. This is now a mining museum and the dozen employees who work there are on a community programme with an average wage of £50.

Such is the concern local people feel for the future of Monktonhall that financial support has come from every section of the community. When a pit closes subsidiary services such as transport, catering, etc also suffer. Small businesses, hard-pressed under the Tory regime, have contributed to strike funds. Social clubs are putting on special cabarets to raise funds.

The Labour Party Young Socialists and Mid Lothian Trades Council have joined forces to raise funds for the miners with a fancy dress halloween party. The Labour Party Women's group have collected food parcels. There have been street collections for the miners.

The Trades Council have joined the Labour Party to form a Labour and Trades Union Council to try and fight unemployment in the area. This Council is a co-ordinating committee to raise the issues of unemployment and Tory policies.

This Saturday coming we have arranged a 'welfare not warfare' demonstration in Dalkeith. The miners will be taking part in this rally.

## NUM special conference — take campaign to every miner

THE DECISION at the miners' special delegate conference to ban overtime was more than just a rejection of the Coal Board pay offer. It was a vote to defend the mining industry.

Delegates of the Special National Union of Mineworkers Conference on 21 October were fully aware of the need to stop pit closures, or go the same way as the steel industry. MacGregor, who butchered the steel industry, has been brought by Thatcher to do the same job on coal.

The overtime ban from

**By Peter Jarvis**

the end of the month provoked further threats from MacGregor. The offer is final and the closure programme must continue at the same rate or faster, he says.

The Tories know that if they are to tame the unions, the miners must be defeated.

Between ten and fourteen percent of coal is produced during overtime and if eliminated from the industry would create 25,000 new jobs.

The NCB want to cut

70,000 jobs.

In a sane society, instead of the sackings demanded by the NCB, a shorter working week, and longer holidays would be introduced.

Over the last 3½ years 41,000 jobs in mining have gone. The NCB claim they "cannot protect all jobs but will do everything possible to protect people". The Coal Board have offered enormous inducements to miners to undermine union opposition to closures. They try to create an atmosphere which stifles any fightback. They

offer up to £15,000 for those nearing retirement to go early, whereas a miner who retires normally receives the paltry sum of £500. The young miner has the carrot of transfer money. It is possible to get £1500 for just getting on a different bus in the morning. Then there is the prospect of higher bonus at the new start because the old colliery has been run down. The decision to accept closure at any pit must be taken out of the hands of the colliery concerned. Just as no job is the property of any one miner, no pit is a

the property of a single lodge or branch. The decision to fight must be transferred to the area, with ultimate decisions concerning the fight being made at national level.

## For a one-day stoppage!

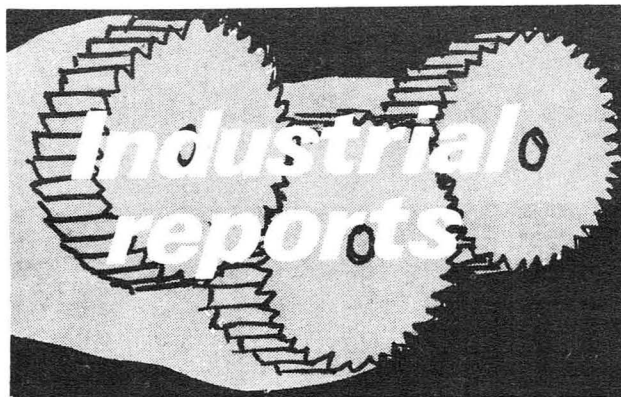
The campaign to win the claim and to defend the industry must go to every miner. Pithead meetings must be held to explain the case. Regular meetings, an on-going dialogue with the

members, is the best way to counter the local board's propaganda.

The ban must be seen as a first step. The whole union should be gearing itself up for bigger confrontations forced on miners by the Tories.

A day stoppage should be called with mass demonstrations in every area. Leading NEC members should address these rallies and then tour the pits and workshops explaining the issues.

Show the NCB that the union is determined to win!



## Queensland Pleaters, Hackney

QUEENSLAND PLEATERS workers in Hackney have been on strike for over three weeks is over the factory owners' refusal to give the workers full holidays and holiday pay.

There have been no wage rises for three years. When the workers went to negotiate these issues the management refused to meet any of the demands say-

ing that they either worked at his wages or they could go elsewhere. They also refused to recognise the union, the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

The owner has used school leavers to scab on the dispute. These youngsters crossed the picket line because they believe it is a permanent job, however

the management are advertising in the local rag to replace the original workers and the youngsters when the strike is over.

A mass picket last Thursday drew considerable support from the local labour movement.

Essential to winning this will be the blacking of all work done by Queensland Pleaters by other

workers in the trade.

Messages of support and donations to NUTGW, Bethnal Green Labour Party Rooms, 349 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2.

By Tim White  
(Hackney South LPYS)



Metal Box workers picket the company's AGM.

Photo: John Griekitis

## MONOPOLIES THREATEN JOBS

**THE GIANT GEC is at it again. They have a reputation of asset-stripping and ruthless redundancies. Now the Openshaw plant in Manchester faces 150 redundancies.**

AUEW-TASS steward Reg Sidebottom explains that management claim they are losing out on orders in the fiercely competitive switchgear market.

So they're looking for savings, improved efficiency and 'regrettably', they say 150 jobs cut across the site, 72 manual.

Within days, on 7 October we held a mass meeting of the thousand-plus union members in staff and factory.

The meeting overwhelmingly endorsed the joint site union committee's call to action. We will totally oppose any forced redundancies, and impose an immediate overtime ban.

While we are fighting compulsory redundancy, we also have a duty to defend the jobs of tomorrow's young workers. We can't just sell jobs.

Management have told us its 'immoral' to encourage older workers to leave—that's their excuse for opposing early retirement. But now they are prepared to force workers through the door.

We need an energetic campaign against all job losses.

GEC can afford it! This year they celebrated a record £270 million pre-tax profits.

The power engineering division's profits increased to £66 million—£70.51 per employee per week.

GEC has a £1,300 million bank-balance: money they refuse to invest in new equipment to really make us more efficient.

Our fight will not be easy. The company are picking off plants one by one.

Experience tells us we must fight back as a combine, with all the factories in the group standing together to defend jobs.

That way we can win.

By Reg Sidebottom  
(GEC Openshaw)

## Metal Box

**ON TOP of Metal Box's proposed closure of the Bromborough plant on Merseyside (Militant 672) has come the announcement this week that 355 jobs are to go at Aintree, Carlisle, Mansfield and Manchester.**

PAUL WITTER (Wirral South LPYS reports from Bromborough.

Already Metal Box UK has shed at least 8,000 jobs in the last 2½ years and stewards believe it could be as high as 11,000.

The effect of closure can be seen already. One ex-worker of Metal Box in Bromborough, who was unemployed for 18 months, after hearing of the closure of the plant, committed suicide.

Yet company profits increased last year by £13 million and Metal Box paid only £800,000 tax. A meeting of share holders, is being planned, at the Savoy Hotel solely to discuss investment in South Africa from where Metal Box recently received £40 million.

One Metal Box employee, Denis Allport was awarded a rise last year of 22% bringing his an-

nual pay up to £93,000.

Management at the Bromborough plant, admitted that it was "bad investment and management decisions" which are to blame for the closure.

Stewards at the plant have contacted Metal Box plants throughout the country and have lobbied councillors and MPs, the stewards tried to speak to the Tory-controlled Wirral Borough. Councillor George Clark attempted to get the council to abandon questions in favour of the stewards speaking to councillors. The Tory councillors rejected his proposal. Labour-controlled Merseyside County Council must give full support to the workers of Metal Box.

"Merseyside" said one steward "is becoming an industrial graveyard, someone has got to stand up to the bosses."

All messages of support/invitations to speak etc should be sent to: Steve Fox, Chairman of the Action Committee at Metal Box, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside or at 34 Higher Bebbington Road, Bebbington, Wirral.

## Highland Fabrication

WORKERS AT Highland Fabrication, Nigg Bay, N. Scotland, scene of a bitter strike involving mass picketing just over a month ago, held a mass meeting on Wednesday 19 October.

Their return to work was agreed on the basis of the right to negotiate a 21 point management report. The mass meeting attended by over 1,500 men lasted over four hours as stewards and members they decided to reject the proposal to cut showers and shower time.

As the convenor, Rab Wilson, pointed out: at the

## Thanks from Greenings' workers

THE DISPUTE at Greenings has now after 23 weeks been settled to the complete satisfaction of the workforce. In March, with millions unemployed and many workers in retreat, our employer felt the time was right to try to smash any organisation and strip us of our rights. The ferocity of their attacks left us no room for manoeuvre and so all our efforts were thrown into a full scale resistance.

When we embarked on what became a long and bitter dispute we made a call for support from all Trade Unionists, activists and sympathisers. That call was answered in a way which overwhelmed us and for which we now wish to express our sincere thanks.

During the dispute many people assisted us with accommodation, transport, time, effort and obviously finances. Without such support our struggle would have been much harder and indeed may have been lost. Our success is a testimony to the value of workers' solidarity.

Your solidarity coupled with workers determination has proven that in unity we can fight and win even in these depressed times and against formidable odds. As we work to rebuild our industry we hope the links forged in adversity will continue to be strengthened. We at Greenings will continue to support all workers struggles as we have in the past.

Our sincere thanks to all.

By A. Conheeny  
(Convenor  
N. Greening, Warrington.)

## Wandsworth protest

ANOTHER 4,000 council homes have been allocated for sale when they fall vacant by Wandsworth Tory Council.

About 200 tenants demonstrated outside Wandsworth town hall for the recent policy and finance committee meeting. These included tenants from the Livingstone estate—all of whom are being moved because of the discovery of lethal asbestos on the estate.

The Tories are refusing to automatically allocate vacant homes from the areas set aside for sale for the Livingstone estate tenants. This will only be done at the Tories discretion!

By Dave Gartrill  
(Battersea Labour Party)

## Thorn Scunthorpe

LAST THURSDAY, 18 October, workers at the Thorn/Eriffon factory at Scunthorpe came out on strike after five months of pay talks.

They were offered 4½%, exactly the same as last year's offer, when the workforce—predominantly women—were told by the management that if they would "bear with them" they would reap rewards.

The workers have kept their promise, and in the words of the EETPU shop steward, Heather Thompson and Valerie Scanens, they have bent over backwards to meet management and make the factory a productive and friendly place to work. Last year, the company's offer was accepted after private ballots. This strike is the first for nine years.

Heather Thompson stated that they are not political and have had no experience of strike action, but many workers—male and female—have only the one wage coming into their family because of the large numbers of unemployed since the steelworks cut-backs.

An average weekly wage at the factory is £67.00 basic for a 39-hour week, plus any bonus they can earn. Some workers earn no bonus at all, some can earn up to £18.00 bonus.

The picket line is made up of very confident women, who are having their first experience of industrial action, and have been surprised and amazed at the support they have had in Scunthorpe.

By Barbara Pearce  
(NUPE)

## Scottish & Newcastle

OVER 500 members of the T&GWU internal branch are on strike at the Scottish & Newcastle Tyne Brewery in Newcastle, and in the MacKay soft drinks factory at Felling, Gateshead.

The strike started after an alleged breach of hygiene rules. The supervisor alleged that a worker had been urinating in the tank room! However, there were no witnesses to this alleged offence and the supervisor had just returned from an extended lunch.

Management decided to take the supervisor's word against the worker's, and he was sacked the following Monday. On Wednesday the MacKay's workers went on strike while the Tyne brewery came out in support the same day.

By Dave Archibald

## Shell strike solid

By a Shell  
ASTMS worker

THE SHELL battle at Stanlow refinery and the adjoining research lab has now stepped up into an all-out strike, by the T&GWU and the Joint Union Negotiating Committee.

As expected on Thursday 20 October, Stanlow ASTMS followed the other unions in massively rejecting the 4½% claim. The meeting also agreed on an over-time ban, although there was considerable feeling that stronger action was necessary.

The strike itself is rock solid, all gates to the refinery are on a 24-hour picket and the turn-out from the members has been excellent. This is the first time on strike for many of the union members, whose confidence and determination is increasing daily, and rose even further when it was heard that Rolls Royce workers had walked out over a 4% offer.

All tanker traffic into the site has been stopped and picketing has now been extended to the neighbouring Haydock terminal.

On Friday 21, the pickets were sent down to Shell headquarters in London (where 40% of jobs have to go by April) to let top management know first-hand the strength of the strike. It seems Stanlow management have not been telling their bosses the whole truth.

And while on the subject of management the only person to be moved on by the police, for "threatening behaviour" was the personnel manager who was glaring at un-unionised staff who stopped to listen to the pickets.

Signs that the strike is beginning to bite are shown by some local Shell garages, having to cover their signs as they run out of Shell petrol and turn to alternative supplies. The strike has already received official backing from the AUEW, UCATT, and TGWU is expected to follow suite. This will be vital and make the strike more effective.

On Monday 24 a meeting of stewards from all Shell sites and unions recommended a national one-day strike throughout Shell on 1 November in support of the Stanlow claim.

## Shipley Hospital

ON 15 October, a thousand members of the public marched with nurses and doctors round Shipley, in the pouring rain, to protest at the proposed closure of the local community hospital.

Tory MP Marcus Fox, escorted by police, met marchers at the hospital. All he could offer was the possibility of privatising cleaning services to save the hospital. This from a Tory MP who is a director of a cleaning firm, already doing NHS work. Constantly barracked, he warned against breaking "democratic traditions" before being escorted away.

A loud cheer was given when NUPE secretary Alex Corina gave fraternal greetings from nurses at the Thornton View work-in.

By Steve Wilkinson  
(Chairman, Shipley  
Labour Party)

By David Churchley

# Two victories but struggle continues

**EVERY MEMBER of the POEU will have been heartened by last week's victories.**

Mercury failed to get a High Court injunction restraining the union from blacking the inter-connection of Mercury into the public network.

British Telecom retreated on their threat of sackings. They now say they will await the outcome of the POEU's re-convened Conference on 7 November before deciding whether to proceed.

Both these victories were won because POEU members showed magnificent determination and resolution against management intimidation. There was 100% trust and loyalty to the union's campaign and instructions from the POEU leadership.

It confirms that in any industrial dispute a union's case depends on the strength and willingness of the members to fight for their rights.

The anger of POEU members, determined not to work themselves out of a job by interconnecting Mercury,



Picket outside BT Headquarters, Gresham Street, London.

penetrated the courtroom.

A major escalation would have seriously disrupted the communications network. It would have opened up a major battle whilst the Tories are already besieged on all fronts.

The union's policy is clear—no interconnection with Mercury. This policy would, it seems, have been adhered to by the NEC had the judgement gone against the union.

If the union's funds had then been threatened with seizure and or the leaders threatened with jail, there would have been an eruption

from the ranks of the union.

The threat of jailing union leaders for undertaking a fight for jobs and hard won rights would have been met by a wider and equally massive response.

In the circumstances Judge Mervyn Davies decided to back down. But this decision was a question of timing and not the end of the matter.

"One judicial swallow does not make a summer of trade union immunity" was the opening line of the *Financial Times* law report on the case (24 October).

The article went on to re-

assure Mercury shareholders and the whole private investment community that the "Court of Appeal which may hear within a few weeks the appeal against last week's decision, may see the issues in a different light".

It goes on to argue that a change in the law may be necessary to ensure that decisions "such as that given by Mr Justice Mervyn Davies" don't "become the rule rather than an isolated exception".

The Institute of Directors, and the CBI have now called for more restrictive legislation.

In other words, if the

POEU can win in the courts by attempting to play by the rules then even these biased rules will have to be changed again to suit the employers.

A showdown has been postponed. The POEU cannot rely on the courts. Last week's decision could well be reversed.

The government have made it clear that it will listen very closely to calls to strengthen anti-trade union laws and narrow their interpretation by the courts. It is only the collective strength of the membership that will force the Tories to drop their plans to devastate

the industry and service.

It was collective strength and the power of the union to hit the vital communications network that forced BT to retreat on sackings. Having failed to intimidate workers into submission it seems their tactic is to try and make the union and members 'sweat it out'. They perhaps hope that some POEU members, removed from the action, will try to change the firm line against privatisation at the forthcoming conference.

This is a vain hope. But the way to ensure unity is to involve every member in the struggle—and not just by financial support. The re-introduction of the levy is welcome, albeit overdue, but it is not enough.

As a body, in mass meetings and on picket lines, the locked out members feel strong and confident. But they too can be prey to feelings of isolation, that the whole burden of responsibility for the union campaign rests on their shoulders.

It is important to spread the action outside London. National selected targets should be hit, with region by region overtime bans and work to rules. Mass meetings are vital to keep morale and confidence high, ensure members are fully informed, squash rumours, answer doubts and steel everybody for the battles ahead.

In this way every member should feel part of the action, become more keenly aware of what is at stake and the nature of the enemy. This would show management and the Tories that the forthcoming conference of the union takes place in a climate of growing confidence, that members will fight on until victory is secured.

## Militant

Photo: Denis Doran/Militant

## STE—The carrot and the stick

THE POEU's fight against Tory privatisation plans has caused many members of the STE (Society of Telecom Executives) to think hard about their position.

The events of the week-end of 8 October have presented a completely new and hard-faced view of higher management in British Telecom.

The military-style take-over of BT operational buildings where private security firms were wheeled in to assist in the eviction of POEU workers, was accompanied by equally hard-line ruthless tactics on the junior management grades in the STE.

First and second line managers were called up at home in the early hours of

Saturday morning, and instructed to report to operational buildings to carry out the work of POEU grades (in direct contradiction to the instructions of their union).

Some went willingly but many were put under considerable pressure. In BT's own words, "others needed to be reminded of their responsibilities as managers to recover the service".

Those who went on strike that Monday in support of members who had been coerced into strike-breaking were all interviewed the following day, and were given a letter expressing disapproval of their actions at a time when BT required their skills for undermining the

POEU action.

As a result of these 'group chats' with senior management the majority of junior managers in BT International have now volunteered to do the work of POEU grades. Most firmly believe that their careers and even their jobs are on the line if they refuse.

For some it has been an easy choice, with £40 shift allowances, free meals, free transport and treble time pay (for a 41-hour week!) for managers who average between £13-18,000 per annum basic pay. Others are still resisting the pressure on them to strike-break despite the lucrative financial rewards being offered (which apparently BT intends withdrawing

now that staff are toeing the line).

Whatever the result of this round of the fight the BT Board will be faced with managing a workforce that has no illusions in their bosses.

George Jefferson, the BT chairman, has set out to break the unions in BT—but the heavy-handed approach adopted will only succeed in pushing STE and POEU members into realising that their future of our industry lies in the formation of a single, powerful, industrial union.

By an STE member

## Workers' notebook

THE DEPARTMENT of Employment's New Earnings Survey shows average gross weekly earnings in April 1983 were £167.50 for men and £108.80 for women. The rate of growth in earnings is reckoned to have started to increase again in August after three years of slow reduction. Average earnings in the year to August were increasing by 7.75% compared to 7.5% in each of the four months April to July.

INCREASED OVERTIME, 10.32 million hours a week in August, and less short-time working has been a major factor in the slight increase in earnings. In the survey period, overtime pay for manual workers averaged £18.1 or 12.6% of their average earnings of £143.60, though these averages include those who do not work overtime. There has also been a slowing in reduction of working hours.

## Avon—No deal on meals

ON 17 October T&GWU members in the Avon school meals service were called out on strike. They returned on 20 October as half-term was looming and they were threatened with loss of retention pay for that half-term, and to allow continued negotiations. PAUL CHAMBERLAIN, Transport and General Workers' Union District Officer for Avon County Manual Staff, talked to Brian Beekingham.

THE COUNTY plans to close 42 kitchens, cut back hours and slash the cafeteria staffing scales (that's the kitchens at the big comprehensives).

The officers of the authority have refused to negotiate, saying we have to have all the proposals implemented.

In many kitchens workers have to stay on after work to finish their job, with no extra over-time payment. Instead of cutting in this way they should take on more staff when they lower the working hours. The part-time women staff put up

with a desperate situation, and now the authority has the nerve to come back and say, "it's not enough, we want more". Its all to do with money, nothing to do with conditions of service.

The first mass meeting of the TGWU members was unanimous that if cuts were imposed we would have industrial action. Then we had a big joint mass meeting of TGWU, GMBATU and NALGO which also voted overwhelmingly for joint action. However, NUPE then had a ballot of members, which returned 2-1 against the action and NALGO have balloted with the same result.

Unfortunately, the day before we were due to meet the authority the results of the NUPE ballot appeared in the press. This meant the meeting was unsuccessful. The TGWU has called out its members with good results when you consider the difficulties involved. Some sites came out solidly, and others have been working.

The worst aspect of this dispute has been the organised

and systematic strike-breaking that has gone on. We asked drivers not to cross the picket and they agreed. Then the catering officer, the area and district catering officers, brought their private cars for meals that needed transporting. These are all NALGO members, I believe.

The Avon Labour council has made no statement at all regarding their employees strike breaking in this way. It's dangerous for the Labour Party in this area, when the council allows this. Its not for want of trying on our party. They will find it difficult to get the votes to these people in May 1985.

We will go back to work for half-term but this dispute has developed a group of people determined to fight. There will be further action if the authority refuse to listen. We have plenty of evidence of intimidation. Women have been rung up at home and threatened with loss of their send-outs (which means further loss of jobs). All sorts of things have been treated.

## Round the pickets

THE INTERNATIONAL Telex Exchange at St Botolphs House, Algate takes only one floor of the building so there's no strict picketing. But about half of the forty-four POEU members who have been pulled out by the union at the two International Telex Exchanges are turning up every morning. They are keeping up pressure on STE scabs and liaising with POEU members still working. Leaflets are produced daily to let people know what is going on. SCPS and CPSA have agreed not to handle tapes from Intl. Telex, so bills will not be going out. That must be about £400,000 a day BT aren't getting from customers.

UCW TELEPHONISTS went on strike at Colombo House last Friday, and on Wednesday at the Fleet Building off Farringdon Road following the suspension of POEU members on Tuesday.

THE UCW executive is to ask its 1,500 branches to organise a voluntary collection of £1 per head, equal to the POEU levy. The UCW has 200,000 members. So pay up comrades!

ONE BRANCH official reports that he has had EOTA (a break-away from the POEU) members asking to rejoin POEU. "I have accepted these members back into full membership on condition they pay up a year's back subs of £52 plus £10 national levy. I am sure this will be ratified by the branch—especially as one EOTA member paid up his monies, became a POEU member again at 10am, and half an hour later was out on strike with us!"

LEADING WALL Street investment bank Morgan Stanley has been appointed to advise the government on ways of selling shares in British Telecom in the US when (if?) they come on the market. US banks are arguing for BT to be sold off in parts, pointing out that this share floatation is huge even by American standards. The largest amount ever raised in one go before in America was \$1 billion. That was for American Telephone and Telegraph. Be warned. Look at Grenada!

A 24-HOUR picket is being mounted at the main Telecom building, Mondial House. For the first time since the firemen's strike braziers are lighting up central London's night skyline. Speaking of firemen, they have been enthusiastically helping the pickets.

THE BEST story of the week comes from a mass meeting at Friends House last Tuesday. An STE member crossing a picket line saw the local Corporation 'dustpersons' tip six bin-loads of rubbish all over his shiny motor car.

FINALLY, WILL some enterprising *Sun* journalist dig up the story of the 50-year old POEU member, father of a young family, victim of a recent heart attack, who BT management have chosen to victimise. Disgusting what damage strikes do, isn't it? Don't let them grind you down.

# MILLIONS PROTEST AT MISSILE PLANS

A section of the vast demonstration which gathered in London on 22 October. Similar marches and protests took place all over Western Europe.



**THE CITIES of Europe were engulfed on Saturday as millions demonstrated against nuclear weapons across the continent.**

**By Bob Wade**

White collar and blue collar workers, students, unemployed, young, old—all took to the streets in a massive wave of anger against the deployment of Cruise missiles in Europe.

massive anti-nuclear mobilisation. In Britain, the Tories will have been shocked by the events which, despite the unceasing government and media propaganda campaign, shows the massive opposition to the deployment of Cruise missiles on December 15 in Britain.

London came to a standstill as 400,000 rallied in Hyde Park in what must have been one of the largest demonstrations in British history.

Following the mass march, the Tory press tried to play down the whole thing—it hardly made one front page.

This was repeated throughout Western Europe. In Italy, nearly a million people marched into Rome.

The most disgusting report appeared in the reactionary *Sunday Express* which carried the hysterical headline, "CHAOS AT MARCH AS 25 ARE HELD". It referred to a small incident where a handful of 'anarchists' were arrested. They represented a miniscule 0.00625% of the march, yet they got the headlines!

In Germany another million took to the streets—300,000 in Hamburg with a similar figure in Bonn, 100,000 in West Berlin and 200,000 in Stuttgart where a 67 mile long human chain linked the city to a proposed missile site.

The LPYS were on the march, handing out 20,000 leaflets and selling hundreds of papers. One group of LPYS members commandeered a footbridge and led anti-Tory chants, which received a good response from youth in the demo.

In Brussels, 750,000 marched through the city, about one tenth of the active population in Belgium. As in Bonn, many soldiers joined the march.

The LPYS will continue this work to recruit youth and link up the struggle against nuclear weapons to the struggle for socialism, the only system that can end the madness of the nuclear arms race once and for all.

Vienna saw its biggest mobilisation since the liberation from the Nazis in 1945. 150,000 marched in Madrid, while France, Luxembourg and Sweden.

Clearly the western capitalist governments and the Reagan administration will have been rocked by this

## A message from her ladyship

**"NO SIXTEEN year old has an excuse for sitting around with nothing to do."**

So declared the Baroness Carnegy of Lour, head of the MSC in Scotland, in charge of the Youth Training Schemes. It appears she thinks forcing school leavers to work a full week for £25 at no expense to the employers is a grand idea.

These are fine words coming from the Baroness however. Besides the fact she earns around £200 a week working for the MSC, she has also been named in a major tax scandal in the east of Scotland.

The *Glasgow Herald* and BBC1's *Reporting Scotland* (October 24) report that the Inland Revenue officers have discovered a huge tax avoidance scheme which is believed to have been going on for ten years. Landowners such as the Baroness have not paid the full tax on profits from their estates. The Baroness is to pay up £400,000 she owes in back tax.

The Baroness, a former Tory councillor has said hopefully the tax scandal is "all history now". It is unlikely that the industrial conscripts on YTS will be so accommodating.

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# 'What I learned on strike'

**CHRIS ROBERTSON—a NALGO shop steward (personal capacity) talks to *Militant* about a long-running local authority dispute in Kent and the lessons he has drawn from the experience.**

"The strike began when a leading shop steward and negotiator (John Kirkpatrick) was sacked for refusing an order. Immediately three divisional offices walked out, and were followed by other departments the next day.

the rulling Tory councillors had become fed up with negotiating over a regrading claim. They decided to bring the issue to a head by effectively taking on the union (who were already taking limited action).

"John was sacked because

"I felt as a union member I had put John in a position

where as leader of the negotiating team he had no choice. I would be letting him and myself down. I saw it as my fight. If it wasn't me today it could be tomorrow. As the strike progressed I began to see it in much wider terms.

"Senior management are no longer united. However, it is a very small group of very powerful Tory councillors we are fighting, who have from the very word go politicised the strike."

"There are a great many lessons to be learnt from this strike. It was a fundamental mistake that when the instruction to strike was given it was only given to social security. It should have been given to everyone in Kent NALGO. Had this happened we could have won weeks ago."

"Fundamentally the lessons of the dispute are the need for leadership and unity. We have not yet gained enough support from the labour and trade union movement. The support has been patchy and come mainly from local stewards rather

than county/national level. "There was initially a lack of understanding, by some, of what a trade union is. Some, even now, still consider it as a local association to gain your pension.

"However, this strike has meant trade unionism has arrived in Kent NALGO and is here to stay and is something which we can build on for the future whether we win or lose.

"We've had *Militant* supporters at our picket lines selling the paper. My wife bought a copy from a local seller. I found it coincided with feelings I'd had for years. The strike has opened up my eyes to what is really going on.

"It seemed it was only *Militant* which was offering practical support and a programme and perspective on the dispute. It is the only paper that offers any way how to build socialism in this country and internationally.

"I don't see any of the problems we face being solved until we build a socialist society."



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